

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Report to Council

ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBER ACTIVITIES AND ATTENDANCE	
COMPILED BY: Town Council Staff	
PRODUCED FOR COUNCIL 9 May 2016	DATE OF REPORT: 3 May 2016
SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES The purpose of the report is to provide to the annual meeting of the Council a report of the activities of members who are representing the Council on outside bodies. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Members were appointed at the last annual meeting to represent the Town Council on outside bodies.2. Reports are attached, together with a summary of member attendance at Council meetings.	
RECOMMENDATIONS: The Council to note the report.	
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION Town Council Staff T: 01289 302391 E: admin@berwick-tc.gov.uk	

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

1. **Berwick 900** **(Councillors H Bettison and G McLean)**

Councillor G McLean

The size and scope of the 900 project initially looked almost impossible. I soon realised that the organisation, communication and willingness to help each other was second to none. A community event the likes of which has not been seen before! (not by me anyway) I could sing its praises forever but will try my best to keep it short.

I worked alongside other volunteers, mostly full weekends attending events over 7 months until last weeks close. I can honestly say I witnessed the very best of Berwick's community spirit and generosity. Most of the public never see the mental strain or the backbreaking physical hard graft that goes into staging these events and pageants. It's not an easy task. I can testify to that.

As an example of the effort the town and its people put into this celebration of our history and cultural heritage, here are a few official facts and figures about the Festival programme:

- The exhibitions and art and crafts projects involved more than 200 researchers, artists and craftspeople and attracted some 10,200 recorded visitors.
- At least 530 participants, five bands, several lorry-borne floats, six horses and a 1940s tractor joined the various parades and processions.
- The major re-enactments representing Berwick's history from the 12th to the 20th century were attended by at least 11,500 visitors.
- More than 270 amateur singers, musicians, dancers and actors of all ages took part in drama, music and dance performances during the Festival.
- A number of local small businesses and charities were able to promote their produce and raise funds at the markets and fairs organised during Berwick 900.
- The historic herring drifter "Reaper" welcomed some 1,500 people on board during her five-day stay in July.
- The teddy bears' picnics were attended by almost 100 costumed teddy bears created by local schoolchildren and amateur knitters.

Over the next few weeks every single household in Berwick Tweedmouth and Spittal will receive an illustrated booklet depicting Berwick's Historic Timeline as a memento of a tremendous festival placing Berwick soundly on the tourist map.

None of this would have happened without hard working passionate people pulling together for our Town so once again to all those who participated. A very big thank you.

2. **Berwick Community Trust** **(Councillor I Dixon)**

No report received.

3. **Berwick-upon-Tweed Corporation (Freemen) Trustees** **(Councillors H Bettison, I Dixon, G Hill, J Lang and C Seymour)**

This organisation meets on the last Friday evening of each month and is attended by 5 nominated Town Councillors as well as 5 members of the Freemen Trustees. These meetings are confidential and deal with various aspects of the Berwick upon Tweed

Corporation (Freemens) Trustees Estate.

**4. Berwick Fair Trade
(Councillor C Seymour)**

The local FT steering group representing a range of local organisations and sectors meets regularly to ensure the Fairtrade Town continues to develop, gain support and retain Berwick Fairtrade status (first declared, November 2012). Activities as follows:

Town Council

Involvement in town activities such as recent Investor's Conference for about 120 people. Fairtrade provided morning coffee and tea and had information stall. Fairtrade logo was added on literature for conference and leaflets in 'goody bag' given to attendees from the Council.

Council has funded two banners which are displayed prominently during Fairtrade fortnight and occasions when are active. Fairtrade logo is now on the Visit Berwick website.

Schools

Established annual competition. One year prize winning poster was printed in quantity and displayed in shops. This year the competition to raise Fairtrade awareness was a Fairtrade breakfast menu and the Mayor and Sheriff were invited to the presentation which was held at the Guild Hall. Involve local people to judge competition. One school has become a Fairtrade school and a Fairtrade cafe at the school summer fair was organised. Steering group member Speaker gives talks about her travels with Traidcraft.

Churches

Almost all the local churches are Fairtrade. The Baptist Church mounted a Big Breakfast in Fairtrade fortnight last month in aid of Christian Aid. One Church had a Fairtrade coffee morning in aid of Christian Aid.

Community

Street stalls with information, hand-outs and competitions at the Christmas and summer markets. As in other years, this year will be supplying Fairtrade tea and coffee for 'Party on the Parade', in tea tent. Window display was put in the town during Fairtrade fortnight. Members have used 'Thought for the Week' slots in the local paper to promote Fairtrade.

**5. Berwick in Bloom
(Councillor A Gibson)**

No report received.

**6. Berwick Youth Project
(Councillor G Smith)**

No report received.

**7. Cittaslow Working Group
(No representative)**

**8. Conservation Area Advisory Group
(Councillor D Blackburn)**

No report received.

**9. HELM (Heritage Environment Local Management) Champion
(No representative)**

**10. Local Multi-Agency Partnership (LMAP)
(Councillor G McLean)**

Confidential issues were discussed at meetings. They included crime / alcohol / drug abuse / awareness, problems with vandalism, fire services, safety issues and more.

I put forward the need for a Berwick Skatepark after many messages of despair on Berwick Deserves Better Community Facebook page. Councillor Gibson and Forbes both spend time talking to the youth of Berwick and this subject was brought up constantly.

