

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

19TH SEPTEMBER, 2011

PRESENT:- Councillor Cooke (Town Mayor)(in the Chair for Minutes 100 to 104 inclusive and 106 to 109 inclusive); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett (in the Chair for Minute 105 only), Mrs Dixon, Mrs Hamilton, Hinchcliffe (Minutes 100 to 105 inclusive), Peat, Watson, Wood and Yarker.

Also in attendance:- Mrs A. Grady and Mrs L. Dickinson (The Meet Committee)(both Minute 103 only); Miss R. Abrahams (Town Mayoress); two members of the public.

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

100. APOLOGIES:- Councillor Harrison.

101. 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 an interest in respect of Minute 105 and left the Council Chamber during the discussion of that matter. Councillor Yarker also declared an interest in respect of Minute 105 and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

102. SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2011 – MINUTES

Resolved– That the Minutes be received.

103. REFERRAL FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE - BARNARD CASTLE MEET – REQUEST FOR 'ONE-OFF' FINANCIAL DONATION

Pursuant to Minute 65/Jul/11, reference was made to the recommendation of the Finance Committee, at Minute 19 of the set of Minutes at Minute 102 above, emanating from that Committee's consideration of The Meet Committee's request for a 'one-off' financial donation of £5,000. It was noted that, whilst it had been intended to make a final decision at the Council meeting on 5th September, 2011, The Committee's audited accounts had not been submitted by that date and therefore Special meetings had had to be convened.

It was stressed that the size and urgency of the request had presented particular problems including the following:-

- (i) The Meet Committee were expecting a commitment from this Council's 2012/13 budget but with the decision to be made outside the overall budgetary consideration for that year; and
- (ii) the request was totally alien to this Council's financial donations scheme (with a current annual budget of £1,500) and was being considered outside that scheme.

As a result of further information received from The Meet Committee, the projected expenditure and income for the 2012 event were circulated to aid Members with their deliberations.

Resolved – That, as recommended by the Finance Committee, consideration of the request from The Meet Committee for a 'one-off' donation be deferred for consideration as part of this Council's overall 2012/13 budgetary deliberations.

104. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONSIDERATION OF ITEM 105 ONLY

As the Town Mayor (Councillor Cooke) had declared an interest in respect of the matters to be discussed at Minute 105 below and was therefore required to vacate the Chair and as the Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor Harrison) was absent from the meeting, the normal procedure would have been to elect the previous Town Mayor. However, as the previous Town Mayor was Councillor Yarker (who had also declared an interest in respect of Minute 105), it was recommended that the Town Mayor who served immediately prior to Councillor Yarker, i.e. Councillor Blissett, should chair the item.

Resolved – That Councillor Blissett be elected to Chair agenda item 105 only.

(NOTE – At this point, Councillor Cooke (Town Mayor) left the Chair and the Council Chamber. Councillor Blissett chaired the meeting during the discussion at Minute 105 below.)

105. TOWN MAYOR – DELIBERATIONS OF PUBWATCH AND ISSUES ARISING

Submitted – Pursuant to Minute 62/Jul/11, a report providing an update on the deliberations of Pubwatch in respect of Councillor Cooke's ban and subsequent issues arising, including the fact that at the Pubwatch meeting on 7th September, 2011 (and following a temporary lifting of the ban in August 2011), it was decided that the ban should be fully lifted and Councillor Cooke's name removed from the barred persons' list. Associated letters in respect of the matter had been circulated to Members. A statement by Councillor Cooke in respect of his position in the matter was circulated at the meeting.

Specific reference was made to the Pubwatch letter dated 9th August, 2011 which referred to 'inappropriate' canvassing of at least one Pubwatch member by a Town Councillor to try and influence the vote on the ban'. A lengthy discussion ensued, during which a number of Motions were put forward.

Resolved – That the Clerk be authorised to seek the identity of the canvasser with the relevant organisations and bodies, e.g. Pubwatch and Durham Constabulary.

106. PROCEDURES AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Submitted – A report, incorporating a statement from Councillor Wood, in respect of procedures at Council meetings. Councillor Wood specifically referred to the prolonged length of speeches Members were prone to make during debate, the associated role of the Chairman and instances when Members ignored that protocol.

Resolved – (a) That, as part of the review of the role of the Town Council, the Modernisation Committee scrutinises the issues raised by Councillor Wood as part of that review.

(b) That Councillor Wood be invited to attend the Modernisation Committee meeting when (a) above is discussed.

107. MODERNISATION COMMITTEE MEETING – 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2011 – MINUTES

The Minutes as a whole were not submitted. The outcome of Committee Minute 18(A) was reported at Minute 108 below.

108. REFERRAL FROM MODERNISATION COMMITTEE – REVIEW OF ROLE OF TOWN COUNCIL

Submitted - Pursuant to Minute 38(A)/Jun/11, a report providing an update in respect of the writing of the final report on the Modernisation Committee's review of the role of the Council, including the fact that the Clerk's 'working from home' arrangement to write the report had unfortunately, and for various reasons, not yet been achieved. Subsequently, the Modernisation Committee, at its meeting on 12th September, 2011, had reviewed the situation and had recommended a revised 'start date' for the review proposals and that the Clerk determine a formula and timescale for the associated report.

Consequently, and taking into account that there was now a need to produce an associated staffing structure report, the Clerk proposed to this meeting a revised 'working from home' arrangement. It was anticipated that a total of 20 working days would be sufficient to complete the task.

Resolved – (a) That, as recommended by the Modernisation Committee, the revised arrangements arising from the review of the role of the Town Council be introduced with effect from the Annual Council meeting scheduled for 14th May, 2012.
(b) That the Clerk's revised 'working from home' arrangements, to compose the review of the role of the Council report and the associated staffing structure report, be approved.

109. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – COMMUNITY BUILDINGS REVIEW – CONSULTATION LAUNCH EVENTS

Submitted – A letter from Durham County Council in respect of that Council's review of community buildings and subsequent consultation launch events. Discussion ensued and it was considered disappointing that there had not been a launch event scheduled to take place in the Teesdale area.

Resolved – That any Members who wish to attend one of the community buildings review – consultation launch events should contact the office so that places can be booked.