

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

20 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Harrison (Town Mayor) (in the Chair); Councillors Blissett, Deacon, Mrs Grady, Hinchcliffe, Kinch, Mrs Moorhouse, Peat, Robinson and Yarker.

Also in attendance: Three members of the public (one of whom filmed the meeting by prior agreement) and two members of the press.

Officer: Mr King (Town Clerk).

87. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor Cooke and Councillor Watson.

Resolved – That the apologies of Councillors Cooke and Watson be accepted.

88. 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. Councillor Kinch declared a non-pecuniary interest in the matter under consideration at Minute 96.

89. COUNCIL MEETING – 2 DECEMBER 2013 – MINUTES

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

90. 'EN BLOC' ITEMS

Submitted – In accordance with Minute 72/Aug/04, a set of items with the accompanying recommendations to be moved 'en bloc'. The seven items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 2 December 2013 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(2) Partnership Committee Meeting – 9 December 2013 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(3) Planning Committee Meeting – 16 December 2013 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(4) Services Committee Meeting – 16 December 2013 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(5) Planning Committee Meeting – 30 December 2013 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(6) Resources Committee Meeting – 13 January 2014 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(7) Town Mayor's Activities

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 2 December 2013, the Town Mayor had attended the following:

- 6 December 2013 **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress (Mrs P. Harrison))**
Christmas Festival Event (Town Council, Scar Top)
- 9 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Civic Carol Service (Ferryhill Town Council, St Lukes Church, Ferryhill)
- 10 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Artwork exhibition 'The Other Side of the Wall' (HMYOI, Deerbolt)
- 11 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Service of Nine Lessons and Carols (Barnard Castle School)
- 12 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Christmas Tree Festival Preview Night (St Mary's Parish Church)
- 13 December Informal meeting with Deborah Jenkins of Barnard Castle Vision (Costa)
- 13 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Christmas Festival Grand Christmas Firework Event (Town Council, Scar Top)
- 15 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Civic Carol Service (Spennymoor Town Council, Town Hall)
- 16 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Civic Carol Service (Chilton Town Council, St Aidan's Church, Chilton)
- 17 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Carol Service (Friends of Richardson Community Hospital)(John Street)
- 20 December Formal Opening of Fryer Tuck Fish & Chip Shop (Horsemarket)
- 23 December Partridge in Pear Tree Trail Draw (Town Council, 44B Galgate)
- 25 December **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
'Christmas Day Visit' (Richardson Community Hospital & other local Care & Nursing Homes).
- 18 January 2014 **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Mayor's Gala Strictly Musicals (Darlington Borough Council, Civic Theatre)

An enquiry was made regarding the decision of the Planning Committee on 16 December, (3) above, Item 70(i), relating to The Little Livery, Westwick Road. It was noted that no objections were raised, notwithstanding the location of the application outside the town's built-up area.

Resolved – That the information be noted and the question relating Planning item 70(i)/Dec/13 be referred to the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

91. UPDATES AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

(1) Partnership Committee

(a) 2013 Grand Christmas Fireworks Event – 13 December 2013

It was confirmed that the above event had been well attended, had 'gone according to plan' and that positive feedback had been received.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(b) 12 Days of Christmas Trail

It was confirmed that a number of entries were received in respect of the 12 Days of Christmas Trail but only one entry had correctly located all 78 baubles hidden in businesses throughout the town. An associated press release announcing the winner was duly submitted.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(c) Christmas Lighting Display 2013/14

It was confirmed that the Christmas lighting display had been dismantled and was back in storage. It was also confirmed that, pursuant to the Council decision for alternative locations coming forward to use the curtain lights which previously lit the Market Cross, no locations had come forward.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

92. PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2014/15

Submitted – A report summarising the deliberations of the Resources Committee on a prospective budget for 2014/15, incorporating the Committee's recommendations in respect of the rental and charging arrangements and summarising the Cumulative Fund situation, including earmarked reserves. It was highlighted that budgetary bids and recommendations had been sought from the council's other committees and the resultant information had been an integral part of the Resources Committee's deliberations. The report concluded with recommendations in respect of the Precept and the overall 2014/15 budget.

Background details for each budgetary item were provided and the budgetary figures for 2013/14 were included for comparative purposes, including projected 'end-of-year' figures for that year. Reference was made to the fact that three potential new items/projects had been included in the consideration of this budgetary process for inclusion in the 2014/15 budget.

It was confirmed that the recommended Precept of £159,573, an increase of £11,782 compared with the Precept for 2013/14, would result in an increase of £5.56 per year (or approximately 10.7pence per week) for a Band D property in Barnard Castle. The annual contribution would be £102.58 compared with the 2013/14 contribution of £97.02. It was also confirmed that a Local Council Tax Support Scheme grant of £14,102 would be received for 2014/15 from Durham County Council and that this amount needed to be taken into account and deducted from the Precept demand.

