

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

15 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Drew (Town Mayor), Turnbull, Ing, Ewart, McLean, Foote-Wood & Connelly.

Officers: Mr Clark (Town Clerk)

Others: Teesdale Mercury, County Cllr Ted Henderson, Mr I Blake

75. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Cllr's Bigge, Chatterjee and Thompson submitted their apologies.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 10/May/19 refers), Members were asked whether they had any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter on the agenda and, if so, to declare those interests at this point of the meeting. Members were reminded that a declaration could be given later in the meeting if a need arose during discussion. No declarations were made.

77. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

78. council meeting minutes

(i) 15 January 2024

Resolved – That the minutes be accepted as being a true and accurate record.

79. EN BLOC ITEMS

This is a report arising from the decision at Minute 72/Aug/04 to amalgamate a number of agenda items so that the accompanying recommendations can be moved 'en bloc'. Any Member has a right to speak on any of the listed items, but it is hoped that discussion can be kept to a minimum.

The items included in the report were as follows:

- (1) Partnership Committee – 05 February 2024 – Draft minutes**
- (2) Services Committee – 19 February 2024 - Draft minutes**
- (3) Resources Committee – 04 March 2024 – Draft minutes**
- (4) Planning Committee – 11 March 2024**
- (5) Town Mayor Activities**

Since the Council meeting on the 15 January 2024, the Town Mayor has attended the following:

12 February - Barnard Castle Cub Scouts – Award Presentation

13 February – Meeting with manager of Barnard Castle branch of Newcastle Building Society

Resolved – (a) That the draft committee meeting minutes and Mayoral activity be received; and (b) That the information be noted.

80. UPDATES, AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

From the meetings outlined above at item 79 the following updates are noted:

(1) Partnership Committee meeting – 05 February 2024

No referrals to full council.

(2) Services Committee meeting – 19 February 2024

No referrals were made to full council.

(3) Resources Committee Meeting – 04 March 2024

No referrals were made to full council.

(4) Planning Committee Meeting – 11 March 2024

No referrals to full council.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

81. REPRESENTATIONS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES

The Council's current representative on each relevant body can make a verbal update at the meeting.

(1) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum - (Cllr Turnbull)

The Clerk reported back to members from the last meeting as Cllr Turnbull was unable to attend.

- Preparations are being put in place for the annual migration
- The fencing at the Shawbank stop over had not been repaired but assurances were given that work on the fence line will be in place
- Concerns were raised with the location of the plant storage area by Farrens which is adjacent to the Shawbank site
- Toilets will be provided at official stop over sites – suppliers are increasingly difficult to find
- A tour of each stop over and potential areas for unauthorised encampments took place. The security in place for the Lower Demesnes was seen as good.
- Durham County will look to install two gate posts on the side road beside the Demesnes.

(2) Larger Local Councils Forum – (Clerk & Cllr Foote-Wood)

- CDALC have a new President, Mary Kelly Foy MP
- Community Emergency Plans – recommending reviews
- Subs have increased.

(3) The Witham Hall Ltd (Cllr Chatterjee)

In Cllr Chatterjee's absence no report was available.

(4) Dawson Cottages Trust (Cllr's Ewart & McLean)

Cllr Ewart referred to the issue of trustee liability following a recent meeting where this was discussed – what it means to be a Trustee. As the Trust is unincorporated the assets and liabilities do not belong to the Trust, but to the Trustees. They are looking at liability insurance.

It was agreed the Clerk look into councillors who are representing it on outside bodies who become trustees and liabilities.

(5) A66 CLG (Cllr's Drew & Thompson)

Referred at agenda item 84.

(6) St Mary's Barnard Castle Hall Association (Cllr Connelly)

Cllr Connelly referred to general maintenance work being carried out.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

82. EAST WARD VACANCY (CO-OPTION)

The Mayor introduced Mr Ian Blake who had put forward an application for co-option to the East Ward vacancy. Members were reminded of the council's co-option policy. Mr Blake gave a short presentation to the council, and members were able to ask questions. A motion was proposed, seconded, and passed to exclude press and public (including the candidate) whilst debating the suitability of the candidate.

