

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 25 November 2013 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	I Hunter (Town Mayor)	G Jones
	J Beresford	J Lang
	H Bettison	J Robertson
	I Dixon	G Roughead
	P Elliott	C Seymour
	T Forrester	F Simpson
	G Hill	J Stephenson

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk
S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
Michael Richardson, Sheriff
J Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace
County Councillor Jim Smith
Liz Davies, Northumbria Healthcare
Lucy Thomson, Northumbria Healthcare
Paul Brayson, Northumbria Healthcare
Berwick Local Healthcare Services Names
16 members of the public

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

Helen Tait of Leukaemia North Northumberland Fundraising Group spoke of the Group's fund raising through the Party on the Parade and other activities and expressed disappointment at the recently reported decision of the Events Committee to change the form of the Council's support for the event. Councillor Dixon explained there would be a presentation by Helen Tait at the next meeting of the Events Committee and encouraged all to attend.

Chris Hardie, Acting Chair of Berwick Town Team Limited, thanked everyone for the work they had

put into the matter of the Portas Pilot over the last month. The Town Team looked forward to the discussion under Item 13 and to working with the Town Council in the future.

CO61/13 **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillors A Gibson (unwell) and A Turnbull (unwell).

CO62/13 **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 23 September 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Hill wished it be recorded that she considered that minute C049/13 was not an accurate record of what she said.

CO63/13 **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor H Bettison declared a personal interest in Item 10 (May Fair 2015);
Councillor P Elliott declared a personal interest in Item 11 (Use of Town Council logo);
Councillor G Hill declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 21 (Additional Budget Provision) and a personal interest in Item 13 (Portas Pilot);
Councillor I Hunter declared a personal interest in Item 8 (EBDA Award 2013) and Item 13 (Portas Pilot);
Councillor G Jones declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 9 (Parking) and a personal interest in Item 13 (PortasPilot);
Councillor J Lang declared a personal interest in Item 10 (May Fair 2015);
Councillor J Robertson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 9 (Parking) and a personal interest in Item 10 (May Fair 2015) and Item 13 (Portas Pilot).

CO64/13 **4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

(i) Verbal requests a dispensation enabling them to participate in discussion and voting on Item 9 (ii) were received from Councillors G Jones and J Robertson.
(ii) The Council agreed to the dispensations requested.

CO65/13 **5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported on events attended since the last Council meeting and invited Councillors to join her at events over the festive period.

CO66/13 **6. BERWICK LOCAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

Members noted the update by representatives of the Berwick Local Health Care

Services on their engagement with local people during the course of the summer and the new hospital which would be built on the site of the current hospital.

The Town Mayor thanked Liz Davies, Lucy Thomson and Paul Brayson for attending and for answering the questions raised by members.

CO67/13

7. ANNUAL AUDIT FOR 2012-13

RESOLVED: To approve the audited annual return and issues arising report.

CO68/13

8. EBDA AWARD 2013

RESOLVED: To nominate Marshalls Leisure Limited for the Eastern Borders Development Association 2013 award.

Councillor Simpson agreed to provide the Clerk with the required 200 words needed to support the nomination.

CO69/13

9. PARKING

Note: Councillors G Jones and J Robertson, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest left the room during consideration of the first part of this item, and having had a dispensation agreed, returned to participate in the second part.

(i) RESOLVED: The Council considered the draft Community Parking Plan and agreed the following recommendations for submission, as requested, to Northumberland County Council.

- **Recommendation: The current categorisation of short and long stay car parks to remain unchanged unless and until there is evidence that a re-assessment of time limits of car parks might increase footfall in the town centre.**
- **Recommendation: Enforcement of time limited parking to be by means of discs, a discussion to be held with NCC about the issue of discs to residents, and jointly with the Chamber of Trade to consider the printing/production and distribution of discs within the town centre.**
- **Recommendation: The introduction of free parking is likely to lead to displacement from the 'pay' facilities which are currently in place. The impact of free parking on these facilities will need to be monitored.**
- **Recommendation: Dedicated coach facilities should be provided as planned, with no charges being made for visiting coaches.**
- **Recommendation: The Town Council should challenge the decision**

by NCC not to review arrangements after twelve months, for the following reasons: NCC has itself proposed a review of the Marygate parking experiment, to assess impact on traffic movement, road safety and shop footfall; NCC is itself funding the AMT benchmarking exercise in Berwick, to be concluded in April 2014, which will include data on parking space use under a charging regime and may lead to initiatives around parking to encourage higher footfall in the town centre. The value of this exercise will be limited if there is no flexibility to adjust time tariffs.

