

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 10 November 2008 at 6 pm at The William Elder Building, Castlegate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	J Beresford	T Houghton
	H Bettison	C Routledge
	A Bowlas	J Smith
	B Douglas	D Stewart
	P Herdman (Chairman)	J Waterhouse
	G Hill	

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk

Gerald Connor, Community Safety Officer, Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council

Martin Bayliss, Northumbria Police

Keith Smith, Northumbria Police

3 members of the public

C045/08 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Hunter, McNeely, Pauline and Simpson.

C046/08 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council held on 8 September 2008 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C047/08 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Bowlas declared a personal interest in Item 9.

Councillor Houghton declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 16.

Councillors Bettison, Herdman and Smith declared a personal interest in Item 18.

Ch'n initials...

C048/08 **4. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**

There were no statements by those members of the public present.

C049/08 **5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised Councillors that:

1. At the meeting of Norham and Islandshire Parish Council Association on 15 September, attended by himself and the Vice-Chairman, a commitment had been expressed to co-operative working among local councils within the proposed Community Forum.
2. He had attended the Annual General Meeting of Community Action Northumberland on 5 November.
3. The agenda for the Area Committee meeting held on 7 November, had been forwarded to the Chairman for comment, but there had been no items of direct relevance to Berwick-upon-Tweed.
4. The Boundary Committee had responded to the Council's letter regarding the number of unitary councillors, advising that they were looking again at the arguments but at present were not minded to agree to a higher figure.
5. The Town Council had received a copy of the Northumberland Charter for Local Councils. This was a draft consultation document which set out the proposed relationship between the unitary authority and local councils, and suggested which services might be devolved to local councils in due course.

Copies were tabled and members requested to forward any comments to the Clerk, who would collate an appropriate response.

The Chairman asked that thanks to the Clerk for her efforts be minuted.

C050/08 **6. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND POLICING**

The Chairman welcomed the Community Safety Officer and representatives of Berwick Sector police to their first Town Council meeting.

The Community Safety Officer said that in common with other local councils in the Borough, it was hoped that community safety could be a regular agenda item,

Ch'n initials...

enabling a partnership approach to setting of priorities.

It was agreed that this should be a regular agenda item, and that a verbal up-date by the Community Safety Officer and police officers should be provided every six months. It was also agreed that the security officer for Berwick Borough Housing should be invited to attend.

Inspector Bayliss summarised key issues within the town at the current time.

[NOTE: The issues raised are listed in an attachment to these minutes.]

He also said that whilst Northumbria Area Command had seen a 12% rise in reported crime county-wide, as at 10 November Berwick-upon-Tweed had seen a 2% rise.

In response to queries raised about the impact of large local holiday centres on police resources, Inspector Bayliss said the extra workload was absorbed within overtime and that the centres did not impact on resources to any greater extent than, for example, Golden Square.

Members also discussed the proposed Cumulative Impact Policy for licensing, and the extent to which the adoption of a Policy might be a means of avoiding deploying extra resources. Inspector Bayliss said that staff resources had increased, and with an adequate intelligence picture further resources would be provided when required from Bedlington.

[NOTE: Councillors Bettison, Douglas and Waterhouse declared a personal interest in that part of the item relating to licensing].

C051/08 7. PUBLICITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

RESOLVED: To adopt the Protocol on Communications.

C052/08 8. RAISING AWARENESS OF BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Members considered the proposals for raising awareness of the Town Council

Ch'n initials...

among residents. Concern was expressed both on the issue of expenditure on a website during a time of economic uncertainty; and on the importance of ensuring that there was something of substance to publicise.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk to prepare a communication strategy for presentation to the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting in January, with a view to allocating a maximum of £5000 in the current financial year to a website and leaflet.

