

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Council Meeting

14 June 2022

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting Held at 54 Kingsway, Bishop Auckland at 6pm

In attendance: Cllr Siddle (Chair) and Cllrs S Zair, L Zair, D Wilson and A Zair

Also Present: Mrs Harris, Town Clerk, Mr Land, Chair of Stronger Towns Board, Julie Patterson Durham Enable, and two Members of the public.

Before the meeting commenced. Cllr Wilson, gave apology to Cllr L Zair, Cllr S Zair and Cllr A Zair regarding comments he had made at a meeting early in the year. The apology was accepted.

TC16/22 Apologies for Absence - Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Blackburn, Eliot, Balmer-Howison and Chappell.

TC17/22 Declarations of interest - no declarations were made.

TC18/22 Minutes of the following meetings were presented:

- 17 May 2022 – Town Council Annual Meeting
- 23 May 2022 – Events Committee
- 7 June 2022 – Finance Committee

Cllr A Zair noted the need for a correction to the party designation of two members in appendix one of the Town Council Annual meeting minutes from 17th May 2022.

Resolved: That, with the inclusion of the above correction, that the all of the above minutes be noted, accepted and approved as a correct record and recommendations contained therein be adopted.

TC19/22 Matters Arising – Cllr Wilson, gave apology to Cllr L Zair, Cllr S Zair and Cllr A Zair regarding comments he had made at a meeting early in the year. The apology was accepted. There were no other updates on matters other than what had been included in the agenda.

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TC20/22 Public Participation - The Secretary of the Pollards Allotment Association spoke to ask for further updates regarding the letter submitted to Council in March 2022, and to raise issues surrounding the changes to the allotment rent process and tenancy agreements. The Clerk advised that correspondence had been ongoing, and that whilst there had been some challenges with the changes to the system this was to be expected when a change to process was implemented. The first inspection and site visits would be made next week, to ensure that the Town Council records were comprehensive. A committee and full consultation with Associations and tenants would be undertaken regarding an update and review of the Rules and Regulations for Allotments.

Resolved: That the Allotment Chair and Town Clerk call an Allotment and Environment Committee and all Associations Chairs and Secretaries be invited to attend.

Both members of the public in attendance left the meeting at this point.

TC21/22 Reports

TC21.1/22 Durham County Council Report – Cllr S Zair update Members that there had been disappointment that the County had not been successful in the Capital of Culture Bid 2025. However, having been placed in the top 4 on their first application gave encouragement for future applications. For the first time the three runners up also receive some funding incentives as well as the winner so not all was lost.

TC21.2/22 Durham Enable - Julie Patterson attended up give a brief update on the Durham Enable. Which is a service from DCC which is 'A brighter future for inclusive employment'. They work with employers and client to create a supported employment journey for those aged 18+ with learning needs, autism or disabilities. The service is still quite new but has been well received and has had some great successes. More information would be sent over, as Julie had kindly stepped in to update on behalf of a colleague.

Resolved: Members thanked Julie for the update and welcomed more information and future updates.

Julie Patterson left the meeting.

TC21.3/22 Stronger Towns Update – David Land, Chair of the Stronger Towns Board attended. He updated Members further that the time scales for business cases had been extended for some of the projects after discussions with the government. The end date of March 2026 remains fixed. There is a Board Meeting on 21st June to discuss the projects in further detail and put the alternative proposals forward for the 6.1M which had originally been allocated the canopy.

Members voiced their concern that there are still issues surrounding the communication with the public, and whilst the Strategic Advisory Group had been set up, no actual communication had come out of this to the public yet.

David Land Confirmed that the Board Seat had been allocated to the Town Clerk for the Town Council, but the Mayor was also welcome to attend and would be encouraged to be involved however the seat was allocated to the Clerk to ensure that there is consistency until the projects were completed.

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The Mayor voiced the concern that whilst they understood that the need for consistency but removal of a democratically elected representative meant that the Board had no direct voice of the public. David noted the comment and acknowledged the issues but assured the Council that they did want them to be fully engaged, and agreed that whilst information hadn't been fed back in the past that new working relationships and the ability to update at Council meetings meant that involvement and dialogue had massively improved in the past year.

David Land left the meeting.

TC22/22 Town Clerk Report

TC22.1/22 Jubilee Celebrations - The Clerk gave a presentation on the success of the weekend of jubilee Celebrations. (See File for Copy). Members acknowledged and gave thanks to the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Admin Assistant of the Council along with Ben Tinkler from Bridge Creative, Thomas Wales from Bacchanalia and Charlotte Walton from the Auckland Project for the excellent organisation and delivery of the events.

Resolved: That a thanks giving event to volunteers and those involved be held on the 8th July.
That the donation as agreed in the budget of £1,000 be given to the Auckland Project in recognition of their support and the work of Ms Walton.
That an Events Committee be called to put motions in place for Christmas 2022.

TC22.2/22 Christmas Lights - A report on the ongoing discussions with DCC about the potential procurement of additional Christmas lights with the Clerk and Cllr Zair as his dual hatted DCC and Town Council position was given. New lights for the banner arms on Newgate street are being installed by DCC as part of their renewal scheme. Options for the Market Place were limited due to the current designs. Options for new lighting in Fore Bondgate and for additional lighting columns additions were given.

Resolved: That Cllr Zair would contact the DCC Team and query regarding the lights for Fore Bondgate, as they already have lights which he understand were being replaced under the renewal scheme.
To speak with DCC and get lamp post lights up to 5 per area (cost dependant) for Cockton Hill, Woodhouse, Henknowle and a tree for Toronto. Lights be bought by BATC but to be gifted back to DCC as per the previous banner lights for ongoing install and upkeep.
That DCC Cllrs be approached to see if any joint funding could be achieved to pay for extra lights to go with the additional ones from BATC.

TC23/22 Report of the Mayor - the Mayor has attended:

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- David Venables Artist evening at Mining Art Gallery and Tapas Restaurant
- Cockton Hill Primary School Jubilee Celebrations
- Made the Jubilee Proclamation
- Attended and Opened the Henknowle Jubilee Event
- Attended and Spoke at the Platinum Party and Beacon Lighting
- Attended and presented medals to the entrants of the Platinum Car Show
- Attended the Royal Teas pop up museum and speech.
- Attended and opened the Platinum Picnic
- Attended and gave a reading at the Bishop Auckland Fellowship of Christian Churches
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TC24/22 Internal Auditor Report - Detailed consideration was given to the report of the Internal Auditor for the financial year ending 31st March 2022, together with a proposed action plan prepared by the Town Clerk. (For copies see file of Minutes).

Members noted that by the very nature the audit was a critical process, however this was welcomed as it helped the Council make further improvements to its systems and procedures. Updates to agreed actions would be made to the action plan as follows. (see appendix 1)

RESOLVED: That the Internal Auditor's report be received

1. That the proposed responses to the Internal Auditors recommendations and comments were agreed with the additions to the action plan.

TC25/22 Report of Town Clerk

TC25.1/22.1 Asset Register - Consideration was given to the Asset Register which had been updated to include new items purchased. The items for disposal had been removed and appropriately disposed of. Approval was sought to appropriately remove 3 old desktop computers which were no longer used. (For copy see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: That the amended Asset Register as at 14 June 2022 be approved, with the desk top machines removed.

TC25.2/22 Annual Governance and Accountability Statement

TC25.2.1/22 SECTION 1 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021-22 - Consideration was given to the Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, for the year ended 31st March 2022. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED: That Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2021-22, be approved and submitted to the External Auditor.

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TC25.2.2/22 SECTION 2 ACCOUNTING STATEMENT 2021-22 - Consideration was given to the Section 2, Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED: That Section 2, the Accounting Statements 2021-22, be approved and submitted to the External Auditor

TC26/22 Finance

TC26.1/22 Statement of Payments – the statement of payments was presented and cheques for authorisation. See Appendix 2. Most items were in relation to the recent jubilee activities, which fall within the power for the Provision of entertainment and support of the arts, Local Government Act 1972.

