

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 29 June 2015 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	H Bettison (Town Mayor)	G Hill
	J Beresford	J Lang
	D Blackburn	G McLean
	I Dixon	G Roughead
	A Forbes	C Seymour
	T Forrester	G Smith
	A Gibson	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Pattison, as Clerk

Ian Hay, Sheriff

Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace

16 members of the public

Cllr Bettison welcomed Councillors and the public to the meeting and requested a one minute silence to remember Alderman Andrew Easton and his contribution to the Borough of Berwick, standing twice as the Mayor and latterly as a supporting member of the Mayor's club and to also remember the very many people killed recently in Tunisia.

C025/15 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies

C026/15 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 11 May 2015 were agreed by all Councillors and signed as a correct record.

C027/15 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllr Anne Forbes declared an interest in item 11 as a member of the Bowling Club.

Cllr Hazel Bettison declared an interest in Item 10, Spittal Improvement Trust.

C028/15

4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

There were no requests for dispensation.

C029/15

5. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr B Darling has contacted the Monitoring Officer at NCC as he has no confidence in a current standing County Councillor. Mr Darling also advised that interested parties must get up to speed with all historical detail in regard to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Spencer Barclay felt clarification was needed in regard to the split between BTC and NCC and who was responsible for what and also mentioned on behalf of Ms Dudgeon the progress regarding the Asda Bus Shelter. The Clerk advised there was money in the budget and a shelter will be purchased as soon as Mr Howie, NCC Highways Department advised on the correct size in order not to block the antique centre or the highway sign on the pavement. Mrs Graham expressed concern re Four Housing not responding to enquiries and the current difficulties of a local family. Cllr Lang has asked for further details regarding this matter and the Clerk will write to Four Housing. Cllr Forrester also advised local MP, Anne Marie Trevelyan was also looking into the matter. A resident expressed concern at the delay by BTC in ensuring that Flagstaff Play Park was improved and made ready for use. Cllr McLean advised that NCC needed to address the drainage problems before any play equipment could be placed onto the park surface. Councillors were working closely with NCC to get the play park transfers/freehold sorted out and have requested the Clerk write again to Mr M Jeffrey to ask for confirmation in writing that this work will be addressed. Mr M Stewart thought that public questions would be better at the end of the meeting rather than the beginning.

C030/15

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Bettison formally welcomed the Interim Clerk Wendy Pattison who came into post on June 1st. Cllr Bettison also welcomed 2 new Councillors, Cllr David Blackburn and Cllr Anne Forbes to Berwick Town Council and also thanked The Assistant to the Clerk, Steve Cozens and the Finance Officer, Robert Leetham for their continuing support and assistance during a difficult time. The Chair, Town Clerk and Finance Officer meet every Friday and go through all Council income and expenditure and this information is passed to all Councillors. An extra column

has been added to the finance data which explains fully all Council income and expenditure and ensures complete transparency. The Town Clerk and Cllr Hill, Chair of Finance are currently looking at the accounts. Questions received by BTC from residents are copied into email correspondence so that residents are fully aware of actions taken. A brain storming exercise took place recently and Councillors brought to the table all matters relating to their Wards and what needed to be dealt with. BTC is working to promote Berwick, not only a Market Town but also as place with lovely beaches and walks. A public meeting was held on June 10th and was well attended. BTC are helping in the fight to keep Seton Hall open and to keep the Archives safely in Berwick. The fraud allegation re Portas has been passed to NCC as the accountable body and Northumbria Police have advised that enquiries are in progress and an examination of accounts is being made and if anything comes from this, it will determine where the enquiry will go. The Civic Party attended a civic reception with the Guild of Freeman who had guests from the Scottish Court of Deans. They attended the opening of Main Guard's new exhibition as part of the 900 Guild of Freeman, walked the May Fair, with a lot more stalls than usual and also visited Hillside Lodge and Berwick Nursing Home. Cllr Bettison also represented the town as Mayor for Spittal Gala and attended an Evensong service. Attended the Stuart Renton Memorial Walk which is raising money to fight cancer. Judged a Teddy competition at Prior Park First School and represented the Town on HMS Northumberland which is currently docked at North Shields and finally attended and took the salute on Armed Forces Day and thoroughly enjoyed the night displays. Cllr Bettison gave a big thank you to all Councillors and the 900 Events team for another fantastic week of celebration in Berwick.

C031/15

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Discussion ensued on whether questions pertaining only to individual committees should be taken at meetings. Cllr Hill agreed that questions should relate to the particular Committee but said that this message was carried in the current wording used in agendas "drawing relevant matters to the attention" which allowed for the use of the Chairman's discretion in case other important or urgent matters had arisen.

Further discussion on whether to have public questions at the very beginning of

meetings was also discussed and this was proposed by Cllr Hill and seconded by Cllr Forrester and was agreed by all.

