

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING**

**19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2009**

**PRESENT:-** Councillor Yarker (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Cooke, Mrs Dixon, Harrison, Peat, Watson and Wood (Minutes 157 to 166 inclusive).

**157. APOLOGIES:-** Councillors Mrs Hamilton (due to ill health), Hinchcliffe and Wheeler.

**158. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with standard local government procedures, 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.

**159. COUNCIL MEETING – 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2008 – MINUTES**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record.

**160. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2008 – MINUTES**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record.

**161. COUNCIL MEETING – 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2009 – MINUTES**

**Resolved** – That, subject to the following corrections the Minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record:-

Minutes 154 and 155 be renumbered 155A and 155B respectively.

**162. 'EN BLOC' ITEMS:-**

Submitted – In accordance with Minute 72/Aug/04, a further set of items with the accompanying recommendations to be moved 'en bloc'. The seven items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

**(1) Finance Committee Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 – Minutes**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(2) Planning Committee Meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2008 – Minutes**

In respect of planning application (TC/2008/0028 The Bowes Museum – Proposed removal of Sycamore tree) at Committee Minute 46(iii)/Dec/08, it was suggested that an arborist's report should be requested when an application for proposed tree felling or surgery was submitted.

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(3) Modernisation Committee Meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 – Minutes**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

#### **(4) Planning Committee Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 – Minutes**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

#### **(5) Finance Committee Meeting – 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008 – Minutes**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

#### **(6) Planning Committee Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 – Minutes**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

#### **(7) Mayoral Activities**

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2008, the Town Mayor had attended the following;

<b>6<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>(accompanied by Town Mayoress (Mrs Marie Yarker))</b> Town Council's Christmas Festival Event 'Around the Tree'.
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>(accompanied by Town Mayoress)</b> Bishop Auckland and Teesdale SingUp Choirs' 'A Winter Wonderland' - Songs in celebration of Winter (The Witham Hall).
<b>10<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>(accompanied by Town Mayoress)</b> Barnard Castle School's Service of Nine Lessons and Carols.
<b>25<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>(accompanied by Town Mayoress)</b> Richardson Hospital – Christmas Day Visit.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

### **163. REFERRAL FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE – DONATIONS**

#### **(1) Craftworks!**

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Finance Committee, at Minute 28 of the set of Minutes at sub-section (5) of Minute 162 above, that a donation of £300, towards the costs of the support of people from Teesdale with special needs, be made to Craftworks!

**Resolved** - That a donation of £300 from the 2008/09 donations budget be made to Craftworks!

#### **(2) 1<sup>st</sup> Barnard Castle Scout Group**

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Finance Committee, at Minute 28 of the set of Minutes at sub-section (5) of Minute 162 above, that a donation of £300, towards the costs of a traverse wall within the Scout Headquarters, be made to the 1<sup>st</sup> Barnard Castle Scout Group.

**Resolved** - That a donation of £300 from the 2008/09 donations budget be made to the 1<sup>st</sup> Barnard Castle Scout Group.

### **164. COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS – VACANCIES**

Pursuant to Council Minutes 97A/Oct/08 and 126/Dec/08, details regarding the vacancies on the Council's Committees and Working Groups for the remainder of Municipal Year 2008/09 were circulated to Members. Reference was also made to a request from the Barney Guild for two co-opted places on the Christmas Festival Committee. The relevant rules and membership arrangements were outlined.

**Resolved** – (a) That, for the remainder of Municipal Year 2008/09, the vacancies on this Council's Committees be filled as follows:-

Christmas Festival Committee – Councillor Peat; and

Modernisation Committee – Councillor Peat.

(b) That consideration of any vacancies on the Working Groups be deferred until the Annual Council meeting, scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2009.

(c) That 2 additional co-opted seats (for the Barney Guild) on the Christmas Festival Committee be agreed, with the Committee (at its meeting scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2009) determining the actual co-optees.

## **165. ECONOMIC SITUATION – EFFECT ON BARNARD CASTLE BUSINESSES**

Discussion took place on the ongoing economic situation and the potential effect on Barnard Castle's businesses. A number of alternative suggestions were put forward, including a co-ordinating role for the Council in respect of Barnard Castle organisations and specific links with the Barney Guild.

**Resolved** – That, as an initial step, this Council write to the Barney Guild with a view to further discussions on possible non-financial initiatives.

## **166. BARNARD CASTLE VISION**

### **(1) General Update**

It was reported that the Clerk or the Assistant Clerk continued to regularly attend meetings of the Barnard Castle Vision Sub-Group, with most of the discussion currently being centred on the Shaw Bank and Witham Hall projects and the recent installation of 'The Box' in lower Galgate. It was noted that the last briefing meeting for Town Councillors was on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 and that a second briefing meeting had not yet been scheduled. Discussion at the meeting centred on general communication links between the Vision and this Council.

**Resolved** – That a second briefing meeting be scheduled between this Council and the Barnard Castle Vision be sought as a matter of urgency.