Resolved: that the payments (electronic and cheques) are approved and payment can be made

TC26.2/22 Community Fund Application – an application for a breast-feeding support group had been made to help run the group for 9 weeks.

Resolved: To approve and support the application.

TC27/22 Correspondence - The Council had received correspondence from a student seeking a work experience placement. An update had been received that afternoon to say that a placement had been secured elsewhere.

Resolved: The correspondence be noted and that the Clerk check with the insurance company regarding work experience placements for future reference.

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Appendix 1 - Internal Audit Recommendations & Actions following Town Council on 14th June 2022

Item	Category	Actions as agreed at Town Council on 14 June 2022
<p>Deposits - To consider transferring some funds to an alternative Bank with FSCS cover (not one related to one of Council's existing Banks) (subject to the appropriate notices being given) to reduce the balances in any account held by the Council to below the £85,000 limit, particularly at the beginning of the financial year.</p>	<p>Essential</p>	<p>The Clerk had sought advice directly from the FSCS in May 2022. “FSCS does not protect deposits made by a public authority (including a parish council), unless it is a small local authority with an annual budget of up to EUR500,000.”</p> <p>BATC currently has annual budget of over Euro500,000 as Savings totals over £332,000 Precept of over £230,000 Total budget over £560,000 Takes BATC over the 500,000 Euro once a conversion has been done.</p> <p>£560,000 Sterling converted to Euro is 655,872Euro</p> <p>If savings were to change next and the budget available were to reduce to less than 427,000 we may be under the limit but at present we are over it.</p> <p>The Council agreed to approach Barclays to open an additional account, Clerk to report to the Finance Committee Progress in July 2022</p>
<p>VAT a) To state in future reports to the Council the net payment + any vat to paid for all transactions. b) To revert to the quarterly refund claim period with HMRC</p>	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Staffing issues in 2021-22 caused workload issues which impacted upon this. Council agreed that reports will be updated and quarterly returns will be made for 2022-23.</p>
<p>Estimates/Quotations/Formal Tenders - If the Council is minded to deal directly with a contractor for works costing more than £1000 ex vat then it must be clearly stated in the minutes the basis upon which it has been decided to waive the relevant clause in its Financial Regulations.</p>	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Council Agreed that moving forward this will be clearly stated in any Council reports and in Council Minutes.</p>

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<p>There must be good reasons stated for this to be the case and I would expect that, if used, it would be for small works only and in exceptional cases.</p>		
<p>Agenda - In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations all Agenda to include a copy of the payments to be approved/authorised with the Agenda excepting those which might be regarded as confidential (ie staff wages/HMRC tax etc returns)</p>	<p>Essential</p>	<p>The regulation states “5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to the Finance Committee. The Committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment in accordance with limits detailed in para 4.1. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.”</p> <p>Due to covid and staffing, payments for approval and meeting papers have been issued electronically or tabled at the meetings. However the Agenda does always include the item, and the payment list is included in the minutes. Council agreed that steps be taken to address this and that the Clerk look to improve the format of the report.</p>
<p>Approval of Minutes - To note my comments and review the procedure for Minutes to be approved as per my comments under this heading on Page 11 of this Report.</p>	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Whilst best practice is for Committees to approve own minutes, and then agenda items on Full Council where there is and item to adopt Committee Recommendations. Council agreed that all minutes would still be approved and actioned at Full Council Meetings to ensure that all Members have the opportunity to pass comment on the actions of Committee. However minutes</p>

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		will be included on sub committee meetings to ensure that the meeting is aware of its previous actions etc.
Other matters noted in the Minutes - See under this heading on Page 11 - to report the corrections to the council/Committee concerned.	Essential	Agreed to address these issues at the next meeting of Council In July 2022
Trees - To continue with the commissioning of annual surveys (unless the Council's Tree Surgeon recommends otherwise). To contact the Weardale Railway Company re the overhanging branches next to the Pollards allotments.	Desirable	Agreed that the tree surveys will form part of the allotment site work plans. Agreed that the Clerk is to raise the issue with the Manager of the Weardale Railway now that the line is being brought into use.
Members Training - Councillors should endeavour to attend suitable training sessions.	Desirable	Agreed that all training sessions will be continue to be communicated to Members.
The New Offices - When considering any leases for the surplus accommodation in its new offices the Council should consider having separate meters installed in the offices and that the lessees should be responsible for their own general rates rather than be included in a general service charge which might work against the Council if it does not itself pay such rates.	Desirable	Agreed to look to develop an accommodation strategy which will look at incorporating the recommendation.

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Appendix 2 – Monthly Payments and Payments for authorisation 07.06.2022 – 14.06.2022

Payment Type/ No	Payee	Detail	Amount £	Authorised By	Notes
EP	Evolve Group Ltd.	Kingsway: Telephone & Broadband - June 2022	£152.29	By Council for Financial Regulation No 5.6	
2209	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd.	National Allotment Society Membership 2022/23	£66.00	Town Council	
2210	County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT)	Mayoral Donation 2021/22	£2,212.34	Town Council	£2,212.34 Donation to be made. £657.04 Funds paid directly to CDDFT, including Gift Aid. £3,000.86 Mayoral Total raised for 2021/22.
EP	Amazon Business	2x Apex A4 Laminating Pouches (100 Pack)	£12.38	Town Council	
EP	Amazon Business	Conference USB Microphone for PC/Laptop	£21.99	Town Council	
EP	Bridge Creative Enterprise CIC	Stage, PA and Lighting Hire and Management for Platinum Jubilee Events	£6,700.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	XL Team (Medical Services) Ltd	Medical Cover for Platinum Jubilee, 2nd June 2022	£379.20	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	XL Team (Medical Services) Ltd	Medical Cover for Platinum Jubilee, 4th June 2022	£552.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	RES Teescraft Scaffold Ltd.	Fencing Hire for Platinum Jubilee Events	£180.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Vinovium Associates	Security for Platinum Jubilee Events, 2nd and 4th June 2022	£995.28	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.

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EP	J. Metcalfe	Vocal Singer for Platinum Jubilee - 4th June 2022	£60.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Alex Hall	Vocal Singer for Platinum Jubilee - 4th June 2022	£150.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Ignite Entertainment	Queen & Guard Break Dancing Show, 2nd June 2022	£350.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Ami Leigh Music (A. L. Boorman)	Jen Amii Musician for Platinum Jubilee, 2nd June 2022	£80.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Baccanlia (Thomas Wales)	Platinum Jubilee Event Programme Management, Production and Delivery	£2,500.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Baccanlia (Thomas Wales)	Facebook Boosts, 3x Temporary Events Notices (TENS), Host Stopover, A3/A4 Printing Posters and Flyers - Platinum Jubilee	£535.78	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.

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Payment Type/ No	Payee	Detail	Amount £	Authorised By	Notes
EP	Hilarity Bites Ltd.	Ada Campe, Host for Platinum Jubilee - 4th June 2022	£600.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Hilarity Bites Ltd.	Patrick Monahan, Host for Platinum Jubilee, 2nd June 2022	£600.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Jennifer Innes	Performance for Platinum Jubilee, 2nd June 2022	£100.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
EP	Forever Prints by Emma	6x Printing of High Vis Vests	£24.00	Town Council	Supplier has been requested to be paid electronically.
DC	Heron Foods	Haribo and Swizzels Sweets - Platinum Jubilee Events	£11.00	Town Council	
EP	The Auckland Project	Donation for the support provided for the Jubilee Celebratons	£1,000.00	Town Council	Agreed to make the payment electronically

Total £17,282.26

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