

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 25 July 2016 at 6.00 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

Councillors:	I Dixon (Town Mayor)	P Hodgson
	H Bettison	J Lang
	D Blackburn	G Mclean
	A Forbes	B Parkin
	T Forrester	G Roughead
	A Gibson	C Seymour
	E Goodyer	G Smith
	K Graham	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Pattison, Town Clerk

Steve Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk

Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace

12 members of the public

Cllr Dixon opened the meeting with an announcement.

In view of threats received by Council Staff and Town Councillors, extra security has been put into place for Council meetings and this would be reviewed at the next Council meeting which will take place on 15th August 2016. Cllr Dixon went on to say that the Town Council took security of Councillors and Staff extremely seriously and this was a purely preventative measure.

Cllr Bettison declared an interest in knowing a guard.

OPEN SESSION

Mr Brian Darling expressed concern at the proliferation of dead seagulls. Cllr Bettison said 390 online signatures and over 100 hard copy signatures had been received in a bid to save the Bell Tower at Berwick Infirmary. Mr Stuart said the Berwick Motor Cycle Club had put on a splendid event at the weekend and they had not received any Council funding and the Digital Board had not displayed the event. Mrs Mclean said the board had displayed the notice and Councillors suggested the Motorcycle

Club applied to BTC for funding for next year's event. Mr Stuart also mentioned increased drug issues in the town and Cllr Goodyer mentioned that Miss Lindsay Walker was looking for premises in order to start a group dealing specifically with depression and other issues. Cllr Blackburn stated that he was speaking from the floor because the clerk had refused to place his item on the agenda, The Clerk responded and said due to his request being made 2 days after the agenda had already gone out the addition was too late. Cllr Blackburn said it was a cultural issue and the role, duties and authority of the clerk needed urgent review. Cllr Blackburn stated that his emails to NCC were being blocked and this prevented him from properly representing the public and for that reason he is considering withholding his council tax and as this may bring the council into disrepute he will be offering his resignation and it will be for Councillors to accept or reject. Cllr Blackburn said everything took a very long time and nothing was ever accomplished and queried why his request to tidy up Café Rock had not been actioned. The Clerk advised NCC had looked at it and said it was a massive undertaking, Cllr Blackburn said he had not been informed. A complaint against a County Councillor has also been made by Cllr Blackburn and he also mentioned his concerns regarding lack of progress at Bankhill. Cllr Goodyer supported Cllr Blackburn and said NCC blocking emails was a very serious concern and it needed further Council discussion.

C063/16 **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been accepted on behalf of Cllr G Hill.

C064/16 **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 11 July 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C065/16 **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Roughead item 7 and 17, Cllrs Seymour, Dixon, Bettison and Lang item 12 and Cllr Goodyer item 12.

C066/16 **4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

C067/16 **5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Dixon has had a busy week and visited Kelso for the crowning of the braw laddie, and also the crowning ceremony last Thursday for the Tweedmouth Salmon Queen and attending the floats parade on Sunday. He also attended a presentation and gave out diplomas to the Sure Start under 5's who were graduating. Unfortunately, Cllr Dixon will miss the Minden day parade and also the arrival of Bikes around Britain but his place will be taken by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr G Roughead.

Cllr Dixon also wanted to thank the Berwick Licensed Victuallers Association who have

presented the Town Council with a cheque for £1,000 towards the new Town Centre CCTV cameras and Cllr Dixon expressed his thanks to them on behalf of the Town Council.

C068/16 6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Two reports received were noted by Councillors with Cllr Graham and Cllr Seymour mentioning the political content in one of the County Council reports was unnecessary. Cllr Hodgson thought one Council report a month was acceptable and this was agreed.

RESOLVED: County Councillors need to supply only one report per month.

C069/16 7. NOTIFICATION OF PAYMENTS MADE BY BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Agreed by Councillors.

RESOLVED: Agreed.

C070/16 8. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- a) Noted by Councillors, with Cllr Seymour pointing out a couple of errors in the procedures in regard to naming the Assistant to the Clerk as Deputy Clerk which the Clerk agreed would be corrected. Cllr Bettison said the Town Council had come a long way in a year with vast improvements being made, the move to greater openness and transparency had now been accomplished.
- b) Cllr Seymour asked for clarification on the amendment indicated in the regulations which the Clerk said was a one-word change from payments to re-imbursements and was under the heading of the Clerk's Imprest Account. A proposal to accept the change was made by Cllr Hodgson and was seconded by Cllr Mclean and agreed by all.

