

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday 24 September 2012 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	J Robertson (Town Mayor)	I Hunter
	H Bettison	A Reid
	A Bowlas	C Routledge
	I Dixon	F Simpson
	F Grant	J Smith
	P Herdman MBE	J Waterhouse
	G Hill	

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk
S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
Inspector Davy Garrick, Northumbria Police
Sergeant Keith Smith, Northumbria Police
Jen Hall, CAB
Andrew Marshall, Town Team
7 members of the public.

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

Inspector Davy Garrick of Northumbria Police updated the Council on current situations. Crime figures for the Berwick Sector were down from 485 to 387, anti-social behaviour has been a priority and burglary has halved with the Farm Watch Network contributing to this. There has been an increase in theft from vehicles (especially tourists) although this has reduced. Work from the community has helped deal with crime, for example, Farm Watch Network and members of the public telephoning/emailing with information.

Andrew Marshall from the Town Team that was involved in the successful bid for Portas Pilot money introduced himself to the meeting. He explained the following points. That £100,000 would be received in Match Funding from Northumberland County Council. The team were in Croydon

this week for a workshop which included Mary Portas and other organisations. John Lord of Arch would join the team. A consultation period would now take place.

Representatives of the Save Berwick Maternity Unit campaign expressed their concerns about the position which the Town Council would take on the issue of the temporary closure of the Maternity Unit. The Town Mayor said this would be covered in the item on the agenda on this topic.

CO36/12 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillor J Beresford (personal).

Absent: Councillors B Douglas and V Pauline.

CO37/12 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 9 July 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

CO38/12 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor P Herdman declared a personal interest in Item 6 (Berwick Maternity Unit).

Councillor I Hunter declared a personal interest in Item 6 (Berwick Maternity Unit).

CO39/12 4. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor made no announcements.

CO40/12 5. BERWICK CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Jen Hall, Bureau Manager, explained the current situation regarding the CAB in Berwick-upon-Tweed Last year the CAB had advised 2,000 clients with 7,000 problems and around half of these were about welfare benefits. Berwick also had a higher number of employment issues than anywhere else in Northumberland CAB had 9 paid workers (5 full-time / 4 part-time) and 24 volunteers (6 trained / 2 trainees). Outreach services in Belford, Seahouses and Wooler had ceased through shortage of funds; administration hours would be cut and legal aid would stop in March. £20,000 in funding still needed to be found for the current financial year. The meeting agreed that the Council should consider whether provisions should be placed in the budget to support CAB and suggested that an application for a Community Grant should be made to the Finance and Resources Committee by the CAB. The Mayor thanked Jen Hall for attending.

CO41/12 6. BERWICK MATERNITY UNIT

Members discussed the temporary closure of Berwick Maternity Unit, and the concerns which it had raised among residents. These related to issues of safety given the times and distances involved for expectant mothers required to travel to Wansbeck or the Borders General hospitals. During the discussion, Standing Orders were suspended in order to allow representatives of the Save Berwick Maternity Unit campaign to make additional points.

Members agreed that they wished to see a midwife-led maternity unit in Berwick, ante- and post-natal care, and an adequate ambulance service.

Members also agreed that the Council would host a public meeting in October, at which the public would have an opportunity to ask questions, and if representatives of the NHS were not able to attend, the Council would undertake to seek answers from them on the public's behalf.

CO42/12 **7. STRATEGY FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS IN NORTHUMBERLAND 2012/2015**

Members supported the principles of the strategy and agreed that the Mayor and Clerk would meet to populate the 'Consultation Response Questionnaire'.

CO43/12 **8. AMENDMENTS TO ANNUAL RETURN**

Members had been advised that BDO, the external auditors, required a small alteration to the balances carried forward figure.

The increase in the value of fixed assets had also been queried. A change in interpretation of fixed asset valuations during 2010/11 required that assets already owned were not revalued and had their value fixed in March 2011. After discussion with BDO, the fixed asset value for March 2011 was restated.

In both cases BDO considered these minor changes that did not require the Council to re-approve the Annual Return before its return, but did require that the changes be brought to the attention of members, by whom they were noted.

CO44/12 **9. DEFINITIVE RIGHTS OF WAY - AMENDMENT**

Members had no facts or evidence to add in relation to the proposal to add a public footpath from the U115 road on Spittal Promenade in a southerly direction to join Parish of Ancroft byway No 6, 215 metres east of Seaview House, but

expressed support for the proposal.

CO45/12

10. PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 24 July 2012 and 28 August 2012.

CO46/12

11. EVENTS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Events Committee held on 3 September 2012.

CO47/12

12. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on 10 September 2012.

CO48/12

13. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 17 September 2012.

CO49/12

14. STAFFING COMMITTEE

To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 18 June 2012, subject to it being noted that Councillor Waterhouse had been elected as a member of the Staffing Committee, and not of the Events Committee (S007/12, 18 June).

CO50/12

15. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: Councillor Waterhouse to represent the Town Council on Berwick Youth Project.

CO51/12

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 26 November 2012 at 6 pm in the Town Hall.