



## Bishop Auckland Town Council

### Council Meeting

17 October 2023

### Minutes

**Present:** Cllr S Zair (Chair), Cllr J Blackburn, Cllr Harker, Cllr L Zair, Cllr A Zair, Cllr L Zair, K Eliot, M Siddle, Cllr A Legge, Cllr J Blackburn

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

**TC052/23      Apologies for absence** – Cllr K Lawson, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr H Balmer-Howieson,

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

**TC053/23      Declarations of Interest** – Members were invited to declare any interest they may have.

**Resolved:** Cllr K Eliot advised she does have connections with Bacchanalia regarding Christmas Town and the Food Market

**TC054/23      Minutes** - To approve the Minutes of the following meetings:

- 12 September 2023 – Full Council (Andrew & Lesley)
- 20 September 2023 - Community Committee (Katie & Mike)
- 3 October 2023 – Policy and Resources Committee (Adam & Michael)
- 10 October 2023 – Community Committee

**Resolved:** That the above Minutes have been received, and that the Town Council agreed to adopt all recommendations contained within them. Cllr Zair – chair of Community Committee upset and feel it is unprofessional that the meeting was not quorate.

**TC055/23      Matters Arising** – Action log from all meetings to be discussed by Town Clerk at each meeting going forward.

**Resolved:** Members noted the actions in progress

**TC056/23      Public Participation** – no members of the public were present

**TC057/23      Reports**

- a) Durham County Council – CAT team at Cockton Hill dealing with localised issues. Bus station due to start in the next 2 weeks. Cllr Siddle had attended and commented that

lots of good info out of session and there needs to be a medium-term plan and not just in and out.

**Resolved:** that members noted the reports have been noted. Cllr L Zair requested start date of bus station works to be publicised as it is causing localised frustration. Cllr K Eliot – bus service to college has reduced and causing some issues for students. Cllr A Zair – Go northern on strike this week and go on strike indefinitely from 2 weeks' time if this is not resolved.

b) Outside Bodies –

- AAP update from Cllr Harker and discussed the council tax levy and the level of delinquency of payments. There was a discussion of the LCTR – this was up due to inflation and interest rates. Low tax base causes some lack of funds. The debt collection dept are doing a good job under current pressures.
- HAZ – gave a rundown of the projects that had been delivered and there is still a group who keeps links to the history and heritage things but are not a project as such, as HAZ has now ended.
- Stronger Towns Board – Cllr Harker & the Clerk drafted a letter from members highlighting it would be beneficial to invite members of the board to meet with council members in person. It was in principal good work started and coverage and is worth building on but we need to establish what is happening on the quick wins. Key members could approach us and keep us informed directly. Stronger Towns - Cllr A Zair asked about transparency, they were given £200k on this project and they spent £70k on legal fees, is there anything such as invoices.
- Larger Council Forum – Meeting went well, accounts were reviewed by Audrey Christie. PCC Joy Allen presentation on ASB. Police cuts are impacting neighbourhoods are being substituted by cadets and PCSO's. The underreporting is still a big issue and people don't have confidence in the police.

**Resolved:** That members noted the updates and that Members requested an invite for the Stronger Towns Board be included in the letter to go out to Graham Wood, David Land & Elizabeth Scott to invite to a meeting as this covers all 3 main partners. Members had concerns over PCSOs and Cadets substituting the role of police officers.

**TC058/23 Mayor's Report** – The Mayor gave an update of his events over the last month.

- Met with CEO Edward Perry and the building of relationships between TAP and BATC and working together going forward.
- Met with Miguel Manuel Senator of the King of Spain. He brought us a gift of a pilgrim ornament.
- Attended the Spanish Tapas evening in Sunderland
- Eden House nursing home 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations
- Weardale Railway Wine & Cheese Afternoon - Mayor wanted it noted of his thanks for the help and support for this event, from the team.

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

**TC059/23 General Powers of Competence** – This can now be adopted as the council now has a CiLCA qualified Clerk.

**Resolved:** Members noted the report and agreed that General Power of Competence be adopted

**TC060/23 Committee Meetings & Membership** – Absence of Cllr Lawson had brought to light that a process needs to be made in the event that members are aware of a long-term absence. The apologies need to be given by following the correct process. Committees not been quorate is not acceptable. It is imperative we have effective processes for the community and we need to establish a way forward. Members discussed possible scenarios of how to ensure committees can always be quorate. Replace Cllr Lawson's position with an Independent member until the personal situation changes.

**Resolved:** that members agreed attendance would be monitored, and that a process would be established to include in a review of standing orders in the interim it was agreed that the members of the labour party to come to the next meeting with an extra member to cover Cllr Lawson's absence.

**TC061/23 Consultations –**

- a) Review of Polling Districts – Clerk received an update of where stations will be and there are no changes required on the BATC area.

**Resolved:** members noted the update

**TC062/23 - Use of meeting rooms by third parties** – The Clerk gave an update on the Parkinson Partnership advice given whoever this is not wholly and more insight and advice needs to be obtained. Cllr Blackburn advised we need to ensure we do not put other venues who rent rooms out in jeopardy.

**Resolved:** that members note the update and agreed that formal written advice should be obtained before formally hiring the room out to third parties. That members agreed confirmed that BATC would not advertise their rooms and each approach to BATC will be considered on a case by case basis.

