

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

24TH JANUARY, 2011

PRESENT:- Councillor Cooke (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Mrs Dixon, Mrs Hamilton, Peat, Watson, Wood (Minutes 163 to part of 165 inclusive) and Yarker.

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

163. APOLOGIES:- Councillors Harrison and Hinchcliffe.

164. 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. There were no declarations of interest at this juncture.

165. PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2011/12

Submitted – A report summarising the deliberations of the Finance Committee on a prospective budget for 2011/12, incorporating the Committee's recommendations in respect of the rental and charging arrangements and summarising the Cumulative Fund situation, including earmarked reserves. It was highlighted that budgetary bids and recommendations had been sought from a number of other Committees and Working Groups and the resultant information had been an integral part of the Finance Committee's deliberations. The report concluded with recommendations in respect of the Precept and the overall 2011/12 budget.

Background details for each budgetary item were provided and the budgetary figures for 2010/11 were included for comparative purposes, including projected 'end-of-year' figures for that year. Specific reference was made to the fact that the full Council had, at Minute 141/Dec/10, agreed with the Finance Committee that 6 prospective new items should be included in the 2011/12 budget.

Specific discussions took place at the meeting on a number of budgetary parameters (all of which had been approved at Council Minute 92(1)/Oct/10), including the overall approach taken during the budgetary exercise, ensuring that this Council acted responsibly and realistically in what continued to be stringent economic times, the need to build up the Council's reserves and the use of Double Taxation funding. Discussions also ensued in respect of costs associated with the production of this Council's Newsletter and opportunities for sponsorship to contribute towards the costs of specific budgetary items such as the Christmas Festival.

It was confirmed that the recommended Precept of £136,025, a decrease of £15,118 compared with the Precept for 2010/11, would result in a decrease of £7.89 per year (or approximately 15p per week) for a Band D property in Barnard Castle. The annual contribution would be £71.06 compared with the 2010/11 contribution of £78.95.

Resolved – That the following budgetary recommendations of the Finance Committee be approved:-

- (a) that the following rentals and charges be agreed:-
 - (i) Ten Fields (Barnard Castle Football Club Rental)
 - £60 in 2011/12 (previously determined) (no change); and
 - £60 in 2012/13 (no change)
 - (ii) Allotments (per plot)
 - £40 in 2011/12 (previously determined) (no change); and
 - £40 in 2012/13 (no change)
 - (iii) Mini Golf
 - Charge per round - £1.00 for all users (no change);
 - Lost ball – 50p (no change); and
 - Damaged club - £5.00 (no change).
- (b) that the Double Taxation additional payment for 2010/11 and the Double Taxation payment for 2011/12 be allocated to the Floral and Open Spaces budget;
- (c) that the inclusion of staffing costs within the overall costs for specific services be not implemented at this time, but the information already assimilated is to be used for the Modernisation Committee's review of the role of the Town Council;
- (d) that the setting-up of an Allotments Improvements Holding Account be implemented with effect from April 2011;
- (e) that a 2011/12 Precept of £136,025 be served on Durham County Council; and
- (f) that the revenue budget for 2011/12 be as shown in the Appendix to these Minutes.