RESOLVED: To continue with the wording used on agendas for public questions and to put Public Questions at the beginning as an informal session ahead of the formal Council meeting.

C032/15

8. NORTHUMBRIAN CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

A letter has been received from Ms Moira McFarlane from CAB to request further contribution/assistance from BTC towards the upkeep of CAB in Berwick. Cllr Hill agreed that CAB gave a marvellous service to the people of the Town and this was echoed strongly by Cllr Mclean and Cllr Lang. A suggestion by Cllr Hill to note the letter and to invite Ms McFarlane to attend the next Finance and Resources Committee and speak to Councillors about the work of CAB was agreed by all Councillors.

RESOLVED: To invite Ms McFarlane to attend the next Finance and Resources Meeting.

C033/15

9. GOLF CLUB ROAD BERWICK UPON TWEED

Councillors were in agreement that traffic problems at this location were concerning. Cllr Mclean advised Councillors that NCC were looking closely at the problems. Cllr Dixon and Cllr Blackburn both expressed their concern and after further discussion re whether to keep yellow lines, it was eventually decided that all Councillors would email the Clerk personally with their opinion by Wednesday.

RESOLVED: To email the Clerk with all individual Councillor opinion.

C034/15

10. APPROVAL OF SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST GRANT

Cllr Bettison left the room

Cllr Dixon took the Chair for this item and advised Councillors that approval to grant S.I.T. with £4k had been approved at Finance Committee on April 27th 2015 Minute No F099/14. Cllr Seymour queried the amount given last year and this was understood to have been a request for £4k but only £2k was awarded. It was then agreed unanimously by all Councillors to grant S.I.T. £4k.

RESOLVED: To grant Spittal Improvement Trust £4k.

Cllr Bettison returned to the meeting

C035/15

11. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015

Item deferred until EGM meeting on July 14th 2015 with Councillor agreement

RESOLVED: To defer until EGM on July 14th 2015.

C036/15

12. PORTAS MANAGEMENT GROUP

- i. Cllr Bettison asked for 2 volunteers to join Cllr Mclean as BTC representatives on the Portas Management Group. Cllr Forbes and Cllr Dixon agreed to join the group.
- ii. It was also agreed that all Portas minutes will be circulated to BTC Councillors and an invitation will also be made to the Chairman of the Portas Management Group, Ms Gayle Skelly to attend the next Environment and Regeneration meeting.

RESOLVED: Cllr Dixon and Cllr Forbes will be BTC representatives on the Portas Management Group along with Cllr McLean and an invitation will be made to Ms Gayle Skelly, Chairman of the Portas Management Group to attend the next Environment and Resources meeting.

C037/15

13. PLAY AREAS

Mr Mike Jeffrey, NCC has advised BTC that there is no problem in transferring the Play Parks to BTC. Cllr Hill said that, as previously agreed, BTC should progress to the transfer of the freehold which need not take long to complete or be too costly and should not sign an agency agreement in the interim. Cllr Gibson thought the transfer could be done once play park repairs had been honoured by NCC and consideration should be given to extra charges re grass cutting and the freehold transfer could be done at a later date. Cllr McLean agreed that all repairs and drainage issues at Flagstaff Park should all be completed before entering into any agreement. Cllr Blackburn thought the middle ground could be achieved by leasing and then transferring. Cllr Lang suggested written clarification from Mr Jeffrey should be obtained and once this was received the Clerk will engage a Solicitor to negotiate the freehold transfer.

RESOLVED: To seek written clarification from NCC that all repairs and drainage issues are resolved and to engage a solicitor on BTC's behalf to obtain a freehold transfer of all Play Parks to BTC.

C038/15

14. NORTHUMBERLAND HOLIDAY AND SHORT BREAKS GUIDE

Approval from Councillors was sought to spend £4,170 on a two page entry in the 2016 Holiday Guide and an entry in the Days Out leaflet. After discussion it was

agreed to authorise this entry and further consideration in regard to the allocated £14k budget set aside for tourism will be looked at again.

RESOLVED: Agreed to spend £4,170.00 on placing a two page entry re Berwick in the 2016 Northumberland Holiday Guide and the Days Out leaflet and to look again at the current allocated tourism budget of £14k.

C039/15

15. AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS AND ORDERS

RESOLVED: To approve the payments and orders appended to these minutes.

Approved by Councillors

RESOLVED: All Payments and Orders authorised

C040/15

16. PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Seymour and seconded by Cllr Smith.

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 April 2015.

C041/15

17. EVENTS COMMITTEE

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Beresford and seconded by Cllr Dixon.

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on 2 June 2014.

C042/15

18. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Dixon and seconded by Cllr Roughead.

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee meeting held on 9 March 2015.

