

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 23rd JANUARY 2018** at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor A Zair (Mayor), and Councillors Allen, Blackburn, Brownson, Chappell, Cullen, Fleming, Tucker, Wilson, L Zair and S. Zair

Also Present: Nigel Bryson and Clive Auld (Bishop Auckland Town Team)
David Anderson (Town Clerk)

Public in Attendance: Alan Anderson

TC.137/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
All members were present

TC.138/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Councillors Allen declared an 'other registerable interest' in respect of item no. 9.1 Women's Centenary Vote' and took no part in the voting thereon.

TC.139/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
None queries were raised.

PRESENTATIONS

TC.140/17 TOWN (CORE) TEAM
Nigel Bryson (Chairman of the Town Team) updated members with regard to the activities of the Core Team.

It was noted that the wifi project was being dealt with by Durham County Council procurement team. Implementation would be delayed to ensure that all necessary regulations, including new GDPR regs, were adhered to and that the specification was appropriate. The procurement of the wifi would be combined with a wifi project for Stanley. Costs would allocated to the separate projects. The tender would be issued as soon as possible.

The information boards on Fore Bondgate would be replaced. The Auckland Project would be responsible for two boards, Durham County Council would be responsible for one board which would include details of shops.

An annual report was being prepared which would cover activities during 2017 together with future plans.

A meeting had taken place with DCC Regeneration regarding possible projects for inclusion in the Heritage Action Zone. It was noted that the Town Council was also represented at this meeting. Projects were being sought which had a heritage link to be part of the HAZ. There was no direct funding from the HAZ, although approved project were more likely, but not guaranteed, to obtain grants. A HAZ project officer was to be appointed who would provide support for approved projects. English Heritage would also support projects.

Progress continued to be made by DCC on the Targeted Business Improvement grants. Three additional applications were being considered.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC.141/17 TOWN (EVENTS) TEAM

Clive Auld (Chairman of the Town (Events) Team gave an update of the activities of the Events Team, including the following:-

The Advent Calendar project had been very successful. Barbara Gubbins, Durham Foundation, had been present during the opening of one of the displays and had been delighted with the success of the project.

A booklet was being prepared to advertise all Town Team events for 2018. Sponsorship had been sought from local businesses which meant that the booklet was self financed.

It was noted that the banners would be redesigned to welcome visitors to the town. Eleven Arches Trust had agreed to help support the renewal of the banners.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.142/17 MINUTES

Town Council	12 th December 2017
Planning Committee	12 th December 2017
Finance Committee	16 th January 2018

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

MATTERS ARISING

There were no further matters arising.

TC.143/17 REPORT OF THE MAYOR

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

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.144/17 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING COURSES

No reports were given

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK**TC.145/17 WOMEN'S VOTE CENTENARY**

Members noted that a delegated decision had been made under Financial Regulation 4.5 for the Council to support the women's vote centenary celebrations planned to be held on 6th February 2018 by applying for a grant from the Government Equalities Office's 'Women's Vote Centenary Grant Scheme'.

The grant application had been successful. Members were required to formally consider the conditions of grant prior to acceptance.

RESOLVED: That the conditions of grant be accepted.

TC.146/17 TRAINING

Consideration was given to attendance at the following training events

1. Allotment Management 11th April 2018, Shotton Hall, Peterlee

Signed:
Town Mayor

2. Bullying and Harassment, 2nd May 2018 Shotton Hall Peterlee

It was noted that both training sessions were free of charge to CDALC members.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Councillor Fleming and the Town Clerk attend the Allotment Management training
 2. That the Town Clerk attend the Bullying and Harassment training

TC.147/17 MISSION STATEMENT

Following conclusion of the Parish Plan and taking into account key issues raised during the process, A number of workshop had been held so that Members could consider the Council's future direction, aims and objectives and its ambitions to grow, which would be underpinned by a Mission Statement.

After careful consideration the following Mission Statement had been proposed for formal adoption:-

'Working in partnership to improve the quality of life for all those who live, work, visit or invest in Bishop Auckland'

In doing so, the Council will:

- Conduct business openly and democratically, and consult with local people.
- Act in the best interests of local people in making appropriate representations to Durham County Council and other appropriate private and public sector groups.
- Deliver services to the highest quality in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and value for money.
- Continue to build relationships with the community and voluntary organisations and with the statutory, public and private sector.
- Encourage and promote economic and commercial long terms plans for the town through partnership working.
- Recognise and support diversity and seek to strengthen the inclusion of all residents of Bishop Auckland.

RESOLVED: That the above Mission Statement be formally adopted

TC.148/17 PROVISIONAL RESPONSE TO PARISH PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration was given to a report making suggestions for a provisional response to the recommendations in the Parish Plan report which had been based on key issues raised during the consultation exercise.

It was noted that the provisional response would help inform discussions on budget proposals for 2018/19. Further work would be required to develop a priorities action plan covering the next 3 – 4 years.

