

A meeting of Bishop Auckland Town Council was held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on Tuesday, 21st January 2020 at 6.00 p.m.

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

Also Present: Clive Auld and Nigel Bryson (Bishop Auckland Town Team) and David Anderson (Town Clerk).

Public in Attendance: A. Anderson.

TC.107/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Fleming, Newton Woods and L. Zair

TC.108/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item No 8.1 Review of Allotment Rent

Councillor Blackburn declared a 'disclosable pecuniary interest' in respect of this item and did not take part in the discussion or voting thereon.

TC.109/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

PRESENTATIONS

TC.110/19 BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN TEAM

Core Team

Nigel Bryson, Chairman of the Town Team, gave an overview of various regeneration activities within the town centre, which were being undertaken by partner organisations, including: -

Kynren - it had been announced that there would be 7 Kynren shows taking place during August - September 2020. A park had been created on the Kynren site which included a children's' activity area, an entertainment stage, 30 minute horse stunt show and an enhanced food offer on site.

Auckland Castle had attracted almost 20,000 visitors since opening in November 2019. 7,000 annual tickets had been sold during the same period.

Fore Bondgate Traders had formed a group to promote the business in the street and to organise events to increase footfall in that area of the town.

Community WiFi was close to being activated. It was understood that footfall data would be available from February 2020.

New Businesses were opening in the town including an new café/restaurant (The Foxes Tail), an orthodontist and a nail bar.

Town Hall it was understood that renovations were going well.

Durham County Council Regeneration were leading on bids for significant grants to help with the delivery of the masterplan.

Signed:
Town Mayor

Gib Chare Water Fountain - work would start on the water fountain shortly. Barbara Lawrie had provided information for an interpretation board which would tell the history of the structure.

A **Town Team Annual Report** was being produced which would be reported to the next Council meeting and would support a request for funding from the Town Council to help finance events in the town.

Events Team

Clive Auld, Chairman of the Events Team, gave an update with regard to recent activity of the Events Team.

Advent Windows had been a great success receiving positive feedback from participating schools, retailers and wider public.

An Events Brochure was being put together for 2020 which would be financed through adverts.

It was reported that social media through December had achieved a reach of 72,000.

It was confirmed that Bishop Auckland Town Council's support would be acknowledged in the brochure.

Arrangements were also being made for the Eggs-travaganza and 1940's day, which had been moved to Saturday 9th May 2020 to contribute to Bishop Auckland's VE75 celebrations.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted

TC.111/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Town Council	3 rd December 2019
Planning Committee	3 rd December 2019
Events Committee	13 th January 2020
Finance Committee	14 th January 2020

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

There were no matters arising

TC.112/19 REPORT OF 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.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.113/19 REVIEW OF ALLOTMENT RENT

Consideration was given to a report regarding a review of allotment rent. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted that 12 months notice had to be given of a rent increase. Any increase in allotment rent would therefore take effect from 1st April 2021.

Signed:
Town Mayor

It was noted that allotment rent had not increased since April 2014.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That allotment rent be increased to 54p per square meter from April 2021.
 2. That the cultivation discount continues to apply.

TC.114/19 MOBILE PHONE

Consideration was given to a report regarding the purchase of a mobile phone. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED: That a mobile phone be purchased as outlined in the report.

TC.115/19 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 TO 2022/23 AND COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

Members noted that the Finance Committee had considered the Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2022/23 and Council Tax 2020/21 at its meeting held on 14th January 2020. (Minute No FIN.45/19 refers).

A copy of the report considered by the Finance Committee had been circulated to all members of the Council and in line with normal practice all members of the Council had been invited to attend the meeting.

Recommendations of Finance Committee

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Finance Committee, held on 14th January 2020, which resulted in a Council Tax of £52.10 (Band D) an increase of 90p (1.76%).

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Council's budget for 2020/21 be set at £254,880 resulting in a precept of £221,471 equivalent to a Band D Council Tax of £52.10 representing increase of £0.90 (1.76%) on the previous year.
 2. That the resulting Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2022/23 be agreed

TC.116/19 TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

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

- Sue Jacques, Chief Executive, County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, regarding proposed changes to services at Bishop Auckland Hospital. Arrangements were to be made for a special meeting to be held for this item. Requests for availability had been made, but no dates had yet been received.

TC.117/19 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.

Signed:
Town Mayor

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK (CONTINUED)

TC.118/19 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the current situation regarding the new office accommodation.

It was noted that the Town Clerk had attended two meeting earlier that day to discuss progress on the purchase of the building and also progress on the building work contract. It was anticipated that the remaining issues would be concluded in the near future which would allow a special Council meeting to be held to complete the purchase and agree the final contract sum for the building work.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

Signed:
Town Mayor