

## **BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 27 June 2016 at 6.00 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed**

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

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Wendy Pattison, Town Clerk  
Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace  
Brian Douglas, Sheriff  
24 members of the public  
Inspector Liz Hall, Northumbria Police  
County Councillor Isabel Hunter

Councillor Ivor Dixon requested a minutes' silence for Jo Cox, MP for Batley and Spen Constituency

#### **OPEN SESSION**

Mr Spencer Barclay mentioned concerns regarding his personal welfare after a previous Council meeting. Mr Darling wanted reassurances regarding the emergency Berwick ambulance services to Cramlington and the current hold-ups at the road works in Morpeth. Cllrs Bettison and Forbes said there were alternative routes which could be taken. Mr Jim Waugh mentioned several inconsistencies regarding the agenda finance items and was asked to write in to the Council.

#### **Introduction of new Northumbria police inspector for Berwick, Inspector Liz Hall**

Inspector Hall apologised for arriving slightly late. Inspector Hall spoke to Councillors and public and

advised them she would be accessible to everyone and would be giving her contact details to the Clerk. Vulnerability was a major Police concern and also anti-social behaviour. The new CCTV system currently being installed by the Town Council in Berwick will be of tremendous assistance to the Police and Northumbria Police were most grateful to the Town Council. Cllr Dixon thanked Inspector Hall for coming to the meeting.

**C022/16 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been accepted on behalf of: Councillors Lang and Seymour, and County Councillor Jim Smith.

**C023/16 2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 9 May 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

**C024/16 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None.

**C025/16 4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

**C026/16 5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Cllr Dixon read out a formal resolution in support of Mr Alan Irvine, Berwick Harbour Commissioner in raising financial support for the development of the Harbour and Berwick Town Council were willing to help in any way possible, this resolution was seconded by Cllr Blackburn and was unanimous.**

Cllr Dixon mentioned the teenage market which takes place on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, and also civic engagements which included amongst many, Party on the Parade, the Main Guard, Berwick Civic Society, Armed Forces day and commemoration of Flodden which is now open at the Barracks. Cllr Dixon also mentioned Berwick Investors Conference and through this event taking place in March, workshops were now in place to encourage and assist Berwick businesses to engage and to export. Cllr Dixon's charity this year will be to benefit Young People in the town and this includes all youth groups, nurseries and organisations.

**C027/16 6. CO-OPTION OF MEMBER**

There were 4 candidates for Co-option, Mr Brian Parkin, Miss Hilary Black, Mr John Thompson and Mr Tim Roake. Cllr Forbes declared an interest in that she already knew Mr Tim Roake. Cllr Roughead sought assurances that all applications were going to be

looked at fairly during the co-option process because some Councillors had appeared to declare their support by email for one of the potential candidates, in which a non-council addresses was copied in. Cllr Hill also supported this statement. Debate then ensued with Cllr Dixon finally asking the candidates to make a presentation to full Council. Cllr Bettison asked for a secret ballot. Confusion again ensued, until eventually all members of the public were asked to leave the room. The 3 candidates (Mr John Thompson was unable to attend and had requested he be considered in absentia) all spoke individually to Councillors in private giving their reasons why they wanted to become a Councillor and then they all left the room whilst Councillors decided and voted. It was agreed by a majority with Cllr Forbes abstaining from the vote to elect Mr Brian Parkin to the Town Council and he duly signed the acceptance of office. Cllr Dixon thanked all the candidates and advised they could apply again next year for the Town Council at the May 2017 Council elections.

**C028/16**

## **7. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Councillor Hill asked Cllr Hunter if she would comment re prioritisation regarding current axing and cuts in services and in particular the fire service re attempts to save money. Cllr Hunter said it was impossible to vote against any of the cuts as there were more Labour and Independent voters than Lib Dems and the Conservatives. The Berwick Fire Service was not being cut and the cuts were happening in other parts of Northumberland. Cllr Mclean declared his thanks re everyone working hard for the town and Cllr Dixon agreed. Cllr Goodyer also mentioned that a Skills Centre was moving into the ground floor of the library building.

**C029/16**

## **8. WARD COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Cllr McLean declared his support for reports from all Councillors to be received on a regular basis. It was agreed they would be submitted on a quarterly basis and will be next submitted in September 2016.

**RESOLVED: Quarterly Ward Reports will be provided and the next ward reports will be submitted in September by all Councillors.**

**C030/16**

## **9. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2016**

1. Cllr Hill expressed concern and said the internal audit report was premature and incomplete. She said the Council and the public were misled re the precept decision and also mentioned the absence of the schedule III monies in the

calculation and that she would also be abstaining from any agreement regarding the internal audit. Cllr Graham disagreed with this statement as did Cllr Hodgson who said the schedule III monies were unknown when the budget and precept was decided and could only be factored into the calculation as a percentage.

2. Cllr Dixon read out the Annual Governance Statements which were agreed by the majority with Cllr Hill abstaining and voting No on items no's 4, 5 7 and 8.

**RESOLVED: Approval of the 2015/16 Annual Audit.**

**C031/16**

## **10. STANDING ORDERS**

Approval to add an item re Internal control no 18 to the standing orders was agreed. Councillor Goodyer queried the current tender amount in the standing orders which states anything above £3,000 to go out to tender instead of £10k and over to go out to tender. The Clerk advised the standing orders were out of date and they required updating and improving and it was agreed to form a working group consisting of Cllr Hill, Cllr Graham, Cllr Hodgson, Cllr Smith and Cllr Dixon to look through them and make the appropriate recommendations updates/changes.

