

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 25th October 2016** at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Golightly (Mayor), and Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, Brownson, Fleming, Lethbridge and Wilson.

Also Present: Clive Auld (Bishop Auckland Town Team), E.A. Fisher (Auckland Castle Trust) and David Anderson (Town Clerk)

Public in Attendance: None

TC.93/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Race, A. Zair, L. Zair and S. Zair.

TC.94/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public in attendance.

TC.95/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

TC.96/16 AUCKLAND CASTLE TRUST

Liz Fisher, Operations Director, Auckland Castle Trust, gave an update on the Trust's projects and activities.

Liz explained that the Trust's vision was to transform an 800-year-old bishop's palace from an unknown private dwelling into a world-class art, faith and heritage destination of international significance. The desire to reinvigorate the town of Bishop Auckland and the wider region through social and economic regeneration was at the heart of the plan.

Within five years this project should attract over 200,000 visitors and inject £4 million per year into Bishop Auckland and the surrounding area. It would give the people of County Durham new opportunities through employment, volunteering and participation, and stimulate opportunities for local enterprise.

The plan involved the following projects.

Restoration of the Castle

Over the next two years Auckland Castle would be renovated with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and other key partners to restore it to its original Georgian Gothic opulence as designed by renowned English architect James Wyatt.

Faith Galleries

The Faith Galleries would be the first museum in England to explore the history of faith in the British Isles, from prehistory to the present day.

Building work commenced on the Faith Galleries in autumn 2016. The purpose-built extension to Auckland Castle would create 10 specially designed gallery spaces across two floors. When complete the galleries would explore how the major world faiths have influenced and shaped the British Isles. It would immerse visitors in real and personal histories of faith through rare and compelling objects, highlighting the role that faith has played in determining our shared national history and identity

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Town Mayor

Welcome Building

A new Welcome building would be constructed to provide information visitors need to explore the castle, grounds and local area. Visitors would also be able to purchase entry tickets, collect guidebooks and maps, get directions, and learn about special seasonal events and activities.

The building would incorporate a dramatic 29 metre high tower giving unsurpassed views across Auckland Park, the town, and the rural landscape beyond.

The road through the Market Place was being realigned by Durham County Council to create a pedestrian friendly approach and accommodate the new building. This work, which began in June 2016, would enable construction of the Welcome Building to begin in the autumn.

Spanish Gallery & Research Centre

Inspired by Francisco de Zurbarán's Spanish masterpieces that hang in Auckland Castle's Long Dining Room, a dedicated Spanish Art Gallery would open in the Market Place in 2019.

It would explore Spanish art from the medieval period to the present day, focusing particularly on the Golden Age of art in the seventeenth century.

The Spanish Gallery would be complemented by a separate research centre, due to launch in 2017 in partnership with Durham University, which would link new academic study to the gallery's exhibition programme

Walled Garden & Restaurant

Created by Bishop Cosin in the 17th century, the Walled Garden at Auckland Castle was the first of its kind in North East England. It used pioneering techniques of the time featuring heated walls and innovative glass hothouses to grow vegetables, flowers, fruit and particularly the pineapples for the Bishop's guests. Following this tradition after its restoration produce grown in the redeveloped garden would be used within the Castle's restaurants.

Mining Art Gallery

The former Old Bank Chambers building was being transformed into a new gallery, showcasing paintings by County Durham's miners and the wider mining community.

The Trust was developing a programme of educational activities and community events to help the region's residents engage with this heritage and plan to offer a number of volunteering opportunities within the gallery when it opened in August 2017.

Members thanked Liz for her presentation and updates and wished the Trust well with the projects.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.97/16 TOWN (CORE) TEAM

Councillor Anderson, Chair of the Core Team, updated members with regard to the meeting of the Core Team held on 13th October 2016.

It was noted that the Core Team had begun the process of reviewing the first Kynren season in relation to its effect on the town centre. A plan was to be drafted to build on the success of the first year.

One issue that had been identified was the perception that all town centre car parks were allocated to Kynren and were therefore not available for general use. In fact only

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Town Mayor

the North Bondgate and Newgate Centre had been allocated to Kynren. The availability of car parks for general use needed to be better publicised for 2017.

Consideration would also be given to the possibility of arranging events in the town centre to coincide with the Kynren shows so that visitors were encouraged to spend time in the town prior to the show.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.98/16 TOWN (EVENTS) TEAM

Clive Auld updated Members with regard to the activities of the Events Team.

