

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of 6 September 2022

Held at 6pm in Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

In attendance: Cllr S Zair (Deputy Mayor – Chaired Meeting) Cllr J Blackburn, Cllr K Eliot, Cllr K Lawson, Cllr A Zair and Cllr L Zair

Also In attendance: Mrs S Harris, Town Clerk, Mr T Wales, Bacchanalia, and Mr B Tinkler Bridge Creative, Mr E Pickering, CEO of Citizens Advice Co Durham, and one Member of the Public

At the start of the meeting Cllr S Zair welcomed Cllr K Lawson to her first meeting after being elected in the recent byelection for the Henknowle Ward.

TC37/22 Apologies for absence - apologies were received and noted from Cllr Leanda Chappell, Cllr M Siddle and Cllr H Balmer-Howison.

TC 38/22 - Declaration of Interests – Cllr Blackburn declared an interest regarding Citizens Advice Co Durham, as they are his employer.

Cllr S Zair asked for agreement that item 6a moves forward to enable Mr Pickering to get away if he wants. This was agreed.

TC39/22 – Presentation from Edward Pickering, Chief Officer Citizens Advice Co Durham, to update on the work of the Bishop Auckland Branch and to advise of the benefit of the donation of £3000 made by the Council to the service. He advised that the service has been running from the Four Clocks centre for more than 21 Years, a mix of paid and volunteers support the community. During covid volunteer numbers have fallen. Over the last 12 months over 1000 local people have been supported by the Bishop Auckland Branch. There has been an increase in the age 25-35 age group accessing the service. The donation from the Council will enable more paid resource which will help to support and estimate 200-300 people. The service demand is growing with more support being given for energy related and tax credit and benefit queries than before. A mid-year update, and end of year update will be provided.

Resolved: That Members thanked Mr Pickering for the presentation and asked for thanks to be given to staff and volunteers for the work which they do. Members also look forward to receiving the reports on the impact of the donation.

TC40/22 – Minutes the following minutes were presented

- Finance Committee held on 25 July 2022
- Events Committee held on 25 July 2022
- Allotment & Environment Committee held on 26 July 2022
- Town Council held on 26 July 2022
- Planning Committee held on 26 July 2022
- Finance Committee held on 30 August 2022
- Events Committee held on 1st September 2022

Signed Chair:
October 2022

Resolved: that the above Committee and Town Council Minutes have been received, and that the Town Council agreed to adopt all recommendations contained within them. Copies of the minutes will be available on the town council website.

TC41/22 Matters arising – The Clerk advised that the trial holes for the car park have been dug and that the design for the car park is to be expected by the end of the month.

Resolved: Members noted the update, most other outstanding matters were on the agenda of the meeting.

TC42/22 Public Participation – **the member of the public did not wish to raise any questions.**

Resolved: Members noted this.

TC43/22 Reports

TC43.1/22 Weardale RYR Transport and Infrastructure – no one was able to attend

Resolved: That the item be deferred to the next meeting this was agreed by all members.

TC43.2/22 Durham County Council Update – Cllr Zair advised that the Tour of Britain came through the Town this afternoon and that it was nice to see so many people brave the rain. It was asked if other DCC members could be encouraged to attend

Resolved: That the Clerk to ensure that the dates of meetings is passed to other DCC Members.

TC43.3/22 Mayors Update – the Mayor is away on leave therefore no report available at this time.

Resolved: That the item be deferred to the next meeting this was agreed by all members.

TC43.4/22 Outside bodies update – the Clerk advised that there had been a meeting of the Stronger Towns Board in late July and earlier in the week. She advised that the submissions for the South Church Workspace and Spring Board to employment projects had been submitted to the government, extensions had been sought for Eastern Sustainability Access Corridor Improvements, and others. There was to be a board meeting at the end of September with the view that more projects are submitted to government after that.

Discussion took place with a focus on the poor communication to the public on progress, whilst the newsletter had finally appeared there were still areas where it had not been delivered and it made promises which haven't been delivered such as public consultation during the summer on the New Projects to improve the town centre.

Queries were also raised as to whether the board should still be meeting in a hybrid capacity as the power for council decisions in a hybrid capacity following the pandemic were removed sometime ago.

Resolved: That Members were unanimous in the request that a letter be written the Board, Durham County Council and copied publicly to the media, and the Council website and social media, expressing the concern over the lack of engagement with the public despite it being promised at the public meeting in February, and in the newsletter, it is now September and there has been no consultation and summer is over. The letter is to include a call for a public meeting and for the Chair to attend the Town Council meeting again. The letter is also to request a board

meeting to be held in public, and to question if the meeting is allowed to be held in a hybrid capacity due to the power being removed from council decision making following the pandemic.

TC44/22 – Town Clerk Report

TC44.1/22 Events Update

All members were advised that the Horticulture Show is scheduled for the end of the month, and that plans are in place for Remembrance Sunday Parade.

The Events committee wished to discuss with the Council the proposal for Christmas celebrations. The Council had committee to working with the creators of Christmas Town to deliver part of the programme. Proposals for three elements of the programme had been put the committee for consideration. The proposals would make the weekend event a quality event however the costs were above the amount allocated in the budget therefore the Council needed to decide which elements they wished to proceed with.

Resolved: That members noted the update on Horticulture Show and Remembrance Sunday Parade.

That the Council would support the Christmas Town Activity. The funding would be used for a Friday evening event formerly known as the Light switch on (name is to be changed) and to provide street entertainment and bandstand entertainment over the weekend. A commitment of £11,000 is in the budget including the £1000 from the Christmas Reserve. The estimated costing for providing the above elements is estimated to be approx. £15000 therefore the event creators are to look for alternative funding from DCC councillors and other sources. One DCC member has already made a pledge to support. However, there is still a risk of £4000 unfunded element, therefore if funding is unsuccessful from other sources, this is to be reported back to council for further consideration.

TC44.2/22 Allotment Update and Works needed – a general overview of the allotments work programme was given, and that maintenance plans were being developed to coordinate works needed. As a priority tree works were needed at Tindale, Edgehill and Pollards. Quotes were put forward.

Resolved: that the update was noted and Members agreed to progress with Supplier B who works on a Day rate basis to undertake the works first. Tindale and Edgehill to be completed first to get the plots into order and to meet the lease conditions of Edgehill. This works would then be added to the maintenance programme to ensure that it is planned periodically.

TC45/22 Finance

TC45.1/22 AGAR queries from the External Auditor - The Clerk advised that the Auditor had advised that there may be some more queries in addition to those raised at Finance Committee. So far no other queries have been made.

Resolved: That members noted the update from the Clerk and that if any queries do come in to be advised of them.

TC45.2/22 Q1 Reports – the Clerk went through the Q1 outturn report and highlighted areas where spend may be over or under by the end of the year. (see file for copy)

Resolved: That the report be noted and thanks given to the Clerk for providing a comprehensive report to Members. It was agreed that a new code for VAT reclaims would be made.

TC45.3/22 Statement of Payments – the Clerk presented the payment report (see appendix 1).

Resolved: Members approved that the payments presented be made.

TC46/22 Correspondence - two items of correspondence were highlighted to members the first was that a pre planning notice was given regarding the removal and upgrade of an existing radio base station union on woodhouse lane. This is to give improved 2g, 3g and new 5g coverage.

Second item was notice of confirmation of a rail crossing diversion and definitive map and statement modification order 22 and rail crossing extinguishment order for the path over the railway near the Sidings.

Exclusion of the 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 item on the agenda by reason of confidential nature of the business to be transacted since the publicity would be prejudicial to public interest.

TC 47/22 Town Clerk Report – Complaint received. The Clerk reported that a complaint had been received from a tenant of an allotment site where a stale mate situation appears to be developing. The complaint will be brought to the attention of the Allotment Committee but there is likely to be lots of work and mediation to be done with the site and others to ensure that standards and consistency are brought up to the expectation of the Council.

Resolved: that a holding letter be sent to the complainant, with the Clerk to look at all of the evidence and a way forward be worked with the site and tenant collaboratively. A formal allotment complaint procedure to be developed as this situation was likely to be raised again in the future so a consistent council response is needed.

Appendix 1 – Statement of Payments as per minute number TC25.3/22 – as authorised (for the period 30.08.2022 – 06.09.2022)

Payment Type/ No	Payee	Detail	Amount £	Authorised By	Notes
EP	Evolve Group Ltd.	Kingsway: Telephone & Broadband - August 2022	£152.29	By Council for Financial Regulation No 5,6	
EP	Vinovium Associates Ltd.	Kingsway: Keyholding Services - May 2022	£111.60		
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Edge Hill 01/06/22-31/08/22	£143.02		
DD	Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	Kingsway: Repayment 01/10/22 - 31/03/23	£4,151.01		
2230	VEST Construction (LIVECO) Ltd.	Retainer and Final Certificate for Council Offices, 54 Kingsway	£3,683.53	Town Council	Preapproved by Finance Committee on 30/08/22.
DC	Wilko	9x White Mugs and 1x Foil Sticker Pack	£9.90	Town Council	
2231	Initial Washroom Hygiene (Rentokil Initial)	Kingsway: WC Service Contract 12/08/22 - 11/08/23	£93.60	Town Council	Recurring contract
2232	Forever Prints by Emma (Emma Pearson)	6x Printing of High Vis Vests	£24.00	Town Council	Previously approved to pay electronically, cheque raised as unable to process this payment.
Total			£8,368.95		

For information only

Payment Type/ No	Payee	Detail	Amount £	Authorised By	Notes
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 10/06/21 – 09/09/21	£1,101.14	Town Council	Electronic payment made on 20/04/21, as a final reminder was received. Update 05/09/22: Account is currently on hold for 3 weeks and is being investigated as, this invoice was disputed due to the high usage in Oct 2021.
-	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 10/03/22-09/06/22 (Credit)	-£408.15	Town Council	Credit Note received. Account is currently on hold and is being investigated.
-	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 10/12/21-09/03/22 (Credit)	-£235.82	Town Council	Credit Note received. Account is currently on hold and is being investigated.
-	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 10/12/21-09/06/22 (Credit)	-£349.88	Town Council	Credit Note received. Account is currently on hold and is being investigated. Total of credits received £993.85.
Total			£107.29		

Signed Chair:
October 2022