

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 26 April 2022, at No.42 Market Place, Bishop Auckland at 6pm

Present: - Cllrs. K Eliot (Chairman), J Blackburn, S. Zair, L. Zair, A. Zair, D Wilson, L. Chappell, M Siddle, and H Balmer-Howison.

Also in attendance: - Mrs S Harris, Town Clerk
Mrs Vicki Booth, Assistant Town Clerk
Claire Gibbons from the Auckland Project
David Land Chair of the Stronger Towns Board
Geoff Paul, Durham County Council

TC 110.0/2021 Apologies - No apologies for absence were received.

TC 111.0/2021 Declarations of interest – No declarations were made.

TC112.0/2021 Minutes - The following minutes were presented for approval:

- Town Council Meeting 22 March 2022
- Events Committee 14 April 2022

Resolved: That the minutes be approved.

TC113.0/2021 Matters arising – The Clerk reported that microphones, speakers, recording equipment and smart devices were still being costed.

Queens Jubilee – The Clerk updated that the Queens Jubilee had a deficit in funding of approx. £10,000 due to a grant application from the a partner organization not being successful. Therefore the event was fully funded at present by BATC. The Events Committee had asked the Clerk to identify where the funding could be sourced from within the Council budget. The Clerk had identified that the budget included £5,000 for in year ward events, therefore this could be used for Jubilee along with funds from the general reserve.

Resolved: That the Council will cover the £10,000 gap in funding, from the ‘In year events’ and general reserve. All Members were in agreement that this was a once in a lifetime celebration and it was a good thing to be doing for the town. Cllr J Blackburn Proposed and Cllr L Zair seconded.

Resolved: That a report would be brought as soon as all costs were received.

TC114.0/2021 Public Participation – No Members of the public wished to speak.

Resolved: That the letter would be appropriately responded too and an allotments committee would be called.

TC115.0/2021 Disqualification of Councillor – Cllr Tucker had been remanded to custody for a period over 3 months following a conviction. Under section 80(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 1972, a Councillor is automatically disqualified as a Councillor with immediate effect if they have within 5 years before the day of election or since their election been convicted in the UK of any offence and has had passed on them a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than 3 months.

Section 80 (5) goes on to say that for the purposes of section 80(1)(d), the ordinary on which the period allowed for making an appeal or application with respect to the conviction or expires or, if such an appeal or application is made, the date on which the appeal or application is made, the date on which the appeal or application is finally disposed of or abandoned or fails by reason of the non-prosecution therefore shall be deemed to be the date of the conviction. It has been confirmed via Durham County Council legal Services that no appeal has been logged. Therefore the council can then move disqualify Cllr Tucker from the Council. The process of any vacancy Councillor Position would then be followed.

Resolved: The Council were unanimous in their decision to disqualify Cllr Tucker from Bishop Auckland Town Council. It was agreed that the Town Clerk inform the Monitoring Officer and Electoral Services Manager for the Notice of Vacancy to be issued. This was proposed by Cllr A Zair and Seconded by Cllr Balmer-Howison.

TC116.0/2021 Resignation of Councillor - Cllr Lee Brownson had resigned. The Monitoring and Elections Officer had been informed and the notice for vacancy had been published. The closing date was 4th May 2022. If there was no call for election then co-option could be considered.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

TC117.0/2021 Reports

TC117.1/2021 County Council Report – Cllr S Zair reported that the Sands Council development which had been proposed for the new ‘County Hall’ was being considered by Cabinet regarding the sale of the property to Durham University with the funds then being used to create and more fit for purpose building as part of the Aykley Heads development.

The Food Festival had been a great success the previous weekend -with over 30,000 visitors in attendance.

Resolved: That the update be noted and a letter of thanks be sent to Jill Wood, DCC food Festival Organiser.

TC1172/2021 Mayors Report – Cllr Eliot reported that she had been to the Mayor of Barnard Castle’s Holi Festival event and that she had attended an Easter Service at the Castle. She had been part of the opening committee of the Food Festival with DCC Chairman Watt Stelling, and then had used the weekend to fundraise for her chosen charity.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

TC118.0/2021 Public Meeting feedback Update – Durham County Council & Stronger Towns Board Mr Geoff Paul, DCC and Mr David Land, Chair of the board attended the meeting to provide and update following the public meeting in February 2022. They both confirmed that the public meeting confirmed that

more needed to be done surrounding communication with the residents, business owners and wider public, however they did acknowledge that a promise for this had been made however as projects had been identity to change they had agreed to wait to put out consistent messages showing the full picture rather than parts. Following the meeting a new Strategic Advisory Panel has been established to ensure wider views on the whole of the regeneration schemes is considered wider. The panel has key community reps etc on it.

