

Bishop Auckland Town Council

14<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 6.00pm in  
No. 42, Market Place, Bishop Auckland.

**Present:** - Cllr. K. Eliot Chairman L. Brownson, A. Zair, M. Siddle, H. Balmer-Howison, L. Zair, L. Chappell, S. Zair, D. Wilson.

**In attendance:** - Mr. J. Robinson, Locum Clerk.

1 member of the public present

**TC 62.0/21 Apologies**

Cllr. J. Blackburn,  
Town Clerk S. Harris.

Before the meeting commenced Cllr. S. Zair advised members that 4 Independent members had formed the Bishop Auckland Independent Group and would sit as members of the Council under this banner.

**TC63.0/21 Declaration of Interest**

There was no declaration of interests recorded

**TC64.0/21 Minutes of Council meetings**

**Resolved:** - on a proposal by Cllr. L. Brownson seconded by Cllr. S. Zair to accept the following minutes as a true record and the recommendations contained therein: -

- a. Town Council meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021
- b. Town Council meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021
- c. Finance Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021
- d. Finance Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- e. Events Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**TC 65.0/21 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**TC 66.0/21 Public Participation**

There were no questions asked of members by the member of the public present. However, a written question had been received in respect of the Councils links to other groups/organisations within the Town. The Locum Clerk read to members an answer to the question from the Town Clerk which will go onto the website shortly.

**Question from the Public – they were interested** in the partnership working of the Town Council, Future High-street Fund, Town Team etc?

*Yes we do work in partnership with other organisations.*

*We are now are linked to the Brighter Bishop Board (future high street fund) , and Stronger Towns Boards (35m stronger towns fund)*

**Signed Chair of Meeting:** .....

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*Clerk has only been invited too and attended on BB Board, Mayor Attends Stronger Towns board, but they're has only been two meetings. Both boards know that better communication with the public is needed.*

*We work with schools and other organisations such as TAP.*

*Town Team – Core group was serviced by the Clerk, however this group was disbanded by the Chair and some members earlier in the summer. The Town Council were not involved in the decision making process to disband the Town Team is now a group of 4 people, who are focusing solely on events, they have changed the constitution to reflect the changes. Town Council are not involved in the Events group, however one person is a councillor.*

## TC 67.0/21 Reports

- a. **The Auckland Project.** Ms. L. Fisher gave a report on behalf of The Auckland Project, the Castle had been open during the summer period on limited opening but still attracted 5,000 visitors. The Spanish Gallery is to open 15h October, and members were invited to attend a special preview evening on 20<sup>th</sup> October. All the various components of the project will re-open on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2022 on a 5-day basis. She explained the plans for all the buildings in the Projects ownership in the Town Centre area. The plans will proceed to the next stage shortly. The Ecological Garden at Winchester Farm is also proving successful. Ms. Fisher completed her report by answering members questions and offering to attend future meetings to update members. On behalf of the Council the Mayor thanked her for the report and wished the Spanish Gallery both a successful opening and success for its future.
- b. **Durham County Council.** Cllr. S. Zair the footfall in the Town Centre over the Food Festival Weekend was 5,000 people per day. The Leisure Centre on Woodhouse Close is to remain in its current site.
- c. **Mayor Report.** She had attended a celebration event for Manners, Construction firm, and met a gentleman in his 90s who had worked for the business for many years. The Horticulture Show had been a great success and raised £330 for the Mayors Charity, this had been matched funded and brought the total up to £660. She had attended the Food Festival and raised £100 for the Mayors Charity. Her Mayors at Home had been extremely successful and attended by several Civic Dignitaries from around the area.
- d. **Brighter Bishop Board.** |members considered the tabled Town Clerk report and noted the comments within it.
- e. **Stronger Towns.** The mayor advised she had not received any information or invites to this group and was concerned that the Town Council input to the group was missing.

Members considered the relationship between the Town Council and the groups referred to in reports d and e. Several members felt the Councils views and opinions were not being heard. Members also expressed concern that Bishop Auckland regeneration was being determined by Councillor's and individuals not elected by the residents, and that greater input is need by Town Council members.

**Resolved:** - It was proposed Cllr. A. Zair, seconded by Cllr. L.Zair and carried, to arrange a Special Town Council meeting and to invite Mr. D. Land and Ms. A. Harhoff, Durham County Council Director of Regeneration and Planning to address the concerns of members regarding who appointed members to the various groups/membership/constitution/terms of reference/plans for the groups. The overriding concerns being who is presenting and informing the groups of the views and aspirations of the residents of Bishop Auckland. To also request a public meeting with the Boards to advise and inform the residents as well as receive their views directly.

