

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 26 October 2015 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Pattison, Town Clerk

Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace

County Councillor Isabel Hunter

29 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

Councillor Hunter advised she was chasing up tarmac issues at Braeside and was making progress. Cllr Hill asked if a decision had been made re 2016 Council Tax bandings and Cllr Hunter advised not as yet. Ms Osborne queried the cost of a tourism holiday advert for approval by Councillors in the AONB Coastal Holiday Guide and thought it was not value for money. Mr Darling queried the lack of progress of roadworks near to the Swan Centre and thought a programme of works should be provided. Mr Ian Dodds queried the Degas painting which was gifted to Berwick by Sir William Burrell and is currently languishing in Ashington's Woodhorn Museum and has supposedly had sun damage which was not the case when this painting was located in Berwick. Cllr Blackburn raised questions on the demolished Kwik Save site and asked for clarity from NCC on the future of the site. Cllr Goodyer called for jobs and services for Berwick and not more offices and expressed concern that the Tourism Office was being moved from its current location on the High Street to upstairs in the library. This will be discussed at the next Environment meeting. Mrs Straughan advised that Pubwatch would be

prepared to fund £1k towards new CCTV cameras. Cllr Roughead had requested NCC call a public consultation into Public Conveniences which was refused and expressed concern that the toilets at Spittal were to be closed during winter leaving no toilets available between the Town Centre and Spittal. Cllr Roughead also called for a laminated sign to be put up advising residents that the display board in the Golden Square bus shelter was not working and also mentioned that adverts which are placed at the Tweedmouth Bus Shelters, who had responsibility for them and who owned the bus shelters. The Clerk advised all bus shelters belonged to BTC. Ms Osborne called for clarity and a list of the Town's assets be provided.

Councillor Bettison called for a minutes silence in memory of a former Mayor of the Town, Mr John Hills who recently died, and also former Sheriff, Mr Tom Wakenshaw and ex Berwick Museum Curator, Mr Chris Green.

C125/15 **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were accepted on behalf of: Councillors J Beresford (the Clerk did not mention Cllr Beresford at the meeting but apologies had been given prior) and also Councillor J Lang.

C126/15 **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 28 September 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record. Cllr Hill requested that County Council reports were always placed on the Council agenda and this was agreed. Cllr Jones and Smith have submitted a written report.

C127/15 **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Gibson, item 10, Cllr Mclean item 10 and 12, Cllr Blackburn item 7.

C128/15 **4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

C129/15 **5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor, Cllr Hazel Bettison has had a busy few weeks attending civic functions. BTC were visited by the Chief Executive of NCC, Mr Steve Mason and the Leader of the Council, Cllr Grant Davey and the visit went well. The end of a very successful Berwick 900 culminated in the 'Performing Rope' and was officiated by Cllr Dixon, who was thanked by Cllr Bettison. Remembrance Sunday is on November 8th and all

Councillors are to be at the Town Hall by 9.20am. St Andrews night is on November 27th, all are welcome.

C130/15

6. REPORT FROM INSPECTOR DAVID GARRICK, BERWICK POLICE

Deferred – due to a shift change preventing Inspector Garrick’s attendance.

Clarification was given re the request by Berwick Police for BTC to donate £4k for 8 Police body cameras. The Council wrote to Vera Baird, Police Crime Commissioner to ask why Northumbria Police were not providing their own officers with body cameras and to request Ms Baird visit Berwick. Vera Baird’s office advised that the Chief Constable had received a delivery of body cameras and Berwick Police will be provided with them. Ms Baird has also indicated she will attend the January Council meeting along with the Chief Constable. Although the BTC office was advised this information by telephone, a promise to put this information in writing to the Town Council has not been received to date.

C131/15

7. BERWICK TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

Deferred - due to a conflict of meeting dates.

C132/15

8. LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor Goodyer requested approval by Council of the 14 Steering group members and this was agreed by all with Cllr Gibson abstaining. Cllr Goodyer has successfully applied for £1,500 grant funding from DCLG and it is hopeful the group can claim another £6, 500 from the DCLG tranche of a projected £8k provision.

RESOLVED: To appoint all 14 members of the Steering Group.

C133/15

9. DEGAS PAINTING

Cllr Graham expressed her own and resident concern in regard to the Degas painting which was gifted to Berwick-upon-Tweed by Sir William Burrell and his wife and is/was an asset of the Town but is now permanently located in Ashington. Cllr Graham has not been able to progress her recent enquiries regarding the matter due to obfuscation by various officers. The painting has been advised as ‘fragile’. No trace also can be found of the medieval statues of St Barbara which are supposed to be in a cupboard somewhere in the museum? The Clerk will contact Anne Moore, Curator, NCC, who works between Berwick and Woodhorn and try to gain a written response on when this painting will be returned to Berwick and to gain clarification on insurance issues.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will write to Ms Anne Moore for information regarding the Degas painting and relevant insurances.

C134/15

10. APPOINTMENT OF SEASONAL LOCALITY OFFICERS

Cllr Hill advised her own and possibly minority disapproval of this appointment, on the basis that she did not believe the associated costs constituted value for money and was plugging a gap for NCC. Cllr Hill also advised that she was disappointed that NCC would not entertain the possibility of at least sharing the costs associated with paying in to the NCC pension scheme. Cllr Hill felt Tweedmouth and Spittal were being neglected and not getting their fair share of spend. She also expressed concern, and her personal opposition to any increase in the precept that this may entail. Cllr Bettison said the locality officers were an enhancement for Berwick so that extra care would be taken to clean the streets of the Town properly. Cllr Mclean expressed his full approval re employing the locality officers in partnership with NCC and working on a seasonal basis from March to September, 7 days per week and that it was a big and an important decision for the Town and the officers would be active in Tweedmouth and Spittal as well as the Town Centre. Cllr Hodgson advised NCC had spent money on a vehicle suitable for locality officers cleaning the streets. Cllr Smith said he fully supported Cllrs Mclean and Hodgson's remarks, Cllr Goodyer also fully supported and said the costs for employment of the officers was very reasonable. Cllr Roughead called for the decision to be deferred until after the budget had been discussed, Cllr Mclean said this issue had been on the table for 1.5 years and it needed deciding. Councillor Seymour seconded Cllr Roughead's motion to defer and Cllr Gibson then proposed a motion re 'Option A' the employment of 2 seasonal locality officers and this was seconded by Cllr Hodgson. Cllr Hill advised an informal meeting regarding the BTC budget was to be held on Friday.

A Motion to defer any decision until after budget setting was 4 Councillors for the motion and 10 against - **motion defeated.**

Motion to employ 2 part-time, seasonal, Locality Officers from March to September 2016, was then voted on and agreed by the majority with Cllrs Hill, Seymour, and Roughead against.

RESOLVED: To appoint 2 seasonal Locality Officers from March to September 2016.

C135/15

11. AONB FREE HOLIDAY GUIDE

The Clerk requested Councillor approval on whether BTC should place 1 or 2/3 pages in the AONB Coastal Holiday Guide. Cllr Gibson thought the 3 pages should be individual and separate and headed Tweedmouth, Spittal and Berwick. The Clerk advised that the £10k Berwick tourism budget allocated by Councillors in 2014 for current year 2015 was used up. Councillor Hodgson asked what the final cut-off date for submission of the content and also payment required regarding budget decisions and was advised Louise Dixon had not as yet received an end date from AONB. Councillors then decided to defer any decision.

RESOLVED: To defer a decision until after Budget setting

C136/15

12. APPROVAL OF PLANNED EXPENDITURE

None

C137/15

13. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 7 September 2015. Proposed by Cllr Hill and seconded by Cllr Smith.

C138/15

14. PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11 August 2015. Proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Bettison

C139/15

15. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

No invitations had been received.

C140/15

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 23 November 2015 at 6 pm.

RESOLVED: To exclude the press and public during discussion of the following items, which include issues of a personal and confidential nature.

C141/15

17. STAFFING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 24 August 2015. Proposed by Cllr Hill and seconded by Cllr Smith and agreed unanimously by Councillors.

18. HONORARY FREEMAN

Cllr Bettison proposed Sir Alan Beith as an Honorary Freeman.

Cllr Roughead declared an interest and left the room.

Cllr Hill said that the honour was intended, in her view, for unsung volunteers and was not appropriate for a politician and otherwise could not support Alan Beith's nomination. She also felt that if we appointed too many honorary freemen then the award becomes less meaningful. Cllr Mclean said Sir Alan had been long serving to the Town and Cllr Blackburn advised Sir Alan had been paid and had not been a volunteer.

Councillors voted on Sir Alan's nomination and this motion was defeated.

RESOLVED: Sir Alan will not be put forward as an Honorary Freeman.

Cllr Bettison proposed Mr Derek Sharman as someone who had given his time and energy to the town over many years and without payment and had served Berwick well. Cllr Blackburn advised it would be an honour to second this appointment. All Councillors unanimously approved Mr Derek Sharman be appointed an Honorary Freeman.

RESOLVED: To appoint Mr Derek Sharman as an Honorary Freeman.

Cllr Bettison proposed Mr Tom Wakenshaw to be posthumously appointed as an Honorary Freeman. Cllr Dixon said it would be an honour to second this proposal. Mr Wakenshaw had given his time and his energy to the RNLI over many years. All Councillors unanimously approved that Mr Tom Wakenshaw be appointed posthumously as an Honorary Freeman.

RESOLVED: To appoint Mr Tom Wakenshaw posthumously as an Honorary Freeman.