### **(2) Castle Floodlights**

It was reported that the Castle floodlights scheme was progressing, with an estimated revised 'switch-on' timescale of around Easter 2009. It was noted that any 'switch-on' event after late-March would be more problematic as it would be required to take place mid-evening, thereby making things more difficult from a family perspective. Specific reference was made to the positive working arrangements between this Council and the Vision on this project.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

### **(3) Section 106 Monies/Landscaping**

It was reported that the Section 106 allocation of £46,000 from Teesdale District Council for the Barnard Castle Landscaping scheme (following a joint bid from the Vision and this Council) had been confirmed. A verbal request for £25,000 from the Section 106 allocation had been verbally agreed by the Vision team towards the Dawson Road playingfield project. The Assistant Clerk had attended a presentation given by the landscaping consultants on the afternoon of 19<sup>th</sup> January and reported that, whilst a number of themes and projects had been highlighted, the exercise was at an early stage and further consultation would take place in due course.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

## **167. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING**

### **(1) Draft Charter**

Submitted – A report incorporating a draft Charter produced by the Co-ordination Group of Local Council Clerks in conjunction with the Corporate Policy Officer of Durham County Council to establish and develop links between the new Unitary Authority and local councils. It was noted that although there were a number of gaps, these would be filled following further discussions and decisions by the Unitary Council. It was hoped that a version of the Charter would be in place by 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009. Comments on the draft Charter were required by 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2009.

**Resolved** – That the draft Charter be fully supported by this Council.

### **(2) County Durham Association of Local Councils – Proposal for Replacement of District Committees**

Submitted – A report summarising proposals of the County Durham Associations of Local Councils for the replacement of District Committees with Area Action Partnership Local Council Committees. Members were reminded, that as there was no current District Committee for Teesdale, the proposals would be an opportunity to rectify matters. The resultant effect on the Teesdale District Parish Forum was discussed at the meeting. Comments on the proposals were required by 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2009.

**Resolved** – That the County Durham Association of Local Councils be advised that this Council supports the proposed replacement of District Committees.

### **(3) General**

A number of other ongoing restructuring issues were reported. The Government had confirmed that there would be no parish and town council elections in 2009; the next elections were scheduled for 2013 but this would depend on the Boundary Committee's recommendation for Unitary Authority elections.

A report was submitted incorporating relevant sections of a Durham County Council report on Area Action Partnerships. It outlined the recommended boundaries and the membership arrangements, with the full report scheduled for submission to the County Council's Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2009. Discussion centred on the level of town and parish council representation which was considered inadequate.

It was almost certain that no services would be devolved on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009. Nothing further had been heard about possible pilot schemes, including this Council's prospective planning role.

The Co-ordination Group of Local Council Clerks continued to work with the County's LGR workstreams, with the main issues being double taxation (see below), Standards Committees, Code of Conduct issues and the possible setting up of Parish Remuneration Panels to give guidance regarding allowances for Members.

It was reported that Durham County Council had recently requested information about allotments, bus shelters, cemeteries and public conveniences. This information was needed for the double taxation exercise, an interim solution on which was being drawn up for 2009/10, with the matter hopefully to be resolved for the longer-term by September 2009.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

**168. 'SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS SEPTEMBER 2010 AND BEYOND' – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

Submitted – A report summarising proposed school admission arrangements from September 2010 and which had been issued by Durham County Council. Admission arrangements related to the number of places available in each school and the proposed changes would affect Teesdale School. The deadline for responses was 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2009.

**Resolved** – That Durham County Council be informed that this Council agrees with the proposals.

**169. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – DRAFT POLICIES**

Submitted – A report summarising draft policies produced by Durham County Council, and effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009. Views of this Council were requested by the deadline of 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2009. The policies referred to were:-

- i) Draft Licensing Act 2003 Licensing Policy;
- ii) Draft Gambling Licensing Policy; and
- iii) Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

It was highlighted to Members that the summary had omitted some of the details in the policies due to the size of the documents. It was alternatively suggested that the Modernisation Committee could review the full documents in more detail, with the associated public meetings to be attended by Committee Members if possible.

**Resolved** – (a) That the Modernisation Committee be given delegated powers to review the full draft policy documents and to respond to Durham County Council with this Council's comments.

(b) That Councillor Peat be authorised to attend the consultation meeting on hackney carriages, etc. on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2009 at Glaxo Social Club.

**170. 'SEIZING THE FUTURE' - CONSULTATION DOCUMENT RESPONSE**

Submitted – A report outlining this Council's response, which was determined by the collation of four questionnaires completed by Members following a meeting with NHS County Durham and Darlington Trust representatives on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 (Minute 151/Dec/08).

**Resolved** – That retrospective approval is given to the 'Seizing of the Future' consultation response.

**171. USE OF THE DEMESNES BY NORTHUMBRIAN WATER LIMITED**

Submitted - Pursuant to Minute 140(2)(b)/Dec/08, letter responses from Northumbrian Water Limited and The Lord Barnard in respect of The Demesnes being used as a contractor's site compound. Discussion arose in respect of the deed of transfer (dating from 1949) from The Lord Barnard (at that date) to Teesdale District Council. It was noted that the compound breached various clauses within the deeds and that Teesdale District Council was communicating with Northumbrian Water Limited regarding the matter.

**Resolved** – That Teesdale District Council be contacted to establish the current position on the contractor's site compound on The Demesnes.

**172. ADDITIONAL REMEMBRANCE MEMORIAL**

Councillor Blissett outlined his suggestion that this Council should investigate the provision of a Remembrance Memorial to commemorate all those who had lost their lives in conflicts other than the Boer War, the First World War and the Second World War (for which Memorials already existed in Barnard Castle). The proposed Memorial would be general in nature, with no specific

names included. In addition to the Memorial, Councillor Blissett asked whether the provision of a Book of Remembrance could be investigated. Both proposals would need to be considered as budgetary items for 2010/11.

**Resolved** – (a) That the proposed additional Remembrance Memorial and the Book of Remembrance be agreed in principle, pending further investigations by Councillors Blissett and Yarker.

(b) That both issues be submitted as prospective budgetary items for 2010/11.