**RESOLVED: To include Internal control including procurement at item 18 into the Council standing orders and to form a working group to go through the current standing orders and to update them.**

**C032/16**

## **11. OSBOURNE ROAD PLAY PARK AND PRIOR PARK PLAY PARK**

Cllr Gibson advised 2 play park companies had been to look at Osbourne Road Play Park with a third coming out on Tuesday. Cllrs Hill and Graham agreed that this was also being done at Grove Gardens South Play Park and not at Prior Park play park as written above and also on the agenda.

**C033/16**

## **12. SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE**

Cllr Goodyer informed Councillors that the next SBC would be on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> 2016. Cllr Goodyer also advised that Northumberland College would be speaking at the Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July and that they wanted to have a firm presence in Berwick. Cllr Goodyer also mentioned the Skills Centre were in the process of moving into the library building. Councillors were fully supportive of the conference and Cllr Bettison said that Berwick needed to lead the way and show the world how it should be done.

**RESOLVED: Approval given for a SBC conference to take place on September 16<sup>th</sup> 2016.**

**C034/16**

**13. RAGES (RAIL ACTION GROUP EAST SCOTLAND)**

Cllr Hill spoke of difficulties encountered with the last train to Berwick from Edinburgh leaving at 9pm through the week and 7pm on Saturday and informed of the aims of the Group RAGES, which is to improve the rail service between Edinburgh, Dunbar and Berwick. The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has stated that SNP are committed to opening Reston and East Linton stations on the East Coast. Cllr Hill proposed that the Council write to the First Minister offering support to the RAGES campaign and that BTC will adopt a policy to support the campaign for later train services which will assist tourism and promotion of Berwick as a commuter town. This was supported unanimously by all Councillors with Cllr Hodgson advising the late train was originally stopped due to drunken behaviour and it was hoped that if this was agreed the train staff would be fully supported. Cllr Roughead thought the Clerk should also write to the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy & Connectivity and also seek support from NCC and a cross border meeting should be arranged in regard to RAGE and Virgin Rail support.

**RESOLVED: The Clerk will write (as above) advising of Berwick Town Council's full support.**

**C035/16**

**14. HIGHCLIFFE SKATE PARK**

Cllr Gibson advised the park was run down and dangerous and was also underused. Cllr Hodgson said there was financial support for a park and it was hoped to acquire extra land to make the park into how young people wanted it to be. It was agreed Cllr Forbes would keep the Council informed of the park's progress and that the young people could approach the Council if they needed assistance.

**RESOLVED: Cllr Forbes will keep the Council informed of the Skate Park's progress.**

**C036/16**

**15. QUAYSIDE PATH AND MARKET PROPOSAL**

Discussion on the close of the disabled path works which are now completed and just needing the decorative surface to be applied leaves a surplus of funds of a £6k underspend which means NCC would still be able to carry out all market activities, or, alternatively, reduce the scale of the market proposal and transfer £2k to the path budget and undertake a pathway link into Dewars Lane (programme spend will be fully utilised) or, if both options were desirable would BTC pay the £2k difference. Cllr Gibson thought the extension of the path would be helpful to the elderly and to the Youth Hostel. After discussion the Council agreed to contribute £2k and agreed to both options.

**RESOLVED: BTC will contribute £2k and have the pathway link extended to Dewars Lane and will also keep the Berwick Market proposal intact.**

**C037/16**

**16. BARRACKS HERITAGE HUB**

Cllr Goodyer advised of the Heritage Hub feasibility study by Jura Consultants, which identified the development costs of the Berwick Reawakening Project and could be in the order of up to 15 million pounds. An expression of Interest has been submitted via NCC and is one of 8 submitted to NELEP Regional Growth Fund. Cllr Goodyer asked BTC if they would be willing support a first stage application and if successful they would be responsible for managing the grant and would have to employ a Special Projects Manager as a necessity and this would also incur a higher annual audit cost. Councillors were fully supportive and agreed to the proposal/bid unanimously.

**RESOLVED: To fully support the Berwick Reawakening project and BTC to be responsible for the monies should the bid be successful.**

**C038/16**

**17. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Cllr Dixon and seconded by Cllr Roughead.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee meeting held on 29 February 2016.**

**C039/16**

**18. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Cllr Hodgson and seconded by Cllr Hill.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 4 April 2016.**

**C040/16**

**19. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Forbes.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 26 April 2016.**

**C041/16**

**20. STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Cllr Hodgson and seconded by Cllr Smith.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 29 March 2016.**

**C042/16**

**21. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

There is a vacancy on the Sure Start Children's Board due to Cllr Beresford resignation. Both Cllr Forbes and Cllr Hodgson expressed interest and Cllr Dixon said he would be happy to step down as he had never actually been a member of the board due to

communication issues.

**RESOLVED: Cllrs Hodgson and Cllr Forbes to represent BTC on Sure Start Children's Board after clarification/confirmation has been received from Sure Start.**

**C043/16**

**22. CALENDAR OF DATES FOR 2016-17**

Agreed by all.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the revised calendar of meetings for 2016-17.**

**C044/16**

**23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 11 July 2016 at 6 pm.