

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 22 April 2015 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: I Hunter, Town Mayor	G McLean
I Dixon	G Roughead
A Gibson	C Seymour
G Hill	F Simpson
J Lang	G Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Pattison, Acting Clerk

Steve Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk

Joyce Benton, Sergeant at Mace

Michael Richardson, Sheriff

24 Members of the Public

Cllr Hunter advised Councillors and the public that a request had been made by a member of the public under the new transparency rules to record and film the Council meeting. The public were asked if they objected to being filmed and none objected.

C0120/14 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted on behalf of: Councillors J Beresford, H Bettison (alternative engagement), T Forrester and G Jones

C0121/14 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor I Hunter declared a personal interest in Item 7 (Authorisation Of Payments And Orders).

C0122/14 3. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

There were no requests for dispensation.

C0123/14 4. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Brian Darling asked if BTC were to recognise/acknowledge the work Sir Alan Beith has done over the years) for the area and to focus on 3 main things which have made a difference. A warning was also given regarding future difficulties arising with Berwick Futures Group. Mr Spencer Barclay expressed concern about an issue he raised at the meeting at Holy Island re Contract Review and the contacts in NCC departments. Cllr Hunter replied that this information is on the NCC website. Mr Spencer Barclay also re-iterated his offer of assistance/project management with regard to ensuring the bike rack at Megs Mount is in place for the summer. Cllr Hunter advised this matter was noted. Mr Basil Coxon raised concerns on the number of empty shops in Berwick High Street and was BTC doing enough to encourage more people to open businesses in regard to reducing rates? Cllr Hunter advised BTC would write to NCC in regard to obtaining possible rate relief to assist prospective businesses. Ms Janet Clare Dean advised concern that her letter had not been responded to in regard to the safety of recordings of meetings and data back-up and requested who had this responsibility. Cllr Hunter advised these items were stored safely however, BTC would need to take advice on what information could be made public and an answer would be provided. Mrs Karin Graham requested further information regarding provision of a xmas tree at Threefields which was allegedly never purchased. Mrs Graham also expressed concern regarding cash payments of £430 being made to a person for canopies which were allegedly bought by residents of Four housing in Highcliffe and Magdalene Ward. Cllr Hunter advised BTC will write to Four housing in regard to this matter. Mr Blackburn expressed his concern regarding ARCH and although BTC had objected to some elements of the Kwik Save takeover he felt a definitive answer from Councillors was required. Mr Blackburn also had grave concerns re members of Berwick Futures Group and alleged they were not a legitimate body. Mr Blackburn stated he had e-mailed Cllrs and copied in the Acting Clerk.

C0124/14 5. APPROVAL AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Cllr Hill said that there had been two proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations put to the last Council meeting and proposed 2 amendments to the Financial Regulations which were agreed relating to 1.3 Office Expenditure for sums up to £1k (the finance committee would manage the criteria for “office expenditure” and 1.6 a change of wording from, a breach of these regulations by an employee is Gross Misconduct to “a deliberate, persistent breach will be dealt

with under the Council's disciplinary procedure". Cllr Hill to meet with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to clarify numbering ahead of the new regulations being updated on the Council website. It was also noted that the Council needs to establish the position of "proper officer" and "responsible financial officer" of the Council.

RESOLVED: To put onto the next Finance and Resources agenda.

C0125/14 6. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Councillors unanimously agreed the new Meeting schedule which includes more finance and Council meetings in order to approve payments re the adopted financial regulations

RESOLVED: To accept the new Meeting schedule.

C0126/14 7. AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS AND ORDERS

Cllr Hill expressed her concern at the lack of transparency regarding 2 salary payment amounts to NCC of £8,054.00. 23p and £6,106.22 which were not individually itemised and no breakdown provided for Councillor information. Cllr Dixon agreed with Cllr Hill on this issue as did Cllr Gibson. It was agreed to approve all other listed payments but not the 2 payments pertaining to NCC. This was proposed by Cllr Dixon and seconded by Cllr Gibson and agreed by all.

RESOLVED: To approve all payments listed but not the 2 NCC payments.

C0127/14 8. APPROVAL OF PLANNED EXPENDITURE

None

C0128/14 9. SPITTAL SPLASH PARK

Cllr Hunter requested whether Councillors agreed to approve £7k expenditure for water hygiene and safety inspections at SSP by Costain. Questions were asked if this amount was likely to increase and Cllr McLean thought there may be someone more local who could undertake this work at a lesser cost. Cllr Seymour advised The Swan Centre may have the capability to do these tests and this could be looked into further. Cllr Hill thought the SLA with NCC did not contain enough detail and Cllr McLean was keen to get the SSP sorted and ready for use. Opening date for the SSP was unable to be confirmed and Councillors agreed that Notice Boards advertising when the SSP was open and shut would be of benefit to visitors. Obtaining 3 quotes was mentioned before finally deciding to request NCC provide the signs. Cllr Gibson proposed BTC go for signs and pay the £7,000, Cllr Hunter asked if Councillors agreed to the signs and to pay the £7,000 and this was agreed by Councillors with Cllr Hill abstaining.

