



Bishop Auckland Town Council

Council Meeting

25 July 2023

Minutes

Present: Cllr S Zair (Chair) , Cllr Balmer-Howieson, Cllr J Blackburn, Cllr Harker, Cllr Lawson, Cllr Legge, Cllr M Siddle, Cllr L Zair, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr A Zair, Cllr L Zair

Also Present: Sarah Harris, Town Clerk, Vicki Booth Assistant Town Clerk,

TC027/23 Apologies for absence – Cllr K Eliot & Cllr K Lawson
No contact from Cllr H Balmer-Howieson

Resolved: That the absences be noted and accepted.

TC028/23 Declarations of Interest – Members were invited to declare any interest they may have.

Resolved: Cllr Blackburn declared an interest in the CAB & Christian Partnership. Cllr A Zair declared an interest in Smith-Roddam solicitors regarding the allotment discussion.

TC029/23 Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the following meetings:

- Town Council 20th June 2023
- Community Committee 4th July 2023
- Allotment and Environment Committee 5th July 2023
- Policy & Resource Committee 11th July 2023

Resolved: That the above Minutes have been received, and that the Town Council agreed to adopt all recommendations contained within them.

Members discussed the possibility of replacing missing members so that all committees can be quorate at all times. Should be revised in standing orders for anyone who will be absent for long periods of time then can look to appoint someone in their place.

Resolved: Town Clerk to prepare a report to be discussed at a future Policy and Resources Committee.

TC030/23 Matters Arising – Action log from all meetings to be discussed by Town Clerk at each meeting going forward.

TC017/23 Advised that request community governance review from DCC. BATC would have a good case for a request for a boundary review as they should be done every 10 years and BATC not done since 2007. We would not be co-terminus with county boundaries if the plans go as anticipated. This could not be considered until the review is complete in Nov 2023.

TC026/23 DCC registry response – looking to use the family hubs for registration going forward.

Resolved: that members noted the update.

TC031/23 Public Participation – No members of public present

TC032/23 Reports

a) Durham County Council – Works now started on the Future High St in Fore Bondgate and will then follow Aug the Stack development, Sept Bus station development.

b) Outside Bodies – Larger councils forum Town Clerk & Cllr Harker in attendance, and provided some brief feedback.

c) Mayor's Report – Mayor gave an update of events he has attended.

Resolved: that members noted the reports have been noted.

TC033/23 Town Clerk Report

a) Events Update

- i) Heritage Fair – the date was set for 23rd September, and the Council were working with a range of partners to deliver the event. The Council were now the event lead as the HAZ Officer had left. Heritage England were funding the event, the Council were supplying officer time.
- ii) Remembrance – planning underway, road closure in place, PA system and programming are being finalised.
- iii) Other events including - River Wear Trust are holding an event in early August which Chair of Allotment and Environment Committee has had some discussions around. They had initially used the Town Council Logo on posters, however this had not been agreed.

Resolved: Members noted the update on events.

Members agreed to publicise BATC support for the River Wears Trust and have the logo on their website, however advice for the event would be provided but it was to be clear that it was their event, and not one of the town council therefore the logo not to be used, and whilst advice provided there would be no physical presence from the Town Council staff at the event due to capacity issues.

- b) Allotment Inspections Update** - inspections have been carried out on 5 of 7 sites. Members support is needed for one site.

Resolved: Members noted the update, and agreed that Members of the Allotment Committee should attend the inspections to provide support for staff.

- c) Car Park Update** - main works are complete, new accessible door is due for install in August due to manufacturing delays.

Resolved: Members noted the update, and complimented the excellent works undertaken so far.

TC034/23 Consultations

- i) LCTRS Grant - DCC are providing proposals to phase out the LCTRS Grant over the next two years.

Cllr Wilson wanted it minuting that he is not happy that he only saw this paper for the first time today as he hadn't viewed papers prior to make an informed decision.

Resolved: That the members agreed to task the Town Clerk to collate a coordinated response stating that the council were dissatisfied with the timing of the consultation, and whilst they have been able to consider and respond many others wouldn't be able to due to recess, and that the council would prefer Option 1 from the proposals as it provides a smaller reduction for 2024-25.

- ii) Housing Strategy Consultation – from Durham County Council is also open for comment.

Resolved: Members agreed for Town Clerk to seek clarification as to timing of the consultation, as again limited time has been made available for councils to consider. Where possible the Clerk to coordinate a response before going on leave, the draft a response to be circulated for consensus before responding.

TC035/23 Use of meeting room request – two third party agencies had expressed an interest in using the council meeting room to provide appointment based specialist support to residents in the form of Cost of Living crisis and debt management.

Resolved: Members agreed for both the CAB and Durham Christian Partnership to use the room, on a 'payment in kind' relationship to support the community, for pre-booked appointments as long as the relevant risk assessments and paperwork was submitted.

TC036/23 Finance

- i) Statement of Payments – was presented as per appendix 1.
- ii) Community Fund Application
- iii) Insurance Renewal Update

Resolved: that Members noted the reports and approved the payments as set out in appendix 1. That there were no community fund applications to consider.

That the Clerk to see insurance renewal from the current provider.

TC037/23 Correspondence –

Resolved: that there was no correspondence to note

TC038/23 - it was proposed to exclude the press and public due to items of a confidential nature. Resolved: that members agreed for the press and public be excluded as 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 do now exclude the press and public for the remaining item on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

TC39/23 Allotment Association Agreements. Update was provided and some issues raised relating to different sites, including those without associations.

Resolved: Members agreed that the Clerk is to contact the National Allotment Association ask them to recommend a solicitor to use to look at the agreements if they are unable too, and if they are unable to consider them or they are unable to recommend someone then the Clerk to approach local solicitor Smith-Roddam.

TC40/23 Staff workloads, capacity and training update – Over school holidays staffing capacity is affected. The Clerk has completed her CILCA qualification, and is awaiting on feedback from the assessor.

Resolved: that members noted the update and were understanding of the issues over school holidays.

That members congratulated the Clerk on submitting the portfolio.