**TC63/23 Events Update** - £5,000 for Christmas that was to be used for community-based activities. Some areas have not been developed as planned, due to logistics and capacity we are not able to run a parade this year.

**Resolved:** that members noted the update and agreed that £5k in small amounts on community projects goes a long way and is an ideal opportunity as well as contacting schools for their Christmas events. Due to timescales Members agreed to delegate the allocation of the spends on activity to the Clerk, who would report back to the Community Committee with an update on the spends.

**TC064/23 – Allotment Update**

- a) Tenancies have all been issued
- b) Strategy progression
- c) Association Agreements – to go to allotment committee for review

**Resolved:** that the Members noted the report.

**TC065.1/23 – Finance – Budget** Clerk asked if there was anything which the Members wished to prioritise in terms of the budget for 2024-25, or if there were to be any additional activities covered.

**Resolved:** That members noted the finance report and what should be added into the budget for the next financial year. Suggested included a bigger budget for youth awards, expand social media presence, have more in the way of community support but noted that they were aware that the budget still needs to be balanced so this also needs to be considered.

**TC065.1/23 – Finance – Budget** – Statement of Payments – the payments in appendix 1 were presented

**Resolved:** that the members agreed to authorise the payments as presented in appendix 1.

**TC066/23** – 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 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.

The Clerk and Assistant clerk left the meeting.

**TC067/23 Completion of CiLCA by the Clerk** -That members received a report confirming that the Clerk had passed the CiLCA qualification. As per the national model contract the Clerk can be awarded increments on the salary scale for completing the qualification.

**Resolved:** That members agreed that the Clerk be awarded increments and be put on the top point of top salary point of LC3, in recognition of the achievement of the qualification, and work which has been undertaken.

The Clerk was welcomed back to the meeting and informed of the decision, and offered congratulations from the Council on the achievement.

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**Appendix 1 - Monthly Payments & Payments for Authorisation – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

Paid	Ref	Supplier	Detail	Net	VAT	Gross	Notes
<b>Allotments (Power to Provide Allotments – Smallholding and Allotments Act 1908, Sections 23, 26 and 42)</b>							
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Broken Banks 01/09/2023 - 30/09/2023	£27.79		£27.79	
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Tindale Crescent 01/09/2023 - 30/09/2023	£49.73		£49.73	
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 19/03/2017 - 30/04/2023 (Credit Note)	-£6,052.16		-£6,052.16	Credit adjustment from 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2017 to 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023. Account is now £6,052.16 in credit.
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 01/07/2017-08/03/2018	£1,203.64		£1,203.64	Account is still £4,848.52 in credit.
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 01/02/2022 - 31/07/2022	£821.08		£821.08	Account is still £4,027.44 in credit.
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 01/04/2017 - 09/08/2018	£322.23		£322.23	Account is still £3,705.21 in credit.
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 10/08/2018 - 31/08/2023	£6,158.78		£6,158.78	Referred to Wave complex Billing Team. £2,453.57 Payment due.
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 01/09/2023-30/09/2023	£257.59		£257.59	Complex Billing Team confirm this is the correct charge for the

Signed Chair:

							site. Balance of £2,711.16 to pay.
	EP	Lintons Printers Limited	300x A4 Allotment Newsletters, 300x 'How To Pay' Sheets and 350x A4 Folded to A5, Allotment Rules and Regulation's Booklets.	£160.00	£7.60	£167.60	
	EP	Jeff Dobson Marquee Hire	Service of 1x Portable Toilet, Woodhouse Close Allotment	£30.00	£6.00	£36.00	
<b>Mayor – Weardale Railway, Wine &amp; Cheese Event (Local Government Act 1972 Section 145 – Provision of Entertainment of the Arts, Including Festivals and Celebrations)</b>							
	EP	Weardale Railway Ltd.	50x Rail Tickets for Mayor's Wine & Cheese Event, 15th October 2023	£1,041.67	£208.33	£1,250.00	
<b>Ongoing Contracts and Obligations – (Local Government Act 1972, Sections 111 and 133)</b>							
	EP	Corona Energy Retail 2 Limited	Kingsway: Gas August - September 2023	£50.06	£2.50	£52.56	Council Financial Regulation 5.6 list of going contracts and obligations.
	DD	EDF Energy	Kingsway: Electricity 01/06/2023-30/06/2023	£104.73	£5.24	£109.97	
	DD	EDF Energy	Kingsway: Electricity 01/07/2023-31/07/2023	£91.78	£4.59	£96.37	
	DD	EDF Energy	Kingsway: Electricity 01/08/2023-31/08/2023	£105.39	£5.27	£110.66	
	DD	EDF Energy	Skatepark: Electricity 01/09/2023-30/09/2023	£33.96	£1.70	£35.66	
	EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Kingsway 01/09/2023 - 30/09/2023	£35.46		£35.46	
	EP	Twinkle Cleaning Services	Office Cleaning (20 hrs) - September 2023	£240.00		£240.00	

Signed Chair:

ICT (Local Government Act 1972, Section 111)							
	DC	SumUp Payments Ltd.	1x Solo+ Card Reader with Integrated Thermal Printer.	£139.00	£27.80	£166.80	

Signed Chair:



