

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of 10 January 2023

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

In attendance: Cllr M Siddle (Mayor – Chair) Cllr J Blackburn, Cllr Harker, Cllr A Legge, Cllr K Lawson, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr A Zair, and Cllr S Zair

Also In attendance: Mrs Sarah Harris, Town Clerk Mrs V Booth, Assistant Town Clerk. County Councillors Jackson, Hunt and Howey, and three representatives from the If U Care Share Foundation, and Inspector Andy Reeves Durham Constabulary.

TC74/22 Apologies for absence - apologies were received and noted from Cllr K Eliot, Cllr L Zair and Cllr Balmer Howison.

Resolved: that their apologies be noted.

TC 75/22 - Declaration of Interests – No declarations made

TC76/22 – Minutes the following minutes were presented

Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the following meeting:

- Town Council 29 November 2022
- Finance Committee 14 December 2022
- Finance Committee 03 January 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.

TC77/22 Matters arising: That the Clerk had been asked to see if the Public Wifi Money needed to be paid. DCC had confirmed that no further payments will be sought from the Town Council therefore a saving of £1533 would be made.

Resolved: that members noted the update and that they were pleased that no further payment would be sought.

TC78/22 Public Participation – the member of the public did not wish to raise any questions.

Resolved: Members noted this.

TC79/22 Mental Wellbeing of Bishop Auckland – The Mayor confirmed that following wider public concerns regarding the mental wellbeing of residents of the Town and concerns over safety of the viaduct area, guests from Durham Constabulary, Durham County Council and If u Share Care foundation had been Jackson updated that DCC had several ongoing projects to alleviate concerns and risks. She confirmed that the Mayor would be asked to join a virtual working group to ensure that the Council were kept informed of progress. Signage had been added to the viaduct, and capital projects of CCTV, Fencing and new lighting were due to start in the near future. Inspector Reeves confirmed that whilst outward facing it may seem that there was an issue with the viaduct, not all incidents were mental wellbeing related, and road traffic

Signed Chair:

accidents also occurred, issues with sensitivities and media reporting were causing concerns but the local press had been spoken too and acknowledged that they had a positive role to play. CCTV and improved lighting would assist with general safety improvements.

If U Care Share provided information on their general work, and the specialist commission support services they had been commission to deliver. They thanked the Town Council for giving them the opportunity to share the work which they do.

Resolved: That members noted the updates and thanked the guests for their time. They noted the sensitivities surrounding the issue and were comforted that the data presented was positive.
That the If U Care Share Foundation be asked to share a stall with BATC at the food festival in April.
That the Mayor and Clerk would update members on any future work streams and projects now that they had been invited to join the wider partnership meeting.

TC80/22 Reports

TC80.1/22 Durham County Council - Cllr S Zair thanked the other DCC members for attending. Cllr Jackson confirmed that Northumberland Ave had been resurfaced. Cllr Howey reported on the projects and public realm improvements on Henknowle on behalf of herself and Cllr Hunt. Town Councillors were invited to attend the new drop in sessions which the DCC Cllrs were running on woodhouse close and Henknowle.

Resolved: That members noted the report and thanked the members for the attendance.

TC80.2/22 Mayors Report - The Mayor had been to Spennymoor Civic Bal, Auckland Youth and Community Christmas Fair, St Anne's Christingle, Christmas Carol concerts, Christmas performance of the Choral Society, attended the College Christmas Fair, Attended the Emergency Planning resilience meeting in Eldon hosted by MP Davison, opened the new SPAR shop and had a productive introductory meeting with the new CEO of the Auckland Project.

Resolved: that members noted the update.

TC80.3/22 Outside bodies representation feedback such as the AAP, HAZ, Stronger Towns Board and Lager Council Forum, etc - The Mayor confirmed that the Town Council were hosting a wider public meeting on the investments into the Town on the 16th January, at the Town Hall, partners delivering the projects had been invited to share information on the projects and have a 'information market place'

Resolved: that members would endeavour to attend, and that feedback on the meeting would be brought to the next meeting.

Representatives from Durham Police, If U Care Share and DCC Councillors Hunt and Howey left the meeting.

TC81/22 Report of the Town Clerk

TC81.1/22 Finance

TC81.1.1/22 Request for re-allocation of summertime activities budget – the summer time activities allocation of the budget had not been used due to staffing

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sickness at the town hall. Therefore they had requested to re-allocated the funding to an additional school engagement programme in the run up to the food festival where local school are invited to attend a master class activity with TV chef and presenter Stefan Gates. (see file for report)

Resolved: that the funding be allocated for the pre-food festival school engagement activity.

TC81.1.2/22 Budget for 2023-24 – the budget for 2023-24 was presented. The Finance Committee made proposal and acknowledged that there was deficit for £29,579 for 2023-24. (see file copy)

Resolved: that the members agreed to adopt the budget.

