

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING****18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2010**

(NOTE – Prior to the meeting and in accordance with the decision at Minute 186(2)/Mar/09, a 15-minute slot was allocated for public participation. No questions had been raised in advance and no members of the public were present.)

**PRESENT:-** Councillor Yarker (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Cooke, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Hinchcliffe (Minutes 130 to 144 inclusive), Peat, Watson and Wood (Minutes 130 to part of 146 inclusive).

**130. APOLOGIES:-** Councillors Mrs Dixon and Wheeler.

**131. 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.

**132. COUNCIL MEETING – 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2009 – MINUTES**

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

**133. COUNCIL MEETING – 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2010 – MINUTES**

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

**134. '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 six items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

**(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 – Minutes**

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

**(2) Modernisation Committee Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 – Minutes**

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

**(3) Planning Committee Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2009 – Minutes**

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

**(4) Planning Committee Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 – Minutes**

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

**(5) Special Christmas Festival Committee Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 – Minutes**

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

## **(6) Town Mayor's Activities**

It was reported that since the Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2009, the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor had attended the following:-

- 15<sup>th</sup> December (Deputy Town Mayor)**  
Barnard Castle School's Service of Nine Lessons and Carols.
- 17<sup>th</sup> December (Town Mayor accompanied by Town Mayoress (Mrs Marie Yarker))**  
The Beaconsfield Public House, Galgate - re-opening ceremony.
- 18<sup>th</sup> December (Town Mayor)**  
Dawson Road play area Photo Shoot with Dawson Play and Groundwork North East.
- 25<sup>th</sup> December (Town Mayor accompanied by Town Mayoress)**  
Richardson Hospital - Christmas Day visit.
- 16<sup>th</sup> January (Town Mayor)**  
Formal signing ceremony in respect of the Local Councils Charter between Durham County Council and the County Durham Association of Local Councils (County Hall, Durham).

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

### **135. REFERRAL FROM MODERNISATION COMMITTEE – REVIEW OF ROLE OF TOWN COUNCIL**

It was reported that, since the Modernisation Committee had begun its review of the role of the Town Council, it had become apparent that the scale of the task needed to be slightly more extensive than was originally envisaged. Consequently, it was considered that the original timescale for implementation to follow the Annual Council Meeting in May 2010 should be revised.

**Resolved** – That it be agreed that the revised deadline for the implementation of the review should be September 2010.

### **136. TEESDALE LOCAL COUNCILS' FORUM – UPDATE**

Submitted – Pursuant to Minute 111(2)/Dec/09 and following the Special meeting of the Teesdale Local Councils' Forum on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2009, a report on the future of the Forum, including an agreement to strengthen links with Durham County Council officers and the Teesdale Action Partnership team but for the Forum to remain independent of those bodies. At the Forum meeting, it was agreed that the existing arrangements should continue, with those councils not members of the Association still having the rights to attend meetings and take part in debates.

**Resolved** – That the updated situation be noted.

### **137. THE UPPER DEMESNES – PROPOSED HAY MEADOW**

Submitted – Pursuant to Minute 115(7)/Dec/09, Minutes of the community meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 on the proposed hay meadow on The Upper Demesnes, including issues raised by those present at the meeting and suggested ways forward for the project.

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

### **138. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COUNCIL MEETINGS - REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS**

Submitted – Pursuant to Minute 186(2(b))/Mar/09, a report incorporating a review of the public participation 'slot' in Council meetings which had been in operation for six months, with various options submitted for consideration. It was highlighted that whilst the option of removing the 'question time slot' from this Council's meetings was possible, it was acknowledged that this Council resultantly would fail to meet the criteria to comply with

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Test 3 of the Quality Council scheme and therefore it should not be considered as a realistic option.

It was also reported that, should the 'question time slot' be retained in any format, Standing Orders must be amended to reflect the procedure. It was also considered that a specific 'Public Participation Procedure' should be put in place and an example of such a procedure was submitted for Members' views.