Discussion ensued in respect of a number of budgetary items. Amendments were moved, seconded and passed to transfer a sum of £7,500 from reserves to meet the budget provision for a Neighbourhood Plan, to transfer a sum of £300 from reserves to meet the budget provision for Chains of Office and to remove the provision of £1,000 recommended for Public Seats, it being noted that third-party funding for public seat refurbishment had now been identified.

Resolved – That the following budgetary recommendations of the Resources Committee (as amended) be approved:-

(a) That the following rentals and charges be agreed:-

- (A) **Play Areas**
 - (i) Ten Fields
£100 for 2014/15 (increase of £40) and £100 in years 2015/16 to 2018/19 inclusive (no change)
 - (ii) Gate Licence Fees
Per property fee remain at £1.00 – total for 2014/15 £14.00 (no change)
- (B) **Allotments** – (per plot)
 - (i) 2014/15 – (already determined) - £40 (no change);
 - (ii) 2015/16 - £42 (increase of £2.00)
- (C) **Mini Golf** – 2014 season
 - £2.00 per round for all users (no change)
 - £0.50 lost ball (no change)
 - £5.00 damaged club (no change)
 - £6.00 group ticket (up to 4 players – saving £2.00) (no change); and
 - £10.00 loyalty ticket (7 rounds bought in advance) (no change)

(b) That any Contingency budgetary requirement be transferred from the Council's general reserves, up to a maximum of £1,500.

(c) That the budget for Public Seats (45) be £0 (zero).

(d) That a contribution of £7,800 from the Council's reserves be included in the 2014/15 budget.

(e) That a 2014/15 precept of £150,773 be approved (being the Town Council's net budget demand of £164,875 less the LCTSS Grant of £14,102)¹.

(f) That the revenue budget for 2014/15 be as detailed in the Appendix to this minute.

93. CLERK'S UPDATE

Submitted – A report outlining recent activities undertaken by the Clerk and staff, summarised the Clerk's forthcoming leave and provided updates in respect of the Scar Top Play Area/Mini Golf Freehold Asset Transfer, Demesnes Asset Transfer, Wednesday Market situation and Christmas Fireworks event and a summary was provided in respect of the Clerk's attendance at the Durham and Cleveland branch meeting of the Society of Local Council Clerks on 10 January 2014. Supplementary information received from the Assets Team of Durham County Council offering terms for the transfer of the Scar Top play area and freehold to the mini golf course, for the payment of £650 plus costs of £700, was circulated. The terms also confirmed that Durham County Council's Green and Clean Team would continue to litter pick and empty litter bins on the site at no charge to the Town Council.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted.

(b) That the Clerk be given delegated authority to prepare an agreement with Durham County Council on the terms offered, with the cost of transfer to be funded from the Asset Transfer Earmark Reserve, and that such agreement be duly made.

¹ It was subsequently confirmed by Durham County Council that the amount of LCTSS Grant would be £14,881 (an increase of £779 on the quoted figure), leading to an equivalent reduction in the precept (£149,994 instead of £150,773) and resulting in a consequential increase in precept, year-on-year, of 1.49%.

94. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

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

(1) Barnard Castle Business Guild Meetings – 11 December 2013 and 8 January 2014

It was reported that, at the Guild meeting on 11 December, matters discussed included Christmas promotions, parking, Wednesday market, the bedroom browser, the location of The Meet funfair and the Guild's finances.

It was reported that, at the meeting on 8 January, matters discussed included a review of the Christmas promotions, the bedroom browser, the location of The Meet funfair, Barney bag update, to review the Guild's constitution and four new members were elected as Guild officers.

There was further discussion of the Business Guild's public stance on the issue of parking in Barnard Castle. It was confirmed that a meeting had been convened by the TAP at which the guild, the town council, the police and county council parking services had been represented. County council officers had undertaken to provide information on the provision and use of paid-for and on-street parking and it was confirmed that this would be reported to a future meeting of the Planning Committee, in the first instance.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(2) Teesdale Local Councils' Forum Meeting – 13 January 2014

It was reported that, at the above Forum meeting, issues discussed centred on the potential loss of financial support from Durham County Council to the County Durham Association of Local Council's and the anticipated impact this would have on the areas local councils. Steve Ragg, CDALC's officer, was also present at the meeting to aid the discussion.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

95. ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

It was reported that, in accordance with the standard arrangements, this Council had been invited (by the County Durham Association of Local Councils) to put forward a nominee to attend a Royal Garden Party to be held on 3 June 2014, with a ballot to be held if necessary. The criteria were outlined and it was confirmed that Councillors Hinchcliffe and Yarker had attended a previous Garden Party and could not therefore be nominated again.

Resolved – That Councillor Harrison be nominated to attend the 2014 Royal Garden Party.

96. 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. 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. (Councillor Kinch took no part in this item).

Resolved – That The TCR Hub and the Teesdale YMCA be individually nominated for a Durham County Council Chairman's Medal.