

## **BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 21 March 2011 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillors:	J Waterhouse (Town Mayor)	I Hunter
	J Beresford	M McNeely
	A Bowlas	A Reid
	I Dixon	J Robertson
	B Douglas	C Routledge
	P Herdman MBE	F Simpson
	G Hill	J Smith

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

S Finch, Town Clerk

Inspector Peter Duguid and Sergeant Keith Smith, Northumbria Police

Mike Greener, Spittal Improvement Trust

3 members of the public

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

#### **OPEN SESSION**

Inspector Duguid reported on crime figures in the Berwick Sector. Overall, the target for the year had been a reduction in recorded crime of 1%, and there had been a reduction of 15.8%. Within this overall figure, thefts from cars, and anti-social behaviour, had both increased. The detection rate at 46% was below the target of 49.7%.

Sergeant Smith reported on parking-related issues, including the use of the warning card left on cars as part of a policy not to be too heavy-handed. He confirmed that decriminalisation of parking had been delayed and was now expected in 2012.

Councillor Herdman noted that he had heard from constituents that the follow-up from the police

after incidents had been reported was much appreciated.

**CO75/10**            **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Pauline.

**CO76/10**            **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 24 January 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Smith drew attention to the item on bus services and noted that the new hail-and-ride service on Ord Drive required publicising.

**CO77/10**            **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Douglas, Hunter and Smith, all declared a personal interest in Item 6 (Cultural Strategy); Councillors Douglas and Hunter declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Licensing Policy for Sex Establishments); Councillor Douglas declared a personal interest, and Councillor Hunter a personal and prejudicial interest, in Item 18 (Taxi Licensing Consultation).

**CO78/10**            **4. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor referred to the death in January of Lieutenant Colonel Humphrey Crossman. A letter had been sent on behalf of the Council to Lady Rose Crossman, and the Mayor and Sergeant-at-Mace had attended the funeral.

The Mayor referred to the imminent retirement of the Sheriff from Northumbria Police, and gave him the Council's very best wishes.

The concert by Berwick Male Voice Choir scheduled for 25 March had had to be postponed. Forthcoming events included the Mayor's At Home on 14 April, and the Riding of the Bounds on 1 May, full details of which would be forwarded to members when available.

**CO79/10**            **5. HONORARY FREEMEN**

The Mayor invited comments on the proposal, which had been circulated, for the Town Council to nominate those who had given exceptional service within Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth for the honorary title Honorary Freeman or

Honorary Freewoman.

There was discussion about the number of titles which should be conferred and the issue of residency.

**RESOLVED: (i) The Council to adopt a policy on Honorary Freemen; and (ii) The Council to agree the nomination criteria and procedure as set out, with the exception that a maximum of persons each year should be awarded the title, rather than a maximum of four persons at any time should hold the title.**

**CO80/10**

## **6. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CULTURAL STRATEGY**

The draft Cultural Strategy of Northumberland County Council had been circulated. Members noted the strategy which they felt was formalising what was already happening.

**CO81/10**

## **7. PLAY PARKS**

- (i) The Mayor suspended standing orders and invited Mike Greener, Spittal Improvement Trust, to explain the request from one of the funders of the Spittal Splash Park for a longer maintenance commitment by the Town Council than the five years already agreed.

Mr Greener said the Veolia Trust was concerned the Park should not fall into disuse after a relatively short time, through lack of maintenance; he confirmed that without the Trust's contribution the project could not proceed.

Members agreed that the project should not be allowed to fail, but that the Town Council should not agree to an open-ended commitment indefinitely.

**RESOLVED: The Council would agree to provide an assurance to the Veolia Trust that it would undertake to fund reasonable ongoing maintenance.**

Standing orders were reinstated.

- (ii) The Town Mayor advised members that a meeting had been held immediately prior to the Council meeting with Jan Casson of Surestart, to discuss plans for the proposed play area at Highcliffe, which members had agreed should be a priority. A potential site had been identified. A capital sum of £25,000 was available but had to be spent by 31 May. The County Council had confirmed that they would not be prepared to take on the management or insurance of the facility. For the project to proceed it would therefore be necessary for the Town Council to agree to take on these responsibilities.