Arrangements were being made for Monster Saturday and Christmas.

Banners in Newgate Street were to be removed so that Durham County Council could install the Christmas lights.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.99/16 THE BIG LOCAL – GAUNLESS GATEWAY

Clive Auld updated Members on the Gaunless Gateway project.

It was noted that a total of £228,375 had been allocated to the project. South Durham Enterprise Agency, who had been appointed to deliver the project, would appoint a co-ordinator in the near future.

Grants from £500 to £3,000 would also be available for projects that benefit the Gaunless Gateway area.

The purchase of a Fun Bus was being considered which could provide children's play to events throughout the Gaunless Gateway area.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.100/16 MINUTES

Town Council	13 th September 2016
Planning Committee	13 th September 2016
Finance Committee	18 th October 2016

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and recommendations contained therein be adopted.

There were no matters arising

TC.101/16 REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Members noted a report of the Mayor detailing the events attended since the previous meeting. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Mayor explained that she had been unable to attend a number of events during the past month due to a back condition. She expressed her gratitude to the Deputy Mayor who had ably attended a several events on her behalf.

The Mayor was to undergo an operation on her back on 31st October and would therefore be unable to carry out her duties during the next two months. In view of the duties carried out by the Deputy during October and the need for him to continue to

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deputise for the next two months, the Mayor proposed that the Deputy Mayor receive the Mayor's special responsibility allowance for October, November and December.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the information be noted.
 2. That the Mayor's special responsibility allowance be paid to the Deputy Mayor for October, November and December 2016

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING EVENTS

TC.102/16 SOUTH WEST RESIDENTS', BUSINESSES & TRAVELLERS FORUM

The Town Clerk gave feedback from the meeting of the South West Residents, Businesses & Travellers Forum held on 3rd October 2016.

The main purpose of the group was to increase understanding between residents, businesses and travellers and to discuss the possible introduction of temporary stopover areas similar to those established in the Teesdale area to ease the problem of illegal encampments.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.103/16 COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AGM

CDALC AGM had taken place on 22nd October 2016 and had been attended by Councillor Fleming and the Town Clerk.

It was noted that a motion put forward by Councillor Fleming for the Association to adopt the Town Council's statement on equality and diversity and for all member councils to be encouraged to consider the adoption of the statement had been agreed unanimously.

It was also noted that Councillor Fleming had been appointed to the CDALC Executive Committee.

An emergency motion had also been agreed to oppose the extension of referendum principles to local councils. All local councils were encouraged to respond to the Government's consultation stating their opposition to the proposals and also to write to their MP's seeking their support. (see also Minute No TC.106/16 below).

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.104/16 CERTIFICATE IN LOCAL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

Members noted that Sheila Horner, Assistant Town Clerk, has successfully completed the CiLCA qualification, a foundation qualification for local council officers and others working with local councils

RESOLVED: That Mrs Horner be congratulated for her success.

TC.105/16 ANNUAL RETURN, YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2016 – EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

Members noted that the External Auditor's signed Report on the Annual Return had been received. (For copy see file of Minutes).

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The external auditor made no additional recommendations, but had endorsed the recommendations made by the internal auditor, which was usual practice.

Council considered the Internal Auditor's recommendations at its meeting held on 31st May 2016 and agreed an action plan. (Minute No TC.30/16 refers). All actions had since been completed.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.106/16 COUNCIL TAX REFERENDUM PRINCIPLES

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Local Government Finance Settlement Technical Consultation published by the DCLG on 15th September 2016, which included proposals to extend council tax referendum principles to local parish and town councils. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The term referendum principles referred to the requirement to hold a local referendum if the proposed council tax increase exceeded a set threshold; the consultation was considering setting the threshold at which the referendum principles would take effect for a rise in precept of 2% or £5 per year, whichever is higher, as currently applied to principal councils.

There were two important parts of the consultation affecting local councils:-

1. The Government was minded to extend referendum principles to a number of larger, higher spending local councils.
2. If increases in precepts continued to concern local tax payers it would consider extending referendums to all parishes.

NALC had responded to the consultation setting out its opposition to the proposals in the strongest terms. Councillor Ken Browse, the Chairman of NALC had met with Marcus Jones MP, the Local Government Minister to discuss the consultation proposals and related issues.

NALC is encouraging all county associations and local councils to actively support their lobbying.

Bishop Auckland Town Council would not be affected if the principles were extended only to larger, higher spending councils. However the Council may be affected if the principles were extended to all local councils.

