

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2012** at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Kay (**in the Chair**) and Councillors Anderson, Fleming, Golightly, Laurie, Lee, Lethbridge, Wilson, Lesley Zair and Sam Zair.

Also Present: Linda Goldie (Town Clerk), Clive Auld (Bishop Auckland Town Team)

TC 105/12 INTRODUCTION OF SARAH ROBSON, HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CHRIS MYERS, REGENERATION PROJECTS MANAGER, DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – UPDATE ON THE OLD BOYS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The Mayor introduced Sarah Robson, Head of Economic Development and Chris Myers, Regeneration Projects Manager of Durham County Council who had been invited to the meeting to update members on the present position regarding The Old Boys Grammar School.

Sarah gave a brief update on the letter previously circulated to the Town Council and then answered questions put to her and Chris from members.

Speaking passionately, Councillor Laurie made the point that the County Council had dragged its feet over this issue for many years, doing very little to find a use for the building and then when it was set on fire, the insurance money was not used to at least renew the roof and ceiling. If this work had been done at the time, there would not be the problems that were being experienced now. She went on to state that she felt this money appeared to be have been squandered by the cost of the scaffolding.

Councillor Laurie also stated that she understood that the legal difficulties surrounding the covenant on the building had been removed which would have made it easier and quicker to find a solution to rectify the problem.

Chris responded by stating that the County Council had received only one derisory offer, which was declined. The County Council was doing its best to reduce its liability but he felt that there were still some further legal difficulties to be overcome.

Sarah stated that the County Council accepted there was a tremendous history to this building but the market was flat. However, they were negotiating with an interested party but she could not give any more details as this was a commercially sensitive matter.

Other members expressed concerns over the building reiterating many of the points that Councillor Laurie had made.

Sarah informed members that if negotiations failed, a new marketing plan and strategy would have to be put in place and indicated that the Town Council would be kept fully informed of any developments.

The Mayor thanked Sarah and Chris for attending the meeting and updating members on this emotive subject.

They then left the meeting.

TC 106/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Huntington.

TC 107/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Signed:
Town Mayor

**TC 108/12 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 30TH OCTOBER 2012**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 30th October 2012 be approved as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

TC 109/12 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES –

(a) Planning Committee – 30th October 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 30th October 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

(b) Finance Committee – 20th November 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 20th November 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

TC 110/12 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor reported that he had attended the following:

- 2nd November – Judging of the entries from Etherley Lane and St. Wilfrids Schools for the photographic & arts competition organized by the Sandringham Care Home
- 6th November – attended the Planning Committee meeting at County Hall and spoke against the Metric Properties application for Phase 2 development at Tindale.
- 11th November – Remembrance Sunday Service at the War Memorial and St. Anne's Church
- 16th November – Bishop Auckland Fellowship of Christian Churches to inform members of developments in the town.
- 19th November – Chaired the Bishop Auckland Town Team Meeting

TC 111/12 UNITARY AUTHORITY UPDATE

- Councillor Lee informed members that retrospective planning permission had been granted for the erection of the fence at Boucher Court and the Police now had a presence in Boucher Court.
- Councillor Sam Zair referred to the refurbishment of the market place which was still not finished. He expressed concern that the County Council had not provided any facilities for Christmas lights.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be informed of the Town Council's disappointment that no infrastructure had been provided to enable the installation of Christmas lights etc.

Signed:
Town Mayor

**TC 112/12 REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES
AND TRAINING EVENTS**

**(a) Bishop Auckland Music & Arts Festival Meeting –
8th November 2012**

Councillor Anderson reported that he, together with the Town Clerk and Councillor Zair had attended the above meeting with Bishop Auckland College.

It was noted that this year's festival had made a loss due to various reasons, one of which was the bad weather. However, the College was seeking contributions from various sources in order to reduce the deficit and to provide some financial security for next year's event.

Councillor Anderson informed the College members that their request for additional financial support would have to be considered by the Finance Committee when considering the Council's budget.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

**TC 113/12 REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVE OF BISHOP AUCKLAND
TOWN TEAM EVENTS SUB-GROUP**

Clive Auld reported that:

- Santa is coming to Town on Saturdays, 15th & 22nd December and will be inside the Newgate Centre – 10.00am – 11.30am, Outside The Lemon Grove shop in his grotto – 12 noon – 1.30pm and Inside Beales Department Store (Toy Department) – 2.00pm – 3.30pm. He will be giving stickers to the children saying "I've seen Santa in Bishop Auckland" and taking Wish Lists in his post box.
- Street entertainment by way of a face painter, balloon modelling, pipes & drums, community choir and a singer has been arranged
- A programme is available with all activities and dates listed.
- 21 shops had agreed to take part in the Christmas Shop Window Display Competition and the Bishop of Durham, the Rights Reverend Justin Welby (soon to be the new Archbishop of Canterbury) will be doing the judging together with the Mayor.
- Campaign to raise £20,000 for new Christmas lights in Newgate Street was underway with Raffle Tickets being sold at £1.00 each for 1st Prize: 32" Samsun HD Television, 2nd Prize: DVD Player, 3rd Prize: Pair of Mobile Phones, 4th Prize: Lady's Watch. Tickets would be available for sale week commencing 1st December.
- Events for 2013 were to be considered in the new year.
- The £10,000 had now been received for the Town Team Partnership and was in the County Council's bank account. This money was earmarked for the markets project. There was no time limit on when it should be spent.
- Clive, along with 3 businessmen in the town, were to meet with Chris Myers and his team, together with County Councillor Sam Zair to discuss the possibility of agreeing projects to enhance the appearance of the town.

Signed:
Town Mayor

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK. The Town Clerk reported as follows:-

TC 114/12 BIG LOCAL – APPOINTMENT OF BOARD REPRESENTATIVE – COCKTON HILL

Big Local was an exciting opportunity for residents in 150 areas around England to use at least £1m to make a massive and lasting positive difference to their communities. It was about bringing together all the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live.

Big Local was being run by Local Trust, which was working with the Big Lottery Fund and a range of partners providing expert advice and support for residents.

Andrew Walker, Bishop Auckland and Shildon A.A.P. Co-ordinator and Oliver Graham from Groundwork met with Councillor Anderson and the Town Clerk on 13th November to outline the process of drawing down funding from the Big Local.

This process involved setting up a board of representatives from Henknowle, Cockton Hill, Woodhouse, Tindale Crescent, West Auckland and St. Helen's.

Two representatives were required from each area, one of which must be a member of the public.

Representatives from all the areas had been identified except for Cockton Hill.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Anderson be appointed as the Town Council's representative on the Big Local Board which was to meet at the Football Club on Monday, 3rd December at 6.30pm.

TC 115/12 CHRISTMAS TREE SWITCH ON AND HOLLY & IVY SERVICE - FRIDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER 2012 – 4.30PM

The Town Council was hosting its annual Christmas Tree Switch on ceremony on Friday 30th November at 4.30pm.

A piper from Bishop Auckland & District Pipes & Drums would lead 3 of the Bishop Auckland's Olympic Torch bearers, Kieran Maxwell, Lyndon Longhorn and Robert Elliss to the tree, through the Clock Tower entrance of the park gates, followed by children from St Andrews, Etherley Lane, Escomb and St Anne's Primary Schools.

Once the tree was lit the congregation would proceed down the drive that would be lit by live flame beacons and enter St Peter's Chapel inside of Auckland castle.

Councillor Charlie Kay the Mayor of Bishop Auckland was to welcome everyone to the service.

The chapel would have undergone a "Holly and Ivy" makeover following a 2 day installation of led lighting coupled with swags of Holly and Ivy and candle lit isles.

Soloist Caroline Stephens would sing the 18th century carol "The Holly and The Ivy" by Sir Henry Walford and the service would receive the blessing from the Bishop of Durham the Right Reverend Justin Welby.

On completion of the service, the congregation would assemble in the Castle grounds to watch a sky lit fireworks display.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC 116/12 MEMBERS CONDUCT AND THE REGISTRATION AND DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS – DISPENSATION FOR COUNCILLORS TO SET COUNCIL BUDGET/PRECEPT

The County Durham Association of Local Councils had advised that the new Code of Conduct did not specifically cover the dispensation for Councillors to set their Councils budget/precept request.

All Town Councillors had completed their Register of Interest Forms which would have shown that they may have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a property (either owned or rented) within their parish area.

As a result, it was necessary for all Town Councillors in this situation to seek a dispensation from the Council. This dispensation needed to be granted BEFORE the Council set its precept to enable Councillors to legally set the precept. The dispensations had to be applied for individually and a letter had been circulated which all members present signed at the meeting before discussing the budget.

RESOLVED: That a dispensation for all Councillors be approved in order for them to set the Council's Budget/Precept.

TC 117/12 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

- **Jimmy Bennett, Street Scene Manager (South), Durham County Council** – to attend the January meeting.
- **Sarah Robson, Head of Economic Development and Chris Myers, Regeneration Projects Manager from Durham County Council** - to attend the February Meeting to update members on the regeneration in Bishop Auckland.

TC 118/12 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.

TC 119/12 BUDGET FOR 2013/2014 – SECOND DRAFT V3

Arising out of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 20th November, a SECOND DRAFT V3 of a Budget for 2013/2014 was circulated for consideration.

After a lengthy discussion, members agreed that it was impossible to reduce the budget any further without detrimental effect to the services which the Town Council delivered.

RESOLVED: That the budget for 2013/2014 as set out, be approved and adopted with a precept requirement for 2013/2014 of £134,600.00.