Members welcomed the proposal for a play area in this location, which lacked any facilities at present, and noted there was a commitment, backed by capital reserves, to improve existing and provide new play facilities. As a new facility this should not need to be scrutinised before transfer from the County Council, and assistance would be available from Surestart with training for inspections.

**RESOLVED: The Town Council to take responsibility for the management and insurance of the new play area at Highcliffe.**

Members also discussed the need to agree priorities across the Town Council area for which play areas needed to be improved, or which sites needed play facilities and did not already have them. A preliminary view had been taken by the Environment and Regeneration Committee, whose Chair Councillor Robertson suggested all members should express their view on priorities.

It was agreed that members should submit their priorities to the Clerk.

**CO82/10**

## **8. A1 BUS SERVICES**

Members considered the letter from the County Council outlining changes to the A1 corridor bus service.

Councillor Herdman proposed, and it was agreed, that the Town Council should make strong representations for the service to go via Wansbeck Hospital, to coincide with visiting times, thus providing a valuable service to Berwick residents needing to visit the hospital. It was additionally agreed that Cramlington should be included in the journey when the new hospital was built.

**CO83/10**

#### **9. NCC STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY FOR SEX ESTABLISHMENTS – CONSULTATION ON DRAFT POLICY**

It was agreed to support the proposal, set out in the draft policy, that would allow local authorities to regulate lap dancing clubs and similar venues under Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 1982.

**CO84/10**

#### **10. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND ADDITIONAL TOWN MEETINGS**

- (i) It was noted that the annual Town Meeting would be held on 19 April at 6 pm. It had been suggested, as agreed, that Groundwork North East should be invited to attend to introduce their proposals for community-led environmental schemes; it was also agreed that Berwick Borough Housing and the County Council's NEAT officers should be invited to attend.
  
- (ii) Councillor Robertson proposed the Town Council should aim to hold issue-focused meetings on a quarterly basis, to which relevant groups should be invited, and which would not be part of the formal Council meeting cycle.  
This was agreed.

**CO85/10**

#### **11. CALENDAR OF DATES FOR 2011-12**

**RESOLVED: To adopt the calendar of meetings for 2011-12, subject to it being noted that the Mayor-Making would be on Monday 16 May 2011.**

**CO86/10**

#### **12. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

There had been no requests for representation on outside bodies.

**CO87/10**

#### **13. EVENTS COMMITTEE**

Councillor McNeely reported that the leaflet publicising events was still in preparation.

Councillor Reid, having chaired the last meeting, introduced the minutes; it was clarified that under minute E049/10, the intention was to assist with the financing of the erection of the Rotary Club's Christmas lights.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on 7 March 2011, subject to the addition of the word 'them' between 'assist' and 'in' in the resolution under minute E049/10.**

**CO88/10**

**14. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee meeting held on 7 March 2011.**

**CO89/10**

**15. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 8 March 2011.**

**CO90/10**

**16. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 18 January, 15 February and 15 March 2011.**

**CO91/10**

**17. GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- (i) **RESOLVED: In accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, to adopt the Equality Policy which had been circulated.**
- (ii) The Clerk advised that the Council was now registered with the Information Commissioner as a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act, and guidance would be forwarded to Councillors on how they should comply with the relevant requirements.

**CO92/10**

**18. TAXI LICENSING CONSULTATION**

Councillor Hunter, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the Council Chamber.

The Mayor advised that the Council had been invited to comment on proposals relating to the zoning of taxi licensing in Northumberland, and in particular to submit views on current taxi rank provision within Berwick.

Members agreed that the County Council should retain the six existing hackney carriage zones.

They also agreed that there should be consultation with Taxi Association members before responding on the issue relating to Berwick taxi rank provision.

The Clerk was asked to arrange a meeting with representatives of the Taxi Association; Councillors Waterhouse, Beresford, Bowlas and Robertson would attend the meeting on behalf of the Town Council.

**CO93/10**

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 9 May 2011 at 6 pm in the Town Hall.