**Resolved** – (a) That Option B, to continue with the 'question time slot' at Council meetings and consider advertising the facility in the Teesdale Mercury, Northern Echo and Darlington and Stockton Times on a more regular basis (such as two weeks before a Council meeting), be the preferred option, with the addition of considering further advertising using such means as Radio Teesdale.

(b) That the 'Public Participation Procedure' be approved as submitted and Standing Orders be amended accordingly.

#### **139. USE OF BUDGETARY CONTINGENCIES – OFFICE FURNITURE**

Pursuant to Minute 77/Sep/09, when it was agreed that the Contingencies budget was to be specifically used for projects which were considered urgent and/or had associated health and safety issues, it was reported that an opportunity had recently arisen to urgently purchase items of second-hand office furniture, at a total cost of £65, thereby alleviating a previous storage problem.

**Resolved** – That retrospective approval be given to the use of the 2009/10 Contingencies budget for the purchase of the office furniture.

#### **140. STREET AND OPEN SPACES CARE**

It was reported that, pursuant to Minute 120/Dec/09, investigations were currently underway to progress the Street and Open Spaces Care issue. Members were also issued with a letter that had been sent to the Teesdale Action Partnership by Durham County Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee. The letter indicated that similar problems throughout the County were to be addressed via an investigation into Anti-Social Behaviour People and Places. However, Barnard Castle did not specifically appear in the field study.

**Resolved** – That a letter be sent to Durham County Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee to request that Barnard Castle be included in the field study so that the means to improve the overall appearance of Barnard Castle be established.

#### **141. NEGLECTED LANDSCAPE – CO-OP PETROL STATION, PROSPECT PLACE**

It was reported that, pursuant to Minute 95/Oct/09, a response had been received from The Co-Operative Group confirming that the landscaping at the Co-Op Petrol Station, Prospect Place was now under control and that the site management team were also carrying out weekly checks of all external areas.

However, it was also reported that, in respect of the suggested forecourt road safety improvements, The Co-Operative Group were not considering any such changes as they were not deemed necessary.

**Resolved** – That letters be sent to The Co-Operative Group and Durham County Council's Highway's Department expressing this Council's concerns regarding the entrance/exit arrangements and requesting that forecourt road safety improvements are made.

#### **142. THE WITHAM HALL REDEVELOPMENT**

Pursuant to The Witham Hall redevelopment presentation to this Council's Members on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2010, discussion ensued on the proposals. Concerns were expressed in respect of the proposed retail units and café within the development potentially deflecting trade from existing businesses within the Town.

**Resolved** – That the proposed overall development of The Witham Hall be supported by this Council.

#### **143. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

Pursuant to Minute 119/Dec/09, it was confirmed Mr A. Burt, M.P. had agreed to adopt the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill. It was also reported that local councils were being encouraged to further write to their local Members of Parliament asking them to sign the Early Day Motion No.143 in support of the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill's Second Reading.

**Resolved** – That a letter be sent to Helen Goodman, M.P. asking her to sign the Early Day Motion No.143 in support of the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill.

#### **144. ROYAL GARDEN PARTY 2010**

It was reported that this Council had been invited to put forward a nominee to attend a Royal Garden Party on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2010. The criteria was outlined and it was confirmed that the outgoing Town Mayor (Councillor Yarker) had already attended a Garden Party and could not therefore be nominated again. The standard arrangement was for a ballot to be held.

**Resolved** – That Councillor Blissett be nominated to attend the 2010 Royal Garden Party.

#### **145. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (in respect of Minute 146 below)**

**Resolved** – That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matter referred to at Minute 146 below on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Parts 1 and 7 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

#### **146. STANDARDS COMMITTEE TRAINING**

Pursuant to Minute 124/Dec/09, Members discussed the scheduled training in respect of the Standards Committee's procedures and the need for certain information to be submitted to Members prior to that training.

**Resolved** – That this Council's course of action in this matter, as now discussed, be approved.