



# Bishop Auckland Town Council

## Council Meeting

12 September 2023

## Minutes

**Present:** Cllr S Zair (Chair), Cllr J Blackburn, Cllr Harker, Cllr L Zair, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr A Zair, Cllr L Zair

**Also Present:** Sarah Harris, Town Clerk, and 1 member of the public.

**TC041/23      Apologies for absence** – Cllr M Siddle, K Eliot & Cllr K Lawson

**Resolved:** That the absences be noted and accepted.

**TC042/23      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.

**TC043/23      Minutes** - To approve the Minutes of the following meetings:

- Town 25 July
- Allotment and Environment Committee 6 September 2023
- Policy & Resource Committee 5 September 2023

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

**TC044/23      Matters Arising** – Action log from all meetings to be discussed by Town Clerk at each meeting going forward.

**TC045/23      Public Participation** – the member of the public raised that within Raby Gardens, and a property was being converted into a HMO (house of multiple occupancy). Planning and Building control plus Environmental health were looking at concerns but due to size, it is likely that no regulations are being breached, and therefore the residents are not able to stop the development.

Resolved: that members felt for the residents, there was little that the Town Council could do, however they would action the Clerk to write a letter to the depts of DCC to seek support for the residents and ask for the concerns to be addressed.

## **TC046/23 Reports**

a) Durham County Council – Works now started on the Future High St in Fore Bondgate and Bus station development, there had been delays from STACK but due to start in October, update given from DCC Cllr Sam Zair, apologies received from Cllr Howey and Cllr Hunt.

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

The Mayor and Clerk updated on the Stronger Towns Board Projects and some likely changes with the 'Quick wins'. Members raised concerns over the governance at the board and how decision are being made.

**Resolved:** that Cllr Harker would work with the Clerk to draft a letter to the Board seeing some reassurances on behalf of the public.

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

**Resolved:** that members noted the reports have been noted.

## **TC047/23 Town Clerk Report**

### **a) Events Update**

- i) Heritage Fair – the date was set for 23<sup>rd</sup> 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, and outline of the day was given.

**Resolved:** Members noted the update on events.

- a) **Car Park Update** - building signage quotes had been delayed but three quotes were being sought.

**Resolved:** that members noted the update, and welcomed the final car park works to start. That the signage quotes be brought to the Policy and Resources Committee, and that a flag pole should also be sought as it was felt one was needed at a civic building.

- b) **Allotment Update** - was provided. (see file Copy)

#### **Recommended:**

that members agreed the water charge is per plot and not per tenant in the interest of fairness.

that members agreed that new mapping sizes be delayed due to discrepancy.

that members agreed that associations would receive 10% of plot rent by way of gratuity payment, for the support provided.

that members agreed that the EMR for allotments be used to enable maintenance of plots to be undertaken.

that members agreed that when budget setting takes place, site maintenance needs to be addressed.

- c) **Town council policies** - a review of the policies had been undertaken (see file copy) and some additional policies were needed, with updates to others.

**Resolved:** that the policies be amended and readopted as per the recommendations for the report.

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

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

**TC048/23 Consultations** – Durham County Council have their budget consultation out at present.

Members were directed to the information

**Resolved:** that members were to note the report and look at the consultation independently.

CDALC were raising the issues in terms of Council Tax Support grant on behalf of Parish Councils.

#### **TC049/23 Finance**

- i) **AGAR – External Audit & Conclusion of Audit** - the external audit report had been received from Mazars and the completion of audit published.

**Resolved:** That the that the Town Council approves and accepts the audited Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2023 and approves the proposed actions to be taken to address any issues raised.

Statement of Payments – was presented as per appendix 1.

**Resolved:** that Members noted the reports and approved the payments as set out in appendix 1.

- ii) **Community Fund Application –**

An application was received from the Durham Army Cadet force – Bishop Auckland branch for a projector x 2, plus audio equipment and a printer at a cost of £499.98

**Resolved:** that Members approved the application for the Durham subject to receipt of the associated paper work

An application was received over the summer period from the Cost of Living Alliance, for staffing support for their event in early September.

**Resolved:** that the application was not able to be supported due to be being for staffing and retrospective in terms of consideration.

- iii) **Insurance Renewal Update** – that the insurance provider had provided a renewal quote, at £3550.94

- iv) **Resolved:** that Members noted the update and authorised the insurance to be renewed.

- v) **Electronic Payments** - card payments machine has been identified as needed.

**Resolved:** that Members noted the update and agreed that a card payment facility is necessary, and actioned a options to be brought to policy and resources committee.

#### **TC037/23 Correspondence –**

**Resolved:** that there was no correspondence to note

**TC050/23** - 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.

**TC51/23 Staff training update** –The Clerk has completed the three minor amendments to her CILCA portfolio and is awaiting on feedback from the assessor.

**Resolved:** that members noted the update.

**Appendix 1 - Item Payments & Payments for Authorisation – 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023 -7 September 2023**

Paid	Ref	Supplier	Detail	Net	VAT	Gross	Notes
Allotments (Power to Provide Allotments – Smallholding and Allotments Act 1908, Sections 23, 26 and 42)							
	EP	Eldon Hope	4 tonnes of grade 1 aggregate for Tindale and Woodhouse	£160.00	£40.00	£200.00	
	EP	J Slater Gardening Services	Clearance of Plots 17 & 19 Tindale Crescent	£337.50	£0	£337.50	
Events – Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) (Horticultural Show) - (Local Government Act 1972, Section 145)							
	EP	Jeff Dobson Marquees	Table Hire for Heritage Festival	£70.00	£14.00	£84.00	DCC will reimburse us for Heritage Festival
	EP	Co Durham History Forum	Memberships for Heritage Festival	£26.00	£0	£26.00	
Kingsway – Car Park and Main Entrance (Local Government Act 1972, Section 133 Community Centres)							
	EP	My Civil Engineering	Final payment of car park works	£13979.16	£2792.23	£16771.39	
Ongoing Contracts and Obligations – (Local Government Act 1972, Sections 111 and 133)							
	EP	Twinkle Cleaning Services	Office Cleaning August 2023	£210.00		£210.00	Council Financial Regulation 5.6 list of going contracts and obligations.