Mr Land confirmed that the 6.1million for the canopy had been removed and instead the 6.1 million was being looked at by the Town Centre Diversification board subgroup. The group were considering smaller more supportive projects within the 4 zones of Fore Bondgate, Market Place and north end of Newgate street. The proposed projects looked ar realm works, extension of the shop front schemes and high end potential hotel and restaurant development. The Board were due to meet the following week. To ensure that the information required by government was met business cases were being developed.

Resolved: That the updates be noted and that the Council be kept fully briefed on the developments and decisions of the board.

TC119.0/2021 Town Clerk Report

TC119.1/2021 Asset Register - the updated asset register was presented for approval (see file copy)

Resolved: That the register be approved and noted.

TC119.2/2021 Risk Management The risk register was presented as a best practice item following the disqualification of a Councillor, as per minute **TC115.0/2021** above. The reason for disqualification whilst had nothing to do with the Town Council or their activities, the person had not had any access to any finance or served on any sub-committees during their recent term of office.

Resolved: That the updated Risk register be re-approved and report noted.

TC119.3/2021 Mayoral Chain - The Mayors Chain is in need of some repair and cleaning. It was suggested that to avoid a gap of not having a Chain of Office available it is requested that the Chains of Office be swapped, and the Deputy Chain be used as the Mayors Chain and vice versa. However this may cause issues the civic insignia.

Resolved: that the Clerk seek quotations for cleaning and repairs, as well as approaching DCC to see if the former Wear Valley District Council Chain could be used and adopted as the Town Councils instead.

TC120.0/2021 Finance –

TC119.1/2021 Quarter 4 Finance Report – a report up to the 31st of March for q4 was given for across all cost codes. (see report on file)

Across the year there had been over spends on :

| Cost Centre | Cost Code | Description | Budget | Spend | Variance | Notes |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|
| Admin | 21 | Insurance | 1,200.00 | 2,855.52 | -1,655.52 | New insurance was procured in Sept 2021 after the existing deal could not be honoured. The new cover is much more comprehensive and quotes were sought where possible. |
| Allotments | 35 | Repairs and Maintenance | 1,000.00 | 2,451.09 | -1,451.09 | This was down to the repair to the watermain at Mill Race this work should have been started and complete in 2020 but covid caused delays. |
| Community Support | 93 | Bishop Auckland Community Wi-Fi | None | 1,533.00 | -1,533.00 | This payment should have been included in the budget but hadn't been identified. It was a commitment that the council made. |
| Democracy | 29 | Elections | 20,000 | 21,448.27 | -1448.27 | The unexpected by election in Henknowle caused the over spend as an ordinary election had been called in May 2020 also. |
| Events | 39 | Remembrance | 750.00 | 12950 | -459.50 | The cost of road closures and larger PA system required have increased costs. |
| Kingsway | 51 | Gas | 1098.00 | 1235.65 | -137.65 | Gas prices have increased and 2020-21 was not an ordinary year for the building so has caused challenges to the forward budgeting of building items. |
| Kingsway | 62 | Loan Repayment Interest (PWL B) | None – included in 50 Loan repayment | 6518.71 | -6518.71 | A new code needed to be created as the repayment and interest needed to be split for AGAR accounting purposes. So no real overspend made. |
| Kingsway | 92 | Health and Safety (Security) | | 2,915.44 | 2,915.44 | This code was created in year for transparency as key holding was not right to be coded to maintenance etc. |
| Kingsway | 53 | Telephone & Broadband | 1,837.00 | 2,742.35 | -905.35 | The telephone system has been over specified and the council have been paying for too much capacity a review of suppliers is being investigated. |

Overall the Council came in underspent for 2021-22 as the first look at the year end is taken.

Resolved: that the report be noted and the Clerk proceed to move on to prepare the end of year return.

TC119.2/2021 Audit /AGAR Update - the clerk updated that the Auditor Mr Ackroyd had been in touch and his services would be used for the 2021-22 accounts as agreed at the last meeting. He was scheduled to undertake the audit in early May. Mr Shingleton would be helping to check statements for the AGAR, in early May therefore the AGAR would be coming to the meeting in June for Full sign off after going to Finance committee first.

Resolved: that the update be noted.

TC119.3/2021 Statement of Payments – the statement of Payments for the period 22.03.2022 – 25.04.2022 (attached in appendix 1) were presented for approval and authorisation.

Resolved: that the payments be approved and authorised.

TC119.4/2021 Community Fund Application – The additional information requested from the GRT service regarding their application had been received. The activity packs would be used at sites and authorised temp stop over sites in Bishop Auckland area.

Resolved: That the funding be granted.