C053/08

9. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED:

- (i) **To agree the nomination of Councillors McNeely and Robertson to the Berwick's Future Steering Group**
- (ii) **To nominate Councillor Houghton to represent the Town Council on the Conservation Area Advisory Group**
- (iii) **To nominate Councillor Houghton to the Cittaslow Berwick Steering Group; as there was no second nomination the appointment of a second Town Councillor to be deferred**
- (iv) **To agree that ad hoc invitations for Town Council representatives on outside bodies be considered by the appropriate committee, and nominations made if agreed, for confirmation as part of the adoption of minutes at the next Council meeting**
- (v) **All appointments to outside bodies be reviewed and confirmed at the annual meeting held in May.**

C054/08

10. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL PLAYBUILDER PROGRAMME

Councillor Bettison agreed to attend a meeting to be held on 1 December which would provide more information about the Playbuilder Programme, for which expressions of interest would need to be made by 12 December.

C055/08

11. EASTERN BORDERS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (EBDA) AWARD

RESOLVED: To nominate JusRol for the EBDA Award 2008.

C056/08

12. ACQUISITION OF PAINTING OF BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

Members discussed the acquisition of a painting of Berwick-upon-Tweed by young local artist Alex Mills which had been offered to the Town Council at a cost of £150. Concern was expressed about where the painting might be displayed for residents to be able to view it. It was noted that the painting could be used in the Council's proposed publicity material.

RESOLVED: The Council to purchase the painting from Alex Mills at a cost

Ch'n initials...

of £150.

CO57/08

13. TWINNING

Members had been asked to consider whether the Town Council would wish to see the current twinning links of the Borough continued, and if so under which management arrangement. At the present time it was not clear whether the unitary authority would take up twinning links county wide.

RESOLVED: The Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, to advise the County Council that it would wish twinning links to continue, and ask to be kept informed of any proposals for the unitary authority, as the successor authority, to maintain the current arrangements.

CO58/08

14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 13 October 2008.

CO59/08

15. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 27 October 2008, subject to it being noted that, under minute FR024/08, sub-item 3 (a), the budget allocated in the current year for supporting events should not exceed £5000.

CO60/08

16. EVENTS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Events Committee meetings held on 17 September and 27 October July 2008 (subject to it being noted that under minute E014/08 there had been no disclosure of interests).

[NOTE: Councillor Houghton, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest left the room during consideration of this item.]

CO61/08

17. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee meetings held on 17 September and 15 October 2008.

CO62/08

18. FREEMEN TRUSTEES AND CIVIC/CEREMONIAL SUCCESSION

The Clerk reported that both the Town Council and the Borough Council had written to the County Council to support the view of the Freeman Trustees that

Ch'n initials...

the Town Council was the natural successor to the Borough Council in its relationship with the Guild.

The Borough Solicitor had had a meeting with the County Council, and was due to produce a report for the County for them to put through the necessary committees.

On 16 October the County Council had advised that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) required to make an order for succession arrangements for civic and ceremonial issues in Berwick, Blyth and Castle Morpeth. The County Council had raised no objection to the Town Council taking on the civic and ceremonial issues, and determination was now therefore a matter for DCLG.

CO63/08 19. ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk reported that the Borough Council had agreed to continue responsibility for the time being for its seven allotments. Payment of rents for 2009 would fall due in February, so it had been proposed the Town Council take over full management on 1 January 2009.

CO64/08 20. THE MITCHELL MEMORIAL HALL

The Clerk reported that The Town Council's 'in principle' interest had been forwarded to the County Council. However, she drew members' attention to item 14 of the Northumberland Charter for Local Councils which had been tabled and which set out the draft policy relating to assets and property.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40 pm.

ADDENDUM

ITEMS RAISED UNDER THE ITEM COMMUNITY SAFETY AND POLICING

The following issues were raised as matters on which police officers were currently focusing resources.

- Boy racers (speed laser device being used)
- Anti-social behaviour at Eastcliffe bus shelter
- Traffic congestion at the Middle School

Ch'n initials...

- Drugs (Operation Blow Torch had had a successful impact on supply and on drugs-related crime)
- Domestic violence (ten incidents being investigated)
- Cashmere Nightclub (licence application out for consultation)
- Fireworks – anti-social elements

Ch'n initials...