

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER 2011**.

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

Also Present: Linda Goldie (Town Clerk).

TC 81/11 INTRODUCTION OF JOCASTA LAWTON, SENIOR COMMITTEE SERVICES OFFICER, DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL AND TERRY BATSON, PARISH REPRESENTATIVE ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE – CODE OF CONDUCT

The Mayor introduced Jocasta Lawton, Senior Committee Services Officer of Durham County Council who had been invited to the meeting along with Terry Batson, Parish Representative on the Standards Committee to speak on the Code of Conduct.

Terry informed members that the Standards Board for England was to be abolished under new legislation and a new Code of Conduct is to be dealt with within the Localism Bill.

The C.D.A.L.C. and N.A.L.C. were working together to draft a Code of Conduct which could be mandatory for all Local Authorities.

At the moment, some of the Parish and Town Councils were to adopt the Nolan Principals as recommended by C.D.A.L.C.

The Bill was expected to receive Royal Assent before the end of the year. However, if Durham County Council adopts its own Code of Conduct, then possibly all Parish and Town Councils might be interested in adopting the same Code.

Terry then answered general questions put to him by members.

The Mayor thanked Jocasta and Terry for their attendance, after which they then left the meeting.

RESOLVED: That further developments be awaited on the new National Code of Conduct.

TC 82/11 PRESENTATION OF PREVIOUS MAYOR'S MEDALS

The Mayor presented medals to Councillors Laurie, Anderson, Wilson and Lesley Zair in recognition of their service as past Town Mayors.

Councillor Laurie thanked the Mayor on behalf of herself and the other previous Mayors for this recognition.

TC 83/11 ROYAL NORWEGIAN CONSULATE - LETTER

In accordance with instructions at the last meeting, a letter of condolence had been sent to the Royal Norwegian Consulate expressing sorrow at the events which took place in and near Oslo.

The Mayor read out a letter which had been received from the Consulate thanking the Town Council for their sympathy and support at this sad time.

TC 84/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Golightly.

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC 85/11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

TC 86/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Laurie and Lethbridge declared an interest in Minute No. FIN 42/11 – Proposed Office Relocation as they were both members of the Bishop Auckland Community Partnership.

**TC 87/11 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 26TH JULY 2011**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th July 2011 be approved and adopted.

TC 88/11 MATTERS ARISING

**(a) Representatives on Outside Bodies and Training Events –
Bishop Auckland Town Centre Forum – 22nd July 2011
(Minute No. TC 73/11 (b) refers)**

The Town Clerk reported that a letter had been received from the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development, Durham County Council (circulated at the meeting) in reply to the Town Council’s letter regarding the Council’s concerns that the proposed restructure did not accommodate the post of Bishop Auckland Town Centre Manager.

The reply stated that the proposal to delete the post and associated marketing budget was taken with regret but it was set against a backdrop of needing to make substantial savings. However, support for regeneration in the town would continue.

There was a post in the proposed structure entitled Durham City Centre Manager with an associated post of Best Bar None Officer. Both posts included a night-time economy function and the delivery of the Best Bar None project across Durham City, Consett, Chester le Street and Bishop Auckland. The wider role they had across the County meant that while they were comparable, they were different to a Town Centre Manager with a single focus.

The letter went on to say that vibrant and successful towns was also a key priority and the importance of Bishop Auckland, as the largest town, was of key importance.

RESOLVED: That the letter be noted.

TC 89/11 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Human Resources Committee - 9th August 2011

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 9th August 2011 be approved and adopted.

TC 90/11 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

(b) Finance Committee - 20th September 2011

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 20th September 2011 be approved and adopted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC 91/11 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

(c) Planning Committee

- 26th September 2011

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

The Mayor reminded members that it was important for them to inform the Town Clerk if they were unable to attend any future meetings of the Planning Committee.

TC 92/11 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor reported the sad news that George Brown, a volunteer driver for the Butterwick Hospice, was killed in a tragic accident during the recent stormy weather and that he had sent a sympathy card to his family on behalf of the Town Council.

He also reported that he had attended the following:-

- 2nd August - Celebration of Volunteering – Stanhope Station
- 3rd August - Teddy Bear's Picnic
- 3rd August - High Impact Locality Profile, Bishop Auckland Police Station
- 4th August - Breathe Easy Group, Methodist Church
- 5th August - Chairman's Charity Evening, Willington Workingmen's Club
- 7th August - Mayor at Home Tea, Bishop Auckland
- 18th August - W.A.S.H. Theatre Presentation, Woodhouse Close Church
- 25th August - Weardale Railway Photo Shoot, Bp. A. Railway Station – Comm. Fund
- 28th August - Great Aycliffe Show 2011
- 31st August - Bishop Auckland in Bloom Presentation Evening, Town Hall
- 7th September - The Royal Humane Society – Presentation Evening, Durham Town Hall
- 9th September - Mayor's Charity Night, Chilton Workingmen's Club
- 11th September - Civic Service, Spennymoor Town Council – Byers Green
- 12th September - Hot Coals & Ash Art Exhibition, County Hall
- 16th September - Mayor's Charity Evening – Shildon Civic Hall
- 18th September - Civic Service – Kelloe Parish Council – St. Helen's Church, Kelloe
- 18th September - Bp. A Chrysanthemum & Dahlia Society – presentation of prizes – King James 1st Community Centre

TC 93/11 UNITARY AUTHORITY UPDATE

- Councillor Sam Zair reported that the annual Firework Display was in jeopardy as the Rugby Club had withdrawn permission for the event to be held in their grounds. Alternative venues were being sought.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 94/11 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS

(a) Bishop Auckland and Shildon Local Council's Committee
24th September 2011

Councillor Anderson reported that he had attended the above meeting where an overview of the agenda for the forthcoming A.A.P. meeting was given by Angelina Maddison, the A.A.P. Co-ordinator.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

(b) Bishop Auckland Town Centre Forum – 25th September 2011

Councillor Laurie reported that:

- That due to the removal of the Town Centre Manager's post and the withdrawal of clerical and financial support by Durham County Council to the Forum it was doubtful that it could continue in its present form. Although Traders had various ideas on how to keep it going, it was thought that the Forum could be wound up at the November meeting.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

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

TC 95/11 RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT 2011/2012 - REVIEW

An updated copy of the Risk Assessment Statement 2011/2012 had been circulated for review.

RESOLVED: That the Risk Assessment Statement 2011/2012 be approved and adopted.

TC 96/11 RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT (FINANCIAL) 2011/2012 - REVIEW

An updated copy of the Risk Assessment and Management (Financial) 2011/2012 had been circulated for review.

RESOLVED: That the Risk Assessment and Management (Financial) 2011/2012 be approved and adopted.

TC 97/11 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – REVIEW

An updated copy of the Grievance Procedure had been circulated for review.

RESOLVED: That the Grievance Procedure be approved and adopted.

TC 98/11 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE – REVIEW

An updated copy of the Disciplinary Procedure had been circulated for review.

RESOLVED: That the Disciplinary Procedure be approved and adopted.

TC 99/11 DATA PROTECTION ACT 1988 – COUNCILS AND COUNCILLORS

Notification under the Data Protection Act 1988 had been received which indicated that there may be a need for local councillors to register in their own right with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) as Data Controllers.

Bishop Auckland Town Council was already registered with the ICO because of the nature of the information held, e.g. allotment holder details and individuals who had written to the Council etc.

Councillors

The issue was threefold:

- As the Town Council was already registered with the ICO Councillors were registered under the Council's registration for all council related business.
- Councillors affiliated to a political party should confirm whether they were registered by their party for all party related business.

Signed:
Town Mayor

- Individual Councillors needed to register in their own right if they held any personal information on their own computers or in their own filing systems in their home or personal office.

RESOLVED: That members note the information and take any action where necessary.

**TC 100/11 MEETING OF WORKING PARTY TO DISCUSS PARK WARDEN SCHEME –
23RD AUGUST 2011**

In accordance with Minute No. TC 75/11, Councillors Anderson, Laurie, Lee and Lethbridge together with the Town Clerk met with Oliver Graham, Area Programme Manager, Groundwork North East to further discuss the merits of Groundwork's Government Backed Employment Scheme which could be tailored to meet the Town Council's requirements.

Oliver outlined the details of the scheme which would provide a Supervisor and local placements from its employment team; this number would vary over the programme but would be up to 5 people at any given time. The team and the van could be branded as 'Bishop Auckland Town Council so would offer a visible presence for the Town Council in and around Bishop Auckland. The works delivered by them could range from general clearance work including snow clearance and local gritting.

The budget set aside for a scheme would secure the services of the team for 2.5 – 3 days employment per week over a period of a year. Most of the cost would be for the Supervisor and the vehicle and the provision of some equipment; whereas the placements would receive their normal benefit plus an incentive payment for being part of the scheme.

In addition to this work, Groundwork and the Town Council could work with other partners including the Police, the A.A.P. etc. to secure additional funding which could enhance the scheme further.

Normal working hours would be from 8.30 am – 3.30pm, however, Oliver said that the scheme was flexible and the hours could be changed to suit the Council's needs, e.g. working until later in the summer to cover more activities in the parks after school.

Oliver said the scheme worked very well with Stanley Town Council where there was continual dialogue with Durham County Council's Clean and Green Team and other parties to avoid any duplication or work.

The work to be done would be Council led with Councillors identifying areas in their wards that needed attention. This could be done by completing a Work Request Form.

After considering all the information provided, the Working Party was in agreement that this scheme fit the criteria that the Town Council wanted to enhance the environmental appearance of Bishop Auckland.

RESOLVED: (i) That the scheme as outlined above be agreed and a satisfactory Agreement be entered into.

(ii) That in order to get the scheme up and running, delegated powers be given to the Mayor and the Chair of the Finance Committee together with the Town Clerk to approve and sign the necessary Agreement.

TC 101/11 RENT REVIEW MEMORANDA – EDGE HILL ALLOTMENTS

In accordance with the Agreement between Mr. & Mrs. Lumsden and Bishop Auckland Town Council for the lease of land at Etherley Lane, Bishop Auckland known as Edge Hill Allotments Site, dated 13th August 2008, the three yearly rent payable had been reviewed by the County Council's Legal and Democratic Resources Team recommending an increase with effect from 8th March 2011 from £560 per annum to £614 per annum.

Signed:
Town Mayor

RECOMMENDED: That the increased rent be approved and the necessary Memoranda of Rent Review be signed by the Chair of the Allotments and Environment Committee and witnessed.

TC 102/11 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Councillor Kay indicated they he would like an item on the next Council agenda to discuss the Town Council focusing on links with Durham County Council Events Team in view of the possible demise of the Town Centre Forum.

Councillor Lethbridge agreed that this was necessary in view of the recent out of town retail proposals and the possible loss of Mothercare due to structural damage.

Signed:
Town Mayor