

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Bishop Auckland Town Council held on Tuesday 28th July 2020 at 6.00pm via Zoom

Present: - Cllrs. J. Allen (Mayor), L. Brownson, L. Chappell, D. Flemming, D. Wilson, A. Zair, L. Zair, S. Zair.

In attendance: - Mr. J. Robinson, Interim Town Clerk, Mrs. S. Horner, Deputy Town Clerk, C. Boylan Events Co-Ordinator

F.C.1.0/2020 Apologies

Cllr. Blackburn, Cullen

F.C. 2.0/2020 Declaration of Interest

Cllrs. L. and S. Zair in respect to 2 items in the finance report due to a work-related contact with one of the tenderers.

Before beginning the meeting, the Mayor wished to place on record on behalf of the members of the Town Council and Interim Town Clerk there thanks to all the staff for the sterling work undertaken during the Pandemic period. She also wished all members well and thanked them for cooperating with the Zoom process which all Councils are using for meetings at this time.

The Mayor advised members the main purpose for the meeting is to endorse actions taken during the recent pandemic situation and to bring the Council back on track.

F.C. 3.0/2020 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

F.C. 4.0/2020 Minutes of the Town Council held on 3rd March 2020

Resolved: - On a proposal by Cllr. D.Flemming, seconded Cllr. L. Brownson and carried to confirm acceptance of the minutes of the Full Council held on 3rd March 2020

F.C. 5.0/2020 Mayor Report

Cllr. J. Allen advised there had due to COVID been no events/functions for her to attend.

F.C. 6.0/2020 Alteration to Constitution

The Interim Town Council presented a report on the need to amend the Constitution to reflect the need to hold meetings via virtual methods.

Resolved: -To formally endorse Interim Clerks report and wording to amend Council Constitution

F.C. 7.0/2020 Delegated Authority due to COVID Pandemic

The Interim Town Clerk reported to members that following consultation with members in March the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of Finance in conjunction with Officers had been given delegated power to act in the best interest of the Council during this period. A report covering all financial payments was tabled for members to consider.

Resolved: - On a proposal from Cllr. D.Wilson and seconded Cllr. D.Flemming and carried to endorse all payments made during the Pandemic Lockdown period.

F.C.8.0/2020 Appointment of Town Clerk

Resolved: - To appoint Mrs. Sarah Harris as Town Clerk from 1st September 2020.

F.C 9.0/2020 Future meeting dates/venues

Members were referred to the document circulated by NALC and SLCC strongly recommending no face to face meetings but to meet remotely. (30th June 2020)

Resolved: - To hold all meetings at the current time via Zoom and to investigate face to face meetings in the Autumn when Kingsway is finished and up and running. Meetings to be held on current frequency basis.

F.C. 10.0/2020 Financial Transactions during Lockdown

Members returned to this item and considered the report submitted by the Interim Town Clerk, all payments totalling £51387.43 (copy on file).

Resolved: - Proposed Cllr. D.Wilson and seconded Cllr. L. Brownson to endorse the action taken and to approve the payment. Cllr. L. Chappell requested her vote against the motion be recorded.

F.C. 11.0/2020 Annual Accounts

Members were informed the Annual Accounts are to shortly be referred to the internal Auditor. Once his report has been received a Special meeting of Full Council will be called for their adoption.

F.C. 12.0/2020 Report on Town Team

Cllr. L. Brownson reported on the activities of the organisation prior to and during the COVID Lockdown. It was agreed a report from the organisation become a standard Agenda item for all future Full Town Council meetings. It was also agreed to arrange a seminar meeting in early September to review the Town Council input to the organisation and the Town Plan implementation. This to be facilitated by the Council staff.

F.C. 13.00/2020 Acceptance of MTFP

The MTFP had been prepared by Council prior to Lockdown, but not formally endorsed

Resolved: - To endorse and accept the MTFP 2020/21

F.C. 14.00/2020 Reserve Policy 2020

Resolved: - To accept the reserve Policy as prepared prior to Lockdown

F.C. 15.00/2020 Council Charges for 2020/21

Resolved: - It was proposed Cllr. D.Wilson, seconded Cllr. D.Flemming and carried that all charges and rents for allotments remain at the current rate and to be reviewed prior to 2021/22 Budget setting.

F.C. 16.00/2020 Accommodation Report

Mrs. S. Horner, Deputy Town Clerk presented the up to date report on the New Town Council Headquarters. (copy on file). The project is progressing as per plan, and a meeting of the Accommodation Committee is to be held shortly. Members wished to place on record they're thanks to Mrs. S. Horner for the work she has done on this project since the former Town Council had left, to ensure it remains on track for a September completion. The Interim Town Clerk advised members the first instalment for Vest is due shortly for payment and invoices have been submitted for additional work. He requested authorisation for £50,000 to be given to enable these payments to be made.

Resolved: - To transfer £50,000 from Deposit account to pay relevant invoices for Accommodation Project

F.C. 17.00/2020 Events Co-ordinator Report

Ms. C. Boylan presented her written report (copy on file), covering the events she is currently exploring. The VJ event will go ahead but will be limited in scope. A virtual flower show and youth competition are being explored. Remembrance Sunday and Christmas are being planned as normal, but clearly, if COVID situation continues will need to be altered accordingly.

F.C. 18.00/2020 Allotments

Cllr. D.Flemming gave an up to date report on the allotments. A Committee meeting to be arranged for September 2020. Allotment rents will now be collected and Invoices to be circulated to tenants by the end of August.

F.C. 19.00/2020 County Councillor Report

It was agreed from September, County Councillors to be given the opportunity to give a report to the Full Town Council if they so wished.

F.C. 20.0/2020 Christmas Lights

CDALC had written to Council advising of the DCC new Policy re installing Christmas Lights on lampposts. Policy noted.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings), as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council resolved to exclude all Press and Public for the remaining items of business.

F.C. 21.00/2020 Human Resources Committee

Members received the minutes and recommendations of the Human Resources Committee held on 15th July 2020.

Resolved: -

1. To agree to the appointment of Mr. J. Robinson as Interim Town Clerk
2. That the draft Polices considered by the Committee be considered at their September meeting
3. The Town Clerk be appointed on the grade and conditions as offered by the Human Resources Committee (copy on file)

The meeting finished at 19.45pm

Signed: -

Cllr. J.Allen
Mayor at Full Council 9th September 2020