

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY, 26TH JUNE 2012** at 6.00 p.m.

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

Also Present: Linda Goldie (Town Clerk), Danni Webb (Northern Echo), James Burrage (Bishop F.M.)

TC 31/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anderson, Lethbridge and Lesley Zair.

TC 32 /12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

TC 33/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 34/12 INTRODUCTION OF DAVE LEWIN, STRATEGIC TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT, REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTION – D.C.C.

The Mayor introduced Dave Lewin, from the Traffic Management Section of Durham County Council who had been invited to discuss the implications of Civil Parking Enforcement and Bishop Auckland Town Centre Parking Report 2011.

Dave outlined what the Civil Parking Enforcement entailed. It meant that in an area where Civil Parking Enforcement had been introduced, the Council was responsible for enforcing parking regulations instead of the police. The police would continue to enforce all moving traffic offences as well as obstruction offences. These powers were introduced by the 2004 Traffic Management Act.

The Council was able to issue a Penalty Charge Notice where a parking contravention occurred. The penalty charge would be recovered through the County Court process if it remained unpaid.

Civil Parking Enforcement allowed the Council to link parking enforcement in car parks and on-street with other transport priorities, reducing congestion and promoting road safety.

He went on to say that there were two levels of penalty charge. The amount depended on the severity of the parking contraventions. The two levels were:

- £70 for a higher level contravention such as parking on a yellow line, and
- £50 for a lower level contravention such as overstaying in a pay and display bay.

The charge would be reduced by 50% if paid within 14 days from the issue date and an increase of 50% applied when a driver failed to pay or failed to successfully challenge the penalty.

Members queried how the money collected through these penalties was used. Dave said that all money raised from Penalty Charge Notices must be reinvested in the service so that it paid for itself and gave examples of costs which included winter and general maintenance, energy, security, water rates and insurance.

Councillor Golightly said that she would like to see a copy of the breakdown of these figures and Councillor Sam Zair said he would e-mail these to the Town Clerk.

Signed:
Town Mayor

Councillor Golightly asked how these changes were going to be enforced. Dave replied that there were dedicated Civil Parking Enforcement Officers to patrol the area who would be a highly visible force.

Councillor Sam Zair commented that by implementing the Civil Parking Enforcement, more disabled parking bays had been created and free short stay on-street parking had also been introduced.

Councillor Kay said that the Town Council was trying to rejuvenate Bishop Auckland and while these changes were welcomed, he was going to push for more changes. Whilst not expecting free parking, he said that a more creative approach was expected.

Dave explained that other issues such as free parking and the price of car parks across the county would be looked at in future.

The changes could be implemented in October depending on when the County Council received the go-ahead from the Secretary of State.

The Mayor thanked Dave for his presentation after which he left the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be informed that the Town Council is in support of the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in Bishop Auckland.

**TC 35/12 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
HELD ON 8TH MAY 2012**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 8th May 2012 be approved as a correct record.

**TC 36/12 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 22ND MAY 2012**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 22nd May be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

**TC 37/12 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 22ND MAY 2012.**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 22nd May be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

TC 38/12 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES –

(a) Planning Committee – 22nd May 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 22nd May 2012 be approved and adopted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

TC 39/12 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Laurie queried the Declaration of Interest referring to Councillor Kay’s personal interest in Planning Decisions – Application No. 3/2010/0499 – Castle Golf Club when there was no reference to the application in the minutes.

The Town Clerk was unable to explain how the error had occurred.

TC 40/12 (b) Finance Committee – 19th June 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 19th June 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

TC 41/12 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor reported that he had attended the following:

- 23rd May - Sandringham Care Home
- 30th May - Youth Awards Competition Presentation Evening
- 31st May - Unveiling of new park bench in the Town Recreation in Celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Torch Relay through Bishop Auckland
- 31st May - Planting of Royal Oak Sapling at Woodhouse Community Primary School
- 2nd June - Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in the town
- 17 June - Olympic Torch Relay
- 18th June - Official Opening of the Black Paw Brewery
- 20th June - Carers Day at Old Maternity Ward Hospital
- 20th June - Street Party – Cockton Hill Infants School

The Mayor made particular reference to the Olympic Torch Relay through Bishop Auckland on Sunday, 17th June when approximately 25,000 people filled the streets from the Market Place up to Cockton Hill Traffic lights.

