

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 5 September 2016 at 6.00 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

Councillors:	I Dixon (Town Mayor)	P Hodgson
	H Bettison	J Lang
	A Forbes	G McLean
	A Gibson	B Parkin
	E Goodyer	G Roughead
	K Graham	G Smith
	G Hill	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stephen Rickitt, Chief Officer, Northumberland Association of Local Councils

Steve Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk

Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace

Brian Douglas, Sheriff

15 members of the public approximately

Councillor Ivor Dixon welcomed Mr Stephen Rickitt, Chief Officer of Northumberland Association of Local Councils. Mr Stephen Rickitt then introduced himself to the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

Mr Spencer Barclay mentioned Rothbury Town Council's audit and issues that occurred last year and stated that Councillor G Hill was there as his representative. Also suggested was that Berwick should have Brexit style exit from Northumberland County Council. Councillor P Hodgson made reference to earlier requests by Mr Spencer Barclay and said that he would be forwarding written correspondence to him. Mr Graham asked for an apology for the comments made about his wife. Councillor G Hill responded. There followed a debate before Members were reminded that within Standing Orders that if a person disregards the Chairman to moderate their conduct the Chairman may move that the person no longer be heard. A local resident raised concerns about the overgrown bushes on Osbourne Place and the state of the Play Park. Mr Stewart stated there was

march scheduled for the Saturday 1 October by the EDL/SDL. A peaceful counter protest march is being planned. There is a meeting to organise it at 7pm on Friday 9 September in the YHA building all welcome. Spittal Splash Park has been cleaned which addresses previous concerns, however, there have been a couple of days within the last fortnight when it hasn't been working. Councillor H Bettison raised concerns over dogs entering the Splash Park. The 'No Dog' sign was small and poorly cited and bigger signs were needed. Mr Darling mentioned that work had begun on the railings on Spittal Promenade.

C106/16 **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been accepted on behalf of Cllrs T Forrester and C Seymour. Councillors expressed their sympathy for Cllr C Seymour.

C107/16 **2. MINUTES**

The following insertions were suggested. Item 6: Cllr Hill asked Cllr Hunter about scrutiny of the administration at NCC by the Berwick County Councillors. Item 8: Cllr Hill asked about the authorization of the 1% national pay award given to the staff. Item 13: Cllr Hill said there needed to be a degree of proportionality re receiving one malicious call, that we needed to act on police advice and there was a need to monitor but no need to turn the Council chamber into Gatwick airport. Item 15: Cllr Hill said Mr Bob Hodgson did an excellent job but questioned the SLA agreements we had and whether these constituted value for money and said she was concerned NCC were trying to pass on more services and costs on to the Council.

Also at Item 11 'sustainable' was added to the resolution and also replaced 'Sustran' before the resolution.

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 15 August 2016 were then agreed and signed as a correct record.

C108/16 **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor E Goodyer declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 14 (Visit Berwick Leaflet 2017);

Councillor G Roughead declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 14 (Visit Berwick Leaflet 2017).

C109/16 **4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

C110/16

5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on events attended since the last Council meeting. This included meeting the Bishop of Berwick who will be inaugurated next month. The Mayor then mentioned the Small Business Conference which will take place on Friday 16 September 2016 and proposed that an extra £200 should be agreed in principle to cover any short fall with an amount to be reported at the next Council meeting. This was agreed.

C111/16

6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor G Hill felt it would be helpful if future reports included how County Councillors voted, particularly on controversial issues. The reports were noted.

C112/16

7. TOWN COUNCILLOR WARD REPORTS

Councillor P Hodgson mentioned he was invited to the signing up of the Berwick Rangers Football Academy in partnership with Northumberland College. The reports were noted.

C113/16

8. NOTIFICATION OF PAYMENTS MADE BY BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

As the Town Council currently does not have a Responsible Financial Officer a list of payments were provided for approval and these were agreed.

RESOLVED: Notification Of Payments Agreed.

