

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

27 APRIL 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Cooke (in the Chair); Councillors Blissett, Harrison, Mrs Moorhouse, Kinch and Robinson (from item 58).

Officers: Mr King (Town Clerk) and Mrs Jane Woodward (Deputy Clerk).

In attendance: Councillor Yarker (to item 65); Two members of the press.

55. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Deacon.

Resolved – That Councillor Deacon's apologies be accepted.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 72(a)/Sep/12 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. There were no declarations of interest at this juncture.

57. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 9 MARCH 2015 – MINUTES

Pursuant to Minute 49/Mar/15 regarding the purchase of a defibrillator for the town, it was reported that information was still outstanding from North East Ambulance Service (NEAS), before this could be progressed. Councillor Harrison informed the committee that Glaxo Sports and Social Club was intending to purchase a defibrillator.

Resolved – (a) That the Minutes be accepted as a correct record and;
(b) That a report on progress of defibrillator purchase be submitted to next Resources Committee in June.

58. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

Submitted – A report and associated appendices relating to payments and receipts for the period 3 March 2015 to 31 March 2015 and income & expenditure relating to the month end of March 2015 (Month 12).

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

59. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2015/16

(1) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Received – a report considering the form in which the council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should be recommended for adoption at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 11 May 2015. It was reported that the amended Financial Regulations were approved and adopted by Council in September 2014 (Minute 66/Sept/14 refers). No further amendments were proposed for 2015/16.

Resolved – That the current editions of Barnard Castle Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be recommended for adoption in 2015/16 at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 11 May 2015.

(2) Scheme of Delegation

Received – a report considering the form in which the council's Scheme of Delegation should be recommended for adoption at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 11 May 2015. It was reported that there were two minor changes to the Services Committee's remit (external floodlighting of the Market Cross and relocation of the Aviation Memorial into the Galgate Greens Memorial Garden). Consequential amendments were proposed for the 2015/16 Scheme of Delegation.

Resolved – That the amended scheme of Delegation be recommended for adoption in 2015/16 at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 11 May 2015.

(3) Calendar of Council Meetings 2015/16

Received – a report proposing a calendar of meetings for the 2015/16 municipal year.

Resolved – (a) That the schedule of Council and Committee meetings be recommended to the council for approval and adoption at the Annual Meeting on 11 May 2015.

(b) That meetings be held at The Witham, until such time as an alternative, suitable venue be sourced.

60. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Submitted – a report highlighting the nine operational policy and procedure documents, recommended for adoption for the 2015/16 municipal year. It was reported that the Media Policy and Procedure was reviewed, revised and adopted by Council in November 2014.

Resolved – (a) That the existing policies and procedures be resubmitted to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council for approval and adoption and;

(b) That the Governance Document Task & Finish Group already established be reconvened to review policies and procedures on a rolling basis, starting with Freedom of Information and Data Protection in line with Transparency Code (Minute 65).

61. TRAINING PROGRAMME 2015/16

Presented – a report considering a 2015/16 Training Programme for both Members and Staff. It was reported that the training budget was £500 and a suggested programme was submitted for consideration.

Resolved – (a) That the 2015/16 training programme be approved and monitored at regular intervals throughout the year.

(b) That the Clerk attend the SLCC Regional Conference at a cost of £69.

(c) That Councillors who haven't undergone Chairmanship training, undertake training at a cost of £50 per delegate.

(d) That the Deputy Clerk commence the revised CiLCA qualification at a cost of £250.

62. TEN FIELDS LEASE ARRANGEMENTS

Submitted – a report outlining clarification received in respect of recent difficulties encountered regarding the proposed new lease between the Town Council, Barnard Castle Football Club (BCFC) and Fields in Trust (FiT) for the rental of Ten Fields. It was reported that Ten Fields was owned by Fields in Trust and Barnard Castle Town Council was the manager of the land. BCFC had rented Ten Fields for over 30 years by way of three 10-year leases and subsequently on a 'hold-over' lease. It was acknowledged that BCFC wanted a long-term lease to source funding for new facilities, as certain grant funding

applications required long-term leases in place. It was noted that interest had been shown in the land from Barnard Castle Rangers, seeking to use the ground for football coaching and match play.

