

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING****31ST OCTOBER, 2011**

PRESENT:- Councillor Cooke (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Mrs Dixon, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison (Minutes 135 to 137 inclusive), Hinchcliffe (Minutes 135 to 139 inclusive), Peat, Robinson, Watson and Wood (Minutes 137(part) to 143 inclusive).

Also in attendance:- Mrs C. Hursey and Mr W. Weston (Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership).

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

135. APOLOGIES:- Councillor Yarker.

136. 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 Hinchcliffe declared an interest in respect of Minute 137 and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

137. SCAR TOP AND WOODLEIGH REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING APPLICATION

Submitted - Pursuant to Minute 124(3)/Oct/11, a planning application in respect of the redevelopment of Scar Top and the grounds of Woodleigh from the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership. The application consisted of improvement works to the existing open space of Scar Top and the grounds of Woodleigh, including new terraced security, mini golf and play area and a new information kiosk. A Design and Access Statement had been circulated to aid Members in their deliberations. It was noted that the anticipated completion deadline for the project was Autumn 2012, with a 'fall-back' deadline of Easter 2013.

Officers from the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership were present to answer Members' questions.

Resolved – That conditional approval is recommended.

138. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TRAINING

Pursuant to Minute 66/Aug/11, it was reported that the equality and diversity training duly took place on 28th September, 2011 and was attended by six Councillors and all four of the office staff. The session provided an overall understanding of equality and diversity and the Equality Act 2010 was also outlined.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

139. ROTARY CLUB OF BARNARD CASTLE – TALK BY CLERK

It was reported that the Clerk had received an invitation from the Rotary Club of Barnard Castle to give a talk at one of their informal evenings, i.e. on Tuesday, 6th December, 2011. The Clerk expected to primarily speak about the Town Council and its work but also would speak about his earlier career in local government.

Resolved – That authority be given to the Clerk to give a talk to the Rotary Club of Barnard Castle on 6th December, 2011.

140. PRESENTATIONS TO TOWN COUNCIL

Whilst this item was to be initially considered at the Council meeting on 17th October, 2011 because of the perceived difficulties surrounding two specific presentations, with it considered that Members might have wished to take further action in this matter, the passing of time had provided additional information.

It was reported that, in respect of three major ongoing local projects about which the Town Council had an interest, a separate presentation to the Town Council in respect of the 'Teesdale Bridge' project had subsequently been scheduled to take place at the Council meeting on 5th December, 2011. It was noted that, in respect of The Witham Hall public exhibition, a total of two Members were known to have attended and, in respect of The Bowes Museum Park Master Plan Project meeting on 20th October, 2011, a total of three Councillors and the Assistant Clerk attended the presentation.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

141. SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED LOCAL COUNCILS' FORUM

Submitted – A report outlining a proposal for the setting up of a Small and Medium-sized Local Councils' Forum, to be co-ordinated by the Executive Officer of the County Durham Association of Local Councils, and to provide various opportunities, including the discussion of items of a pertinent nature (so that a co-ordinated approach could be taken if necessary) and networking opportunities. Such a Forum already existed for larger councils.

Resolved – (a) That the Executive Officer of the County Durham Association of Local Councils be advised that this Council agrees to a Small and Medium-Sized Local Councils' Forum being set up, albeit with some reservation.

(b) That authority be given to the Clerk to attend the Small and Medium-Sized Local Councils' Forum.

142. PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF TEESDALE HOUSE

Submitted – A report by Councillor Watson in respect of Durham County Council's anticipated disposal of Teesdale House and the potential consequences, including the loss of this Council's meeting room. Discussion ensued and it was recognised that there was a lack of definitive information in respect of the matter to enable a decision to be taken at this time.

Resolved – (a) That Durham County Council be requested to provide further information in respect of the anticipated disposal of Teesdale House.

(b) That, subsequent to the receipt of the information at (a) above, the Modernisation Committee be authorised to review the situation with a view to formulating further recommendations.

143. METAL THEFTS

Submitted – At the meeting of the Teesdale Local Councils' Forum meeting on 26th September, 2011, County Councillor Bell and Councillor Mrs Thompson of Cotherstone Parish Council had referred to the continuing flouting of the provisions of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 and the need to substantially strengthen those provisions so that the number of incidents of metal thefts could be substantially reduced. Reference was made to an associated campaign by the Association of Chief Police Officers and all local councils in Teesdale were asked to support the campaign.

Resolved – That, in respect of the campaign to substantially strengthen the provisions of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964, this Council fully supports the initiative.