

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 27 March 2023 at 6.00 pm in The Meeting Room, Town Council Office, Unit 1, 82 – 88 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	M Greener (Chair)	R Mackenzie
	J Bowden	W Robertson
	G Brown	L Stephenson
	R Bruce	T Stewart
	R Driver	J Turton
	H Lindsay	A Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Gareth Davies, Town Clerk

Stephen Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk

Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace

Glen Sanderson

Cty Cllr C Seymour

2 members of the public

C144/22

1. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL (NCC)

Glen Sanderson updated the meeting that he is talking to parish and town councils throughout the County and encouraged Councillors to communicate with himself and County Councillors. After which he provided updates on the Leisure Centre, a schools consultation, the Culture Zone and the Maltings.

Members then asked a number of questions including on toilets in Castlegate, Woolmarket, those in the Maltings and lack of provision in the library, also the market and further education to which Glen Sanderson would provide a response in due course.

Glen Sanderson raised the location of the Library / Tourist Information Centre to which a response was provided by the Town Clerk.

Further issues raised included the Conservation Management Plan, Berwick Forum, devolution, Berwick as a pesticide free town and a '20's plenty' scheme, the last of which should be raised with local County Councillors.

C145/22

2. OPEN SESSION

There were no contributions by members of the public present.

C146/22

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A Forbes, P Jackson, J Robertson and G Smith.

C147/22

4. MINUTES

On the motion of Cllr T Stewart, seconded by Cllr R Mackenzie, the minutes of the meeting of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council held on 23 January 2023, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C148/22

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

- i. There were no disclosures of interest.
- ii. There were no requests for dispensation.

C149/22

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor provided hard copies outlining details of events they had attended and been involved in.

C150/22

7. STRATEGIC PLAN

A report was distributed amongst Members and the Town Clerk provided an update. The timescale of providing a consultation document at the Town Meeting in May is still the expectation and climate change is to be added to the document.

After which, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to note the update.

C151/22

8. CIVIC CALENDAR 2023-2024

- i. The Town Clerk introduced the item and mentioned that the meeting schedule has continued to make use of Monday's and Tuesday's, however, Officers were happy to receive feedback. On the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr J Turton, Council **RESOLVED** to agree the Municipal Calendar subject to the addition of a Local Services Committee meeting in December.
- ii. On the motion of Cllr T Stewart, seconded by Cllr J Bowden, Council unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- a. To note the report, and
- b. That the Mayor Making event be removed from the Civic Calendar.

C152/22 **9. PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, BRIDGE STREET**

Council unanimously **RESOLVED** that this item be discussed during the confidential session.

C153/22 **10. THIS ENDLESS SEA**

Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to note the update provided by the artist and distributed as a background paper.

C154/22 **11. DIRECT DEBIT**

On the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr A Williams, Council **RESOLVED** to authorise that the internet and telephone provider for the Town Council office be paid by Direct Debit.

C155/22 **12. SUBSCRIPTION TO HR SERVICES**

On the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr G Brown, Council **RESOLVED** to renew the subscription to HR Services.

C156/22 **13. LOCAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

- i. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr J Turton, seconded by Cllr G Brown to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Local Services Committee held on 05 December 2022 (noted at the meeting of 19 December 2022).
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr G Brown, seconded by Cllr J Bowden to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Local Services Committee held on 06 February 2023.
- iii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr L Stephenson to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Local Services Committee held on 06 March 2023.

Standing Orders were suspended sufficiently to allow Cty Cllr C Seymour to update the meeting that she would arrange access to Newfields Pavilion.

C157/22 **14. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- i. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr R Driver to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 09 January 2023 (noted at the meeting of 23 January 2023).

- ii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr M Greener to adopt the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Planning Committee held on 23 January 2023.
- iii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr R Driver, seconded by Cllr M Greener to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 13 February 2023.
- iv. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr R Driver to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 13 March 2023
- v. On the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr G Brown, Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following recommendation detailed in minute **P080/22**:
P080/22: “On the motion of Cllr R Bruce, seconded by Cllr M Greener, the Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that the Berwick Conservation Area Management Plan be adopted.”

C158/22

15. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- i. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr A Williams to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the People and Communities Committee held on 10 January 2023 (noted at the meeting of 23 January 2023).
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr A Williams to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the People and Communities Committee held on 07 March 2023.

C159/22

16. BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

- i. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr T Stewart to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 17 January 2023 (noted at the meeting of 23 January 2023).
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr R Mackenzie to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 14 February 2023.
- iii. On the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr R Mackenzie, Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following recommendation detailed in minute **BA083/22**:

BA083/22: “After which, on the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr A Williams, the Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council:

1. That the membership of NALC be renewed and the invoice subsequently paid”
 - a) On the motion of Cllr M Greener, seconded by Cllr H Lindsay, Council **RESOLVED** that Cllr T Stewart represents the Town Council at Town and Parish Liaison Group meetings with Northumberland County Council,
 - b) On the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr J Turton, Council **RESOLVED** that Cllr M Greener represents the Town Council at County Committee meetings, and
 - c) On the motion Cllr R Mackenzie, seconded by Cllr G Brown, Council **RESOLVED** that the Chair of Budget and Administration is the contact with NALC should any issues arise between Council and the Town Clerk.
- iv. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr T Stewart, seconded by Cllr R Mackenzie to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 14 March 2023.

C160/22

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday, 02 May 2023 at 6 pm.

Council RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was appropriate to exclude the media and public from the discussion of the following items of business on the basis that public discussion might prejudice the Council's position and staffing or personal issues might be discussed.

C161/22

18. INTERNAL AUDITOR

On the motion of Cllr H Lindsay, seconded by Cllr R Mackenzie, Council **RESOLVED** to:

1. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk to draft a tender document that reflects the requirements in paragraph 4 of the report, and to

2. Advertise that tender document in order to enable a decision to be made at annual council in May 2023 as to the appointment of an internal auditor.

C162/22

19. STAFFING ISSUES

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate to the Town Clerk authority to, after consultation with the members of the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee, seek legal advice as to the way forward with issues surrounding pensions, and to seek HR advice as the way forward with other staffing issues, and to incur expenditure from reserves as necessary.

C163/22

9. PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, BRIDGE STREET

1. The Town Clerk explained the history of the Town Council's involvement in this matter, including its existing policy of seeking to record and protect existing rights of way in the town, which justified the Town Council assisting anyone who wished to assert or demonstrate a right of way.

The Town Clerk then explained that there had been considerable correspondence from a number of sources, both asserting and rebutting the existence of a right of way, and that the Town Council was not the final decision making body on this matter.

On the issue of whether the Town Council should support the making of an application to Northumberland County Council the Town Clerk advised council that in terms of the public interest as to whether Town Council should support such an application there was:

- i. Little risk of detriment to applicants since they have reasonable direct access to NCC's processes,
- ii. That there was no need for the Town Council to either test the evidence or incur costs on legal advice because they are not the final decision making body, and
- iii. That the utility of the right claimed and the necessity for it to be asserted had not been demonstrated to such an extent that the Town Council needed to be involved.

2. The Town Clerk's advice therefore was that the Town Council should take no further action save that it should publish its decision, and should forward any evidence it had received either asserting or rebutting the claimed right of way to the relevant officers at County Hall.