Members were informed that proceeding with a lease in excess of seven years would be impractical as a market valuation of the land would be required, which would be of disproportionate cost. In addition, FIT would be unlikely to give permission for a lease longer than seven years, due to constraints on them under The Charities Act 2011.

Committee members were given various options to proceed, on the basis of offering a new seven-year lease.

Resolved – That the lease renewal for Ten Fields be on hold until discussions held with both Barnard Castle Football Club and Barnard Castle Rangers regarding potential for the Town Council to lead on partnership funding for new facilities.

63. BARNARD CASTLE METHODIST CHURCH SPIRE APPEAL

It was reported that the Town Council had received a letter from Reverend Hollings on behalf of the Church Trustees of Barnard Castle Methodist Church, requesting a donation to the cost of repairing the Spire. It was noted that the Methodist Church was a Grade II listed building and that the Spire was 121 years old and required pointing to make safe and clear gutters at a cost of £18,000 including VAT. Members acknowledged that the request for funding did not meet the criteria for the town council's financial donations policy, since work had already started, due to safety concerns. Members were reminded that the church was a focal point in the town, a community asset and that the Town Council used the Methodist Church for various events, especially Christmas.

Resolved – That a recommendation be made to full Council on 11 May to support the Spire Appeal with £1,000 out of the town council's general reserves.

64. AVIATION MEMORIAL

It was reported that work to relocate the Aviation Memorial to the Galgate Greens had now been largely completed by the contractors engaged by the Homes and Communities Agency. Some planting remained to be done when weather conditions were favourable. Cllr Yarker requested, on behalf of the RAFA and the organisers of the annual Aviation Day commemorative event, that the Town Council considered marking the relocation of the memorial with an official opening to be organised collaboratively and to include the Town Mayor and other members of the Town Council. Cllr Yarker asked that Committee consider he be named custodian for the memorial, on behalf of the town council, having been a founder member. It was noted that day to day responsibility was delegated to Services Committee (war memorials) but that there could be a named person.

Resolved – (a) That a simple ribbon-cutting, or similar ceremony be organised at a convenient time, but in advance of Aviation Day, scheduled on 1 July and;
(b) That it be recommended to Council on 11 May that Councillor Yarker be named custodian for the Aviation Memorial.

65. TRANSPARENCY CODE

Received – a report considering the options open to the town council to reflect good practice from the transparency codes to which smaller and larger local councils are subject by statute. It was reported that no transparency code currently applied to the Town Council, but that it would be good practice and prudent to prepare to meet requirements, as its budget approached the £200,000 threshold. A list of recommended actions was circulated.

Resolved – (a) That, those actions recommended in the appendix to the report be made to meet best practice.

(b) That all Council/Committee papers be published on the website alongside the agendas, and that draft minutes be published on line within one month of the relevant meeting, starting from the municipal year 2015/16 and;

(c) That consequential changes to financial regulations and standing orders be made and brought to Resources Committee as recommendations.

66. STRENGTHENING PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTATION

It was reported that The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on behalf of the Secretary of State had published a consultation paper setting out the Government's proposals for extending the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to cover larger parish and town councils. The premise of the consultation was that larger parish councils, with responsibilities and budgets comparable to those of district councils, should have equivalent accountability and redress mechanisms for the public. It was confirmed that Barnard Castle Town Council would not fall into the category of a larger parish or town council under any of the proposed options, so was not directly affected by the proposal.

Resolved - That responses be given to the options presented by DCLG as follows:

(1) That the LGO jurisdiction be extended to larger parish and town councils.

(2) That a large parish or town council be defined by having a population the same as or greater than 35,000 people, irrespective of budget.

67. LOCAL COUNCIL AWARDS SCHEME

Pursuant to Council meeting 19 January (Minute 2012/Jan/15 refers), Committee members were asked to consider whether (or not) to register for the Local Council Awards Scheme (previously Quality Council Scheme) and if so, to determine the level of accreditation to achieve. Committee members felt that as there were no tangible benefits and no external regulation or review in place, it was not worth registering for the scheme at this time.

Resolved – That the town council does not register for the scheme at this time.