

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015** at 6.00 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor Brownson (Mayor), and Councillors Anderson, Fleming, Golightly, Race, Wilson,

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

**TC.109/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blackburn, Lethbridge, A Zair, L. Zair and S. Zair

**TC.110/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised under this item.

**TC.111/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Golightly declared an 'other registerable interest' in respect of Item No 7b 'Minutes of Committees, Finance Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015'. Councillor Golightly acknowledged that she should have declared an interest at the Finance Committee in respect to an application relating to the Four Clocks Heritage Programme, but hadn't realised that the application involved Bishop Auckland Community Partnership. The application was therefore reconsidered (Minute No. TC.115/15 refers). Councillor Golightly took no part in the reconsideration of that application.

**TC.112/15 WANNASEE FESTIVAL 2016**

John Brennan and Paul Watson were in attendance to update Members on preparations for the 2016 Wannasee Festival.

Members noted that attendance had increased from the previous year in line with predictions that the Festival would become established over the initial three to four year period.

Members also noted the financial appraisal for 2015, together with likely costs for 2016. It was acknowledged that the financial support from the Town Council would be required in line with original projections.

Discussion took place with regard to the line-up for the 2016 Festival, together with outline arrangements for a civic event which was planned to take place at the Festival on Saturday.28<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

During discussions relating to the planned civic event it was noted that this would take place only four days after the election of the Mayor for 2016/17, which would not allow sufficient time for the newly elected Mayor to issue invitations and make other necessary arrangements. It was therefore suggested that the date of the Annual Meeting be changed to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016, which would permit arrangements to be made for the current Mayor to hold a civic event at the Festival.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the information be noted
  2. That the grant for 2016 be confirmed.
  3. That the date of the Annual Meeting be changed to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016

**Signed:** .....  
**Town Mayor**

## **TC.113/15 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015**

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

## **TC.114/15 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

- a. Planning Committee, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015
- b. Finance Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes be approved and adopted, with the exception of Minute No FIN.36/15. (See Minute No TC.115/15)

## **TC.115/15 MATTERS ARISING**

Further to Councillor Golightly's declaration of interest in respect to the application for financial assistance from the Four Clocks Heritage Project (Minute No FIN.36/15 refers), the application was reconsidered.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1 That a donation of £485 be made to the Four Clocks Heritage Project to help initiate the project.
  - 2. That the remainder of the recommendations of the Finance Committee recorded at Minute No FIN.36/15 be approved.

## **TC.116/15 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR**

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

31 October 2015	Attended official Opening of new hairdressers in Fore Bondgate
6 November 2015	Attended Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary Dinner at Auckland Castle.
6 November 2015	Judged photographs and Remembrance Poem Competition
8 November 2015	Attended Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service
9 November 2015	Attended Sedgefield Town Council's Charity fundraising Event
13 November 2015	Attended re-opening of Natwest Bank Bishop Auckland
13 November 2015	Attended 106th Birthday celebrations of a resident of Eden House Care Home
13 November 2015	Attended Mayor of Sunderland City Council's Black Tie Charity Fundraiser event
15 November 2015	Attended 'We Will Remember Them', a celebration to remember the fallen organised by Bishop Auckland Music Society
20 November 2015	Officiated at the Town Council's Christmas Light Switch-On
21 November 2015	Attended Lloyds Bank Children In Need Charity Ball
2 December 2015	Attended Bishop Auckland Civic Society Annual Charity Town Quiz which supported the Mayors charity
3 December 2015	Presented awards at the Royal Air Force Air Cadets Squadron's Annual Presentation Evening
4 December 2015	Attended Mayor of Spennymoor Town Council's Civic Dinner

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

## **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS**

## **TC.117/15 TOWN TEAM**

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

**Signed:** .....  
**Town Mayor**

The first Christmas event had taken place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December, with Santa visiting Beales department store. The event had been well attended with over 85 children having their photo taken with Santa. Events were also planned for the following two Saturdays running up to Christmas.

Small Business Saturday had taken place on 5<sup>th</sup> December. 23 local shops took part, each offering a discount or promotion to encourage local people to shop local. Promotions had been advertised in Bishop Press.

A business conference had been held at Auckland Castle on 17<sup>th</sup> November aimed at helping local business take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Eleven Arches night shows and Auckland Castle developments. The conference had been very well attended.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

**TC.118/15 THE BIG LOCAL – GAUNLESS GATEWAY**

Members noted that the bid had been submitted. A copy would be circulated for information.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

**REPORT OF TOWN CLERK**

**TC.119/15 APPOINTMENT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Members noted that Councillors Race had resigned from the Planning Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Fleming be appointed to the Planning Committee for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

**TC.120/15 COUNCIL TAX 2016/17, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 – 2017/18**

Consideration was given to the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 and in particular the proposed budget for 2016/17.

It was noted that in addition to inflationary pressures the Council's funding was also vulnerable to the effects of the Localisation of Council Tax Support regime which had the unintended consequence of reducing the Town Council's Tax Base, thereby reducing the ability to raise revenue.

The Government had made a grant available, however this did not make up the entire shortfall. Durham County Council had informed local councils that the allocation would reduce year on year in line with the reduction of revenue grant paid by the Government to it. Grant forecasted up to 2017/18 was included in the MTFP.

In addition, it was noted that the Secretary of State's powers to impose a referendum on principal councils where increases in Council Tax were above a certain level, may be extended to local councils. This would limit the Council's ability to deliver additional services. An announcement had not yet been made, however indications were that if this regime was imposed on local councils it may only apply to those Parish/Town Council that levy a Council Tax above the level of the smallest district councils, i.e. around £160 - £170 (Band D). An announcement was not expected until mid February, however Durham County Council had requested notification of local councils precepts by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

Bishop Auckland Town Council would not be affected if the referendum regime was extended as anticipated. However any announcement by the Secretary of State would

**Signed:** .....  
**Town Mayor**

be reported to Members and the Council Tax and the precept would be revisited if necessary.

The Finance Committee had considered the MTFP, incorporating budget proposals for 2016/17 at its meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015. All Members had been invited to the meeting to participate in the preparation of budget proposals.

Detailed consideration was given to the Finance Committee's proposals, together with proposals to restrict the increase to Council Tax to £1.80 (4.73%), which would result in a Council Tax of £39.83 (Band D).

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Council's budget for 2016/17 be set at £192,427, resulting in a precept of £160,411 equivalent to a Band D Council Tax of £39.83 representing increase of £1.80 (4.7%) over the previous year.
  2. That the resulting Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 be agreed

#### **TC.121/15 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

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

- Mike Richardson, Velo 2016 (19<sup>th</sup> January 2016)

#### **TC.122/15 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.123/15 TOWN COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION**

Consideration was given to a report updating members on the current position with regard to the Council's accommodation. (for copy see file of Minutes)

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Council's maximum offer for the property identified in the report be 'f' as identified in the addendum to the report considered on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

Signed: .....  
Town Mayor