

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2023

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

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

Also In attendance: Mrs Sarah Harris, Town Clerk and County Councillor J Howey.

TC83/22 Apologies for absence - apologies were received and noted from Cllr K Eliot, due to a family emergency, Cllr K Lawson and Cllr Balmer Howison, due to work commitments and Cllr A Zair due to being unwell.

Resolved: That the Members noted and accepted their apologies.

TC 84/22 - Declaration of Interests – No declarations made

TC85/22 – Minutes the following minutes were presented

Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the following meeting:

- Town Council 10 January 2023
- Public Meeting 16 January 2023
- Finance Committee 25 January 2023
- Finance Committee 14 February 2023
- Planning Committee 14 February 2023
- Events Committee 15 February 2023

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.

TC86/22 Matters Arising - To from the above Minutes which are not included elsewhere on the agenda (for information only). The Clerk provided updates on the Internal Auditor.

Resolved: To note that the Town Clerk and Chair of Finance Committee had met with the new internal auditor to get the process in place.

TC87/22 Public Participation -Cllr Howey spoke as a member of the public to say that the events and activities that the town council are putting on are welcomed.

Resolved: That members thanked her for her comments and noted.

TC88/22Reports

TC88.1/22 Durham County Council

Cllr Howey explained that the works in the Henknowle ward were underway, and that she had also chased up about the Potholes on Proudfoot drive.

Cllr Zair advised that the works to the Viaduct and lighting were now underway and that the work was being done with a lane closure to restrict disruption.

Resolved: that the Members thanked the DCC members for the updated and noted the reports.

TC88.2/22 Mayors Report - the Mayor explained the activities he has undertaken, (see file copy of report).

Resolved: Members noted the report.

TC88.3/22 Outside bodies representation feedback such as the AAP, HAZ, Stronger Towns Board and Lager Council Forum, etc

The Clerk advised that she had represented the Council at the Larger Councils forum. The Topics discussed were around the DCC consultation on Dog licences, which didn't directly impact on BATC as we don't own any of the public spaces, members still needed to be aware. Info had been circulated. A interesting presentation from Stanley Town Council on their environment schemes and awards was given, and like BATC they don't won the infrastructure but work with DCC for improvement.

Resolved: That Members noted the report and that the Clerk to see if the info from Stanley could be used for the revised allotment awards and improvements. Clerk to feed back.

TC89/22 Report of the Town Clerk

TC89.1/22 Durham County Council Standards Committee Vacancy - Cllr Mike Harker had showed an interest in applying for the vacancy on the County council standards committee.

Resolved: That Members supported Cllr Harker's application.

TC89.2/22 Risk Management - the Risk management report and matrix were presented (see file) to members.

Resolved: That Members noted the report and adopted the matrix.

TC89.3/22 Audit Planning Diary - the audit planning diary was presented (see file) to members.

Resolved: That Members noted the report and adopted the diary.

TC89.4/22 Review of effectiveness of Internal Audit the review of the effectiveness of internal audit was presented. (see file)

Resolved: That Members noted the report and adopted the timelines, and stages.

TC89.5/22 Car Park Tender and Financing the update report was presented. Four providers had tendered for the work, the Chair of Finance, and Clerk met with DCC procurement on Monday 20th Feb 2023 to appraise and score the tenders. A few questions needed follow up action, therefore a final proposal wasn't available. However Members were pleased to hear that the contracts were within the proposed EMR amounts.

Resolved: That Members noted the report and await further information on the proposed contractor.

Members were unanimous in agreement that PWLB loan should not be sought for this work, as the proposed amounts were within the EMR budget allocation.

TC89.6/22 Contracts update - telephone and broadband - the update report was presented, however the additional information following the Finance Committee was not yet back from the company, and therefore the update on pricing for 3 years had not been received. and matrix were presented (see file) to members.

Resolved: That Members noted the report and awaited further info on the 3 year term.

TC89.7/22 Additional Bank Accounts and Bank Signatories Sever delays with the change in authorisation of accounts due to postage issues and backlogs at banking groups was explained, however nearly all was sorted or hoped to be sorted by the next meeting. The Finance Committee had noted that a second additional account was possibly needed. Unity trust had an account for 2.1%AER, highest around for a business savings account. Also an additional signatory was needed for all accounts.

Resolved: That the members noted the sever delays, and agreed that Cllr Mike Harker be the additional signatory, and that a Unity Account be opened. The Clerk to action these changes.

TC89.8/22 Events update - a general update on events was given. Coronation celebrations were a main focus. A proposal from a local event supplier had been received however events committee had tasked the Clerk with looking at other funding opportunities or grants.

Resolved: that the members noted the report and that if the costings for a coronation event be in excess of the allocated budget then the proposals needed to come back to full council

TC89.9/22 Arrangements for Annual Parish Meeting - details of proposed changes to the annual meeting were presented, to encourage attendance (see file for report)

Resolved: that the members noted the report and agreed a change was needed and welcomed the proposals.

TC90/22 Correspondence_– details of any Correspondence (letters or email received)

TC90.1/22 Letter regarding - Access on Kingsway – Members noted the correspondence and history of the issue.

Resolved: That members noted the correspondence and agreed that it was a DCC issue and the action taken for signposting had been appropriate.

TC90.2/22 Consultations from DCC A list of consultations was provided (see copy of file)

Resolved: That the Members noted the report and that a response should be done as a collective to the bus station pre planning consultation.

TC90.3/22 Training from CDALC

Resolved: That the Members noted the report, two members are and agreed that a overall training session be scheduled.

TC90.4/22 Procurement thresholds – a note on the increased procurement thresholds was circulated, this as an increase from £25k to £30k (see file copy)

Resolved: that the members noted the increase.

TC91/22 Exclusion of 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 do now exclude the press and public for the remaining item on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.*

TC92/22 Eviction of Allotment Tenant – Update – A update was provided regarding the situation, and the advice received from National Allotment Society.

Resolved: That the Members noted the update, and thanked the Clerk for all of the work on this issue. The members were unanimous in their agreement that the advice of the National Allotment Society be

followed and the next stage of the termination be carried out and a quotation be sought for removal of items and making safe the Plot. Cllr Legge agreed to visit the site to offer advice.

TC93/22 Payment of Members Allowances to Co-opted Members. – The Clerk reported (See file copy of report) that errors had been made and payment had been issued of Basic allowance to Co-opted members. Co-opted members had been advised and repayment sought.

Resolved: That the members noted the report, and were unanimous in agreement that it wasn't fair that national policy dictated no payment when they were full voting members, and agreed that the matter be raised via county association, with a view for a national opinion.

TC94/22 Strategy, Workloads and Training – a discussion was had regarding staffing workloads, and staff training needs, and direction of travel for the Council.

Resolved: that the Members noted the ongoing capacity issues, and agreed that taking on significant new projects or events was not possible at this time, however exploration of the impact of partnering with an advice service was to be investigated, and that the staff training be prioritised.