No ballot was called so voting was by a show of hands.

Resolved – (a) The result was that Ian Blake be co-opted onto the town council as a member for the East Ward; (b) Cllr Blake signed his Declaration of Office form and was invited by the Town Mayor to join the meeting.

83. NOTICE OF VACANCY - EAST WARD

Following the resignation of Cllr Alan Coulthard a vacancy was posted in the prescribed manner. Fourteen days following the Notice, the Council were notified that an election had not been called. Members were now asked to consider co-option to fill the vacancy.

Resolved – That the vacancy be considered for co-option under the approved policy.

84. A66 DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

A Development Consent Order has been passed by the Secretary of State, approving the proposed upgrade of the A66. Unfortunately, our views were ignored, and the 'Black' route has been approved. The focus has now moved on to mitigating the effect the project will have on the town, and seeking clarity over timings/impacts etc. The council will continue to work with other affected stakeholders.

Members were disappointed in the decision that appeared not to take into account the views of local people.

Concerns were raised over the volume of traffic coming through the town now, especially HGV's, and how this decision will increase the volume during construction. Speed limits in Newgate and elsewhere need to be looked at, and reduced especially around a primary school where the limit is currently 40 mph.

The Mayor allowed County Cllr Henderson to speak where he reiterated that the County Councillor members representing the town were still trying to get a relief road considered.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

85. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr Fiona Turnbull has submitted the following written motion:

That Barnard Castle Town Council mark the passing of Cllr Harrison, and his 17 years' service to this council by purchasing a memorial bench and plaque.

Resolved – (a) That the council mark the passing of Cllr Frank Harrison by purchasing a memorial bench and plaque; (b) that a location around Thorngate, facing the river is looked into; and (c) that the costs when obtained are referred to the Resources Committee for approval.

86. CLOSURE OF BARCLAYS BANK BARNARD CASTLE

Following the meeting in January, it was agreed that the council seek clarity on the situation, and investigate alternative banking provision for the town. A productive meeting was held with the manager of the Newcastle Building Society, and further meetings are planned.

Cllr Drew reported that the Newcastle Building Society were wanting to explore ways they could help mitigate the loss of banking provision in the town.

- 2 or 3 of their branches have become trial banking hubs
- Setting them up has cost implications and benefit other banks and needs to be looked at
- Very little chance of an ATM machine being placed in the high street (outside branch), but didn't rule one going in the branch.

Cllr Foote-Wood spoke and referred to his public meeting, and the setting up of a working group to seek banking provision in the town. This group included 2 county councillors: Cllrs Henderson and Bell.

Cllr Henderson spoke and informed the meeting of the work he had carried out:

- Applied (through LINK) for help with obtaining at least one 24/7 ATM in the town, and a banking hub
- Looking at using the Post Office as a banking hub – where different banks on different days of the week could offer face to face banking
- The out of commission stamp machine could be removed and a 24/7 ATM replacing it
- Now awaiting responses from officials on the requests.

Cllr Foote-Wood proposed the wording for a resolution.

Resolved – (a) That the Town Council support the campaign to provide full banking facilities in Barnard Castle after the closure of Barclays Bank as initiated and approved at the public meeting on February 8th 2024; (b) That the Town Council co-ordinate its efforts with the campaign for a banking hub with full banking facilities; and (c) That matters relating to this are referred through the Town Clerk.

87. FORMER NAT WEST BUILDING BARNARD CASTLE

Following the presentation at the November meeting by Duncan Peake (Raby Estates), and Graham Ball (Cultratrust) (Item 60/Nov/23 refers) they are requesting the council consider a letter of support to assist in applying for funding for the project.

Resolved – That a letter of support be written.

88. NOVEMBER COUNCIL MINUTES

Received report.

The council have received a request from the Startforth Community Centre Committee to amend the previously passed minutes from the November meeting.

Resolved – That the November 2023 approved minutes are corrected to read:

The Education Endowment Order was granted, transferring ownership to the Diocese of Leeds, meaning that the building can be sold. However, all parties are keen for the building to remain in community use and are working to that end. Were the building to be sold, the terms of the Order mean that the proceeds will be used in the local area.