

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY, 26TH APRIL 2011** at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor L. Zair (**in the Chair**) and Councillors Anderson, Golightly, Huntington, Kay, Laurie, Lethbridge, Wilson and S. Zair.

TC 202/10 AUCKLAND CASTLE AND THE ZURBURAN PAINTINGS
(Minute No. TC 186/10 refers)

The Mayor introduced Andrew Brown, Secretary to the Church Commissioners who had been invited to speak to the Council and answer questions regarding Auckland Castle and The Zurburan Paintings.

Andrew apologised for not attending the last Council meeting but he had been attending another meeting in London to discuss the future of the paintings and the Castle. He went on to say that on 1st April it had been announced that Jonathan Ruffer, a City financier, had agreed to make a donation for a Trust to be set up to hold the paintings in the Castle in perpetuity and that by giving these paintings back to the people of the North-East would be a defining moment of his life. The Bishop would not live in the Castle and a house was to be bought in Durham Road, Bishop Auckland as a temporary residence.

Discussions had been taking place with the National Trust and Durham County Council in the hope that the paintings and the Castle would become a tourist attraction staging exhibitions with loans from the National Gallery in London. He announced that another major player had come forward to lend some of their works. This was good news for Bishop Auckland, County Durham and the North East. The Bishop's Ministry will be kept in the Castle and the Bishop would remain in Bishop Auckland. Discussions continued with the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts Fund and the World Monument Fund. The Rothschild Foundation had offered £1million.

The Food Festival had recently been held in the Castle grounds with approximately 35,000 people attending out of which a lot of people had had the opportunity to view the Zurburan Paintings in situ in the Castle.

The Mayor then opened the meeting to questions from members.

Councillor Laurie commented that this was a good news story but expressed her concerns that the Trust could be set up without representation from the North East and also asked whether the Trustees could move the paintings on. Andrew replied that one of the objectives of the Trust was that they remain in the Castle in perpetuity. He also stated that it was Jonathan Ruffer's desire that the paintings remain in the Castle.

Councillor Kay said he did not understand why the terms of reference of the Trust excluded the Bishop of Durham from his Castle residence. He thought it deregulated the status of the Bishop and given the size of the building, the Bishop could be given a self-contained residence and further discussion took place regarding the practicalities of this.

Councillor Lethbridge commented that he had been to see the paintings on the day of the Food Festival and felt a sense of exhilaration at the amount of interest being taken in them and was pleased the paintings were to remain in Bishop Auckland.

Councillor Sam Zair asked whether the Church Commissioners could still see the Castle as a venue for weddings as it had always been very popular for this type of occasion in the past. Andrew stated that he would take the comments back to the Trustees

The Mayor thanked Andrew for coming and talking to the Council, after which he then left the meeting.

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC 203/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fleming.

TC 204/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Golightly, Laurie and Lethbridge declared an interest in the Minute No. FIN 131/10 – Youth Awards Funding 2010 – The Four Clocks Youth Project as they were members of the Community Partnership Management Committee.

TC 205/10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

**TC 206/10 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 29TH MARCH 2011**

RESOLVED: That, subject to the following addition being included in Minute No. TC 201/10 – Topics for Future Discussion:

“(b) Election of Deputy Mayor

Councillor Lethbridge stated that the appointment of the next Deputy Mayor should be discussed in a rational manner at the next meeting”,

the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29th March 2011 be approved and adopted.

In view of the omission of this item in the Minutes and, therefore, not being included on the agenda for this meeting, it was suggested that the matter be discussed at the end of the meeting.

TC 207/10 MATTERS ARISING

**(a) Report of Town Mayor
(Minute No. TC 194/10 refers)**

Councillor Laurie advised that the Music Festival Meeting held on 11th March had only been attended by the Mayor and herself. The Shildon event mentioned had been attended on a different day by the Mayor.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 208/10 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Planning Committee - 18th April 2011

This meeting had not been held due to it being inquorate.

(b) Finance Committee - 19th April 2011

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 19th April 2011 be approved and adopted.

TC 209/10 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

Signed: **2 - 7**
Town Mayor

TC 210/10 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR

During the month, the Town Mayor reported that she had:-

- 8th April – was invited to Bishop Auckland Fire Station in connection with the Local Government Association Awards
- 13th April – attended the Magistrates Court in Bishop Auckland to mark not only the closure but also the fact that the Magistrates had sat in Bishop Auckland for 600 years.
- 13th April – was asked by B & Q to give Easter eggs to children who won a colouring competition from Etherley Lane School
- 14th April – Councillor Lethbridge had attended a Charity night hosted by the Mayor of Aycliffe Town Council
- 15th April – had attended a Civic Dinner hosted by the Mayor of Ferryhill Town Council
- 16th April – attended the Food Festival and was proud to escort the Chair of Durham County Council along with other Mayors who had also expressed an interest in attending
- 18th April – Presented a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Mary West on her 100th Birthday
- 20th April – attended Richardsons Dance School in Finkle Street and watched a presentation given by the dance students who had a day's training with a dancer who was performing in the CATS musical. Photos had been taken to promote the event and it was hoped to open this up in the summer months to any children even if they did not attend their classes
- 21st April – attended a Civic Dinner hosted by the Mayor of Chilton Town Council

TC 211/10 UNITARY AUTHORITY UPDATE

Councillor Sam Zair informed members that consultations were taking place regarding school transport, leisure and community centres and the situation was quite worrying.