C114/16

9. APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Deferred to private session at end of meeting.

C115/16

10. THREE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

Councillor G McLean submitted an initial list for the three-year financial plan, however, he stated this was subject to change and/or additions. A deadline of the end of September was agreed for Councillors to return the forms.

C116/16

11. STANDING ORDERS

As only the updated Standing Orders had been circulated, Councillors felt that the original or a tracked version should have also been provided so that they could compare. The item was then deferred to a later meeting so the original version could be provided also.

C117/16

12. BERWICK INFIRMARY

The original date of Friday 9 September had been cancelled and the meeting would now take place on Friday, 23 September at 11am starting with a site visit to the

Infirmery / Bell Tower followed by a discussion at the Infirmery.

It was agreed that Councillors H Bettison, D Blackburn, J Lang, G McLean and G Smith should attend the meeting along with the Sherriff Mr B Douglas.

C118/16 13. ADOPTION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURES

- a) Deferred for further discussion, possibly when the new Clerk is in place.
- b) Deferred for further discussion, possibly when the new Clerk is in place.

C119/16 14. VISIT BERWICK LEAFLET 2017

[NOTE: Councillors E Goodyer and G Roughead, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, left the meeting during consideration of this item].

It was suggested that samples should be provided by those who have quoted for the design work. This was agreed and the item deferred.

Councillor J Lang congratulated the organisers of the Food and Beer Festival which was the biggest so far. The Mayor who attended with the Sheriff also congratulated the organisers.

C120/16 15. FIVE ARCHES ALLOTMENTS

Councillor G McLean reported that there will be addition cost for excavation as the pipe is over 50 meters. A cost for this work will be provided.

RESOLVED: Quote agreed.

C121/16 16. UNAUTHORISED OBSTRUCTIONS ON THE HIGHWAY

Concern was expressed towards advertising, tables and chairs etc being placed on pavements that caused difficulty for those using the pavements. It was agreed to send a comment of acknowledgment and appreciation for the proposed guidance and suggested that NCC Highways Inspectors could be asked to a meeting / walk round.

C122/16 17. LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Now at the evidence gathering stage the Working and Steering Groups have to explore the information and feedback provided by the public. A grant of £1,500 has been obtained from the government to complete the vision and objectives consultation. A consultant has been appointed who is helping to advise the Working Groups. An item has been set aside in the upcoming Small Business Conference for the Plan. The next meeting of the Steering Group is Friday 23 September 2016.

C123/16

18. PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19 July 2016.

C124/16

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 10 October 2016 at 6 pm.

The Council resolved that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the media and public from the discussion of the following business on the basis that public discussion might prejudice the Council's position and/or staffing issues might be discussed.

C125/16

20. LEGAL AND/OR STAFFING MATTERS

The Council noted the resignation of the Acting Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). Following discussion, the Council resolved as follows:

- a) To establish a committee consisting of five councillors (The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors Forbes, Hill & Hodgson).
- b) That the committee have delegated authority to appoint an interim Town Clerk and/or RFO.
- c) That the committee have delegated authority to make any urgent decisions required pending the appointment of an interim Town Clerk and/or RFO.

The above resolution was carried following a named vote with Councillors Bettison, Dixon, Forbes, Hill, Hodgson, Goodyer, Lang, Roughead and Smith voting for the motion and Councillors Gibson, Graham, McLean and Parkin voting against the motion.

There then followed further discussion when the Council further agreed (without dissent) to

- d) Increase the membership of the committee to six with Councillor Graham being appointed as the additional member.
- e) That the committee would be disestablished immediately following the next

meeting of the Council (currently scheduled for 10 October 2016) unless the Council resolved to continue the committee.

- f) That the interim Town Clerk and/or RFO should be appointed for a maximum period of 12 weeks with any extensions being agreed by the Council.

That the Assistant to the Clerk (Mr Cozens) be granted delegated authority to vary the opening hours of the Council's office to enable cover to take into account staff absences and holidays. Notice of any variation is to be placed on the Council's website, on a notice on the office door and emailed to all Councillors.