RESOLVED: Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures were approved.

C071/16 9. QUARTERLY REVIEW AND RESERVES FIGURES

Cllr Seymour thought the report should be noted. Cllr Bettison thought the quarterly review was well done and praised BTC staff. Cllr Dixon said he had been into the BTC office and had examined the quarterly review along with Cllr Mclean. Cllr Mclean said the Council will work within the system over a 3-year period and ensure all objectives were clear and measurable Cllr Seymour thought some areas were unclear and did not like the wording 'potentially allocated'. Cllr Goodyer and Lang agreed with Cllr Seymour and asked for a breakdown of the potentially allocated monies of £130k in order to publish a list of all proposals for growth or capital schemes to be made available to all Councillors as a separate document. Cllr Forbes said it was not a plan per say and Cllr Hodgson said it

was to link into a 3-year plan with Council reserves properly allocated. It was noted to accept the quarterly review with 'potential' taken out and a breakdown of the £130k reserves be emailed to Councillors.

RESOLVED: To take out the word 'potentially' allocated and email to Councillors a breakdown of the (potential allocation of £130k).

C072/16

10. OSBORNE ROAD PLAY PARK – Agreement to go out to tender

Cllr Alex Gibson has received promises/pledges of up to £24k toward the regeneration of Osborne Road Play park. Three companies have been out to look at the Park with quotes coming in around £40k which would include removing the old equipment and replacing with new. This would mean Cllr Gibson needing to request £16k from the Play Park budget which is currently standing at £40k. Councillor Roughead thought that local children may like to choose the equipment, but Cllr Gibson that he had already received feedback from the children and knew what they wanted. Cllr Hodgson seconded Cllr Gibson's proposal to go out to tender and this was agreed unanimously by all.

RESOLVED: To go out to tender for the Osborne Road Play park.

C073/16

11. LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Goodyer expressed delight at presenting the report re the consultation exercise to the Town Council which took place in early 2016 and was based on the views of over a hundred people. Cllr Goodyer also talked about the Plan's visions and objectives and said that this action was still considered a living document and one which could still be developed and refined. A grant of £4,280 towards the 7 topic groups has been requested/obtained and 7 planning consultants have now been contacted to give quotes for their time. There are very few Neighbourhood Planning consultants available in Northumberland and many have already said they were unable to take on anymore work due to other commitments. Only one quote has been received to date and this can be reported on at the next Council meeting in August. Free advice has also been obtained regarding Housing development. Cllr Bettison thanked Cllr Goodyer for his great enthusiasm and commitment.

C074/16

12. 2016 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Cllr Goodyer left the room.

Cllr Bettison explained to Council that she had spent 5 hours with the Clerk, Cllr Gibson and Cllr Mclean endeavouring to put 100's of xmas light prices into a readable and easy to understand format so that everyone understood what was required. Time factors were playing a huge part in a decision to decide this matter reasonably quickly. Cllr Bettison

said the current lights needed replacement and the long standing xmas theme over many years had also become very tired. There were no lights currently provided by the town council in Tweedmouth and Spittal areas and the current Spittal xmas lights which had been in use for a number of years were now defunct. Cllr Graham agreed Tweedmouth and Spittal were not included in the lights and thought it was time they were and also said it was time the xmas lights in the town were replaced. Cllr Blackburn said things were moving along far too quickly regarding this matter with Cllr Graham pointing out that Cllr Blackburn had complained earlier that things were moving too slowly. Cllr Forbes said she could not justify spending such a large amount of money (£47k) on lights when many people in her Ward had so very little. **SUSPEND Standing orders** – Mrs Mclean said the website Berwick Deserves Better had had people complaining online about the very poor xmas lights which BTC provided to the town every xmas. Mr Darling wondered what lighting specifications had been agreed. Cllr Seymour said Berwick should appoint a group to raise money for xmas lights in a similar way to that of Alnwick and Morpeth and that BTC should keep the same xmas theme as in previous years. Cllr Lang thought that this was in keeping with the status quo. Mr Michael Stewart suggested planting a live conifer and this would save buying a new tree every year. **REINSTATE Standing orders** Cllr Forbes then made a proposal to add £18k to the current budgeted monies of £12k making £30k altogether and introduce a 3-year programme in order to keep improving the lights every year. This was agreed by all Councillors with Cllr Seymour voting against. **RESOLVED: To spend £30k on xmas lights including the £12k already allocated.** **Cllr Goodyer returned to the room.**

