

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012** at 6.00 p.m.

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

**Also Present:** Clive Auld, Lee Brownson (Town Team Representatives) and Linda Goldie (Town Clerk).

**TC 89/12 INTRODUCTION OF SCOTT MCINALLY, TRAVELLERS' LIAISON OFFICER, DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Mayor introduced Scott McInally, Travellers' Liaison Officer, Durham County Council who had been invited to the meeting to speak to members regarding the travelling community.

Scott informed members that there were 6 permanent travellers sites in the County and 350 incidents of unauthorised encampments reported. Each unauthorised encampment was judged on a case by case approach taking into account welfare, health and educational needs. He also said that the County Council was trying to introduce more temporary stopovers with a view to encouraging the travellers to use these sites which have better facilities instead of the unauthorised ones.

He went on to say that removing the travellers from an unauthorised site could take up to 3 – 5 weeks. However, if there was a suitable temporary stopover site nearby, the removal process could take less than a week.

Scott then answered various questions put to him by members including concerns over stray horses and young travellers driving horse and traps through pedestrianised areas of the town centre.

The Mayor thanked Scott for his informative presentation, after which he then left the meeting.

**TC 90/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies had been received.

**TC 91/12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present.

**TC 92/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**TC 93/12 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012 be approved as a correct record, subject to the undermentioned amendments:-

- **TC 72/12 Public Participation** – Paragraph 7 line 4 to read: “unsuccessfully applied for the Portas money, *would go towards* the necessary capital funding for this venture”.
- **TC 82/12 Market and Street Traders – Consultation by Durham County Council** – resolution to read: “*That a Budget Heading for Markets be set up*”.

Signed: .....  
Town Mayor

**TC 94/12 MATTERS ARISING**

- **TC 72/12 Public Participation** - Councillor Sam Zair asked whether the Mayor had met with the Leader of the County Council to discuss more off street parking.

The Mayor said that a meeting was to be held shortly.

- **TC 88/12 The Old Boys Grammar School** – The Town Clerk circulated a letter which had been received in response to the Town Council’s letter with regard to the Old Boys Grammar School.

**TC 95/12 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES –**

**(a) Planning Committee – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

**(b) Human Resources Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising

**(c) Finance Committee – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2012**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2012 be approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

**TC 96/12 REPORT OF TOWN MAYOR**

The Mayor reported that he:

- Had attended the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Boots the Chemist in Bishop Auckland where he received an assurance that this store was staying in Bishop Auckland for the foreseeable future.
- Had registered to speak against the Tindale Crescent Application which was being considered by the County Council on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> November.

**RESOLVED:** That the Mayor be authorised to speak on behalf of the Town Council against the Tindale Crescent Application.

**TC 97/12 UNITARY AUTHORITY UPDATE**

- Councillor Sam Zair reported that the County Council was preparing a pilot scheme for the reduction/dimming of street lights throughout the County.

**TC 98/12 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS**

• **Accounts Training – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012 – Acemoney Package**

The Town Clerk reported that she and her Admin Assistant had attended an Accounts Training Course at County Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> October when the Acemoney Package was given free to all Parish/Town Councils present.

It was hoped that the new financial package would be up and running from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

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

**TC 99/12 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE AND PARADE –  
11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012**

The Town Council, in partnership with The Royal British Legion were inviting Councillors to take part in the Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade which would be held on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2012. Those wishing to participate in the parade were requested to assemble at the War Memorial in the Market Place in time for proceedings to commence at 10:30am. Following the laying of wreaths, a Service of Remembrance would be held in St. Anne's Church in the Market Place.

Members were requested to inform the Town Clerk if it was their intention to lay a Wreath at the War Memorial.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

**TC 100/12 SKATEPARK – TOWN RECREATION GROUND –  
PROVISION OF LIGHTING**

Groundwork North East had advised that they had submitted a planning application to Durham County Council for permission to provide lighting at the Skatepark in the Town Recreation Ground. The process usually took about 6 weeks after which, if approval was given, an application would be made to Awards for All for a grant towards this provision. The Town Clerk circulated information received from Groundwork giving more details regarding the application.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

**TC 101/12 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND REVIEW OF EMPTY PROPERTY/  
SECOND HOMES DISCOUNTS – FORECAST IMPACT ON TOWN AND PARISH  
COUNCILS**

Notification had been received from the County Council drawing attention to the Council's proposals in response to the forthcoming changes to the national Council Tax Benefit system and to seek views as part of the consultation process.

The County Council had modelled the impact of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and potential withdrawal of a range of discounts linked to empty properties and a table had been set out showing the indicative position for the Town Council, taking into account the Government's proposals with regards to protecting town and parish councils from the Local Council Tax Scheme.

The table indicated that the scheme could have little impact on the Town Council's precept based on the estimated figures and although these could be subject to change, it was felt that the budget and precept setting process could go ahead without undue concern.

**Signed:** .....  
**Town Mayor**

The public consultation would ensure feedback could influence the scheme, allow sufficient time for feedback to be gathered, impacts to be understood, and a final scheme to be shaped. Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> December, would consider the outcome of the consultation and make decisions with regards to the amendment of discounts, double taxation grant and make recommendations to Council in January 2013 in respect of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That the budget and precept setting process go ahead based on the estimated figures.

**TC 102/12 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

**RESOLVED:** That Jimmy Bennett, Street Scene Manager (South), Durham County Council be requested to attend the January meeting.

**TC 103/12 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 excluded 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 104/12 BUDGET FOR 2013/2014 – SECOND DRAFT**

Members considered the Second Draft of the Budget for 2013/2014 which had been circulated.

Various members were concerned that the proposed precept was too high and after a lengthy debate it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Town Clerk look at possible ways of reducing the precept further and this be considered by the Finance Committee at its next meeting on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> November.