- **Recommendation:** The Town Council recommends that a working party is convened by the Town Council, to include NCC and representatives of partner organisations, to consider in detail longer term options for parking at Berwick Railway Station; new arrangements for Castlegate (overflow) car park, parking at Quayside and other options. The working party's remit should include working with current initiatives such as coach parking, the Marygate experiment and Tweed and Silk 2.

(ii) Members considered the proposals for parking in Marygate and agreed the following response:

RESOLVED: that the Town Council supports the proposal with the recommendations that waiting time should be set at 30 minutes as opposed to 20 minutes and that enforcement should be by means of discs displayed by those using the parking bays.

CO70/13

10. MAY FAIR 2015

Members considered the request by Derek Sharman to change the date of the Mayor's Walking of the May Fair in 2015 from the last Friday in the month to Friday, 22 May 2015 and to stage a 'Mayor's Parade' event on the Bank Holiday Monday. The requested change in day for the Mayor's Walking of the May Fair would still fall in the range of dates allowed under the Charter for this event.

RESOLVED: (i) To agree the change in date for the Mayor's Walking of the May Fair in 2015 to Friday, 22 May; and (ii) To agree to a Mayor's Parade on the Bank Holiday Monday.

CO71/13

11. USE OF TOWN COUNCIL LOGO

Members noted the explanation of Councillor J Robertson that there had been a misunderstanding on the purpose of this item and the use of the Town Council

Logo would be discussed at the next meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee.

CO72/13

12. PLAY REVIEW

Members considered the recommendation by the Environment and Regeneration Committee that the Town Council take responsibility for play areas from April 2014 and discussed the safety of play equipment including that at Spittal Play Area.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders. County Councillor Jim Smith explained he was working towards rectifying problems with equipment at Spittal Play Area including replacement where necessary.

RESOLVED:

The Council to agree the recommendation of the Environment and Regeneration Committee that the Town Council takes responsibility for play areas located at Flagstaff Park, Five Arches, Greenhaven, Grove Gardens South, Osborne Place, Spittal Pavilion, Springdale and Newfields.

CO73/13

13. PORTAS PILOT

The Town Council had received an invitation from Northumberland County Council to manage the Portas Pilot. The invitation had been discussed at the Strategy and Policy Working Group and a proposal put forward for the Town Council to consider. A proposal had also been put forward by Councillor T Forrester. A vote then followed to decide which proposal would be accepted.

RESOLVED: To adopt the proposal put forward by the Strategy and Policy Working Group as set out below:

- 1. To thank Berwick Town Team Ltd for their valuable work to date**
- 2. To accept Northumberland County Council's invitation to take over the management of the Berwick Portas Pilot**
- 3. To set up a Portas Working Group to manage the Berwick Portas Pilot, reporting through the Environment and Regeneration Committee to the Town Council, which would in turn report to the accountable body (Arch on behalf of NCC); the Working Group:**
 - to be appointed as soon as possible by the E&R Committee (which will retain delegated responsibility for membership of the Working Group);**

- to include representatives of local business and community interests as well as councillors and officers;
 - to report to regular meetings of the E&R Committee;
4. Funding decisions up to a value of £10,000 to be delegated to the Portas Working Group, decisions above £10,000 requiring approval by the E&R Committee.
 5. All funding allocations proposed by the Working Group to be circulated to all councillors a week before confirmation, to allow all councillors the opportunity for input before Working Group decisions are confirmed.

CO74/13 14. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Reports were received from County Councillors I Hunter, G Jones and J Smith on their divisions and within the county as a whole.

[The reports are appended to these minutes].

CO75/13 15. PARISH LIAISON WORKING GROUP

Members noted the report by Councillor I Hunter; the next meeting of the Parish Liaison Working Group would be held in the New Year.

CO76/13 16. PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 27 August 2013 and 24 September 2013.

CO77/13 17. EVENTS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Events Committee held on 2 September 2013.

CO78/13 18. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on 9 September 2013.

CO79/13 19. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: (i) To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 16 September 2013; and (ii) To commend the incorporation into Standing Orders the following:

Where matters require urgent attention outside the meeting schedule, to delegate authority to make decisions to the Clerk in consultation with two of: the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and the Chairman of one Standing

Committee. Any such decision should be reported to the next meeting of Council or relevant Committee.

In accordance with Standing Order 79 this item would be adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of Council.

CO80/13

20. STAFFING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 1 July 2013.

RESOLVED: To exclude the press and public during discussion of Item 21, which included issues of a personal and confidential nature.

CO81/13

21. ADDITIONAL BUDGET PROVISION

Note: The Clerk and Councillor G Hill also left the room during consideration of this item.

RESOLVED: To create a budget of £2,500 to meet costs related to employment issues.

RESOLVED: To re-open the meeting to the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.

CO82/13

22. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: Councillor F Simpson to represent the Town Council on the Northumberland Association of Local Councils County Committee.

CO83/13

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council, an Extraordinary Meeting, would be held on Monday 2 December 2013 at 6.30 pm in the Town Hall; the next Ordinary Meeting of Council would be held on Monday 20 January 2014 at 6 pm in the Town Hall.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Report received from County Councillor I Hunter.

The main item at the foremost of the minds of the Administration is how to make the £42 million savings this year which appears to include a senior management restructure.

The other main issue is ensuring Local Services are prepared for the winter weather.

My Ward

In prior I have continued to work on a review for the speed humps, which is going out to consultation within the next few weeks however I am disappointed that Officers will only be consulting on the speed humps in the area of Dean Drive which is scheduled to be resurfaced in December. The officers were only going to consult on the houses within this area of Dean Drive, but I have forced them to consult the whole of Prior Estate as Dean Drive is one of the main access roads in to the estate and is the main access to the First School.

The new fence at Prior First School is now in place which was required for the safety of the children as people were using the school grounds as a short cut. I funded this from my small grants funding.

Report received from County Councillor G Jones.

Two Highlights for me over the past couple of months are:

Attending Holy Trinity's Circle of Peace - on Remembrance Day.

And driving over the New Bridge after the cobbles had been removed!

Other Activities:

Marketing Berwick - working with officers on signage for Berwick, including from the A1, to support the efforts put in by the likes of John Haswell and the Tourism Forum.

Dark Skies - I've joined the AONB Dark Skies working group to look at protecting and promoting Northumberland's Dark Skies.

Planning - a number of enforcement issues have come my way. I'm asking officers to demonstrate consistency in enforcement.

Housing - I've dug around on numbers and there are an enormous number of housing permissions in place, but yet to be delivered, in Berwick - numbers of close to 700 housing units, as of July 2012. It's Core Strategy time; there's an open day tomorrow at the William Elder building.

Streetcare - I've had a few issues of litter and street cleaning raised with me; the team are very responsive. The first port of call is either mailing ask@northumberland.gov.uk or calling 0845 600 6400.

Verges in Lovaine Terrace - residents now have their flagstones reinstated, as per Percy Terrace.

Resurfacing on A6105 - complete; Highways Engineer assisted with drainage issue raised by Halidon Hill residents at the same time.

Police Presence - police visibility has increased since the last report.

Report received from County Councillor J Smith.

Encourage Berwick Town Councillors to attend NCC Core Strategy drop in session at the William Elder Building between 2.30 pm and 6.30 pm on Tuesday 26th November.

Also encourage councillors to make use of NCC Northern Area Committee with public questions and petitions.

Site visits with NCC officers to discuss water quality at Spittal Beach and footpaths, dropped kerbs and drains at Highcliffe. Samples are taken along the beach over a number of years and aggregated. The water quality is mainly affected by the River Tweed and should the river be in flood at the time of sampling this will give a poor quality reading.

Residents are very pleased with the home improvements being carried out by the contractor Mitie and funded through the Green Tax.

Traffic flows are being measured off the A1 as part of the investigation to change signage on the A1 in order to encourage more visitors to Berwick.

The bonfire at Dock Road went ahead successfully thanks to the businessmen who organised it.

Cllrs. Hunter, Beresford and I met with Four Housing Group regarding the demolition of garages at Highcliffe and grassing over the area. Four Housing Group requested that NCC adopt the area and tarmac it for extra parking. I explained that NCC have to save £42 million this year and can't afford to do this, which was confirmed by County Highways. I posed the question, "Why not repair the garages and equalise the rents for private home owners?" Answer, the decision has been made by the Board of Directors. I am very disappointed with this decision given that I spent £25,500 from my small schemes allowance to put in an extra six parking bays where 20 of the 22 garages are standing empty.

Sockets for the Christmas Lights on the Royal Tweed Bridge and repairs to footpaths in Tweedmouth are underway and hopefully the repairs and painting of the Spittal Prom railings and the shelter will start in the New Year.