The proposal was to restrict council tax increases to 2% or £5.00 (at Band D), whichever was the higher. If the proposal was not amended the Council would be able to raise council tax by up to £5.00 (equating to approximately 13%) without the need to hold a referendum. However if council tax was limited to 2% the Council could only levy an additional 80p.

Members were reminded that initially the Government stated that the changes relating to the Localisation of Council Tax would not affect local councils. However, amendments made to the proposals at the eleventh hour adversely affected local councils, which were later described as 'unintentional consequences'.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the information be noted
 2. That the Council respond to the consultation to oppose the proposals.

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3. That Helen Goodman MP be invited to the next Council meeting to seek her support to oppose the proposals.

TC.107/16 NALC LARGER COUNCILS COMMITTEE

Following a national ballot Councillor Fleming was appointed to the National Association of Local Council's Larger Councils Committee to serve a two year term from January 2015 to December 2016.

The role involved representing the County Durham Association of Local Councils at meetings held at NALC offices in London and associated work. The cost of attending meetings were covered by NALC.

Nominations have been requested to serve from January 2017 to December 2018. Councillor Fleming has again indicated his willingness to stand for re-election.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Fleming be nominated to the National Association of Local Council's Larger Councils Committee

TC.108/16 SOUTH WEST RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES & TRAVELLERS FORUM – APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE

Nominations were sought to represent the Town Council on the South West Residents, Businesses & Travellers Forum.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Lethbridge be appointed to the Town Council on the South West Residents, Businesses & Travellers Forum

TC.109/16 IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS FOR DOG CONTROL

Consideration was given to a report detailing the implementation of Public Space Protection Orders for Dog Control. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED: That the Town Council support the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders for Dog Control.

TC.110/16 WEBSITE PROPOSALS

Consideration was given to a report detailing proposals for content and design of a new website. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED: That the proposals contained in the report be agreed.

TC.111/16 LAYING OF WREATHS AT THE WAR MEMORIAL

Consideration was given to a report regarding the length of time that poppy wreaths should remain on the war memorial. Members also considered a method of securing poppy wreaths to the memorial. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted guidance from the War Memorials Trust advising that custodians of memorials should have a policy in place regarding the length of time poppy wreaths should remain on display. Some people may be upset by wreaths being removed what they considered prematurely, whereas others may be concerned that wreaths have been left for too long. If wreaths were left in place for a long time they could begin to deteriorate which could lead to the memorial appearing as though it was not looked after and this could also cause distress.

With regard to the securing of wreaths, it was noted that the memorial was a listed structure and therefore the wreathes could not be secured direct to it. The War Memorials Trust advises that some of the best examples involved a freestanding frame

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which could be placed either in front or around the memorial. Wreaths could then be fixed to the frame. This would not physically impact on the memorial and could be removed with the wreaths. This would ensure that the memorial was not visually affected the rest of the year.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That poppy wreaths be removed after two months.
 2. That a free standing wooded frame be placed around the monument steps so that wreaths can be securely fixed to the frame.

TC.112/16 SKATEPARK LIGHTING - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report updating members on the Skatepark Lighting project. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Work on the project had started with cabling being installed within the park. Northern Powergrid was to install power to a meter box. An order has been placed for the lighting columns which will be installed as soon as possible.

Savings had been made on the initial costs resulting an underspend of £2,830. Groundwork Trust had suggested that this could be used to deliver a programme of skate activities and events to reinvigorate the site following the works. Similar events were held when the skatepark originally opened. Groundwork Trust was willing to put a programme in place.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the information be noted
 2. That Groundwork be requested to use the balance on the budget to deliver a programme of skate activities and events to reinvigorate the site following the works

TC.113/16 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

The following would be invited to attend an appropriately timed meeting to update the Town Council on their activities:

- Kate James, Durham County Council, Food Festival (December 2016)
- John Brennen, Wannasee (January 2017)
- Inspector Warren Edwards, Neighbourhood Policing
- Chris Myers, Regeneration Projects Manager, Durham County Council

TC.114/16 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 next item by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

TC.115/16 DETERMINATION OF TENANCY

Members were updated with regard to an ongoing determination of a tenancy at Mill Race Allotments.

- RESOLVED:** That a further update would be given at the next meeting.

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ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

TC.116/16 DELEGATED DECISIONS UNDER FINANCIAL REGULATION 4.5

It was noted that no decisions had been taken under Financial Regulation 4.5 since the previous Council meeting..

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

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Town Mayor