

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2015** at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Brownson (Mayor), and Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, Lethbridge Race, Wilson, A Zair, L. Zair and S. Zair

Also Present: Clive Auld (Bishop Auckland Town Team), John Raw and David Anderson (Town Clerk)

TC.88/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Fleming and Golightly.

TC.89/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised under this item.

TC.90/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Blackburn and S. Zair declared an 'other registerable interest' in respect of Item Number 13 (8 a.) Town Council Accommodation - Current Accommodation and took no part in the voting thereon.

TC.91/15 FOOD FESTIVAL 2015

Steve Howell (Head of Culture & Sport), Kate James (Festivals and Events Manager) and Nick Malyn (Community Arts Officer) were in attendance to give details of the outcome of the 2015 Food Festival.

Steve Howell gave an overview of a draft evaluation report which had been prepared by Durham University. Members noted the profile of visitors, which had increased by approximately 9% on the previous year, feedback from visitors and businesses and a financial appraisal of the event.

It was noted that the benefit to the local economy had been estimated to be £572,620, an increase of approximately 10%.

Discussions took place around the take up of the park and ride offer, the use of North Bondgate car park for traders, and the possibility of encouraging more visitors to use the rail service.

Arrangements were to be made for representatives of the Town Council to meet with the Events Team to discuss preparations for the 2016 Festival.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted

TC.92/15 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15TH SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

TC.93/15 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

- a. Planning, 15th September 2015
- b. Finance Committee, 20th October 2015

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC.94/15 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor reported that he had attended a number of events since the last Council meeting including.

16 September 2015	Attended a celebration of GCSE and A Level Students awards evening at St. John's School. A special remembrance award was also bestowed posthumously to a former student who was killed in Afghanistan.
18 September 2015	Held a Comedy Charity Night to raise funds for Help for Heroes.
20 September 2015	Present trophies at the Bishop Auckland Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society's Annual Show
25 September 2015	Attended Mayor of Hartlepool's Charity Quiz Night
30 September 2015	Officiated at the opening of the Agnew Building at King James I Academy
1 October 2015	Attended a meeting of the Breath Easy Group as main speaker.
02 October 2015	Attended Mayor of Spennymoor's Afternoon Tea
3 October 2015	Attended 2nd Bishop Auckland Scouts to meet with volunteer groups and potential volunteers from South West Durham
7 October 2015	Officiated at the opening of Prince Bishops Community Bank
8 October 2015	Attended Mayor of Great Aycliffe's charity cabaret night
15 October 2015	Involved in promotion of 'Slow to 20 for Safer Streets' to publicise newly introduced 20 mph restrictions around schools in Bishop Auckland.
16 October 2015	Attended Chairman of Durham County Council's charity concert
17 October 2015	Attended Mayor of Darlington's charity social evening
23 October 2015	Officiated at the opening of the Newgate Shopping Centre following its refurbishment
23 October 2015	Attended Mayor of Brandon & Byshottles charity evening

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS

TC.95/15 TOWN TEAM

Clive Auld updated Members on recent activities of the Town Team.

Monster Saturday, which had taken place on 31st October 2015, had been well attended. Various entertainment had been arranged including performances by Sandra Welsh Dancers, Mint Management and a children's pumpkin parade.

Arrangements were being made for Christmas events taking place on Saturday, 5th, 12th and 19th December.

Arrangements were also being made for Small Business Saturday, which would be held on 5th December.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.96/15 THE BIG LOCAL – GAUNLESS GATEWAY

Members were updated with regard to the Big Local project. It was noted that the final draft of the bid had been agreed by the Gaunless Gateway Board.

The summary of the document, together with a questionnaire was being delivered to households in the Big Local area to gather community views. Detailed discussion was

Signed:
Town Mayor

given to the bid and survey of opinion. It was noted that feedback from the survey would be used to revise the bid where necessary prior to submission.

It was commented that discussions for the use of funds allocated to the areas by the Big Lottery had been ongoing for a number of years and were under threat of being withdrawn if a project wasn't agreed. Those involved with the Gaunless Gateway project to provide apprenticeships and training opportunities for people from the defined area had persevered to achieve a worthy use of the funds, whereas other proposed projects had been abandoned due to the difficulty of the process. It was understood that there was community support, which would be tested by the survey.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.97/15 COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS AGM

It was noted that Councillor Fleming and the Town Clerk had attended CDALC AGM on Saturday 24th October. A schedule of appointments made at the AM was circulated for information. It was also noted that Mick Barton, Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary and a colleague gave a presentation on Gypsy's and Travellers, which prompted an interesting and lengthy discussion.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.98/15 STANDARDS TRAINING, 18TH NOVEMBER 2015

Members were advised that County Training Partnership, in conjunction with Durham County Council had invited local councils to attend a standards training session to be held on Wednesday 18th November 2015 from 6.00 p.m. The training, which would be held at County Hall, was free to attend.

Councillor Golightly had previously expressed an interest in attending. Councillor L. Zair expressed an interest in attending at the meeting

RESOLVED: That Councillors Golightly and L Zair attend the training.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.99/15 COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION - BUDGET

At its meeting held on 15th September 2015 Members provisionally agreed a maximum budget of £350,000 for the purchase and renovation of suitable premises or to build new premises if suitable land could be acquired. The budget was be made up of a loan from the Public Works Loan Board of £300,000 (annuity repayment over 50 years at a fixed term interest rate of 3.51% costing £6,386 half yearly) and £50,000 from balances which had been built up for this purpose. (Minute No TC.87/15 refers). Additional balances were available for contingencies and fixtures and furnishings.

An article had been published in the local community newspaper Bishop Press to seek comments from the public on the proposal. Members noted that no comments had been received.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Council confirms its previous in principle decision to acquire its own office accommodation
 2. That an outline budget of £350,000 be confirmed for the accommodation project made up of a loan from the Public Works Loan Board of £300,000 (annuity repayment over 50 years) and £50,000 from balances.

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC.100/15 NE FIRST CREDIT UNION (WOODHOUSE CLOSE)

Consideration was given to a report, together with an addendum circulated at the meeting, detailing discussions that had taken place with the Chief Executive of NE First Credit Union, which operated out of Woodhouse Close Church. (For copies see file of Minutes).

Members had previously agreed in principle for a sum of £5,000 to be deposited with the Credit Union for a 3 year rolling period reviewed annually, which was to be used to help the most vulnerable in society avoid or break the cycle of lending from illegal sources and associated difficulties.

Debate took place regarding whether to apply conditions on the use of the funds.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That a deposit of £5,000 for a rolling period of 3 years, reviewed annually.
 2. That the funds be ringfenced for use to help residents living within the Town Council's area with criteria applied so that funding could not be used to support the purchase of luxury items.

TC.101/15 REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

Members reviewed the Council's Constitution and considered a scheduled detailed various amendments. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED: That the Constitution be agreed.

TC.102/15 REVIEW OF POLICY FRAMEWORK

Members reviewed the Council's Policy Framework and considered a scheduled detailed various amendments, (for copy see file of Minutes).

The following policies made up the Policy Framework:-

- Comments & Complaints Procedure
- Community Engagement Policy
- Community Fund Policy and Guidance
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Public Filming, Recording and Reporting Policy
- Public Participation Policy
- Publication Scheme
- Training Statement of Intent

RESOLVED: That the Policy Framework be agreed

TC.103/15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY CODE 2015

Consideration was given to a report setting out the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was noted that the code applied to local councils with an annual income or expenditure of at least £200,000. The Town Council's anticipated income and

Signed:
Town Mayor

expenditure fell below this level, however it was suggested that the Council comply with the Code on a voluntary basis in the interest of openness and transparency.

RESOLVED: That the Local Government Transparency Code be adopted.

TC.104/15 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARDS SCHEME

Consideration was given to the National Association of Local Councils revised Local Councils Award Scheme. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted the requirements for each level of award and considered a schedule indicating whether the Council's had fulfilled each criterion.

RESOLVED: That having satisfied the criteria for Foundation Status the Council apply for the award.

TC.105/15 COUNCIL WEBSITE

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval to upgrade or renew the Council's website. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted that the current website no longer met the needs of the Council or the requirements to fully engage with the community.

It was suggested that the Council should have its own Facebook page as a means to engage with the public.

RESOLVED:

1. That options to upgrade or renew the Council's website be investigated.
2. That the Council obtain a Facebook page.

TC.106/15 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

The following would be invited to attend an appropriately timed meeting to update the Town Council on their activities:

- Wannasee (8th December 2015)
- Mike Richardson, Velo 2016 (19th January 2016)

TC.107/15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council excluded the press and public for the remaining items on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

TC.108/15 TOWN COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Council's current accommodation and options for future accommodation, together with an addendum updating Members with regard to possible future accommodation. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED:

1. That an offer be made for the property identified in the addendum to the report ranging from c – e
2. That the offer of a reduced rent for the current accommodation be accepted.

Signed:
Town Mayor