

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 24th OCTOBER 2017** at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor A. Zair (Mayor), and Councillors Blackburn, Brownson, Chappell, Fleming, Wilson, L Zair and S. Zair

Also Present: Nigel Bryson (Chairman, Bishop Auckland Town Team), Dawn Kirsopp (Deputy Chief Executive, Citizens Advice County Durham) and David Anderson (Town Clerk)

Public in Attendance: Maurice Card (Old Fashioned Sweet Shop, Fore Bondgate)

TC.102/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, Cullen and Tucker

TC.103/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Blackburn declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Item No 4 'Citizens Advice Country Durham' and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

TC.104/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Maurice Card, Old Fashioned Sweet Shop, raised a number of concerns with regard to the lack of signage and general condition of Fore Bondgate, together with the management of vehicular access to the street via the rising bollard.

Mr Card advised that he was organising traders association for Fore Bondgate and Bondgate.

Mr Card acknowledged that the Town Council was not directly responsible for the concerns raised. The Town Clerk would however investigate the concerns raised and meet Mr Card at a later date at his business premises to discuss further.

PRESENTATIONS

TC.105/17 CITIZENS ADVICE COUNTY DURHAM

Dawn Kirsopp, Deputy Chief Executive, Citizens Advice County Durham (CADC), gave a presentation regarding their work and the impact of Universal Credit, which was to be rolled out in Bishop Auckland in December 2017.

Ms Kirsopp explained the impact that universal credit would have on local people. All claims would have to be made and managed online and claimants would need to respond to email requests within certain deadlines to avoid sanctions. This added to the burden and stress for claimants, many of whom would not have access to a computer and may not be computer literate.

CACD were providing a digital lounge at the Bishop Auckland centre and were increasing the number of volunteers to assist claimants and deal with queries.

Ms Kirsopp explained that CACD had lost £125,000 from its core funding for 2017/2018, which made it difficult to provide the service at a time when the need for support was increasing. An annual financial donation from the Town Council would assist with the establishment of the digital lounge and to help fund training of volunteers and the ongoing demand for their services.

Signed:
Town Mayor

Members unanimously agreed to make a donation to CACD and referred consideration of the amount to be donated to the Finance Committee.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That an annual financial donation be made to Citizens Advice County Durham
 2. That the amount to be donated be considered by the Finance Committee.

TC.106/17 TOWN (CORE) TEAM

Nigel Bryson (Chairman of the Town Team) updated members with regard to the activities of the Core Team.

It was noted that the Core Team was reviewing its constitution to ensure its efforts aligned with the work of Brighter Bishop Auckland group which was providing a strategic overview of the regeneration of the town centre.

The second round of consultation on the Town Centre Masterplan was to be carried out in January 2018 which would look in more detail at the ideas and options for the town centre.

Durham County Council was leading on the procurement for the guest WiFi project. The Core Team had committed funds from the Portas grant to help fund the revenue costs of the project. The Town Council and a local Councillor had also committed to funding the revenue costs of the project.

The second phase of North Bondgate car park had begun. Demolition would be complete by mid November with construction of the car park beginning thereafter.

An update on the Targeted Business Improvement Grants offered by Durham County Council was given.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.107/17 TOWN (EVENTS) TEAM

Nigel Bryson updated Members in relation to the activities of the Events Team.

The Events Team were planning a programme of events to be held during the next 12 months to assist with planning activities and also to give businesses advance notice.

Arrangements were being made for Monster Saturday to be held on 28th October.

Banners had been removed from Newgate Street to allow Durham County Council to stress test the lampposts before they installed the Christmas lights.

Arrangements were being made for Christmas events including the Advent Window project.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.108/17 MINUTES

Town Council	12 th September 2017
Planning Committee	12 th September 2017
Events Committee	11 th October 2017

Signed:
Town Mayor

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

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

TC.109/17 REPORT OF THE MAYOR

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

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

TC.110/17 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRAINING COURSES

County Durham Association of Local Councils - AGM

Councillor Fleming and the Town Clerk had attended the AGM of CDALC on Saturday 21st October 2017.

Councillor Fleming had been reappointed to the Executive Committee and as chairman of the Larger Councils Forum.

A presentation was given on the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation which would be implemented from 25th May 2018. The new regulations extended the current provisions for data protection and increased the maximum penalties for non compliance and data breaches.

A training event was being arranged by the County Durham and Cleveland Training Partnership. (see Minute No TC.114/17 below).

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.111/17 ANNUAL RETURN, YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2017 – 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).

The external auditor stated that ‘on the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with the proper practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met’

The Council had therefore achieved an unqualified audit.

Members noted that all recommendations of the internal auditor have been actioned.

RESOLVED: That the audited Annual Return and External Auditors Report for the year ended 31st March 2017 be noted.

TC.112/17 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Members noted that a revised Members Code of Conduct had been received via County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) which included the addition of “disrepute” to the existing NALC Code of Conduct. (for copy see file of Minutes).

Signed:
Town Mayor

Durham County Council's Monitoring Officer, the CDALC Executive Committee and CDALC Larger and Smaller Council Forums were all in agreement with the revised wording and had requested that all parish and town councils within County Durham adopt the Code so that it was standardised across the County.

RESOLVED: That the revised Code of Conduct be adopted.

TC.113/173 COMPOSTING TOILET – POLLARDS ALLOTMENTS

Consideration was given to a report regarding the installation of a composting toilet at the Pollards allotment site. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted that a request had been received from the Pollards Allotment Association for the Town Council to oversee the project. Members also noted quotations received from the suppliers of composting toilets, together with a schedule of funding available for the project.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Town Council manage the project
 2. That the WooWoo KL2 Cabni and STK Toilet System be purchased and installed on the Pollards Allotment site
 3. That the Pollards Allotment Association provides grant funding as detailed in the report to support the project

**TC.114/173 TRAINING - GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS
1ST NOVEMBER 2017, SPENNYMOOR TOWN HALL**

Consideration was given to attendance at the above training event.

RESOLVED: That the Councillor Fleming and the Town Clerk attend the training event

TC.115/17 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

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

- Durham Community Action, Parish Plan (December)
- John Brannan and Paul Watson, Wannasee
- Barbara Slasor, Gaunless Gateway Partnership
- John Wiseman, Auckland Youth and Community Centre
- Mick Irwin, Drug and Alcohol Reduction Unit

TC.116/17 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 items on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.117/17 DETERMINATION OF TENANCY

Consideration was given to a report updating Members with regard to a determination of an allotment tenancy at Mill Race, Bishop Auckland. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Signed:
Town Mayor

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the information be noted.
 2. That the Town Council confirm its intention to proceed with court action to regain possession of the allotment plots.
 3. That the Council's solicitor be instructed to seek to regain possession of the plots via court action.

TC.118/17 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Consideration was given to a report regarding new office accommodation for the Town Council. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded of the criteria initially set for new premises together with a list of properties considered, possible alternative properties currently available and costs of current accommodation.

Members noted that the offers agreed at the previous meeting for premises detailed in the report had been declined and gave further consideration to the purchase of that property.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the information be noted.
 2. That further discussions take place with the owner of the property identified in the report with a view to purchasing that property.

Signed:
Town Mayor