Councillor Lethbridge said that the proposed cuts were hurting especially with the recommended changes to school transport which would affect people who could not afford to send their children to school.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

TC 212/10 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS

There was nothing to report.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

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

TC 213/10 WEBSITE MEETING – DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL WEB TEAM – 11TH APRIL 2011

Councillor Golightly, Michael Armstrong (Temporary Admin Assistant) and the Town Clerk met with Linda Buchanan from Durham County Council Web Team on 11th April to analyse the detail which had already been put on the website and to make any amendments or additions where necessary.

The final stages of the website development were now being put into place and it was hoped that the website would go live on Monday, 13th June.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

**TC 214/10 AUCKLAND CASTLE COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP MEETING –
AUCKLAND CASTLE, BISHOP AUCKLAND – 11TH APRIL 2011**

The Town Clerk had attended a Community Liaison Group meeting regarding the future of Auckland Castle on Friday, 11th March held in Old Bank Chambers, Bishop Auckland.

Alan Baxter & Associates (Statement of Significance) and Jura Consultants (Options Appraisal) were in attendance.

The Chair, County Councillor Neil Foster opened the meeting with the good news that Jonathan Ruffer, the founder of an investment-management firm, had set up a trust (The Zurbaran Trust) to buy the paintings for £15 million and preserve them at the Castle and discussion were afoot between the National Trust and Durham County Council to manage the castle and its grounds.

The County Council was currently leading on two important pieces of work involving the Castle. The first was a 'Statement of Significance' which was being prepared by Alan Baxter & Associates and which would establish what was special about the Castle and its importance as an historic and cultural centre. The second was an 'Options Appraisal' which was being prepared by Jura Consultants of the Castle and its grounds which was being undertaken to establish the possibilities these assets might offer in the future.

It was pointed out that the Bishop Auckland Food Festival was being held on Saturday, 16th April when members of the public would have the opportunity to view the Zurbaran Paintings on display. It had been suggested that this would be an ideal opportunity to ask people for their ideas on how to maximise the use of the Castle and grounds to its best advantage.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

TC 215/10 ARMED FORCES DAY – 25TH JUNE 2011

A copy of a letter sent to the Chief Executive of Durham County Council from Sir David Richards (Chief of Defence Staff) had been received asking if Town and Parish Councils would like to participate in Armed Forces Day which is on 25th June.

Armed Forces Day was a day when the whole nation was invited to show support for the military community both serving and retired, at home and abroad. Building on the success of last year, when hundreds of thousands of people attended events across the U.K., it was hoped that Armed Forces Day this year would again be marked by the community inviting the widest possible cross-section of service men and women (regular and reserve), veterans, cadet force and their families to an event to say thank you.

Over four thousand flags were flown around the country, many from historic and iconic buildings and some by individual members of the general public who wanted to show their support personally.

The letter requests that a flag be flown during the week before Armed Forces Day, hoisting it on Monday, 20th June. By Flying the Flag in the community, it would be showing support for the men and women of the Armed Forces, past and present, who continued to rise to the very difficult challenge of maintaining the defence of the realm.

RESOLVED: That the Town Centre Manager be requested to encourage local traders to participate in the event.

**TC 216/10 BISHOP AUCKLAND STATION TRUST – CAMPAIGN TO SAVE
THE SUNDAY TRAIN SERVICE**

An e-mail had been received from Michael O'Neill, President of the Bishop Auckland Station Trust (BAST) asking for the Town Council's support to save the Sunday train service from Bishop Auckland to Darlington.

Signed:
Town Mayor

He said it was very likely that the Sunday Service would end in December due to the fact that Darlington Borough Council had already stopped funding the service and Durham County Council was also likely to stop funding.

He went on to say that if the service did end, it would be a huge blow to the town and we would lose the greenest and best mode of public transport the town currently had; the train was much cheaper than the bus (£4.30 return to Darlington compared to £6.50 by bus). It would put huge financial pressure on people who currently travelled by train, workers, disabled people and families.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to Northern Rail stating that this action would be a retrograde step for Bishop Auckland in view of the exciting prospects at the Castle and the Town Council's desire to encourage tourism.

TC 217/10 THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DURHAM (VARIOUS SCHOOLS, SEDGEFIELD, TEESDALE, WEAR VALLEY AREAS AND BURNHOPE) (NO STOPPING ON SCHOOL ENTRANCE MARKINGS) ORDER 2011

A copy of the above proposed road traffic regulation order had been received affecting the Bishop Auckland Area as follows:-

**Schedule 3
No Stopping on School Entrance Markings
Monday – Friday 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.**

Cockton Hill Junior School – McIntyre Terrace; **Evergreen Primary School** – Warwick Road; **King James 1 Community College** – A689 South Church Road; **Oakley Cross School and Nursery** – Lomond Walk; **St Anne's C of E Primary School** – Warwick Road; **St John's RC Comprehensive School** – B6282 Woodhouse Lane; **St. John's RC (Aided) School** – Victoria Lane and Clyde Terrace; **St Wilfred's RC Primary School** – Murphy Crescent; **Barrington CE (Controlled) School** Westcroft.

Full details of the proposals together with relevant plans and a Statement of the Council's Reasons for making the order were available for examination at County Hall, Durham between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m; or by **e-mail on request to Highways.Orders@durham.gov.uk quoting reference TRO/92094/SKC**; and at Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland and Sedgefield District Libraries during normal opening hours.

Any person who wished to object to the proposed Order should send their grounds of objection, in writing to Patricia Holding at County Hall or via e-mail to the above e-mail address quoting the above reference by **no later than 29th April 2011**

Councillor Golightly commented that people parked anywhere so how was this going to be enforced.

Councillor Lesley Zair replied that fixed penalty notices were to be issued.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 218/10 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICY – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The County Council was proposing major changes to Home to School/College Transport which would affect some parents and their child/children. £14 million were spent every year to deliver transport arrangements. Some of these did not have to be provided legally and if they were stopped a saving of over £5.5 million would be saved.

The County Council was proposing to:

- Raise the distance limit from 2 to 3 miles for children over the age of 8 so that for these older children only free transport is provided for those who live over 3 miles from their nearest school.

Signed:
Town Mayor

- Stop free transport to faith schools
- Stop the extra provision which allows free transport for pupils living in some communities to attend particular schools
- Stop the help provided for young people over the age of 16 to get to school or college
- Charge for spare seats on buses and taxis for those children not entitled to a free seat

These proposed changes would only apply to new applicants and the County Council website www.durham.gov.uk/transportconsultation could be used to complete an on-line form to express any views.

The closing date for response was 10th May 2011.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 219/10 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – CONSULTATION

The Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan for County Durham was now open for consultation. The County Council was passionate about delivering a path network which contributed to quality of life and enabled people to lead healthy active lives and they wanted to hear from people to make sure they got it right.

Paths for People is the County Council’s plan to develop a high quality path network fit for 21st Century travel, recreation and enjoyment. It will prioritise resources to focus on key access routes rather than address the whole network (3,500km of public rights of way).

It would improve paths which serviced specific purposes and fulfilled greatest demand such as important utility and recreation paths around communities and key tourism routes and would also create vital links between and within access networks to provide a more comprehensive network where need was justified.

The County Council’s vision for the access network over the next ten year was to **deliver an access network fit for the 21st Century** and the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan could be viewed on the County Council’s website www.durham.gov.uk

Comments to prow@durham.gov.uk before 13th May 2011.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 220/10 ALLOWANCES CLAIMED BY BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL – PUBLIC NOTICE

The Local Authorities Members’ Allowances (England) Regulations, 2003 required the Council to publish details of the actual allowances paid to its elected Councillors each financial year and a copy of allowances claimed for 2010 – 2011 had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the allowances claimed be noted and a copy be placed on the Town Council’s Notice Board and website.

TC 221/10 SPEND AGAINST BUDGET AS AT YEAR END 31ST MARCH 2011

A copy of the Spend Against Budget as at Year End 31st March 2011 had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the Spend Against Budget as at Year End 31st March 2011 be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

**TC 222/10 ALLOTMENTS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
AS AT YEAR END 31ST MARCH 2011**

A copy of the Allotments Income and Expenditure Statement as at Year End 31st March 2011 had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the Allotments Income and Expenditure Statement as at Year End 31st March 2011 be noted.

TC 223/10 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

The Annual Town meeting was to be held on Tuesday, 17th May at 6.00pm in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre to which members of the public were invited to attend and ask questions of the Council.

The Annual Town Council Meeting was to be held on Tuesday, 31st May at 6.00 pm followed by the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 224/10 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

(a) Public Toilets in Bishop Auckland

TC 225/10 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

When the Town Council had been established it had been agreed informally that the position of Mayor would be chosen from one political party with the position of Deputy Mayor being chosen from another. This situation had worked perfectly until the political balance changed.

Discussion took place as to how the Town Council wanted to choose its Deputy Mayor in the future.

After further discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED: That an addition to the Council's Standing Orders be made as follows:-

"That the opportunity for the position of Deputy Mayor be given to anyone nominated for that position and who, subsequently, obtains the majority of votes".

Signed:
Town Mayor