Cllr Blackburn Left the meeting

TC81.1.3/22 Precept Proposals for 2023-24 Due to the budget having a £29,579 deficit the finance Committee were proposing a 3% increase to the precept for 2023-24, which would generate an additional £9,485.72 in additional revenue costing an additional £1.54 per month (total cost £53.66 per month) or 3pence per week for a band D property . Debate ensued amongst councillors.

Cllr A Zair asked how much it would take to break even and not have a deficit. The Clerk responded with To Break Even the Council would need to increase the precept 12.8%

£29,611.50 in additional revenue costing an additional £6.65 per month (total cost £58.75 per month) or 13pence per week for a band D property

Members agreed that a increase was needed, as it would help to reduce the deficit. No increase had been applied for the last three years. However challenging financial times meant that they didn't feel comfortable with a very large increase. Rather than going for the full 8.7% a proposal to meet closer in the middle of 5% was suggested. A 5% increase would generate £14,028.76 in additional revenue costing an additional £2.08 per month (total cost £54.71 per month) or 5 pence per week for a band D property This would be inline with similar increases in neighbouring parishes and that of DCC.

Members individually stated their stance and amount of increases acceptable.

Cllr Wilson agreed that 5% would be acceptable and would match that of DCC, a larger increase would not be accepted.

Cllr Siddle agreed that 5% would be acceptable, however he would be prepared to increase it further.

Cllr Lawson, agreed that 5% is acceptable, however the council needs to look at the services provided and how it can maximise applications for additional funding and revenue steams.

Cllr Harker, in the absence of any double digit proposals he would accept 5% but is more acceptable than 3% as it does reduce the deficit.

Cllr A Zair – agreed that whilst finance did propose 3%, we need to ensure that we balance the books in the future therefore agreed % is a good compimise.

Cllr S Zair, agreed that 5% would be accepted and is in line with others, a higher increase wouldn't be appropriate at this time.

Cllr A Legge - agreed that 5% was acceptable, he would of gone higher as we need to ensure that there is a balanced budget in the future.

Resolved: that the members were unanimous in their agreement to raise the precept by 5%.

TC81.1.4/22 Monthly Statement of Payments – payments were presented.

Resolved: That the payments be authorised as presented in appendix 1.

TC81.1.5/22 Payment of Grant under Community Grant Scheme – a grant had been agreed sometime ago for the Tindale Homing society. The organisation keep failing to provide an authentic invoice to receive the payment. They did not buy the equipment from the supplier stated in the application.

Resolved: that the grant must not be paid, and a letter be sent stating that the terms of grant allocation have not been met and therefore the offer is revoked.

TC81.2/22 Appointment to Committees, Panels, Outside Bodies and Working Groups – the proposals for the labour seats was presented. (see file copy) the independents agreed to leave their allocations the same, barring filling the vacant seats on Events, Finance and planning.

Resolved: that the members agreed that new committees allocations are as follows, and that outside bodies would remain the same:

	Total Seats	Labour	Independent	Names
Accommodation Cttee	4	2	2	Cllr S Zair (Chair) Cllr D Wilson (V.Chair) Cllr K Eliot, and Cllr A Legge
Allotment & Environment	5	3	2	Cllr J Blackburn (Chair), Cllr S Zair (v Chair), Cllr H Balmer Howison, Cllr Siddle and Cllr Legge
Council	11	6	5	All
Disciplinary & Grievance	3	2	1	Cllr A Zair (Chair) Cllr K Eliot (Vice Chair) and Cllr D Wilson
Events Committee	6	3	3	Cllr L Zair (Chair) Cllr Siddle (Vice Chair), Cllr Lawson, Cllr Harker, Cllr Blackburn, Cllr S Zair
Finance Cttee	6	3	3	Cllr Wilson (Chair) Cllr S Zair (Vice Chair), Cllr Harker, Cllr A Zair, Cllr Lawson, Cllr Blackburn
Human Resources	5	3	2	Cllr M Siddle (Chair) Cllr L Zair (Vice Chair) Cllr Balmer Howison, Cllr K Lawson,
Planning Cttee	6	3	3	Cllr A Zair (Chair) Cllr H Balmer Howison (Vice Chair), Cllr L Zair, Cllr K Eliot, Cllr M Harker, Cllr D Wilson
Policy & Strategy Cttee	5	3	2	Cllr K Lawson, (Chair) Cllr A Zair (Vice Chair) Cllr J Blackburn, Cllr M Siddle,
Youth Council Cttee	5	3	2	Cllr H Balmer Howison, (Chair) (Vice Chair) Cllr K Eliot, Cllr M Siddle

Signed Chair:

TC81.3/22 Allocation of Chair to General Appeals Committee - members were advised that a General Appeal Panel Had been called for an allotment appeal, and as the members for this were allocated due to topics to be determined and avoid conflicts of interest. Cllr Harker, Cllr Lawson and Cllr L Zair had been selected. A chair was to be determined.

Resolved: that Members agreed that Cllr Harker be the chair.

TC81.4/22 Meeting Schedule 2023-24 – a draft proposal for a meeting schedule was tabled. This only has the Full Council and Finance committee dates included.

Resolved: that additional meetings for other committees be added, and that further report is to come to council to set the final dates for May onwards. It was also agreed that from February a onwards planning committee would follow finance and not full council.

TC81.5/22 HR Service Level Agreement – A report (see file) was presented which highlighted a that a review has been undertaken of the charges for the HR Advisory Service provided by the DCC team through Service Level Agreements to Town and Parish Councils. A new charge of £250 plus VAT will include the provision of 4 hours HR advisory work by our team to the Town Council and any HR work that may be required after this 4 hours will be charged as currently at £75 plus VAT, per hour.

Resolved: that the council sign up to the agreement as in the past the service has been very good and beneficial to the council.

TC81.6/22 Car Park Tender process – that the Car park tender documents have been prepared and would eb going live on the portal. 10-12 local and trusted firms were to be contacted by DCC procurement. As previously agreed (TC.58.2/21) the DCC procurement team would be ensuring that all legislation and processes would be conformed with.

Resolved: that the update and reconfirmed that they are happy to use DCC procurement team and that the council were pleased that progress was finally being made.

TC82/22Correspondence_– no correspondence to note.

Appendix 1 – payments agreed

Monthly payments& Payments for Authorisation – 10 th January 2023						
Ref	Supplier	Detail	Net	VAT	Gross	Notes
Allotments (power to provide allotments Smallholding and Allotments Act 1908 S 23, 26 and 42)						
EP	Amazon Business	Refund: ABUS Chain Combination Lock	-£45.57	-£9.11	-£54.68	Credit Note
EP	Ak Garden maintenance & waste removal	Clearance of green waste, general waste, wood, glass, paint pots and scrap metal from Woodhouse Close Allotment	£480.00		£480.00	
EP	Ak Garden maintenance & waste removal	Clearance of wood, general waste, green waste and scrap metal from Woodhouse Close Allotment	£220.00		£220.00	
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Broken Banks 10/09/22 – 09/12/22	£25.00		£25.00	
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Pollards 10/09/22 – 09/12/22	£868.14		£868.14	Usage seems high for time of year, to monitor.
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Tindale Crescent 10/09/22 – 09/12/22	£27.51		£27.51	
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Woodhouse Close 10/09/22 – 09/12/22	-£26.46		-£26.46	Bill includes reversal of £190 admin charge.
EP	Arbor 82	Tree Works at Tindale Crescent Allotment	£740.00	£148.00	£888.00	
Mayors Activities						
2250	Sunderland City Council - Cancelled	Cancelled	£0.00		£0.00	Cheque raised and cancelled. To be paid electronically.
EP	Sunderland City Council	2x Tickets to Mayor's Civic Ball, 24th February 2023	£90.00		£90.00	
EP	Sedgefield Town Council	2x Tickets to Mayor's Race Night, 21st January 2023	£25.00		£25.00	
Events – Remembrance and Christmas Town (LGA 1972 S 145 – Provision of entertainment of the arts including festivals and celebrations)						
EP	Charlotte Armstrong	Stage Management, Bishop Auckland Christmas Town 2022	£200.00		£200.00	

Signed Chair:

Ongoing Contracts and Obligations						
DD	EDF Energy	Skatepark: Electricity 01/11/22-30/11/22	£22.33	£1.12	£23.45	Council Financial Regulation 5.6 list of going contracts and obligations.
EP	Vinovium Associates Ltd.	Kingsway: Keyholding Services - November 2022	£90.00	£18.00	£108.00	
EP	Evolve Group Ltd.	Kingsway: Telephone & Broadband - December 2022	£118.80	£23.76	£142.56	
EP	Salaries, Superannuation	December 2022 (Includes Pay Award)	£8,978.41		£8,978.41	
EP	HMRC - Tax and NI, Salaries	December 2022 (Includes Pay Award)	£3,711.46		£3,711.46	
EP	D.C.C. Pension Scheme	December 2022 (Includes Pay Award)	£2,892.52		£2,892.52	
EP	Members Allowances	December 2022	£329.91		£329.91	
EP	HMRC - Tax and NI, Members Allowance	December 2022	£73.66		£73.66	
EP	Wave (NWG Business)	Water: Kingsway 16/09/22 – 15/12/22	£60.07		£60.07	
EP	Corona Energy Retail 2 Limited	Kingsway: Gas November - December 2022	£294.60	£14.73	£309.33	
Other						
EP	Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance	Amendment to Insurance and PLI Policy 21/09/22-30/09/23	£266.01		£266.01	18/10/22 Town Council Meeting previously authorised payment of £287.27 inclusive of IPT. Invoice has now been received for £266.01, pro-rata for remainder of the policy year.
DC	HomeShred UK	Delivery of 10 Secure Paper Waste Bags	£26.99		£26.99	
Total:			£19,583.93	£219.64	£19,803.57	

Signed Chair: