

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING****3 DECEMBER 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 and 10 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, Hinchcliffe (Minutes 103 to 106 inclusive), Peat, Robinson, Watson, Wood and Yarker.

Also in attendance:- Sergeant S. Rogers (Durham Constabulary)(Minutes 103 to 105 inclusive); Mrs J Armin (Durham County Council)(Minutes 103 to 106 inclusive); 10 members of the public.

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

103. APOLOGIES:- Councillor Mrs Hamilton.

Members were advised that Councillor Mrs Hamilton was currently in hospital.

Resolved – That the Clerk write to express the Council's best wishes to Councillor Mrs Hamilton.

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

105. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

In accordance with the arrangements agreed at Minute 203(b)/Mar/12, Sergeant Simon Rogers of Durham Constabulary attended the meeting. Members were informed of current priorities and were encouraged to attend and raise relevant issues at Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings. A 'question and answer' session ensued.

Members were also advised that the recently elected Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Ron Hogg, was to hold a public consultation event on 13 December 2012 and that Members were invited to attend.

Resolved – That Sergeant Rogers be thanked for his attendance.

106. 'TEESDALE BRIDGE AND WOODLAND WALK' PROJECT

Jeanette Armin, Principle Project Manager, Durham County Council, attended the meeting and provided Members with an update in respect of the Teesdale Bridge and Woodland Walk project. A 'question and answer' session ensued.

Resolved – That Mrs Armin be thanked for her attendance.

107. COUNCIL MEETING 15 OCTOBER 2012 – MINUTES

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

108. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 22 OCTOBER 2012 – MINUTES

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

109A. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 21 NOVEMBER 2012 – MINUTES

Resolved – That, subject to the following, the Minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record:-

(a) That, in respect of Minute 101, the Clerk make investigations and clarify whether Councillor Watson should have made a declaration of interest in respect of the item.

(b) That, in respect of Minute 102 the following correction be made:-

in paragraph 3, at the end of the second sentence, the following be added:-

‘A further point of order was called for when Councillor Watson made reference to a defamatory statement that he claimed had been made against him by a member of the public (Mr M. Bacon) who was present at the meeting. As the statement could not be substantiated, Councillor Watson was requested to retract the statement and apologise to Mr Bacon but Councillor Watson refused both requests.’

109B. CONDUCT OF COUNCILLOR J. WATSON – UPDATE

Pursuant to Council Minute 102/Nov/12, the Clerk reported that a meeting had taken place between Councillors Mrs Grady, Robinson and Watson. It was confirmed that Councillor Watson had verbally apologised to Councillors Mrs Grady and Robinson at the meeting and that the apology had been accepted by Councillors Mrs Grady and Robinson. It was also confirmed that letters reaffirming the apology had subsequently been forwarded by Councillor Watson to Councillors Mrs Grady and Robinson and also that a letter of apology had been sent to Mr M. Bacon. The matter was therefore considered closed, in accordance with the Minute.

110. ‘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 eleven items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 15 October 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(2) Finance Committee Meeting – 29 October 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(3) Allotments & Play Areas Working Group Meeting – 5 November 2012 – Notes

Resolved – That the Notes be received.

(4) Planning Committee Meeting – 5 November 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(5) Administrative Support Committee Meeting – 7 November 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(6) Floral and Open Spaces Working Group Meeting – 12 November 2012 – Notes

Resolved – That the Notes be received.

(7) Christmas Festival Committee Meeting – 12 November 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(8) Editorial Board Meeting – 19 November 2012 – Notes

Resolved – That the Notes be received.

(9) Planning Committee Meeting – 19 November 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(10) Finance Committee Meeting – 19 November 2012 – Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(11) Town Mayor’s Activities

Since the last Council meeting on 15 October 2012, it was reported that the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor (as indicated) had attended the following:-

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 2 November | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress (Mrs P. Harrison)) HMYOI Deerbolt tour and discussion. |
| 2 November | Informal meeting with Deborah Jenkins of Barnard Castle Vision (Costa Coffee) |
| 9 November | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Barnard Castle Schools’ Centenary Service and Dedication of the Window |
| 10 November | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Girlguiding Barnard Castle District’s opening of new headquarters (Birch Road) |
| 11 November | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Remembrance Sunday – Church Service (St Mary’s Parish Church) and Further Act of Remembrance (The Bowes Museum’s grounds). |
| 14 November | (Deputy Town Mayor) Bohemia – Formal Shop Opening (66 Galgate) |
| 17 November | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) The Clique’s Cheque Presentation Evening (White Swan, Startforth) |
| 1 December | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress) Town Council & Dickens in Teesdale’s Christmas Festival Event and Son et Lumière (Lower Galgate and Scar Top). |

Resolved – That the information be noted.

111. REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

1) Allotments and Play Areas Working Group

(A) Rental of Ten Fields by Barnard Castle Football Club

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Allotments and Play Areas Working Group at Note 21(vi) of the set of Notes at sub-section (3) of Minute 110, in respect of the

rental of Ten Fields by Barnard Castle Football Club, the 'hold-over' lease situation and the fact that a rent review was due.

Resolved – That the following recommendation of the Allotments and Play Areas Working Group be approved:-

That a comprehensive meeting be held with Barnard Castle Football Club to discuss the 'hold-over' lease situation during 2013 with a view to determining a future rental level from 2014/15 onwards.

(B) Big Tree Plant

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Allotments and Play Areas Working at Note 22 of the set of Notes at sub-section (3) of Minute 110, in respect of the Big Tree Plant project, the fact that Groundwork North East had secured funding to deliver the project covering the northeast and Cumbria and that the Town Council had been asked if it would consider an area of its land to be part of the project. It had been noted that waterlogged areas could benefit from the planting of appropriate tree species.

Resolved – That the following recommendation of the Allotments and Play Areas Working Group be approved:-

That the lower half of Green Lane play area that is prone to being waterlogged be included in the Big Tree Plant.

2) Administrative Support Committee - 2013/14 Training Programme

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Administrative Support Committee at Minute 20 of the set of Minutes at sub-section (5) of Minute 110, in respect of the 2013/14 Training Programme. It was noted that a general list of training needs was considered and that the Committee had been mindful of the fact that a substantial amount of training had been carried out during the previous four years. It was also noted that training such as 'Being A Good Councillor' were now provided free through e-learning, an online tool set up by the National Association of Local Councils.

In association with the 2013/14 Training Programme, the Committee had recommended a 2013/14 budgetary allocation of £1,000 (no change) to the Finance Committee meeting on 19 November 2012 and this had been provisionally agreed by that Committee.

Resolved – That the following 2013/14 Training Programme, as recommended by the Administrative Support Committee, be approved:-

| Delegate | Course |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Councillors | Chairmanship Training |
| | Planning updates |
| Councillors (and staff) | Member/officer relationships |
| | Online Training (Being a Good Councillor, Planning, etc.) |
| Clerk | CiLCA |
| Assistant Clerk | Planning updates |
| Services Administrator | Allotment Updates |
| Second Services Administrator | HM Revenue and Customs Training (now online) |

3) Christmas Festival Committee – 2013 Christmas Lighting Display, etc.

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Christmas Festival Committee at Minute 17 of the set of Minutes at sub-section (7) of Minute 110, in respect of the 2013 Christmas lighting display, including the Market Cross lighting arrangements.

Reference was made to the Market Cross lower ceiling repair works and the subsequent installation of a 'safety netting' device. It was confirmed that a letter had been sent to Durham County Council expressing the Christmas Festival Committee's disappointment in respect of the coloured floodlight bulbs not being allowed to be changed because of this netting and the subsequent explanation received from the Project Manager was noted.

It was also confirmed that investigations had been made in respect of the Market Cross bell tower being lit up. However, due to a problem with the external lighting and associated high repair costs, it would not be able to be lit up.

However, it was noted that the Project Manager had made reference to this Council's interest in having the Market Cross illuminated and also included in the festive aesthetics of the town and explained that this was also an interest shared at Durham County Council and that that Council would like an opportunity to address the lighting to the Market Cross.

Resolved – That the following recommendation of the Christmas Festival Committee be approved:-

That this Council works together with Durham County Council to introduce an overall lighting scheme to the Market Cross that will present the building as the historic and iconic structure that it is.

4) Floral and Open Spaces Working Group - 2013/14 Budget and Plans

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Floral and Open Spaces Working Group at Note 20 of the set of Notes at sub-section (6) of Minute 110 in respect of prospective improvement plans and associated budgetary bid for 2013/14, including the watering service complications. It was noted that the Working Group had recognised that, whilst it was intended for an overall improvement scheme for the Town's floral displays was to be achieved over a five-year period (with 2011/12 being the first year of that period), it was considered that the existing display of tubs was sufficient, albeit that other improvement options could be explored.

Resolved – That the following recommendations of the Floral and Open Spaces Working Group be agreed:-

- (a) That this Council's floral display improvement project be considered complete.
- (b) That this Council oversees a mass bulb-planting project in green areas throughout the Town as part of the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership.

5) Administrative Support Committee - Revised Contract of Employment and Associated Staff Handbook

Reference was made to the recommendation of the Administrative Support Committee at Minute 22 of the set of Minutes at sub-section (5) of Minute 110, in respect of an updated model contract of employment for its four substantive officer posts and associated staff handbook.

It was noted that NALC and the SLCC had published an updated model contract of employment for clerks and deputy/assistant clerks in December 2011 and that the contract between the Council and its other substantive employees (last reviewed in July 2008) had not yet been updated to reflect the changes in the updated model contract. The revised model contract and the staff handbook had been circulated for Members' information.

Resolved – That the following recommendations of the Administrative Support Committee be approved:-

- a) That the contract of employment and associated staff handbook, as submitted, be approved.
- (b) That the Town Mayor be given delegated authority to sign a contract of employment with the Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Council.
- (c) That the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to sign a contract of employment with other members of staff on behalf of the Town Council.

112a. 2013/14 NEW BUDGETARY PROJECTS/ITEMS

Submitted – Pursuant to Finance Committee Minute 32/Nov/12, a report outlining the Committee's recommendations in respect of new items for potential inclusion in the Council's 2013/14 budget and items for deferral. It was confirmed that, at this stage, the Council was not making final decisions on the included budgetary items but the excluded items would not re-appear later in the budgetary process.

Resolved – (a) That consideration of the following expenditure items be deferred, and not be included in the prospective 2013/14 budget, for the reasons stated:-

- (1) **Refurbishment of Public Seating throughout the Town** – That the outcome of the Heart of Teesdale's review of street furniture, which encompasses public seats, be awaited;
- (2) **Restoration of Upper and Lower Demesnes** – That a project to transfer the Upper and Lower Demesnes' ownership/maintenance be undertaken prior to consideration of a financial commitment;
- (3) **Neighbourhood Plan Preparation** – That, as estimates of the cost of preparing a plan suggest that an allocation of £30,000 over two years would be necessary, the gap with existing plans be analysed, by monitoring the development of the County Durham plan before committing this Council to such expenditure in pursuit of (at this time) un-quantified benefits;
- (4) **Preparation of a Town Map** – That, because this project has not progressed as anticipated with the associated partner organisations and without the full information, the item be deferred;
- (5) **Preparation of Lease – Barnard Castle Football Club** - That a comprehensive meeting be held with Barnard Castle Football Club to discuss the 'hold-over' lease situation during 2013 with a view to determining a future rental level from 2014/15 onwards;
- (6) **Preparation of Lease – New Mini Golf Site** – That the matter be determined between the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership and Durham County Council as landlord;
- (7) **Ten Fields Additional Hedge** – That the cost be absorbed within the basic play areas budget;
- (8) **Chains of Office** – Deferred for 2013/14 – consideration to be given for 2014/15 budget.

(9) **Council Office Accommodation and Chamber** – That, in respect of this Council borrowing money from the Public Works Loan Board with a view to purchasing some property (with the associated mortgage payments), the item be deferred; and

(10) **Council Lapel Pin Badges** – That no further action be taken.

(b) That the following list of potential new projects be included within the 2013/14 budget:-

(1) **Community Events** - £10,000;

(2) **Dog Fouling** - £500;

(3) **2013 Election Costs** - £5,750 (to comprise £1,440 recurring expenditure and a one-off amount of £4,310 in 2013/14 only);

(4) **Ongoing Staffing Costs following change of Town Clerk** - £750;

(5) **War Memorials 3 year plan** - £3,600;

(6) **Meeting Room Hire** - £750 with the prospective alternative venue to be decided at a later date;

(7) **Bartlemere/Kalafat Lighting** - £4,000;

(8) **Blue Plaque - The Witham Hall** - £350;

(9) **Cleaning of Office** - £429;

(10) **Eye Tests for Employees** - £50; and

(11) **Newspaper for Office** - £75.

(NOTE – in respect of item (7) above (Bartlemere/Kalafat Lighting), the office staff were commended on the work carried out in respect of the matter.)

112b. CONTINUATION MEETING SCHEDULING

At this point of the meeting, it was determined that, due to time constraints, a Continuation Council Meeting would be required.

Resolved - (a) That a Continuation Council Meeting, to consider deferred items from this agenda, be scheduled for 10 December 2012.

(b) That the Modernisation Committee meeting scheduled for 10 December 2012 be resultantly cancelled.

113. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

Consideration of this item was deferred to the Continuation Council meeting.

114. BARNARD CASTLE VISION

Consideration of this item was deferred to the Continuation Council meeting.

115. SERVICE AND PROJECT UPDATES

Consideration of this item was deferred to the Continuation Council meeting.

116. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S MEDAL

Consideration of this item was deferred to the Continuation Council meeting.

117. IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY - CONSULTATION

Consideration of this item was deferred to the Continuation Council meeting.

CONTINUATION COUNCIL MEETING 10 DECEMBER 2012

PRESENT:- Councillor Harrison (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Cooke, Hinchcliffe, Peat and Yarker.

Also in attendance:- Two Members of the public.

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

103B. APOLOGIES:- Councillors Mrs Grady, Mrs Hamilton, Robinson, Watson and Wood.

104B. 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. There were no declarations of interest at this juncture.

113. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

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

(1) Barney Guild – Meetings on 17 October and 21 November 2012

Councillor Peat reported that the above Guild meetings had been well attended and that talks had been given by representatives from Barnard Castle Farmers' Market, the Bowes Museum and this Council's Clerk. It was also reported that the number of local businesses that had installed Christmas trees to the façade of premises to enhance the Town's Christmas lighting display had increased from previous years.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(2) Teesdale Residents and Travellers Forum – Meeting on 23 October 2012

It was reported that at the above Forum meeting, issues discussed in respect of Barnard Castle centred on the security of the Lower Demesnes (misuse of overhead barrier) and reference was made to The County Durham Plan consultation and that Shaw Bank was being designated as specific employment land, including the Travellers Area of Acceptance site, without any reference to a replacement TAA site. It was resolved that the Forum would send a response to the consultation to highlight the importance and the need to retain or suitably replace the Shaw Bank TAA site.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(3) Small and Medium-Sized Councils' Forum – Meeting on 16 November 2012

It was reported that at the above Forum meeting, issues discussed included Area Action Partnership updates, Durham County Council consultation periods, winter maintenance, changes to bus services, localising of Council Tax Support and double taxation grant and payments by parish and community councils and charter trustees.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(4) South West Durham Heritage Corridor Partnership

It was reported that a new proposal had been put forward to possibly fund the initial stages of a re-worked proposal to enable the South West Durham Heritage Corridor project to get back on track after it had ceased to progress due to a lack of funding in 2010. Councillor Cooke's role as this Council representative on the Partnership was therefore requested to be reaffirmed so that he could attend the forthcoming meetings of the Partnership in an 'official' capacity.

Resolved – That Councillor Cooke be nominated as this Council's representative on the South West Durham Heritage Corridor Partnership.

114. BARNARD CASTLE VISION

Submitted - A briefing note (written by Mrs A. Ward of the Barnard Castle Vision) providing an update on the Vision's ongoing projects, including The Witham, NeST, the Shop Front scheme, the Barney Guild, Winning Words (part of the cultural Olympiad) and the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

115. SERVICE AND PROJECT UPDATES

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

(1) Floral and Open Spaces Issues

(i) Floral Displays Watering Service

It was reported that, at the meeting of the Floral and Open Spaces Working Group on 12 November 2012, an update was provided in respect of the floral displays watering service (Council Minute 30(iii)/Jun/12 refers), including that an advertisement had been placed in the Teesdale Mercury to invite prospective companies to submit tenders in respect of this Council's floral displays' watering service. However, it was noted that, whilst two enquiries were made to request the tender information, only one tender had been received, resulting in the tender exercise being invalid. It was also reported that Durham County Council had stated that that Council might not be able to provide the watering service in the future but, if it did, it would be at a much higher cost. Members' views were therefore sought as to how to progress a cost effective watering service for future floral displays. The Working Group subsequently resolved that an appropriate article should be placed in the local press to highlight the difficulties being encountered in respect of the service in an attempt to encourage local business interest in carrying out the watering service. It was confirmed that appropriate articles had appeared in the Northern Echo and the Teesdale Mercury and that a number of interested parties had subsequently made enquiries regarding the watering service arrangements. It was anticipated that additional quotations would therefore be submitted.

Resolved – That the situation be noted.

(ii) Garden of Remembrance Project

Pursuant to Minute 85(1(i))/Oct/12, it was confirmed that, in respect of the Garden of Remembrance Improvement Project, work had commenced on the relaying and cleaning of the paving, albeit that the recent inclement weather had delayed the work, and that the seats had been revamped.

Resolved – That the updated situation be noted.

(2) Poppy Appeal/Remembrance Sunday Poppy Appeal

It was reported that the arrangements for the 2012 Poppy Appeal had worked well. Details were provided of the procedures involved and the support received and that the total raised to date was in the region of £8,300. An appropriate letter had been sent to the media.

Resolved - That this Council's thanks be extended to all those individuals and organisations involved in the successful co-ordination of the Appeal during the Remembrancetide period.

Remembrance Sunday

It was reported that the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday 2012 had worked reasonably well. The event had been well supported by both the Councillors and the public. It was confirmed that, following a debriefing meeting, a number of issues had been identified and to be improved upon prior to the 2013 Remembrance Sunday.

Resolved – (a) That this Council's thanks be extended to all those individuals and organisations involved on the day.
(b) That the Office carries out investigations into rectifying highlighted issues in anticipation of the 2013 Remembrance Sunday arrangements.

(3) Christmas Festival Event 2012

It was reported that, pursuant to Minute 85(3)/Oct/12, the Christmas Festival Event had taken place on 1 December 2012. The standard elements of the event, organised by this Council, had been well-attended and had 'gone according to plan' and that a greater audience had attended the Son et Lumière and firework display which had received a number of positive reviews. It was also reported that the 'Christmas Festival Events leaflet' had been distributed during November 2012 and indications were that it had been well received.

Resolved – (a) That the situation be noted.
(b) That this Council's thanks be extended to the office staff and to all those who supported the Christmas Festival Event for their contribution in making it so successful

(4) Mini Golf– Review of 2012 Season

Submitted – A summary of the 2012 Mini Golf season and the relevant income and expenditure figures. It was noted that out of 100 sessions, 20 sessions had to be terminated early due to adverse weather conditions with the consequence being that visitor numbers were well down. The Mini Golf Supervisor, as part of his duties, had carried out an inventory of equipment but, due to the imminent replacement of the course and hut, the usual 'end-of-term' condition report was not considered necessary.

It was also noted that, due to the Scar Top development work, it was anticipated that the 2013 season would not commence until late May/early June. However, the fees and charges would need to be determined during the current budgetary cycle.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted.
(b) That a meeting of the Floral and Open Spaces Working Group be convened to determine fees and charges for 2013 season for recommendation to full Council on 14 January 2013.

(5) Mini Golf – A Journey through Teesdale

It was confirmed that, pursuant to Minutes 45(5)/Jul/12 and 92/Oct/12, the relevant procurement process covering the two elements of the above project, the appointment of the Stone Artist and the Course Construction Contractor, was nearing completion and that the Stone Artist, Phil Townsend, had been appointed to carry out the artistic stone component of the replacement mini golf course.

The procurement of the Course Construction Contractor was being carried out through the North East Procurement Organisation portal via Durham County Council and the process, which had culminated in the recommendation of the tender evaluation panel, was outlined and it was noted that immediate confirmation from the Town Council was necessary to avoid delay in commencing the project.

Following the appointment of the course construction contractor, it would then be possible for both contractors to begin working together to achieve a cohesive design for approval in January 2013.

Resolved – That the contract for the course construction of the proposed mini golf course be awarded to Urban Crazy (mobile) Limited.

116. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S MEDAL

Submitted - A report in respect of the Durham County Council Chairman’s Medal, including the fact that the Medal was launched to encourage ambition and success and was presented to individuals, groups and organisations in County Durham to recognise significant achievement and outstanding effort in all walks of life, including links to the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, Olympic and Paralympics celebrations and events. This Council had received an invitation from the Teesdale Action Partnership to nominate an individual or organisation for a Chairman’s Medal and the criteria was outlined.

Resolved – That Barnard Castle Cricket Club, The Hub and Teesdale YMCA be individually nominated for a Durham County Council Chairman’s Medal.

117. IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY – CONSULTATION

Submitted – A report outlining details of the Government’s consultation in respect of improving local Government transparency, including that regulations would be made that would require local authorities to publish data falling within certain descriptions of information specified in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (‘the Code’), which was issued on 29 September 2011 under section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. The Code was concerned with making data generated by authorities available and accessible to the public. The authorities to whom the Code applied, and to whom the regulations would apply included local councils with an annual budgeted spend or income of £200,000 or more, as proposed in the original Code. It was noted that this Council’s gross expenditure, including grant-funded projects had the potential, in any given year, of being close to that limit. It was also noted that NALC supported the proposals, provided the minimum budgetary threshold (at this stage) of an annual budgeted spend or income of £200,000 was retained. The consultation deadline was 20 December 2012.

Resolved – That the Town Council supports the Government’s proposals in respect of Improving Local Government Transparency.