

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY, 13TH DECEMBER 2011 at 6.00 p.m.**

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

Also Present: Linda Goldie (Town Clerk).

TC 140/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Huntington and Lee.

TC 141 /11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

TC 142/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 143/11 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29TH NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED: That, subject to the name of Simon Dodds on page 4 Min. No. TC 132/11 being amended to read Nigel Dodds, the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29th November be approved and adopted.

TC 144/11 MATTERS ARISING

- (a) Introduction of Andrew Blanckley, Durham County Council Policy and Development Team – Winter Maintenance Partnership Working with the Town Council and Groundwork North East - Presentation
(Minute No. TC 120/11 refers)**

Councillor Anderson reported that the Service Level Agreement had been prepared and was awaiting signatures from the County Council. The workforce had also undergone 'Toolbox' Training by the County Council and 10 snow shovels had been delivered. Target areas had been identified and weather reports were to be received.

- (b) Planning Committee – 28th November 2011 –
(Minute No. TC 128/11 refers)**

Councillor Lesley Zair informed members that Jonathan Ruffer, The Zurburan's Benefactor had also written to the Secretary of State asking for the Focus site planning application to be called in.

TC 145/11 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor reported that he had attended the following:

26 th November	-	Dance Fuzion Show at the Town Hall
1 st December	-	Town Council's Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony/Painting Comp. Awards
2 nd December	-	Carol Service, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
2 nd December	-	Chairman's Civic Dinner, Spennymoor Town Council
5 th December	-	Remembrance Concert, Ferryhill Town Council
5 th December	-	Judging of Christmas Window Competition
8 th December	-	Carol Service – Sedgfield Town Council
9 th December	-	St. Wilfrids R.C. School – Presentation of Prizes for Christmas Painting Competition
11 th December	-	Civic Carol Service – Spennymoor Town Council

Signed:

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Town Mayor

TC 146/11 UNITARY AUTHORITY UPDATE

- Councillor Sam Zair reported that D.C.C. had been shortlisted in seven categories in the 2012 Local Government Chronicle Awards, including the overall award for 'Council of the Year'.

The final winners would be announced in March but at this stage the County Council was still in the running for:

- Low Carbon Council (carbon management programme)
 - Efficiency (service review in Neighbourhood Services)
 - Children's Services (Family Pathfinder project)
 - Public Sector Partnership (the Safe Durham Partnership's Total Home Safety initiative)
 - Health and Social Care (mental health Support and recovery)
 - Management team (Neighbourhood Services)
 - Council of the Year (Altogether better Durham)
- Councillor Sam Zair also reported that funding was now available to complete the final stage of the Market Place refurbishment.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 147/11 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES, AD HOC MEETINGS AND EVENTS

(a) Music Festival Meeting - 6th December 2011

Councillor Anderson reported that he, together with Councillors Kay, Laurie, Lesley Zair and the Town Clerk, had attended a Music Festival Meeting when a progress report was given on finance and headline acts that might be available.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 148/11 BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL – FUTURE TOWN CENTRE EVENTS STRATEGY

Councillor Kay again referred to the demise of the Town Centre Forum and stated that a new 'Town Team' – a visionary, strategic and strong operational management team - was needed to be established as soon as possible in order to consider ways of magnetizing the town centre as a draw for footfall. He then referred to the independent review by retail consultant Mary Portas who had been commissioned by the Government to look into the decline of town centres across the country and how this could be reversed. Some of the issues raised in the report could easily be related to Bishop Auckland. Issues which could be addressed were limited free parking and the possibility of crèche facilities being provided. Councillor Kay said that to do nothing was not an option and the 'Town Team' should be sponsored by the Town Council for the good of the town.

Councillor Sam Zair agreed with Councillor Kay and suggested that perhaps the 'Town Team' could be led by the Chairman of the Traders Association.

Councillor Laurie said that the Town Centre Forum representatives were sad to see its demise and that it was a good idea to take up this enthusiasm and work with it. She agreed that this 'Town Team' should be Town Council-led with the Town Council initially providing meeting accommodation and clerking facilities every two months.

Councillor Fleming queried where funding would come from. Councillor Kay replied that the Town Council could underwrite a room and clerking support.

Councillor Anderson agreed that this Team should be Council-led and that it had to work with all the partners at our disposal, especially Durham County Council and its Events Team.

Signed:

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Town Mayor

Councillor Wilson felt that there should be resident involvement and the Bishop Press could be fully utilized to spread the Team's aims and objectives for the town.

Councillor Lethbridge commented that we needed to know any plans that the County Council had for the town before any strategy could be drawn up.

Councillor Kay went on to say that a Steering Group from members of the Town Council should be constituted to look at the detail of setting up an open meeting.

Councillor Fleming said it was essential that the major players of the retail world be included, i.e. Morrisons and Asda.

RESOLVED: (i) That a Working Party consisting of Councillors Fleming, Golightly, Kay, Laurie, Lethbridge and Sam Zair be set up to discuss the feasibility of establishing a Town Team to take Bishop Auckland forward.

(ii) That the first meeting of this Working Party be held in the Town Clerk's Office on Monday, 9th January 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

Report of Town Clerk. The Town Clerk reported as follows:-

TC 149/11 CHEQUES FOR AUTHORISATION

Cheque nos. 668 - 677 from the Current Account and cheque nos. 71 - 73 from the Allotments Account were presented for authorisation.

RESOLVED: That the abovementioned cheques be authorised for payment.

TC 150/11 PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILLOR REGISTER OF INTERESTS – UPDATE

Last year, members completed Form LGA1 from Durham County Council – Notification by Member of a Local Authority of Personal Interests. The County Council had asked that if any members' details had changed since completion of the form, then they must inform the Town Clerk when a Form LGA3 would need to be completed.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC 151/11 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

- **Changes to Uniform Business Rates**

Signed:
Town Mayor