

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 11TH JANUARY 2017** at 6.00 p.m.

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

Also Present: Clive Auld (Bishop Auckland Town Team), John Brennan, Paul Watson (Wannasee) and David Anderson (Town Clerk).

Public in Attendance: None

TC.133/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Blackburn

TC.134/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public in attendance.

TC.135/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

TC.136/16 Wannasee Festival

Paul Brennan and Paul Watson, organisers of Wannasee Festival, were present at the meeting to give a review of the festival held in 2016 and an overview of the festival to be held 26th to 28th May 2017.

Members also noted the financial outcome of the 2016 festival, which had been provided in confidence to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting, showing that the event was not yet at a breakeven point.

It was noted that VIP tickets had been on sale in 2016 to support Mayor's charity, which had been very popular. It had been intended for a similar event to be held in 2017. However, due to the timing of the local elections to be held on 4th May and the Council's Annual meeting to be held on 16th May it would not be possible to organise an event for new Mayor.

It was therefore suggested the Town Clerk make arrangements with Wannasee to sell VIP tickets to raise funds for a local charity. Discussions could take place regarding the involvement of the Mayor, following the Council's Annual meeting.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the information be noted
 2. That the grant for 2017 be confirmed.
 3. That the Town Clerk make arrangements with Wannasee to sell VIP tickets to raise funds for a local charity.

TC.137/16 TOWN (CORE) TEAM

Councillor Anderson, Chair of the Core Team, updated members with regard to a meeting of the Core Team held on 5th January 2017.

Two new members had joined the Core team. Gillian Campbell, Bishop FM, representing business sector and Katie Smurthwaite, representing community sector

Consideration was given to the development of an action plan which would give an overview of projects contributing to the regeneration of the town centre. It was

Signed:
Town Mayor

intended that this would form the basis of discussions at Core Team meetings and to report progress at Town Team meetings.

Sara Williams, Marketing and Partnerships Manager, Eleven Arches, had given an update on arrangements for Kynren 2017. Volunteer recruitment was going well. An additional 500 volunteers were being sought for 2017. Mix and match sessions had been led by Steve Boyd which had been really successful. Ticket sales went live beginning of December. Sales were on target. Gift vouchers also selling well.

Overall it was intended that Kynren would provide a destination event which would contribute to the regeneration of the town and surrounding area.

A more structured approach was being taken for event car parking, which would include parking at North Bondgate and the Newgate Centre, together with park and ride facilities at the outskirts of the town. It had been noted that pricing of car parks and shuttle busses had been fixed to recoup costs. No profit is being made on these. There had been a perception that Kynren had utilised all the car parks during the 2016 season. However this had not been the case. Information needed to be circulated that all other town centre parking facilities were for general use.

Liz Fisher, Auckland Castle Trust, had given an update on the Castle's projects. It was noted that the Castle was closed for renovation and building works. Additional activities were being planned to be held in the Market Place to encourage footfall and dwell time.

The Mining Art Gallery was being created in Old Bank Chambers. It was expected that this would be open during summer 2017.

Town Ambassador Training was continuing. It was envisaged that the town would attain World Host Destination status when this round of training was complete.

Work continuing to establish Bishop Pointers to welcome visitors to the town.

Bishop and Coundon in Bloom had also been launched. This would involve a number of projects to increase the attractiveness of the town and encourage civic pride.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.138/16 TOWN (EVENTS) TEAM

Clive Auld updated Members with regard to the activities of the Events Team

Christmas activities had gone fantastically well with almost 700 photos with Santa being sold. Various entertainment had also been arranged including singers, a harpist and a choir.

A meeting would be held to consider events for 2017.

Members expressed their gratitude to the Events Team.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.139/16 THE BIG LOCAL – GAUNLESS GATEWAY

Clive Auld updated Members on the Gaunless Gateway project.

Members noted that a community co-ordinator had been appointed.

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Town Mayor

The maximum amount of funding available through community grants for individual projects that supported the Gaunless Gateway area had been increased. Grants would be available for the next 2 years. Nine applications had been considered to date.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.140/16 MINUTES

Town Council	13th December 2016
Planning Committee	13th December 2016
Finance Committee	10th January 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and recommendations contained therein be adopted.

MATTERS ARISING

Referring to Minute No TC.126/16 and making reference to a recommendation contained in the Internal Auditors report, Councillor Fleming queried when a review of staff salaries would take place. It was suggested that a review should take place to reflect current and proposed additional responsibilities in line with the Council's intentions to purchase its own premises and proposals to increase activities in line with parish plan consultation.

This was supported by the Council. A report would be submitted to Council in due course.

TC.141/16 REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Members noted a report of the Mayor detailing the events attended since the previous meeting. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Mayor expressed her gratitude to the Deputy Mayor for his support during December while she was recovering from a back operation.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.142/16 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING

There were no reports

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.143/16 ROYAL GARDEN PARTY, TUESDAY 23RD MAY 2017

Consideration was given to making a nomination to CDALC for a representative to attend the Royal Garden Party on 23th May 2017.

RESOLVED: That Councillor A. Zair be nominated to attend the Royal Garden Party.

TC.144/16 ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk with regard to the annual rent review relating to 2018/19. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded that the Town Council was required to give tenants 12 months notice of any increase in rent. Consideration was given to a table showing rent history from 2010/11 to 2017/18, together with a comparison of rent paid by tenants of Durham County Council allotments.

Signed:
Town Mayor

RECOMMENDED: That rent for 2018/19 remain at 50p per square meter with a 50% discount applied if the plot is more than half cultivated.

**TC.145/16 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 – 2019/20
COUNCIL TAX 2017/18**

Members considered recommendations of the Finance Committee agreed at its meeting held on 10th January 2017 in connection to the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 and budgetary requirements for 2017/18. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Durham County Council had requested notification of local council's precepts by no later than 27th January 2017.

Council Tax Base, Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Details of the Tax Base and the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) Grant for 2017/18 were reported at the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 6th December. (Minute No FIN.40/16 refers) and were taken into account at its meeting held on 10th January 2017.

In summary the Tax Base (i.e. number of Band D equivalent properties) had risen by 55.2, increasing the Council Tax Yield by £2,198.62. However the LCTRS Grant had reduced by £3,270. The net effect was that the precept would need to increase by £1,071.38 to achieve a stand still budget.

Referendum Principles

Members noted that following lobbying by NALC, County Associations and individual town and parish councils, including Bishop Auckland, the Government had advised that referendum principles would not be extended to town and parish council for 2017/18.

Parish Plan

It had been expected to be able to quantify the financial implications of the outcome of the parish plan consultation. This however wasn't possible as many of the issues raised were not the primary responsibility of the Town Council and therefore discussions would be required with Durham County Council and other organisations to identify current strategies and whether additional funding would be required to improve or resolve issues.

Whilst it was not possible to quantify resources required for individual issues the Finance Committee included a fund within its recommendations to help facilitate future projects associated with the parish plan. This would put the Council in a good position to be able to respond appropriately and contribute positively to issues raised during the consultation.

Finance Committee Recommendations

The Finance Committee had recommended that a precept for 2017/18 of £169,539, an increase of £9,127 on the previous year. If this was agreed Council Tax for 2017/18 would be £41.52 (Band D) an increase of £1.70 (4.26%).

Members noted a table setting out council tax payable for 2017/18 for each tax band based on recommendations of the Finance Committee, together with the number of properties in each band. It was noted that the vast majority of households (62%) fell in band A and would £27.68 per annum.

Signed:
Town Mayor

Responding to a query it was reported that, if the recommendations of Finance Committee were agreed, council tax would have risen by £12.93 (45.23%) since the last local elections in May 2013. On average this would represent an increase of £3.23 per year. Although in monetary terms the increase had been modest, the percentage increase is large due to the low base figure.

It was noted that Council Tax for Bishop Auckland continued to compare well with other parish councils in the county. The average being £133 (2016/17).

Funding had been used to enhance services provided directly or supported by the Town Council including:-

- Bishop Auckland Food Festival
- Wannasee music festival
- Velo town centre cycle race
- Lighting of the town rec skatepark, which will open shortly
- Christmas switch-on and entertainment
- Youth Awards
- Horticultural Show
- Community fund donations
- Provision of hanging baskets in the town centre
- Consultation on local issues to develop a parish plan
- Project fund to respond to Parish Plan issues

It was also noted that since its introduction in 2014/15 LCTRS grant had reduced by £6,994 which had to be made up by increases in council tax.

The Town Council had recently achieved the foundation status of the Local Council Award Scheme and was working to achieve quality status.

Following detailed consideration of the recommendations of the Finance Committee it was moved by Councillor Race and seconded by Councillor S. Zair that the budget for the Youth Awards should be set at £5,000, a reduction of £1,000.

On a vote being taken the amendment was agreed. (9 votes for; 1 vote against).

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Council's budget for 2017/18 be set at £197,285 resulting in a precept of £168,539 equivalent to a Band D Council Tax of £41.28 representing increase of £1.45 (3.65%) over the previous year.
 2. That the resulting Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 be agreed

TC.146/16 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

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

- Kate James, Durham County Council, Food Festival (March 2017)
- Inspector Andy Reeves, Neighbourhood Policing
- Chris Myers, Regeneration Projects Manager, Durham County Council

TC.147/16 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,

Signed:
Town Mayor

the Council excluded the press and public for the next item by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK (CONTINUED)

TC.148/16 DETERMINATION OF TENANCY

Members considered a report with regard to an ongoing determination of a tenancy at Mill Race Allotments.

RESOLVED: That the action taken be endorsed.

ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

TC.149/16 DELEGATED DECISIONS UNDER FINANCIAL REGULATION 4.5

It was noted that no decisions had been taken under Financial Regulation 4.5 since the previous Council meeting.

Signed:
Town Mayor