C043/15

19. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The minutes of 27th April were proposed by Cllr Hill and seconded by Cllr Roughead.

The minutes of May 20th were proposed by Cllr Hill with query proviso on item 8 and were seconded by Cllr Roughead.

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meetings held on 27 April 2015 and 20 May 2015 with proviso.

C044/15

20. REPRESENTATION ON STANDING COMMITTEE AND OUTSIDE BODIES

It was agreed by Cllr A Forbes to join all standing committees

It was agreed by Cllr Blackburn to join all standing committees

It was agreed by Cllr Mclean to join Environmental and Regeneration Committee

and Finance and Resources Committee

RESOLVED: Cllrs Blackburn and Forbes to join all Standing Committees and Cllr Mclean to join Environment and Regeneration and Finance and Resources Committee

Outside Bodies

Three Councillors agreed to join Freeman Trustees with only 2 vacancies available. Cllrs Mclean, Hill and Lang. After a lively discussion and a partial vote, Cllr Roughead suggested holding a ballot. The result was extremely close with Cllrs Hill and Lang elected as representatives. Discussion also took place on whether two ex BTC Town Councillors should remain as Trustees, however advice was given that they were able to stay on until November 2015.

Free Trade – Cllr Seymour

Berwick Youth Project – Cllr Smith

Cittaslow Working Group – Deferred

Conservation Area Advisory Group – Cllr Blackburn

HELM – Deferred

Gateway Group – Deferred

Sure Start – Cllrs Dixon and Beresford, Cllr Dixon advised he would stand down if only one Councillor was required.

Parks Steering Committee – Cllr Mclean

RESOLVED: Elected to Outside Bodies - It was agreed to contact the Freeman trustees and seek clarification and state the Council's preference that the replacement trustees could be effected immediately. Freeman Trustees, Cllrs Hill and Lang; Free Trade, Cllr Seymour, Berwick Youth Project, Cllr Smith; Conservation Area Advisory Group, Cllr Blackburn; Sure Start, Cllrs Dixon and Beresford (Cllr Dixon will stand down if only 1 Councillor required); Parks Steering Committee, Cllr McLean.

C045/15

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meetings of the Council will be an EGM held on July 14th and a Council Meeting held on Monday 27 July 2015 at 6 pm.

Apologies were given in advance for the meeting of 14th July by Cllr Dixon and on 27th July for Cllr Beresford

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

C046/15

22. STAFFING COMMITTEE

This minute is private and confidential.

C047/15

23. HALBERDIER

This minute is private and confidential.

C048/15

24. SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

This minute is private and confidential.

Council Meeting

Appendix D
Item 15
Monday 29th June 2015

12 June 2015 (15-16)

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED

Voucher	Code	Date	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
77	Community Projects	25/06/2015	101107	Community Grant	St John's Ambulance	504.00	0.00	504.00
78	Subscriptions	25/06/2015	101108	Subscription	Northumberland Association of Local Councils	1,327.77	0.00	1,327.77
80	SSP Construction	25/06/2015	101109	Spittal Splash Park	Sunsafe Play Systems	741.21	148.24	889.45
81	SSP Construction	25/06/2015	101110	Spittal Splash Park	Northern Environment Workshop	409.60	81.92	491.52
82	Transport	25/06/2015	101111	Bus hire	Shepherds Walks	775.00	0.00	775.00
83	Management	25/06/2015	101111	Bus hire	Shepherds Walks	50.00	10.00	60.00
84-92	Salaries:	25/06/2015	101112	Salaries:	Northumberland County Council	4,850.79	0.40	4,850.79

See page 3 for accompanying explanatory notes

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS TO BE Approved

Voucher	Code	Date	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
79	Website	25/06/2015	debit card	Domain name fee	NameHOG	160.00	32.00	192.00

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
DIRECT PAYMENTS TO BE NOTED

Voucher	Code	Date	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
74	Telecoms	25/06/2015	direct debit	phone	BT	94.91	18.98	113.89
75	Salaries: Pension	25/06/2015	direct debit	Pension	NEST	214.39	0.00	214.39
76	Electricity	25/06/2015	direct debit	Electricity	Southern Electric	42.89	2.14	45.03

Explanatory Notes to accompany payment list.

Voucher Notes

- 77 Grant awarded towards cost of new chair at day care centre [minute ref]. Grant awarded was £500 but actual cost is £504.
- 78 Annual subscription to NALC [membership renewal approved
- 79 Renewal cost for continued use of .gov.uk domain name; charge is for two years
- 80 Agreed final payment from project retention to Spittal Splash Park contractor
- 81 Project management fee for final phase of Spittal Splash Park project
- 82-83 Final contribution to 2015 Walking Festival, being mainly cost of transport hire
- 84-92 Salary details to be provided by separate cover