The weather stayed fine and there was a carnival atmosphere in the street.

The Town Council in partnership with Bishop Auckland Town Team had put on a programme of events to keep everyone entertained pending the arrival of the torch with an array of entertainers such as Mr. Twister a magician and balloon artist, a face painter, Durham Rams Sword and Morris Men, Bishop Auckland Pipes and Drums, X-Treme Dance Fuzion, Bryn Haswell a male vocalist, Roman Soldiers from Binchester’s Roman Fort and Bishop Auckland Choir.

The event was also attended by the M.P. for Bishop Auckland, Helen Goodman.

The Bishop Auckland Pipes and Drums led children from Etherley Lane Primary School in a Parade of Nations. All the children carried different flags from around the world and paraded down North Bondgate into the market place where there were thousands waiting.

Signed:
Town Mayor

The torchbearers through Bishop Auckland were:

- Ian Richardson from Billingham
- Kieran Maxwell from Newton Aycliffe
- Lyndon Longhorn from Crook
- Robert Ellis from Spennymoor
- William Mounter from Guisborough.

Feedback from some of the shops was very good relating to the extra trade that had been created.

Members congratulated the Town Team on the excellent work they had done in making the day a day to remember and also the County Council, especially Nigel Dodds and his team who had co-ordinated the Olympic Torch Relay throughout County Durham.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to Durham County Council thanking them, and in particular Nigel Dodds and his team, for all the efforts that had been put in to making the Olympic Torch Relay throughout County Durham a huge success.

TC 42/12 UNITARY AUTHORITY UPDATE

- Councillor Lee said she had attended a meeting with representatives of the County Council to discuss a new Customer Access Point and One Stop Shop in Bishop Auckland. She informed members that a new build would take place on the former Mothercare site and suggested the possibility of the Town Council having office space in the building.

TC 43/12 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS

(a) Bishop Auckland Destination Development Plan

The Town Clerk reported that she had attended a meeting at Auckland Castle on Tuesday, 26th June with various representatives of Durham County Council, Visit County Durham, B.A. College, Auckland Castle Trust and the A.A.P.

Rowena Hackwood, Chief Executive of the Auckland Castle Trust welcomed everyone to the meeting and discussion took place regarding the vision for Bishop Auckland. It was agreed that it was necessary to build on what Bishop Auckland already had and to try to develop the vision with an action plan.

It was acknowledged that communication and marketing needed to be shared by all partners and reference was made to the role that the Town Team was playing in the town and also that the Town Team needed to be included in future discussions.

It was agreed that more work was needed on the Destination Development Plan in view of the Auckland Castle Trust's interest in the town. They wanted people to come to the Castle to visit but it was important that signage, parking and retail offer were all addressed to improve the visitor experience.

Other ideas included:

- Doing an audit on empty shops and empty space
- Private Sector being invited to be around the table
- Strategic Investment Team need to look to investors and why they should invest in Bishop Auckland

Signed:
Town Mayor

- Need to attract high quality retail offer
- Engage with businesses – improvement of shop fronts
- Accommodation Study is being carried out – the Trust has bought the Queens Head Hotel
- Working with the A.A.P. on Employment and Jobs

Anne Isherwood gave details of the future plans for Bishop Auckland College and circulated a Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2-14 with their mission: To promote social inclusion, fulfil aspirations and develop the potential of individuals, communities and employers through excellence in teaching, learning and skills development.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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

TC 44/12 DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE APPEALS PANEL – APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL MEMBER

At the Annual Council Meeting, Councillor Wilson together with the Deputy Mayor (ex officio) were appointed to serve on the Disciplinary and Grievance Appeals Panel.

The Mayor was not able to sit on this Panel as his was a Member of the Human Resources Committee, so another member needed to be appointed.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Huntington be removed as a member of the Human Resources Committee and appointed as a member of the Disciplinary and Grievance Appeals Panel.

TC 45/12 COMPLAINT TO WEARDALE RAILWAY – CONDITION OF EMBANKMENT BETWEEN LATHERBRUSH BRIDGE AND B & Q – REPLY

On 27th April the Council wrote to the Acting Manager of the Weardale Railway offering to match fund up to £1,000 subject to them providing an equal amount, for clearing the railway embankment between Latherbrush Bridge and B & Q.

Mr. Isom replied on 1st June stating that:

“I refer back to my previous letter in which I explained we can not make any clearance until the end of the ‘bird nesting’ which as stated before starts on the 31st March through to the 1st September in which period we are restricted in what clearance we can carry out, except if it effected the ‘safety of trains’ are we allowed to clear trees etc.

We will arrange for clearance after that date and this request will then be satisfied”.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the letter be noted.

TC 46/12 BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN CEMETERY – COMPLAINT REGARDING CONDITION

A copy of a letter had been circulated which had been received from Leanda Chappell complaining about the condition of the Town Cemetery. A copy had also been sent to the County Council.

The Town Clerk circulated to members copies of photographs which had been received with the letter showing dried areas of grass around the headstones and graves.

Members commented that a certain amount of weedkiller needed to be used but not as much as was seemed to have been used from the photographs and this practice was not acceptable.

Signed:
Town Mayor

RESOLVED: That Durham County Council be informed that the practice of using so much weedkiller around the graves and headstones in the Town Cemetery was considered unacceptable.

TC 47/12 N.A.L.C. CODE OF CONDUCT – FINAL VERSION

The National Association of Local Councils had now completed a final version of the Code of Conduct and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct had been circulated which all Parish Councils were recommended to adopt by 1st July.

The function of adopting, revising or replacing a Code of Conduct must be discharged by full Council. A Parish Council must publicise its adoption (and in future any revision or replacement) of a Code of Conduct in such manner as it considers is likely to bring the adoption, revision or replacement of the Code of Conduct to the attention of persons who live in its area and displaying a copy of the revised Code of Conduct on noticeboards, placing a copy in public areas and showing a copy on the website.

A Council's Code of Conduct does not apply to members and co-opted members in their private lives.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council adopts the revised Code of Conduct.

TC 48/12 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

- **Wear Rivers Trust**

Councillor Huntington referred to a meeting he had attended with the Wear Rivers Trust who was proposing to put in a bid to the Community Learning and Innovation Fund.

There was an opportunity to deliver learning and volunteering in Environmental Conservation along that section of the Gaunless running through the Henknowle Ward and the output from the proposed CLIF programme, along with benefits to individuals, would be the production of a management plan for the site developed and owned by the local community. The site was wholly owned by Durham County Council and was partly designated as a nature reserve but was completely unmanaged.

Due to closeness of the deadline date for submission of a bid, there was no time for the Wear Rivers Trust to come to a future meeting to explain their plans and ask the Council to be listed as a partner in this project.

RESOLVED: That in view of the timescale involved, the Wear Rivers Trust be informed that the Town Council fully supports their bid and agree to be listed as a partner in this project.

- **Bishop Auckland Food Festival in the Durham Dales** – Kate James, Festivals and Events Manager, Visit County Durham, Sarah Robson (Head of Economic Development), Nick Miller (Miller Research) and Rowena Hackwood (Auckland Castle Trust) to attend the July meeting to update members on the success of the Food Festival.

- **The Travelling Community** – Scott McNally, Travellers' Liaison Officer, Durham County Council be requested to attend a future meeting regarding the travelling community.

- **Auckland Castle Trust** – Jonathan Ruffer be requested to attend a meeting October/November regarding an update on the Auckland Castle Trusts future plans.

- **The Bishop of Durham** – The Rt. Revd. Justin Welby be requested to attend a future meeting.

Signed:
Town Mayor