

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
(Convened by the Town Mayor in accordance with paragraph 9(1)  
in Part II of Schedule 12 of the Local Government 1972)**

**21 NOVEMBER 2012**

**PRESENT:-** Councillor Harrison (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Cooke, Mrs Grady, Mrs Hamilton, Peat, Robinson, Watson, Wood and Yarker.

**Also in attendance:-** 28 members of the public.

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

(NOTE – Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Clerk explained that there would be no public participation slot.)

**99. APOLOGIES:-** None.

**100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 72(a)/Sep/12 refers), Members were asked whether they had any personal, pecuniary 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. Councillors Mrs Grady, Robinson, Watson and Wood declared an interest in Minute 102 and took no part in the voting thereon.

**101. PLANNING APPLICATION – LAND ADJACENT TO ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH, AMEN CORNER, BARNARD CASTLE**

Consideration was given to a planning application for improvement works to paving, walls, car park surfaces and landscaping and listed building consent to land adjacent to St Mary's Church and Amen Corner. It was noted that the key objectives of the scheme were to improve the visual connectivity between the Church and Horsemarket in particular, to restore some of the historic elements and features that had been lost and to improve the quality and condition of the existing streetscape. A Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Statement had been circulated for Members' information. It was noted that, because of its significance, the application had been referred to full Council.

**Resolved** – That conditional approval and listed building consent is recommended.

**102. CONDUCT OF COUNCILLOR J. WATSON**

Submitted – A report by Councillors Mrs Grady and Robinson that referred to certain actions, which they claimed had arisen from statements in an email that had been sent by Councillor Watson, and that email was attached as an Appendix to the report for Members' information.

Prior to the overall discussion, it was stressed that the debate should be on the specific issues that were referred to in the submitted report.

Councillor Robinson presented the report and made reference to its recommendations. Councillor Watson delivered his right of reply but a point of order was called for as the reply was considered peripheral.

Discussion ensued and a number of Members considered that Councillor Watson should apologise for the purported actions and statements. However, Councillor Watson did not consider that his purported actions and statements required his apologies, as he was acting on behalf of a constituent who had asked for his assistance.

In an attempt to progress the situation, a Member proposed that Councillors Mrs Grady, Robinson and Watson should attend a mediation meeting with the Town Clerk, which was seconded. A vote was taken with 4 votes in favour of the motion and 2 abstentions. The motion was therefore carried.

**Resolved** – That Councillors Mrs Grady, Robinson and Watson have a meeting with the Clerk to sort out their differences and if that cannot be achieved, then the matter should be referred to Durham County Council's Standards Committee as a formal complaint.

At this point, Councillor Watson attempted to continue with his defence. However, in making an allegation against another Member, the Town Mayor called for Councillor Watson to apologise. When Councillor Watson refused to apologise or retract his statement, he was asked to leave the meeting by the Town Mayor. The meeting was then closed.