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Cllr. L.Chappell raised the issue of the Newgate Shopping Centre and residents concern regarding the closure of the door and fire safety. Cllr. S. Zair declared an interest at this point as Vice Chairman of Durham and Darlington Fire Authority.

It was agreed to write to both DCC and Durham Fire Authority expressing concern in regards to public safety as a result of this action and for their comments.

#### **TC68.0/21 Report of Town Clerk**

- a. **Committees.** As a result of the formation of an independent group the membership of committees needs to change. A draft report was presented by the Town Clerk. It was agreed to agenda this for the November meeting to allow groups and Councillors to agree membership.
- b. **Council insurance.** The Town Clerk tabled a report on the renewal of Insurance. The former company had withdrawn from Local Government coverage and a new one required. She had consulted with the Mayor and Chair of Finance before awarding the contract to a new company. It was agreed to endorse action taken by Mayor, Chairman of Finance and Town Clerk in this matter
- c. **Accommodation Update.** Town Clerk tabled an up-to-date report. It was agreed to pay for the design work of the car park. Then to have an Accommodation Committee meeting to take these matters further, in regards of the tender document and contractor selection.
- d. **Allotment Restructuring.** Members considered a written report on this matter and agreed to commission Northern Counties Allotment Association to undertake the work and report back to Council with outcome.

#### **TC69.0/21 Financial Issues**

- A. **External Audit.** The Town Clerk advised members of an Unqualified audit for 202/21 with several matters under Matters to Highlight. These had been actioned.
- B. **Mid-year quarterly reports.** These were endorsed.
- C. **Monthly statement of payments.** Agreed to authorise monthly payment

#### **TC70.0/21 Correspondence**

Report noted and received.

It was proposed Cllr. L. Brownson seconded by Cllr. S. Zair and carried to Exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted.

#### **TC70.0/21 Human Resource Report**

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk regarding the recruitment process for the Deputy Town Clerk. Members agreed to advertise via CDALC and Northeast Jobs- Sector 1. To also involve DCC Human Resource Unit if required in the shortlisting/interview process.

#### **TC71.0/21 Christmas Events**

a. Trees/brackets to businesses in the Town Centre as referred to in the Events Committee minutes. This was agreed.

b. Members received a written report from the Town Clerk regarding the Christmas Events. Members considered that due to the short time left to organise the event that they

**Resolved:-** To work with The Bridge Creative to deliver the 'Bishop Auckland Santa Town' weekend activity, with moon market, street theatre and tree illumination on the Friday. Members felt that the Drive by Santa

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was too costly, but did agree that a re to ask the Gaunless Valley project to provide a quote to extend their Bus Santa into Bishop Auckland and Toronto.

The meeting closed 7.20pm

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Appendix 1 – list of payments agreed under TC069/21 C

Payment Type/ No	Payee	Detail	Amount £	Authorised By	Notes
EP	Twinkle Cleaning Services	Kingsway: Cleaning 1st, 3rd, 10th 17th and 24th September 2021 (5 Hour Sessions)	£264.00	By Council for Financial Regulation No 5.6	
2124	Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway	Corporate Sponsorship for 2021/22	£50.00	Town Council	
2125	R. Lightfoot Electrical	PAT Testing of Electrical Appliances - Kingsway	£184.80	Town Council	
2126	Fifteas Vintage Tea Room	28x Cream Tea - Catering for Mayor At Home Charity Event	£149.20	Town Council	
2127	Total Business Group	A3 Laminator and Various Office Stationery	£164.46	Town Council	
DC	The Works	Sharpie Permanent Markers (12 pack) and Clear Tape	£7.00	Town Council	
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 10/06/21 – 09/09/21	£1,101.14	Town Council	Advised by Wave that our latest customer reading will be reflected on our next bill. Will monitor meter usage over the next few months.
EP	Vinovium Associates Ltd.	Kingsway: Keyholding Services - September 2021	£111.60	Town Council	Request received from Vinovium to pay monthly invoices electronically. Members to discuss/approve.
<b>Total:</b>			<b>£2,032.20</b>		

Signed Chair of Meeting: .....

Date: