

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY, 31ST JULY 2012** at 6.00 p.m.

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

Also Present: Linda Goldie (Town Clerk).

TC 49/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Huntington, Golightly and Wilson.

TC 50/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 51/12 INTRODUCTION OF KATE JAMES – FESTIVALS AND EVENTS MANAGER, VISIT COUNTY DURHAM – BISHOP AUCKLAND FOOD FESTIVAL

The Mayor introduced Kate James – Festivals and Events Manager, Visit County Durham (part of DCC) (Festival Design and Development) who had been invited to update members on the success of the Food Festival and to discuss key development areas for 2013.

Other representatives present were Sarah Robson – Head of Economic Development, DCC (Lead Agency), Chris Jones – Miller Research (Evaluation and Festival Consultants), Rowena Hackwood – Chief Executive, Auckland Castle Trust (Festival Partner and Land Owner) and Beryl Anderson – Events Team, DCC (Delivery).

Kate gave members a broad overview of where we are, where we would like to be and how we are going to get there and gave key facts relating to the 2012 Food Festival in comparison to the 2011 Festival. Over 20,000 visitors attended on the day as opposed to 35,000 last year. However, the weather played a large part in this contrast in numbers.

Many businesses commented that BAFF puts Bishop Auckland on the map, raising awareness of the range of shops in the town amongst people from the region.

Two-thirds of those interviewed agreed that further expansion of the food festival into the Market Place and Town Centre in future would have a positive impact on trade and all of those contacted agreed that the Food Festival was a good thing for the town and surrounding region. Approximately half of those interviewed felt that the event had improved people's attitudes towards Bishop Auckland.

She went on to outline the key development areas for 2013:-

- 2 day event, incorporating evening events
- Expansion of the activity in the town centre, including development of a curated craft market in the Town Hall and market place with its own brand identity
- Introduction of a book tent – a 'festival within a festival' featuring chefs, food writers and celebrities doing talks, demonstrations, debates and book signings.
- A festivals exchange programme where other established events are invited to showcase their regional produce at BAFF, and where we export the best of North East produce to other areas of the country.
- Audience development work, building a year round food community.

Signed:
Town Mayor

Rowena, from the Auckland Castle Trust said they were supportive of having the Food Festival in the town but it would probably come at a price. The damage caused to the green this year cost a lot of money.

After the presentation, Kate answered various questions put to her by members. She said that they were aiming not to make a charge but budgets were diminishing.

The Mayor thanked Kate and her support team for their presentation, after which they left the meeting.

RESOLVED: That support for next year's Food Festival be considered at the time when the Town Council sets its budget.

TC 52 /12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Mayor introduced Jack Taylor aged 16 years from St. John's R.C. School who was participating in the National Citizens Service which was a Government backed programme promoting opportunities for young people to develop their leadership skills, become more engaged with their communities and take on a social action project that makes a difference to their area.

University of the First Age was a national educational charity that had the responsibility for making the programme happen in this region.

Jack was part of Team Tango who was a group of NCS young people undertaking a social action project on behalf of the national programme.

The project was focusing on helping the older generation to keep contact with friends and family through the use of technology. Services such as Skype and e-mail were useful on computers to allow long distance communication whereas texting on mobile phones was good for quick everyday use.

Jack and his group were hoping to raise money to buy laptops and mobile phones for care homes, community centres and any other useful locations that would benefit from the project. They were wanting to donate these devices and run one to one courses for the participants to give them a full understanding.

Jack then left the meeting.

Members discussed the project and after consideration it was:

RESOLVED: That £500.00 be given as a donation towards this project. (Local Government Act 1972) (Section 137).

TC 53/12 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26TH JUNE 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th June 2012 be approved as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

TC 54/12 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES –

(a) Planning Committee – 26th June 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 26th June 2012 be approved and adopted.

Signed:

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Town Mayor

There were no matters arising.

(b) Human Resources Committee – 5th July 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 5th July 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

(c) Finance Committee – 17th July 2012

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 17th July 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

(d) Strategy Committee – 10th July 2012

RESOLVED: That, subject to Councillor Anderson's name being deleted as Vice-Chair and substituted with Councillor Laurie, the Minutes of the Strategy Committee held on 10th July 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

(e) Human Resources Committee – 18th July 2012

This meeting was not held due to it being inquorate.

TC 55/12 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor reported that he had attended the following:

- 12th July - The 'Sylvia Woods Awards', Cockton Hill Infants School
- 15th July - Stanhope 'War on the Line' event
- 23rd July - Auckland Castle – Royal Visit/Transfer of Castle to the Trust

TC 56/12 UNITARY AUTHORITY UPDATE

- Councillor Sam Zair reported that Durham County Council had received a Green Flag Award for Bishop Auckland Town Recreation Ground. This now meant that Durham County Council had 15 sites listed as setting excellent standards and good practice in the management and development of parks and open spaces.

TC 57/12 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS

(a) Disciplinary & Grievance Training – 3rd July 2012

Councillor Anderson reported that he had attended a Disciplinary & Grievance Training Course together with the Town Clerk on 3rd July 2012.

