

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

17TH JANUARY, 2011

(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 Cooke (Town Mayor)(in the Chair for Minutes 149 to 157(2) inclusive and 158 to 161 inclusive); Councillor Harrison (Deputy Town Mayor)(in the Chair for Minutes 157(3) and 162); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Mrs Dixon, Mrs Hamilton, Peat, Watson, Wood (Minutes 149 to 157 inclusive) and Yarker.

Officers:- Mr Bosworth (Town Clerk) and Mrs Plant (Assistant Clerk).

149. APOLOGIES:- None.

150. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 20/Jun/07 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. Councillor Cooke (Town Mayor) declared interests in respect of Minutes 157(3) and 162 below, left the Chair and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon. Councillor Harrison (Deputy Town Mayor) chaired the meeting for those items only.

151. COUNCIL MEETING – 6TH DECEMBER, 2010 – MINUTES

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

152. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – 13TH DECEMBER, 2010 – MINUTES

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

153. '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 four items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 6th December, 2010 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(2) Planning Committee Meeting – 20th December, 2010 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(3) Finance Committee Meeting – 20th December, 2010 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(4) Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Activities

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 6th December, 2010, the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor (as indicated) had attended the following:-

- 15th December** (Town Mayor accompanied by Town Mayoress (Miss R. Abrahams))
Barnard Castle School's Service of Nine Lessons and Carols.
- 22nd December** (Town Mayor)
Richardson Community Hospital's Carol Service.
- 24th December** (Deputy Town Mayor)
Children's Christingle Service, St Mary's Parish Church.
- 25th December** (Town Mayor)
Richardson Community Hospital – Christmas Day visit.
- 14th January** (Town Mayor)
Meeting with Ms D. Jenkins of Barnard Castle Vision (Town Council office).

Resolved – That the information be noted.

154. INFORMAL MEETING WITH COUNTY COUNCILLORS – 10TH JANUARY, 2011 – OUTCOME

Submitted – Pursuant to Minute 144/Dec/10, a report summarising the details of the informal meeting on 10th January, 2011 between Town Councillors and the local County Councillors with responsibilities for Barnard Castle. Members' views were requested on any key issues that had arisen from the meeting.

Resolved – That it is considered that the meeting was of benefit to all involved.

155. PLAY AREA ACCESS ISSUES

Submitted – A report summarising a play area access issue involving residents who had direct access from their properties onto one of the playingfields managed by this Council. Investigations had concluded that residents who had access onto such areas should each have a Licence granting the access, in exchange for a small fee. The Licence would ensure that those residents would not gain any legal rights of access.

Resolved - (a) That a survey be carried out of all this Council's playingfields to establish which residents have direct access onto this Council's playingfields and that those residents be each issued with a Licence.

(b) That the Licence is to include the following stipulations:-

- (i) that a Licence be granted for a period of one year; and
- (ii) that the fee paid by each Licensee be £1 per annum.

156. COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT INITIATIVE

It was reported that Teesdale Conservation Volunteers (TCV) had asked for this Council's support towards a community allotments initiative based in The Bowes Museum's old garden nursery. The project was outlined and it was reported that TCV had specifically requested whether this Council was willing to write to those people who were currently on this Council's Allotments Waiting List, on behalf of TCV, to offer one of the small allotment plots, giving potential new tenants the opportunity to experience allotment gardening before taking on an allotment plot through this Council's more formal arrangements.

Resolved – That the initiative be supported by this Council but no administrative support be given to Teesdale Conservation Volunteers.

(NOTE – Councillor Mrs Dixon declared an interest in this matter and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.)

157. STANDARDS COMMITTEE PANEL HEARING DECISIONS

Submitted - Pursuant to Minutes 86/Sep/10 and 133/Dec/10, a report summarising the decisions taken following the Standards Committee Panel's formal Hearing on 5th January, 2011 and the following three issues that had arisen as a result of the Hearing and receipt of the Decision Notice:-

- (1) the wording of the apology from Councillor Wood;
- (2) the perceived need for equality and diversity training; and
- (3) the non-submission of Councillor Cooke's resignation letter.

Each of the above three issues were considered separately.

Resolved – (a) That the required apology from Councillor Wood, issued to Councillors on 6th January, 2011, be noted and the matter now be considered closed by this Council.
(b) That a vote of confidence in the Clerk be agreed.
(c) That appropriate equality and diversification training be arranged for this Council.
(d) That, in respect of the reported submission of a resignation letter from Councillor Cooke, arising from the 20th July, 2009 Council meeting and included in the Investigating Officer's report, it is considered that it was clear to the Panel that the letter had not been submitted and the matter now be considered closed by this Council.

158. VISIT COUNTY DURHAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BARNARD CASTLE

Submitted – A report by Councillor Watson regarding the Destination Development Plan for Barnard Castle (recently reported in the Teesdale Mercury), including the Plan's proposals. Councillor Watson considered that action should be agreed at this stage, for implementation in due course, on specific issues such as the arrangement of a meeting between those involved and the Town Council, a specific examination of the engagement and communication issues and in-depth consideration of the Town Centre Manager's role.

Resolved – That, in respect of any potential projects emanating from the Visit County Durham Development Plan for Barnard Castle, action only be considered by this Council when such projects are put forward for specific consideration.

159. ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

It was reported that, in accordance with the standard arrangements, this Council had been invited to put forward a nominee to attend one of the Royal Garden Parties to be held in July 2011. The criteria was outlined and whilst, for some years, this Council had decided that the outgoing Town Mayor should be nominated, a difficulty would arise should proposed extensions of the terms of office of the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor from one to two years be approved. It was confirmed that only Councillor Yarker had attended a Garden Party and could not therefore be nominated again. The standard arrangement was for a ballot to be held.

Resolved – That, in view of the potential difficulty in nominating the outgoing Town Mayor, Councillor Blissett be nominated to attend the 2011 Royal Garden Party.

160. BARNARD CASTLE VISION

Submitted – Pursuant to Minute 136/Dec/10, a report seeking clarification on the future consultation arrangements with Barnard Castle Vision, including whether the Vision should be asked to reconsider the attendance of a Vision representative at a number of Council meetings throughout the year or the re-introduction of the briefing meetings for Town and County Councillors and whether the one-to-one meetings should cease.

The Town Mayor (Councillor Cooke) and the Clerk also verbally reported the outcomes of their individual meetings with the Vision Chairman on 14th January, 2011.

Resolved – (a) That one-to-one meetings between the Town Mayor and the Chairman of Barnard Castle Vision and the Clerk and the Chairman of the Vision continue.
(b) That a request be made for the attendance of a Barnard Castle Vision representative at at least two Town Council meetings throughout the year.

161. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (in respect of Minute 162 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 162 below on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

162. STANDARDS COMMITTEE MATTER

Submitted – A report providing an update on a Standards Committee matter, including details of a Decision Notice received.

Resolved – That the outcome be noted.