

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

23RD JULY, 2012

(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 but 15 members of the public were present during the 15-minute slot.)

PRESENT:- Councillor Harrison (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Cooke, Mrs Grady (Minutes 38 to 50 (part) inclusive, 51 and 53), Mrs Hamilton, Hinchcliffe (Minutes 38 to 47 inclusive and 51), Peat, Robinson, Watson, Wood and Yarker.

Also in attendance:- 15 members of the public.

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

(NOTE – At the start of the meeting, the Town Mayor announced that agenda item 51 was to be brought forward for consideration immediately after agenda item 43 and that agenda item 53 was to be brought forward for consideration immediately after agenda item 48.)

38. APOLOGIES:- None.

39. 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 Peat declared an interest in respect of Minute 50 below and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

40. COUNCILLOR HINCHCLIFFE – BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL

It was reported that Councillor Hinchcliffe had been awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to the community in Barnard Castle, in The Queen's Birthday Honours List 2012. A number of Members spoke about Councillor Hinchcliffe's attributes.

Resolved – That the congratulations of the Council be extended to Councillor Hinchcliffe on his well deserved honour.

41. COUNCIL MEETING – 11TH JUNE, 2012 – MINUTES

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

42. '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 five items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 11th June, 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(2) Finance Committee Meeting – 25th June, 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(3) Planning Committee Meeting – 2nd July, 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(4) Administrative Support Committee Meeting – 6th July, 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(5) Town Mayor's Activities

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 11th June, 2012, the Town Mayor had attended the following:-

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| 20 th June | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress (Mrs P Harrison)) Green Lane School's Shared School Sports Event. |
| 20 th June | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) 2012 Olympic Torch Relay Event (Newgate and County Bridge). |
| 20 th June | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Barnard Castle Cricket Club's Olympic Torch Event (Vere Road). |
| 21 st June | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Teesdale School's Launch of Friends of Teesdale School. |
| 23 rd June | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Spennymoor Town Council's Mayoress 'At Home' Event (Town Hall, Spennymoor). |
| 30 th June | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Lartington Hall's Charity Garden Party (Lartington Hall). |
| 4 th July | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Aviation Day (HMYOI Deerbolt). |
| 7 th July | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Barnard Castle School's Speech Day & Prize-giving presentation, followed by a Valediction and lunch in the Chapel. |
| 9 th July | Town Council's Floral Competition – accompanied the judge on the visits to the Garden Competition entries. |
| 14 th July | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Town Council's Show Day (Methodist Church Hall). |

Resolved – That the information be noted.

43. APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT TOWN CLERK

Submitted – Pursuant to Minute 27(2)/Jun/12, the Minutes of the Administrative Support Committee meeting on 6th July, 2012 (as submitted at Minute 42(4) above) and the Minutes of the Interview Panel meetings on 17th and 18th July, 2012 in respect of the appointment of the replacement Town Clerk.

It was reported that, prior to the shortlisting process being carried, changes to the Administrative Support Committee had had to be made due to Member absences which required retrospective approval at this meeting. It was also reported that the same situation had arisen in respect of the Interview Panel. It was confirmed that, following the Interview Panel's presentations and interview process of seven candidates on 17th July, 2012, the decision-making part of the meeting took place the following day, i.e. 18th July, 2012.

Reference was made to the fact that the overall process was considered successful.

With the imminent approval of the replacement Town Clerk, the current Clerk made reference to his revised retirement date.

Resolved – That the following recommendations of the Administrative Support Committee and the Interview Panel be retrospectively approved:-

- (a) that the membership of the shortlisting panel, as agreed at Council Minute 27(2)(b)/Jun/12, be amended by the deletion of 'Councillor Mrs Hamilton' and the insertion of 'Councillor Mrs Grady';
- (b) that the membership of the interview panel, as agreed at Council Minute 27(2)(b)/Jun/12, be amended by the deletion of Councillor Yarker (one of the Administrative Support Committee Members) and the insertion of 'Councillor Mrs Grady';
- (c) that if Councillor Mrs Hamilton is unavailable for the main interviews, Councillor Mrs Bailes be appointed as her replacement;
- (d) that the membership of the Interview Panel, as agreed at Council Minute 27(2)(b)/Jun/12, be retrospectively further amended by the deletion of Councillor Blissett (one of the Administrative Support Committee Members) and the insertion of 'Councillor Mrs Bailes'; and
- (e) that the decision of the Interview Panel, that, subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, Mr M. King be appointed as the replacement Town Clerk, be ratified.
- (f) that the revised retirement date of the current Town Clerk of 31st October, 2012 be noted.

51. COUNCILLOR CONDUCT (Councillor Wood)

Submitted – A report by Councillor Wood in respect of Councillor Watson's conduct at the Council meeting on 11th June, 2012.

However, prior to the item being discussed or considered, the Town Mayor (Councillor Harrison) read out a statement and moved that the item not be discussed as the matter had become a personal victimised vendetta against Councillor Watson and that both Councillors were equally to blame for the past disruptions and tirades and this was seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor Blissett).

A short debate ensued on the merits of such a proposal

Resolved – That it be agreed that agenda item 51, in respect of Councillor Conduct, not be discussed.

44. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

Submitted – A report providing updates on some of this Council's representation on other bodies. The three items included in the report were as follows:-

(1) Barney Guild – Meeting on 18th July, 2012

It was reported that, at the Guild's meeting on 18th July, 2012, matters discussed included Loyalty Cards, prospective future events (including the re-introduction of a Bonfire Night), the Markets and Street Trading consultation, and the Guild's Constitution. It was also reported that the Town Clerk had attended the meeting to discuss the Guild's involvement with this Council's 2012 Christmas event.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(2) Teesdale Local Councils' Forum – Meeting on 16th July, 2012

It was reported that, at the Forum's meeting on 16th July, 2012, matters discussed included updates on Police issues, Teesdale Action Partnership, the North Pennines Area of Natural Beauty and Green Dog Walkers. Venues and dates for future meetings were also sought.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(3) Teesdale Residents and Travellers Forum – Meeting on 3rd July, 2012

It was reported that, at the Forum's meeting on 3rd July, 2012, issues discussed in respect of Barnard Castle centred on the entrances to The Demesnes as the bollard had not been used responsibly following the further letter drop and Police Community Support Officer's visit to affected residents.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

45. SERVICE AND PROJECT UPDATES

Submitted – A report providing updates of some of this Council's services and current projects. The six items included in the report were as follows:-

(1) Floral Competition

Pursuant to Minute 30(2)/Jun/12, it was reported that the Garden Section entries in the Annual Floral Competition were judged on 9th July, 2012 by Mr S. Robinson and he was accompanied throughout the day by the Town Mayor. There were 19 entries, a drop in numbers of previous year, but the standard of entries remained high.

The results of the Garden Section (and the other categories judged on the day of the Event) were announced at the Show Day Event on 14th July, 2012 and it was considered that the Event had been successful and enjoyed by all who attended.

In respect of the Event being themed around Dickensian celebrations, the Show Day offered an opportunity for the community to enter a variety of Victorian/Dickensian themed categories and this was further complemented by the support of the Dickens in Teesdale Group who provided a free Victorian workshop craft activity. Despite the inclusion of an additional category for baking, entries on the day were disappointingly low, although the standard of those that had entered was high.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(2) 2012 Olympic Torch Relay

Pursuant to Minute 30(3)/Jun/12, it was reported that, on 20th June, 2012, the 2012 Olympic Torch duly made its way through the Town and that the Town Mayor and Mayoress welcomed the first Torch Bearer into the Town and also waved farewell to the Torch at County Bridge. It was considered that the spectators who came to see this once-in-a-lifetime event appeared to thoroughly enjoy the spectacular.

Reference was made to Barnard Castle Cricket Club's Olympic themed event that took place after the departure of the 2012 Olympic Torch from the Town and it was considered to be a very successful community event.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted.

(b) That a letter of thanks be sent to Barnard Castle Cricket Club for organising a successful Olympic themed community event.

(3) Dawson Road Playingfield Celebratory Event

Pursuant to Minute 30(4)/Jun/12, it was confirmed that the celebratory opening event to acknowledge the completion of the works at the Dawson Road playingfield was scheduled to take place on 28th July, 2012 between 12.00 noon and 3.00 p.m. and would include the Town Mayor carrying out a ribbon-cutting ceremony and entertainments and Multi Use Games Area activities.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(4) Newsletter

It was confirmed that, Edition Number 16 of the Council's Newsletter had been recently produced and distributed and that a number of comments had subsequently been received, nearly all of a favourable nature. It was noted that the next edition of the Newsletter (Number 17) was planned to be produced in early October 2012.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(5) Mini Golf Project

Pursuant to Minute 30(6)/Jun/11, it was confirmed that an Offer of Grant in the sum of £37,350 had been received from North Pennines Dales Leader which completed the funding package necessary for the replacement Mini Golf Course project, 'A Journey through Teesdale' (a 'project within a project' as part of the Scar Top Redevelopment being undertaken by the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership), to go ahead. It was reported that the project had also been supported by the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership through the Heritage Lottery Fund in the sum of £20,000, the Teesdale Action Partnership Neighbourhood Budget (Councillor Mrs Harrison) in the sum of £5,000 and a contribution of £7,243 from this Council. Planning and preparation work to progress the project would now start in earnest.

Resolved – That the updated situation be noted.

(6) Christmas Festival Event 2012

It was reported that the Christmas Festival event, planned for 1st December, 2012 under the banner of the Dickens in Teesdale group, continued to encounter a number of problems, including that the full funding package had not yet been secured and that there remained a few hurdles to overcome, a potential 'conflict' with the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership's Scar Top project continuing to be a factor and that further discussions were needed to ensure that the whole community event was workable, and that the Clerk's revised prospective departure during the mid-Autumn of 2012, whilst not putting the event in jeopardy, would not exactly help the project. It was anticipated that a more positive update would be provided at the Council meeting scheduled for 3rd September, 2012.

Resolved – That the updated situation be noted.

46. BARNARD CASTLE VISION

It was verbally reported at the meeting that, in respect of the redevelopment of The Witham Hall, a contractor had now been appointed and work was due to commence by the end of July 2012.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

47. TEESDALE HOUSE – NON-AVAILABILITY FOR MEETINGS

Submitted - Pursuant to Council Minute 198(A)/Mar/12, a report outlining the response received from Durham County Council's Head of Economic Development and Housing in respect of the specific questions that arose following the announcement by the County Council that the Council Chamber in Teesdale House would no longer be available for use by this Council with effect from 19th March, 2012.

It was confirmed that, as this Council's request for financial recompense had been unsuccessful, a large part of the 2012/13 Contingencies budgetary allocation would be used to pay for the alternative accommodation at Woodleigh.

Discussion ensued and the overall response received from Durham County Council, including the lack of regard to the County Durham Local Councils Charter, was considered disappointing.

Resolved – (a) That a further letter be sent to Durham County Council expressing this Council's disappointment in respect of the Council Chamber in Teesdale House being no longer be available for use by this Council.

(b) That initial investigations be made in respect of local councils borrowing of money with a view to this Council considering the option for alternative office and meeting space accommodation.

48. PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY EXTENSION

Submitted - Pursuant to Minute 174/Jan/12, a report outlining the response received from Durham County Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services in respect of the process involved to extend the external boundary of the Town Council's area to include Darlington Road and High Riggs under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, including that a Community Governance Review would be required to be carried out by the County Council.

In addition, and partly because of an associated article that was published in the Teesdale Mercury, a statement issued by Marwood Parish Council in respect of this Council's proposal to extend the Town Council's ward boundary and confirmed that that Council was against the proposal.

Discussion ensued and it was agreed that the process of the proposed boundary extension of the Town Council's area should be commenced.

Resolved – That, Durham County Council be advised that, under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, this Council requests that the process to extend the external boundary of the Town Council's area to include Darlington Road and High Riggs be commenced.

53. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE FOR SERVICES

Submitted - A report summarising the Community Right to Challenge for Services (part of the Localism Act 2011), including that voluntary and community groups (including parish and town councils) would have the right to express an interest in taking over the running of a relevant principal authority service and that those expressions of interest had to meet Regulations laid out in the Right. It was noted that Durham County Council had not yet fully considered which services it would put out to the Right.

Discussion ensued and reference was made to the similar challenge made by this Council to Teesdale District Council prior to the local government re-organisation in 2009 in respect of the transfer of assets/responsibilities and the subsequent lack of response.

Resolved – (a) That a letter be sent to Durham County Council asking that that Council recognises the Community Right to Challenge for Services.
(b) That, at a future Council meeting, a review be carried out of the previously considered list of the Town’s assets/responsibilities/services.

49. MARKETS AND STREET TRADING CONSULTATION

Submitted - A report summarising Durham County Council’s consultation in respect of the future management and regulation of markets and street trading in County Durham, including that Council’s markets vision and what it proposed to do to support the strategy. It was noted that the deadline for comments had been extended from 27th August, 2012 to 20th September, 2012 in recognition of local councils’ Summer recess period.

Discussion ensued and reference was made to the County Council’s preferred option in respect of the future management and operations of markets, whereby all markets would be operated and managed by independent operators, trader consortia or other interested parties and it was agreed that investigations should be made into the running of Barnard Castle’s Wednesday market so that this Council could explore the implications and consider the option of this Council managing the Town’s market and also so that a more informed decision in respect of the consultation could be made.

Resolved – (a) That Durham County Council be requested to provide the relevant information for the running of Barnard Castle’s Wednesday Market.
(b) That, following the receipt of the information at (a) above, the matter be further considered at the Council meeting scheduled on 3rd September, 2012.

50. HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES THROUGH BARNARD CASTLE

Submitted – A report summarising the issue of Heavy Goods Vehicles travelling through the Town, especially when the A66 was closed, including details of potential options to improve the situation, such as the re-instatement of the County Bridge traffic camera, the resiting of a road traffic sign and the option of a relief road and a potential route was outlined. It was noted that it was unlikely that any funding for a relief road would be available in the near future. However, it was considered prudent that the suggestion of a relief road should be included within the emerging County Durham Plan as a definitive intention for the future.

Resolved – That Durham County Council be advised that this Council supports the principle of a relief road for Barnard Castle and that that principle should be included in the County Durham Plan.

51. COUNCILLOR CONDUCT (Councillor Wood)

Considered earlier in the meeting.

52. COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS – NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

It was reported that a request had been received from the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) for nominations of candidates for positions on CDALC’s Executive Committee. The present incumbents were willing to be renominated.

Resolved – That no nominations be made for positions on CDALC’s Executive Committee.

53. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE FOR SERVICES

Considered earlier in the meeting.