

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 11 July 2016 at 6.00 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

Councillors:	I Dixon (Town Mayor)	J Lang
	H Bettison	G McLean
	D Blackburn	B Parkin
	A Forbes	G Roughead
	A Gibson	C Seymour
	E Goodyer	G Smith
	G Hill	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Pattison, Town Clerk

Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace

17 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

No comments from the public.

C045/16 1. BERWICK INFIRMARY

Nine representatives from NHS Trust, Nathaniel Litchfield, Keir Construction and IBI Architects were present at the Council meeting to discuss plans for Berwick Infirmary. Ms Sam Marlow presented a short history of the Hospital which was built in 1874 and currently deals with 26,000 people on a yearly basis and has attendances of 43,000. Planning permission has not yet been requested but will be built on the present site and will operate normally throughout the build with work starting in summer 2017 for 3 years until 2020. The Maternity Unit and the Well Close Square GP surgery will be incorporated and there are no plans to include the historic Bell Tower which will be surplus to requirements. Cllr Hill asked if the Bell Tower could be gifted to the Town Council. Ms Marlow further advised that a questionnaire undertaken at an earlier consultation had

proved positive with most people happy with the plans with only one firm objection against the removal of the Bell Tower. Mr Tom Kilpatrick, Architect, said the building would be contemporary and modern. Cllr Goodyer suggested an extension of the Hospital car park could join up with the Castlegate car park and would be of value, however, as there will be approximately 90 parking places at the new hospital this was not felt to be viable. Cllr Bettison was very unhappy at the removal of the Bell Tower which had a rich history and said she would be organising a petition against this happening. Cllr Blackburn mentioned that NHS should consider the sale of the Bell Tower Building rather than demolition and asked for consideration to be given to the maternity car park being retained as an overspill for the station. A query regarding plans for the maternity building was also made by Cllr Blackburn and was advised it will eventually be made redundant and sold off. Cllr Blackburn thanked the representatives for their extensive consultation with the people of Berwick and this was echoed by Cllr Goodyer. Cllr Dixon also thanked the representatives for coming to speak to Councillors and residents.

C046/16

2. NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE, ASHINGTON

Ms Jenny Beaumont, Vice Principal. Northumberland College accompanied by Ms Linda Weddle, Business Development, spoke to Councillors about Northumberland College. Ms Beaumont was invited to Berwick at the invitation of Councillor Eric Goodyer. Ms Beaumont went on to say that the College offered 60 different courses and they were populated by returning students or 16-19 year olds. The college is located next to Berwick Academy, there is also a construction site at the Ramparts Business Park for joinery, plastering training etc but this was felt as not ideal and the College were looking around for other premises along with also sourcing garage accommodation to train apprentices/mechanics. They also have a Hair and Beauty salon located at Marygate which is very successful and the uptake for 2017 is extremely good. The College is also working in partnership with the Maltings to provide performing arts courses and also with Active Northumberland re the Swan Centre and Berwick Rangers regarding a football academy and working alongside Berwick Youth project during July. Evening Courses and accountancy courses are also coming on-stream. By 2019 it will be a changing landscape with the college being seen as more of a technical college. Cllr Blackburn thought offering nursing courses would be a viable initiative and Cllr Hill wanted to know how the Town Council could support the College further. Transport is free to other parts of

Northumberland to areas such as Kirkley Hall which offers different courses not currently available in Berwick and Cllr Bettison mentioned concern re transport issues for people with learning difficulties and mobility problems. Cllr Parkin said there was available land at Shielfied for the College to look at further and various other locations around town were also suggested by other Councillors ending with Cllr Goodyer requesting the Clerk to arrange a tour of Berwick to point out suitable locations for College expansion. Cllr Dixon thanked Ms Beaumont and Ms Weddle for coming.

C047/16 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted on behalf of: Cllr K Graham, Cllr P Hodgson and Cllr T Forrester.

C048/16 4. MINUTES

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 27 June 2016 had changes requested by Cllr Hill who did not agree with the word 'advised' as mentioned in the minutes as this gives a value judgment on subjective and disputable statements, and said they should say 'said'. The Clerk felt that the requested changes were unnecessary and requested Councillors voted on them. Cllr Bettison thought the matter should have been brought up at an earlier date when the draft minutes were first emailed to all Councillors for approval. Cllr Forbes said all Councillors were informed by the Clerk that they were not allowed to change the minutes until an actual Council meeting took place. Councillors then voted and it was agreed by majority that the Clerk should no longer say 'advised' in the minutes when it was actually 'said'. Cllr Roughead also wanted to add that a cross border meeting should be arranged in regard to RAGE and Virgin Rail support. The minutes were then signed as a correct record and agreed by all.

C049/16 5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllr Roughead, Hoppa Bus and Tweedmouth Feast, Cllr Hill, Tweedmouth Feast, Cllr Goodyer, Christmas lights, Cllr Bettison, Spittal Christmas lights.

C050/16 6. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

There were no requests for dispensation.

C051/16 7. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Dixon attended the Curfew run which was incredibly well supported and also met with broadcaster, Jeremy Paxman who started the Junior race. Cllr Dixon also praised the Teenage Market which had been a wonderful success and also reported that the shop

owners at Marygate had reported as being much busier. Cllr Dixon thanked the Acting Clerk and said that Berwick had been to first town in Northumberland to hold a teenage market.

C052/16

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Noted.

Cllr Hill said that personal issues should not be included in the reports and also advised her attendance at County where it was disclosed that ARCH had requested a loan from NCC.

C053/16

9. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Cllr Goodyer left the room.