The suggestion was well received. Knowing it would be a long process given the costs involved the decision was made to keep it fairly low profile due to earlier disappointments. We then started to look at funding and suitable sites. Councillor Jones contacted active Northumberland re land at the Swan Centre, I contacted John Bell (Youth Project) who offered to put on a bus for youngsters to a skatepark for them to come up with their own preferences for design etc. Things looked good and we were at the point of forming a steering group to include Cllr Forbes, myself and young town people when it was announced that LMAP had disbanded. This brought the project to a halt. Since then Berwick's Youth have taken over the reins themselves on the back of their successful presentation at Berwick's Investor Conference, and by all accounts are doing well. I admire them for this and wish them luck. I have offered my assistance if asked for.

**11. Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) – County Committee
(Councillor C Seymour)**

As just co-opted on to County Committee March 2016, only attended one meeting which take place every two months in Morpeth.

NALC represents the interests of parish and town councils, whilst offering specialist training, advice and other support to its members, such as the BTC Councillor training that we had recently with David Francis (past Secretary of NALC).

County committee composed of councillors and clerks, supports councils on procedures, financial management, governance, insurance, giving support to community projects, ICT, newsletters, premises management, village greens, and town and country planning. NALC also works on behalf of its members with other organisations at regional, county and district level and with Society of Local Councils. NALC is contact point for parish and town councils.

Recently, David Frances attended a meeting with BTC and the Berwick Riders Association to help facilitate with some issues that had arose in order to make sure that this traditional annual event continues and was a tremendous support with this Association.

County Committee Members welcomed NCC, Geoff Paul's offer to make available, free-of-charge Communication Tool, to aid dialogue between councils. Arrangements for demonstration to be made.

Boundary Review:

It was agreed to request a meeting with the Council, and to work with the local parish councils to compile a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Joint Burial Committees:

Members noted the implications for the governance and accountability of joint burial committees which was brought about by changes in the audit requirements. Some JBCs were operating unlawfully as if they were not part of their parish councils. It was likely that the external auditor would need to intervene, if a JBC failed to respond to the changes.

**12. Northumberland Town and Parish Council Charter Review Group
(H Bettison)**

No report received.

**13. Parks Steering Group
(Councillor G McLean)****14. Portas Management Group
(Councillor G McLean)**

My observations on this committee. Only attended 3 or 4.

This started well. A good team of local people plus a scrutineer from NCC looking at some good ideas on how PORTAS money might help the town. My preferred proposal was 'Castlegate Boulevard' this project was brought forward by a local couple who had worked on similar town schemes. At the last meeting final plans and costings after months of preparation were presented, sadly however at that same time the Portas Chair was requested to attend a public council meeting after suggestions that a 'forensic' no stone unturned investigation was required. The Chair had already been subject to extreme harassment in an earlier public meeting and could not endure a repeat of that night and so resigned. Following yet another resignation NCC pulled the plug and I made the decision to stand well back from Portas. The tree project was not put forward at subsequent council meetings and the rest is ongoing history.

**15. Riding of the Bounds Association
(Councillor H Bettison)**

No report received.

**16. St Aidans
(Councillor G Smith)**

No report received.

**17. Sure Start Children's Board
(Councillors J Beresford and I Dixon)**

No report received.

KEY	
Attended	√
Apologies	A
Neither attended or offered apologies	N
Sick	S

EVENTS

COUNCILLOR	Jun 2015	Jul 2015	TOTAL
J Beresford	√	N	1/2 (50%)
H Bettison	A	√	1/2 (50%)
D Blackburn		√	1/1 (100%)
I Dixon	√	A	1/2 (50%)
A Forbes		√	1/1 (100%)
G Hill	√	√	2/2 (100%)
J Lang	√	√	2/2 (100%)
C Seymour	√	√	2/2 (100%)

KEY	
Attended	√
Apologies	A
Neither attended or offered apologies	N
Sick	S

FINANCE AND RESOURCES

COUNCILLOR	May 2015	Jun 2015	Jul 2015	Sep 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Apr 2016	TOTAL
H Bettison	√	√	√	N	A	√	A	A	√	√	√	7/11 (64%)
D Blackburn			√	√	A	√	A	√				4/6 (67%)
I Dixon	A	√	√	√	A	√	A	√	√	A	√	7/11 (64%)
A Forbes			√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	8/9 (89%)
A Gibson	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	11/11 (100%)
K Graham					√	√	√	√	√	√	A	6/7 (86%)
G Hill	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	11/11 (100%)
P Hodgson					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7/7 (100%)
G McLean			√	√	√	√	A	A	√	√	√	7/9 (78%)
G Roughead	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	A	√	√	9/11 (82%)
C Seymour	√	√	√	√	A	√	A	√	√	√	√	9/11 (82%)
G Smith					√	√	√	√				4/4 (100%)

KEY	
Attended	√
Apologies	A
Neither attended or offered apologies	N
Sick	S

STAFFING

COUNCILLOR	Jun 2015	Aug 2015	Sep 2015	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	TOTAL
H Bettison	√	A	√	√	√	4/5 (80%)
D Blackburn		√	A	√	A	2/4 (50%)
I Dixon	√	√	A	N	A	2/5 (40%)
A Forbes		√	√	A	√	3/4 (75%)
A Gibson	√	A	√	√	√	4/5 (80%)
K Graham			√	√	√	3/3 (100%)
G Hill	√	√	√	√	√	5/5 (100%)
P Hodgson				√	√	2/2 (100%)
J Lang	√	A	√	A	√	3/5 (60%)
G McLean			√	√	√	3/3 (100%)
C Seymour	√	√	A	√	√	4/5 (80%)
G Smith				√	√	2/2 (100%)