RESOLVED: To renew the agreement with Costain and to request NCC provide notice boards advising opening and shutting times for SSP and to also make enquiries at the Swan Centre re costings for future water hygiene testing.

C0129/14 10. SPITTAL PLAY AREA

Cllr Hunter requested whether Councillors approved £500 SLA for Spittal Play Area which includes weekly inspections, annual inspections and minor repairs. Cllr Hill advised that the SSP and Spittal Play Area (freehold) should both be transferred to BTC at the same time. Cllr Hunter asked members for their agreement that there will be one transfer for the 2 areas as this would save on fees, this was agreed.

RESOLVED: To approve payment.

C0130/14 11. PLAY AREA INSURANCE

Deferred until next Finance and Resources Meeting, the Chair of Finance and Resources to ascertain further information

RESOLVED: To defer discussion until next meeting.

C0131/14 12. PROTOCOL FOR MEETINGS

Cllr Hill proposed a statement of intent and this was seconded by Cllr Seymour. BTC is fully committed to transparency in its decision making processes and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that Councillors are fully informed when making decisions and, in line with legislation and best practice will ensure that;

1) All agendas, accompanying papers and appendices are published on the Council website a minimum of 3 clear days before meetings unless they can legitimately be classified as confidential.

RESOLVED: Agreed by all Councillors.

2) All agendas, accompanying papers and appendices are distributed to Councillors a minimum of 3 clear days before meetings.

RESOLVED: Agreed by all Councillors.

3) Payment lists presented for approval must contain an itemised breakdown of each transaction and indicate where authorisation is being sought retrospectively Questions were asked in regard to data protection issues regarding the itemising of salary payments.

Standing Orders Suspended to allow member of the public, Mr Marshall to discuss Data protection issues. Mr Marshall advised those who are paid from the public purse should expect some information about their salaries to be made

public. However, salary information also relates to their personal financial circumstances and this deserves some protection.

Standing Orders Resumed

RESOLVED: Agreed by all Councillors with Cllr Hunter abstaining.

C0132/14 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Monday, 11 May 2015 at 6 pm in the Town Hall.

15 April 2015 (14-15)

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

PAYMENTS LIST

Voucher	Code	Date	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
377	Hoppa Bus	31/03/2015	101060	Laminates	Fantasy Prints	7.50	1.50	9.00
378	Other Marketing	31/03/2015	101061	Leaflet Distribution - Events	Border Events	25.00	5.00	30.00
380	Other Marketing	31/03/2015	101063	Leaflet Distribution - Events	North Northumberland Tourism Association	135.00	0.00	135.00
381	Public Realm Works	31/03/2015	101064	Notice Board keys	Glasdon	13.08	2.61	15.69
382	IT Support	31/03/2015	101065	IT support	Northern Lab	90.00	18.00	108.00
392-409	Salaries	03/03/2015	101051	Salaries	Northumberland County Council	8,054.23	0.00	8,054.23
410-18	Salaries	31/03/2015	101070	Salaries	Northumberland County Council	6,106.22	0.00	6,106.22
419	Legal Advice	31/03/2015	101073	Legal services	Collingwood Legal	2,248.50	449.70	2,698.20
420-3	Salaries: Other	31/03/2015	101074	Casual employee	Casual employee	395.40	0.00	395.40
424	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	110.00	22.00	132.00
425	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	110.00	22.00	132.00
426	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	110.00	22.00	132.00
427	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	55.00	11.00	66.00
428	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	275.00	55.00	330.00
429	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	110.00	22.00	132.00
430	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	41.27	8.25	49.52
431	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	15.31	3.06	18.37
432	Public Seat Maintenance	31/03/2015	101075	Seat maintenance	Northumberland County Council	110.00	22.00	132.00
1	NAS Subscription	07/04/2015	101066	Subscription	National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Ltd.	55.00	11.00	66.00
2	Travel/subsistence: officers	07/04/2015	101067	Expenses	Staff	24.65	0.00	24.65
3	Councillor Travel & Subsistence	07/04/2015	101068	Expenses	I Hunter	63.70	0.00	63.70
4	Other Events Grants	07/04/2015	101069	Events Grant	Spittal Improvement Trust	700.00	0.00	700.00
5	Postage	14/04/2015	101071	Stamps	Viking	54.00	0.00	54.00
6	Stationery & Printing	14/04/2015	101071	Stationery	Viking	24.68	4.93	29.61
7	Councillor Travel & Subsistence	14/04/2015	101071	Ink cartridges	Viking	34.99	7.00	41.99
8	Other Events Grants	14/04/2015	101072	Events Grant	Cittaslow Berwick	1,603.20	0.00	1,603.20
9	Salaries: Other	14/04/2015	101074	Casual employee	Casual employee	292.50	0.00	292.50