TC121.0/2021 Correspondence – details of any Correspondence (letters or email received)
The Clerk advised that a code of conduct complaint had been received, it had been investigated by the Monitoring Officer, and it was found to be unwarranted and no further action needed to be taken.

Resolved: That Members noted the update.

| Payment Type/ No | Payee | Detail | Amount £ | Authorised By | Notes | |
|------------------|---|---|-----------|--|--|---|
| DD | EDF Energy | Electricity: Kingsway 01/02/22-28/02/22 | £95.08 | By Council for Financial Regulation No 5.6 | | |
| DD | O2 (Telefonica Ltd.) | Mobile Phones 24/03/22-23/04/22 | £73.80 | | | |
| EP | Corona Energy Retail 2 Limited | Kingsway: Gas March - April 2022 | £142.88 | | | |
| EP | Evolve Group Ltd. | Kingsway: Telephone & Broadband - April 2022 | £152.29 | | | |
| DD | British Gas | Electricity: Skate Park 22/02/22- 27/03/22 | £9.92 | | Final Bill – Switching to a new supplier. Energy Service Level Agreement (SLA). | |
| DD | O2 (Telefonica Ltd.) | Mobile Phones 24/04/22-23/05/22 | £85.70 | | | |
| EP | Salaries, Superannuation | April 2022 | £5,505.60 | | Increased as Assistant Town Clerk is now in post. | |
| EP | HMRC - Tax and NI, Salaries | April 2022 | £1,991.55 | | Increased as Assistant Town Clerk is now in post. | |
| EP | D.C.C. Pension Scheme | April 2022 | £1,786.66 | | Increased as Assistant Town Clerk is now in post. | |
| EP | Members Allowances | April 2022 | £367.37 | | | |
| EP | HMRC - Tax and NI, Members Allowance | April 2022 | £36.00 | | | |
| EP | Jamie's Taxis (Reimbursement) | Mayor's Travel to Holi Festival Event - 20th March 2022 | £96.00 | | Town Council | Reimbursement - Councillor Katie Eliot |
| 2186 | Total Business Group | Printing Costs: March 2022 | £38.92 | | Town Council | |
| 2187 | The Auckland Project | Room Hire at No.42 for Horticultural Show 2021 | £180.00 | Town Council | | |
| 2188 | Fire Parts | Fire Extinguisher Service | £38.00 | Town Council | | |
| DC | R. Defty | Set of Keys for Kingsway | £24.00 | Town Council | | |
| EP | Wave (NWG Business) | Water: Mill Race/West Mills 09/01/22-08/04/22 | £240.46 | Town Council | | |
| DC | Vistaprint | BATC Printed Table Cloth Runner | £57.89 | Town Council | | |
| DC | Post Office Ltd. | 72x 2nd Class Stamps | £48.96 | Town Council | | |

| Payment Type/ No | Payee | Detail | Amount £ | Authorised By | Notes |
|------------------|---|--|-----------|---------------|---|
| EP | Amazon Business | 5x A4 Acrylic Poster Holders | £25.98 | Town Council | |
| EP | Amazon Business | 2x HDMI to VGA Cable 0.9M | £16.70 | Town Council | |
| EP | Amazon Business | Olivia Rocco Navy Blue Polycotton Sheet | £7.95 | Town Council | |
| EP | Amazon Business | Self Adhesive Glue Dots (1000 pack) | £4.79 | Town Council | |
| EP | Amazon Business | A4 Acrylic Brochure Holder & White Stick on Tape | £13.55 | Town Council | |
| EP | Amazon Business | A5 Acrylic Brochure Holder | £5.15 | Town Council | |
| 2189 | Furniture@Work Ltd. | 2x Grey Oak Tables for Meeting Room | £522.72 | Town Council | |
| 2189 | Furniture@Work Ltd. | 4x Black/Chrome Conference Chairs for Meeting Room | £133.92 | Town Council | |
| DC | Cre8ive Graphics Ltd. | Display materials for Bishop Auckland Food Festival 2022 | £28.80 | Town Council | |
| DC | Cre8ive Graphics Ltd. | 2x Embroidered Ladies 3in1 Jackets and 2x Embroidered Ladies Polo Shirts | £171.48 | Town Council | |
| 2190 | County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) | CDALC Subscription Charge 2022/23 | £2,081.31 | Town Council | Electorate 11,900 @ 10p per Elector for CDALC - £1,190.00 Electorate 11,900 @ 7.49p per Elector for NALC - £891.31 |
| DC | Boyes | 20M Black Elastic Cord, 4mm - Food Festival | £6.00 | Town Council | |
| DC | Wilko | 8x White Mugs, Picture Hanging Pack, Fabric Ribbon and Tissue Paper | £30.40 | Town Council | |

Total £14,019.83