The course was very informative and the Council was supplied with various handouts relating to case studies.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor

(b) Bishop Auckland Town Team – Markets Working Party – 25th July 2012

Councillor Laurie reported that the Markets Working Party of the Town Team had met on 25th July and drafted a response to the Soft Market Testing Questionnaire submitted by Durham County Council in relation to the Working Party's expression of interest in operating the Bishop Auckland Markets.

She outlined the various costs involved and said that if money could be found for the first year, the markets could be self-financing.

It was pointed out that Item 12 (g) on the agenda was an item relating to the consultation by the County Council on proposals for the future management and regulation of markets and street trading in Co. Durham and views were being sought on all aspects of markets and street trading and this matter would be discussed later in the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

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

TC 58/12 MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL 2012 - EVALUATION MEETING – 10TH JULY 2012

Councillors Anderson, Laurie and Lesley Zair together with the Town Clerk attended the Music & Arts Festival Evaluation meeting at Bishop Auckland College on Tuesday, 10th July 2012 with various other representatives.

Despite the weather, the event went ahead and it was estimated that 1,500 people attended on the Friday, 2,800 on the Saturday and 1,600 on the Sunday.

Items discussed included:

- **Food and Drink Policy** – Due to numerous complaints regarding the confiscation of food and drinks, it was agreed to allow food and non-alcoholic drinks to be brought into next year's Festival on the Friday and the Saturday and this would be printed on the tickets and flyers.
- **Cost of Food on the Site** – It was agreed that some of the food outlets were charging high prices which was proving expensive for families. However, in view of the above recommendation, it was felt that the caterers should be left to decide what their charges should be.
- **No Tea-time Headliner provided by STAR Radio** - The Committee was disappointed that STAR radio had not secured a headline act to cover the tea-time slot and it was felt that this had a great impact on the attendance and subsequently on the events finances. The partnership with STAR radio was brought into question and other interested radio stations were discussed. It was agreed that Kevin and Mike would sound out the interested radio stations with a view to future sponsorship, bearing in mind that any agreement guaranteed they would provide a tea-time headliner.
- **Cancellation Policy** – It was agreed that in view of near-cancellation of this year's event because of the extreme wet conditions, a Cancellation Insurance would be taken out at a cost of around £150.00.
- **Signage** – Several Committee members felt that the signage for the event was inadequate with a need for more car parking signs and signs to indicate the entrance to the event.

Signed:
Town Mayor

- **Letter of Support** – A letter was circulated from a resident stating that he and his family had thoroughly enjoyed the whole of the weekend and looked forward to next year’s Festival.
- **Finance** – Although the event was a success, because of the reduced numbers, there was a substantial shortfall in the finances. However, there were several ideas in the pipeline to recoup these losses and these would be discussed in details at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

TC 59/12 COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS A.G.M. – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – NOMINATIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES

Nominations were requested for the following positions:-

President – Currently

Helen Goodman M.P.

Three Vice Presidents – Currently

Councillor Terry Batson (Tow Law Town Council)
 Councillor David Bell (Brandon & Byshottles Parish Council)
 Councillor William Waters (Spennymoor Town Council)

Honorary Treasurer – Currently

Councillor Dudley Waters (Sedgefield Town Council)

Honorary Auditor – Currently

Mr. Andrew Bailey (Great Aycliffe Town Council)

The above candidates could be selected for re-election or if anyone wished to contest these positions they should inform the Town Clerk so that they can be submitted by 28th September 2012.

No member wished to contest any of the above positions.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Anderson be nominated as the Council’s representative at the A.G.M. and be authorised to vote accordingly.

TC 60/12 SKATEPARK – TOWN RECREATION GROUND – PROVISION OF LIGHTING

Groundwork North East was preparing a planning application for submission to the County Council for the provision of lighting in the skatepark at the Town Recreation Ground.

If this application was recommended for approval, Groundwork North East in partnership with the Town Council, would be submitting a bid to ‘Awards for All’ for a grant to carry out this work.

The Town Council had already set aside £7,500 as match funding towards this bid and had also committed to paying up to £500 per annum for electric used.

RESOLVED: That Groundwork North East be informed of the Council’s concern at the amount of time taken to progress this matter and that it looks forward to further progress being made as soon as possible.

Signed:
Town Mayor

**TC 61/12 REGISTER OF INTERESTS –
COMPLETION OF NEW FORM**

A copy of an e-mail was sent to Members which had been received from Steve Ragg regarding the completion of new Register of Interest Forms.

A copy of the Registration Form together with Guidance Notes had been circulated to members with a request that the Form be completed as soon as possible.

Those council members who were also County Councillors would need to declare they were a County Councillor in section 10 of the Register of Interest Forms.

“(10) I am a member or in a position of general control or management of the following body/ies exercising functions of a public nature – **this includes details of any dual and triple hatted appointments you hold e.g. membership of Town and/or Parish Councils**”.

RESOLVED: That hard copies be posted to those members who had not yet returned their form.

TC 62/12 LOCALISING SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX FUNDING

The C.D.A.L.C. Executive Committee met with representatives of Durham County Council and discussed the issues relating to the Localising of Council Tax Benefits in County Durham. This was a Government driven initiative (currently a consultation document) being imposed on all principal authorities in the country meaning that Durham County Council **must** implement a local scheme to meet the requirements of this initiative.

In a nutshell, the Government’s scheme would mean that, in future, support for council tax would be offered as reductions within the council tax system with Councils receiving a grant from Government to offset this reduction. In effect, the County Council would collect less Council Tax and only get 90% of the current grant paid back to them from the Government so they would be suffering a loss of around £4.6m.

Every Parish Council would be individually affected by these changes depending on the number of Council tax benefit claimants in their area so some would lose out more than others and could require more in the way of protection than others.

It was expected that a September DCC Cabinet meeting would give further details and possible effects on individual councils.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted and further details be awaited.

**TC 63/12 B.A.F.C. - COMMUNITY FOOTBALL – FREE MATCH TICKETS FOR CHILDREN –
REPORT 2011-2012 AND ACTION PLAN 2012-2013**

Bishop Auckland Football Club had submitted its Intended Scheme for 2012-2013 Season regarding the free tickets initiative .

A copy of the Action Plan for 2012 - 2013 Free Match Tickets for Children Scheme had been circulated for information together with a report of the 2011 - 2012 Scheme.

An amount of £2,000 was included in this year’s budget and as the previous three years schemes had proved successful, it was:

RESOLVED: That this amount be released to fund the Free Match Tickets for Children Scheme 2012 - 2013.

Signed:
Town Mayor

**TC 64/12 MARKETS AND STREET TRADERS – CONSULTATION
BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

The County Council was running a consultation on proposals for the future management and regulation of markets and street trading in Co. Durham.

Views were being sought on all aspects of markets and street trading including:

- Which areas are suitable for trading
- Improving the shopping experience
- Giving good value for money for local people
- Supporting new businesses and creating employment
- Improving town centres
- Contribution to the cultural vibrancy of towns
- Encouraging visitors to the area

D.C.C. was keen to develop a vision for markets and street trading to recognise the contribution they make to our local economy.

It was essential that markets and street traders co-exist with other local businesses to improve trade in town centres and the surrounding areas, as well as providing new opportunities for trading. The consultations was for anyone with an interest in the future of markets and street trading in Co. Durham and D.C.C. would like to hear from residents and users of local markets, market stall holders, street traders and anyone with an interest in future provision of and management of markets.

Although the public consultation would end on 23rd August, the County Council recognised that many Town and Parish Councils would be in recess during the summer holiday period and therefore, the consultation had been extended to 20th September 2012.

Councillor Laurie drew members' attention to the fact that the Town Team had already expressed an interest in managing Bishop Auckland markets.

A lengthy debate followed arising out of which members expressed opinions that the Town Team should not own anything and, as the markets were an asset to the Town, these should belong to the Town Council.

RESOLVED: (i) That the Town Council submit a non-committal expression of interest (Soft Market Testing Exercise) in managing the Bishop Auckland markets.

(ii) That the Finance Committee be requested to discuss the financial viability of taking on the management of the markets in possible partnership with the Town Team.

TC 65/12 COUNTY DURHAM PLAN – PREFERRED OPTIONS

Members were sent an e-mail with details and links relating to the County Durham Plan Preferred Options Document.

This was one of the last opportunities to let Planners know if the Council was happy with the proposals for the Town Council's area.

Once details of representations to the preferred option plan were known the Submission Draft of the Plan would be reported to Cabinet in June 2013.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

Signed: **7 - 8**
Town Mayor

TC 66/12 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

- **Additional Retail Development – Tindale Crescent** – Councillor Sam Zair referred to the recent planning application for additional retail development at Tindale Crescent. The previous application had been approved despite Officers recommendations for refusal on the grounds that this out-of-town retail development would be detrimental to the retail outlets in Bishop Auckland Town Centre. All members were in agreement that this additional development, if approved, could greatly affect the proposed Gentoo development in North Bondgate and further jeopardise town centre trade.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council informs the County Council of its strong objections to the above proposal.

- **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.

TC 67/12 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 68/12 POSITION OF NEW TOWN CLERK – DRAFT ADVERT, PERSON SPECIFICATION, JOB DESCRIPTION AND CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

A copy of a draft advert, person specification and job description had been circulated for consideration.

The position was to be advertised in the Northern Echo as well as being put on the County Council's intranet site and also the C.D.A.L.C. was to circulate it to all Parish and Town Councils.

RESOLVED: (i) That the draft advert, person specification and job description be approved.

(ii) That the cost of the advert in the Northern Echo as outlined in the report be approved.

(iii) That the key dates as outlined in the report be approved.

TC 69/12 POSITION OF ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK – JOB DESCRIPTION AND CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

RESOLVED: That the Job Description of the Assistant Town Clerk be considered after the appointment of the new Town Clerk in order for him/her to have an input into the decision.

Signed:
Town Mayor