With regard to Recommendation 4 relating to the sale of alcohol to underage people it was suggested that information and stronger links be sought with Operation Aries

With regard to Recommendation 8 relating litter, dog fouling and fly tipping, it was suggested that discussions be held with DCC with a view to initiating educational and enforcement initiatives in the town.

Signed:
Town Mayor

RESOLVED: That the suggested response, together with the above suggestions be agreed as the provision response to the Parish Plan recommendations.

TC.149/17 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2017/18 TO 2020/21 AND COUNCIL TAX 2018/19

Members noted that Finance Committee considered the Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 – 2020/21 and Council Tax 2018/19 at its meeting held on 16th January 2018. (Minute No FIN.54/17 refers). However in view of the continuing work to develop a response and action plan to deal with the key issues raised during consultation on the parish plan, members deferred consideration to Council to allow proposals to be discussed at a member workshop. The Finance Committee had therefore made no recommendations on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 - 2020/21 or Council Tax 2018/19

Council was reminded that details of the Tax Base and the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTR) Grant for 2018/19 had been reported to the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 5th December 2017. (Minute No FIN.42/17 refers). In summary the Tax Base (i.e. number of Band D equivalent properties) has risen by 39.00, increasing the Council Tax Yield by £1,609.92. LCTR Grant had therefore increased by £349.

The Government had advised that referendum principles would not be extended to town and parish councils for 2018/19. It was however suggested that members be mindful of the principles whilst considering the council tax and budget for 2018/19, which stated that a referendum would be triggered if council tax increases were 2% or above, or over £5.00 whichever was higher. It was noted that if referendum principles were applicable the Town Council would be able to increase council tax by up to £5.00 without triggering a referendum.

Consideration was given to the MTFP which had been revised to take into account of this information, together with a number of proposed amendments, in consultation with the Chairman of Finance Committee, which could be accommodated within the current budget without affecting council tax.

Members were however reminded of the development of the Council's response to the consultation undertaken on the parish plan. It was the intention to develop a realistic and achievable action plan that addressed the key issues raised during the consultation process. The Town Council would not be able to address all of the issues alone and it would therefore need to work in partnership with others or lobby relevant authorities on behalf of the community.

Provision of £9,000 had been made in the proposed budget to help fund projects during 2018/19, however depending on issues and priorities yet to be agreed additional funding may be required.

In addition to allocating adequate funds to resource projects the Council also needed to consider resources in terms of staff to deliver projects. The Council had 2.6 FTE (full time equivalent) employees who were fully occupied and therefore additional resources would be required for the action plan to be delivered.

It was noted that an increase of £5.00 on the Council Tax at Band D would generate an additional £20,610 which could be used to help tackle key issues raised during the Parish Plan consultation. With around 62% of properties falling within Band A the increase to the majority of households would equate to £3.34 or 28p per month.

Signed:
Town Mayor

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Council's budget for 2018/19 be set at £219,386 resulting in a precept of £190,771 equivalent to a Band D Council Tax of £46.28 representing increase of £5.00 (12.12%) on the previous year.
 2. That the resulting Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 – 2020/21 be agreed

TC.150/17 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

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

- Neighbourhood Inspector Andy Reeves (January 2018 – Special meeting)
- John Wiseman, Auckland Youth and Community Centre
- Mick Irwin, Drug and Alcohol Reduction Unit
- Barbara Slasor, Gaunless Gateway Partnership
- John Brannan and Paul Watson, Wannasee

TC.151/17 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.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.152/17 ACCOUNTANCY SUPPORT

Consideration was given to a report seeking support from a suitably qualified person to provide accountancy services, including assistance with budgetary control, quarterly reports to Finance Committee and preparation of the annual governance statement and accountability return. The report also proposed that the introduction of the RBS (Rialtis Business Systems) accounting system be explored. (For copy see file of Minutes).

- RESOLVED:**
1. That Mr Derek Shingleton be requested to provide accountancy services for the Council on a casual basis.
 2. That the introduction of the RBS accounting system be explored.

TC.153/17 DETERMINATION OF TENANCY

Further to Minute No TC.135/17 Members noted that the tenants of the subject allotments had now vacated the site. The tenants had demolished structures and cleared the site to a reasonable standard.

Durham County Council (DCC) had been organised to clear the site if the tenants had not, it had been agreed on site, in consultation with the Chairman of the Allotments and Environment Committee, that DCC level the site in preparation for future use, which had yet to be decided.

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

Signed:
Town Mayor

2. That action taken in consultation with the Chairman of the Allotments and Environment Committee to clear the site be endorsed.

TC.154/17 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the current position with regard to the potential purchase of accommodation detailed in the report considered by Council at its meeting held on 24th October 2017.

It was noted that the owner of the building was obtaining costs for an extension to accommodate a meeting room. Further discussions would take place regarding the value of the building and potential offer from the Council when the costs had been obtained

RESOLVED: 1. That the information be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor