

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 25 January 2010 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Margate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	F Simpson (Town Mayor)	I Hunter
	J Beresford	M McNeely
	A Bowlas	V Pauline
	I Dixon	J Robertson
	B Douglas	C Routledge
	P Herdman	J Smith
	G Hill	J Waterhouse

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk
4 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

The Town Mayor welcomed Councillor Dixon to his first meeting and all those present.

There were no issues raised by members of the public; Acting Inspector Andy Pullen of Northumbria Police had tendered his apologies.

CO68/09 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Bettison and from the Sheriff.

CO69/09 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council held on 16 November 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The Clerk reported that the EBDA Award had been made to The Gunsgreen House Trust (CO60/09).

It was noted that the developers of the apartments at 7-13 Main Street Tweedmouth had agreed to the name McGregor Court (minute CO61/09).

CO70/09

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillors Bowlas, Herdman, Robertson and Simpson, as non-Freemen Trustees, each declared a personal interest in Item13, Finance and Resources Committee.

CO71/09

4. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor informed members of the events she had attended as Town Mayor, together with other members of the Civic Party. She made special reference to the successful Christmas lights, which she had switched on. She also reported on the Boxing Day Dip, which it was expected had raised £400.

The Mayor had been pleased to welcome the Coldstream Guards to Berwick on 6 January on their march from Coldstream to London.

Members were advised of the Civic Valentine's Ball which was to be held on 12 February, with tickets available from Councillor Bettison.

CO72/09

5. SERVICE DEVOLUTION

The Town Clerk outlined the discussions and correspondence with Northumberland County Council regarding the proposals for the devolution of a range of services in 2010-11. The Finance and Resources Committee had advised the County Council that members did not consider they were in a position to take these responsibilities on at this time.

Members had indicated, when contacted individually, that they wished to agree with the proposals set out by the Director of Street Scene in a letter dated 5 January 2010, in particular the proposal that discussions on devolving services in 2011-12 should be started as soon as possible. This view had been expressed to the County Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note and confirm the response to Northumberland County Council as the view of the Council as a whole**

- (ii) **To note the report on service devolution presented to the County Council Executive Committee on 11 January 2010.**
- (iii) **To note the proposal to establish a NALC Larger Councils Forum, at which issues relating to service devolution will be considered and shared**

CO73/09

6. REVIEW OF ISSUES ARISING FROM SEVERE COLD WEATHER

Members raised the following issues arising from the severe cold weather.

- (i) Failure to treat car parks; Castlegate car park was particularly bad.
- (ii) Attempts to contact the County Council call centre over Christmas had elicited the response that local and estate roads and footpaths would not be treated, leading some to be impassable for several days.
- (iii) The policy to keep main roads open had not been followed; Main Street Spittal, a bus route, had not been gritted.
- (iv) It was noticeable that road clearance and gritting had improved once the holiday period was over, but people still had to get about during the Christmas and New year period
- (v) The problems highlighted the need to know what emergency planning arrangements were in place
- (vi) Matters could have been improved if local volunteers had been provided with the tools to carry out clearing and gritting.
- (vii) A review would be undertaken by the County Council over the standard of service provided
- (viii) The number of gritting lorries appeared to be less than it was prior to local government reorganisation.
- (ix) Local bus services were suspended in Main Street Spittal because the road was not safe.
- (x) The location of grit bins needed to be reviewed as they were not all in the most useful locations.
- (xi) The A1 was at times in as poor a state as local roads.

The Clerk said these points would be forwarded to the County Council, which was holding a public Scrutiny Meeting on the subject on 26 January.

CO74/09

7. RESOLUTION

The Town Clerk advised that a letter of resignation had been received earlier in the day from Mr Houghton. Councillor Robertson confirmed the proposed resolution was therefore withdrawn.

The Clerk outlined the procedure for filling a casual vacancy.

CO75/09

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Two items of correspondence had been received and were discussed:

- (i) Request from Alice Burn to become Northumbrian Smallpiper to the Mayor of Berwick-upon-Tweed;**

Members had mixed views about whether this offer should be accepted; the Mayor was asked to establish what Ms Burn's charges would be and refer these to the next meeting of Council.

- (ii) Request from the Royal Regiment of Scotland for the Town Council to present a Pipe Banner to the Royal Regiment of Scotland, at an estimated cost of £350-£500**

RESOLVED: To welcome the suggestion that the Town Council should present a Pipe Banner to the Royal Regiment of Scotland and agree expenditure of £350-£500.

CO76/09

9. TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Clerk and Assistant to the Clerk outlined the key features of the Town Council website, which was now live. This was noted.

CO77/09

10. TOWN TWINNING

Councillor Robertson reported on the public meetings which had been held to establish local interest in reviving and developing the twinning links which had previously been established by the Borough Council.

Those attending had expressed enthusiasm for continuing the tradition of establishing links overseas, and it was hoped in future the scope would include both existing twin towns and additional overseas links.

Events were already being planned, and it was hoped that as well as a list of contacts being maintained, there would be a centralised list of forthcoming events in order to avoid clashes.

A further meeting would take place on 25 February 2010 at 7 pm at The Beehive. Members expressed their support for the continuing of international links.

C078/09

11. BERWICK COMMUNITY FORUM

Members noted that a meeting to progress the Berwick Community Forum would be held on 3 February 2010.

C079/09

12. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Bowlas was nominated, seconded and agreed as a replacement for Mr Houghton as the Town Council's representative on the Conservation Area Advisory Group.

C080/09

13. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members were advised, as required by the Audit Commission, that the audit for the financial year ending 31 March 2009 had been completed.

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meetings held on 9 November 2009 and 14 December 2009.

RESOLVED: To approve the precept which had been agreed at a meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting earlier in the evening, and which had been reported to the Council by the Chairman of the Committee.

CO81/09

14. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee meeting held on 10 November 2009.

CO82/09

15. EVENTS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on 9 November 2009.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Douglas it was noted that the scope of festive lighting across Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth should be considered at an early stage when planning for 2010.

CO83/09

16. PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 17 November and 15 December 2009.

CO84/09

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND CALENDAR OF DATES FOR 2010-11.

The next meeting would be held on Monday 22 March 2010 in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall.

RESOLVED: To agree the calendar of meeting dates for 2010-11.