C075/16

13. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Clerk requested Councillors gave 3 priorities/requests for the Local Transport Plan. A lively discussion took place with Cllr Dixon suggesting a zebra crossing at Marygate which was also supported by Cllr Graham. Cllr Blackburn said 2 zebra crossings would be needed and Cllr Hodgson thought zebra crossings would slow the traffic down and this was agreed by most Councillors. Cllr Goodyer thought Cycle routes and cycle tracks were of great importance especially regarding future tourism. **SUSPEND Standing orders** –Mr Stewart thought HGV vehicles should only be allowed in the town centre within set times. Mr Brian Douglas thought the bollards were difficult and vehicle restriction was not feasible. Cllr Gibson suggested wooden bollards were needed for safety reasons outside St Cuthbert's RC School and a one-way system should be put into place at Tweedmouth West School. **REINSTATE Standing Orders.** It was eventually decided to request

1. Cycle Paths and Routes, 2. To make Marygate more pedestrian friendly –speed restriction re 10 mph, and 3. No HGV deliveries between 10am and 4pm.

RESOLVED: To request 2017/18 LTP requests, 1. Cycle Paths and Routes, 2. To make Marygate more pedestrian friendly, and 3. No HGV deliveries between 10am and 4pm.

C076/16

14. NORTH AREA REVIEW OF SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES 2016

Cllr Roughead expressed his concern that the early bus service going into Alnwick from Berwick was not cut back and requested BTC wrote to NCC in support of this. This was seconded by Cllr Forrester and agreed by all.

RESOLVED: The town council will write to NCC and request that the early service bus from Berwick into Alnwick will not be cut back.

C077/16

15. GOODIE PATCHY

Cllr Roughead requested support for the notion to agree a preservation order be made on the trees in the Goody Patchy woodland. Cllr Blackburn gave his full support. However, Cllr Dixon mentioned receipt of a letter from a local resident who complained about the height of the trees due to heavy rainfall and the ensuing loss of sunlight towards their property due to the height of the trees. Cllr Graham agreed with the complainant and Cllr Forbes also expressed her concern about the Town Council getting involved in what could be a contentious issue. Cllr Roughead said it was more a maintenance issue he was in support of rather than a TPO. Cllr Bettison said the problem was long standing and the surrounding area was in an extremely neglected state. A vote was taken with 10 Councillors in support of the notion with 3 against and 2 abstaining.

RESOLVED: To support Cllr Roughead's notion.

C078/16

16. GRANT APPLICATIONS

Councillors discussed the frequency of receiving applications for grant funding and Cllr Hodgson suggested quarterly. Cllr Seymour thought no financial thresholds should be in place and no criteria's. This was agreed by all.

RESOLVED: To discuss grant applications on a quarterly basis with no further changes.

C079/16

17. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

a) A Request from the Tweedmouth Feast Committee for a grant of £1,150 was agreed.

RESOLVED: To grant £1,150.00 to the Tweedmouth Feast Committee.

b) A request for £350 for the Berwick Old Age Pensioners Fund was agreed by all with Cllr Alex Gibson asking for another £60 to bring the total up to £410 and this was agreed by

all.

RESOLVED: To grant £410.00 to Berwick Old Age Pensioners Association.

C080/16

18. EVENTS COMMITTEE

**RESOLVED: The minutes were proposed by Cllr Lang and seconded by Cllr Forbes.
To adopt the minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on 22 July 2015.**

C081/16

19. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**RESOLVED: The minutes were proposed by Cllr Forbes and seconded by Cllr
Roughead. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources
Committee held on 18 May 2016.**

C082/16

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 15 August 2016 at 6 pm.