A quote has been received for the purchase of Christmas lights for the whole of the town to the value of approximately £60k and this would include Tweedmouth and Spittal. The town has had the same xmas theme for several years and new brackets and lights for the trees are now required. Cllr Hill was very concerned at the cost and said increasing the Christmas budget to £60k was out of the question and this was seconded by Cllr Seymour. Cllr Forbes also agreed and said £60k could not be justified. Cllr Bettison thought swags/garlands would be attractive but was concerned at time factors and that the Council should not delay for too long if they were to order new lights for this year. Cllr Seymour again expressed concern re the cost and asked whether it had actually been agreed by Council to add in the decoration of the Tweedmouth and Spittal areas. 13 Fixed lights had been found to be broken and the cost to renovate them was over £7k which Councillors thought was too expensive to make appropriate repairs. Cllr Hill said the budget process was wholly inadequate and it was no way in which to run a Council. The Clerk said there was already £12k in the budget for xmas decorations. Cllr Hill said an Extraordinary meeting should be called within 2 weeks in order to properly allocate the £200k in the Council's reserves. Cllr Roughead said that Alnwick and Morpeth collected donations from the public all year round in support of their town's xmas lights. A suggestion to buy new xmas lights over a three year period was supported by Cllr Lang. Cllr Blackburn said promotion of a lighting festival could be done in November to attract tourists to the town and Cllr Mclean mentioned the lights in the context of the 3 year financial plan and also thought a local celebrity who had done a lot for the town in the past could open the Christmas lights in November. The Clerk told Councillors that there would be a quarterly review of the budget at the July 25th meeting and a decision could

be made then about the lights. A further suggestion by the Clerk to allow the Finance Officer and the Acting Clerk to compile a 3 year draft financial plan for Councillor input and discussion, was disputed by Cllr Hill as completely out of the question and that a three year plan should be put together solely by all Town Councillors and not by the Acting Clerk and/or the Finance Officer. Cllr Hill also asked if the Councillors insurers were aware of problems regarding the Lions Allotments and the Clerk said they had been informed, Cllr Hill requested this was also put onto the Council's Risk Register. A suggestion by the Clerk that Deputy Mayor, Cllr Gregah Roughead could Chair an informal meeting of Town Councillors without the presence of either the Clerk or the Finance Officer and compile a Council three year financial plan between them was agreed by the majority with a few Councillors suggesting the Clerk and Finance Officer could attend.

RESOLVED: To decide finally on xmas lights at the July 25th meeting following information given re the quarterly review and Cllr Roughead will request an informal meeting to be held between all Town Councillors in approximately 2/3 weeks time and Councillors will put together a Council three year financial plan
Cllr Goodyer returned to the meeting.

C054/16

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

None.

C055/16

11. PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL

None.

C056/16

12. NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY

Cllr Goodyer remarked that the opening section of the core strategy re Economy which had focused mainly in earlier editions re the areas of North Tyneside and SE Northumberland had been substantially changed and now included Berwick and North Northumberland. Trains running through Berwick to the South and to the North were still not included or protected and this was a cause for concern.

C057/16

13. FLAGSTAFF PARK

Approval of an invoice from Kompan was requested in order to remove the previous equipment's cement and fixings from the Flagstaff Park Play area. Councillor Forbes was angry at the delay and wanted to know why this issue was still ongoing and why the work had not been started. The Clerk advised the removal of the old equipment had to be done

in the presence of an archaeologist and further delays had been caused by Northumbria Water who had not completed their work at the site. Cllr Mclean also said that nothing could be done without the full approval of Historic England and this had contributed to further delays.

RESOLVED: To approve an invoice to remove the old cement and fixings under appropriate archaeological conditions from Flagstaff Park.

C058/16

14. GRAFFITI ON BANKHILL UNDER THE BRIDGE

Cllr Blackburn said the quotes received re the removal of graffiti from under the bridge at Bankhill were a waste of time as removal of more graffiti from the New Road was also a major requirement. Cllr Blackburn also said that the Council should employ an artist to enhance and paint over the affected areas. Cllr Roughead provided photos and a report showing areas of Alnwick and Amble which are specifically allocated for graffiti art. Cllr Bettison said the Town Council should not be paying for the graffiti removal work to be done as it was an NCC responsibility and they should pay for this work to be done themselves. Cllr Mclean expressed his concern at any areas in the town being allocated for selected graffiti in what was considered as a conservation town environment.

It was then proposed by Cllr Bettison and seconded by Cllr Roughead that the Clerk write to NCC and ask them to remove the graffiti from the indicated areas free of charge.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will request NCC remove the graffiti from under the bridge at Bankhill and on the New Road free of charge.

C059/16

15. COUNCIL BANK ACCOUNT

It was agreed to remove from the current Council's Bank Account, 2 x £75k and place this money into two new and separate Banks.

RESOLVED: To move 2 x £75k into two new and separate Banks.

C060/16

16. NORTHUMBERLAND HOLIDAY GUIDE AND DAYS OUT LEAFLET 2017

Approved by all. Cllr Bettison also wanted assurances that the Days Out leaflet was proof read and must be run past all Councillors to ensure that dates for the various listed events were correct before sending for printing.

RESOLVED: To agree an advert in the Northumberland 2017 Holiday Guide and approval of the Days Out leaflet and to also ensure that Councillors check the event dates in the Days Out Brochure to make sure they are correct.

C061/16

17. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Cllrs Hill and Roughead left the room.

An application for £1,150 to support the Tweedmouth Feast was discussed but no bank statements or invoices have been provided to the Council. It was discussed by Councillors and then proposed by Cllr Bettison and seconded by Cllr Blackburn to agree to ring fence the money until the Council meeting of July 25th when this information should have been provided and this was agreed by all.

RESOLVED: To ring fence £1150.00 until July 25th when the appropriate paperwork is provided.

C062/16

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 25 July 2016 at 6 pm.