

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

24 MARCH 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Harrison (Town Mayor) (in the Chair); Councillors Blissett, Cooke, Deacon, Hinchcliffe (Minutes 101A to 107 inclusive), Kinch, Mrs Moorhouse, Peat (Minutes 101A to 112 inclusive), Robinson, Watson and Yarker.

Also in attendance: Sgt Rogers, Durham Constabulary (Items 101 to 103), two members of the public (one of whom filmed the meeting by prior agreement) and two members of the press.

Officer: Mr King (Town Clerk).

101A.ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES:- None.

101B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor announced that a letter of resignation had been received from Cllr Watson, indicating his decision to retire after 38 years' service to the town council, to take effect on 26 March 2014. Members spoke in praise of Cllr Watson's service to the town and of his dedication to the town council over that period.

Resolved – That thanks be given to Cllr Watson for his 38 years' service to the town council and best wishes be offered on his retirement.

102. 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. Cllr Mrs Moorhouse declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 106(9) and Cllr Harrison declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 114.

103. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

Pursuant to Minute 43(b)/Jul/13, Sergeant Simon Rogers of Durham Constabulary attended the meeting to discuss relevant topics and current issues, including evidence of low and stable crime levels across Barnard Castle and Teesdale as a whole, measures being taken by Durham Constabulary to address local priorities such as combating anti-social behaviour and work being undertaken across County Durham to reduce the incidence of bicycle thefts.

Resolved – That Sgt Rogers be thanked for his attendance.

104. COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JANUARY 2014 – MINUTES

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

105. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – 10 MARCH 2014 – MINUTES

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

106. '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 nine items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 27 January 2014 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(2) Planning Committee Meeting – 10 February 2014 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(3) Partnership Committee Meeting – 10 February 2014 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(4) Special Partnership Committee Meeting – 24 February 2014 – Minutes

It was noted that the minute at item 61 (a) on this meeting's agenda was subject to review at the next meeting of the Partnership Committee, to reflect the fact that the dog waste bin had, in fact, been installed by the town council, using a re-used bin provided by Durham County Council.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(5) Services Committee Meeting – 24 February 2014 – Minutes

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

(6) Resources Committee Meeting – 10 March 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:

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| 24 January | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress (Mrs P. Harrison))
Launch of the Gavin Turk Exhibition (The Bowes Museum) |
| 6 February | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress)
School Show 'West Side Story' (Teesdale School, Prospect Place) |
| 12 February | Official Opening of Library and Customer Access Point (Durham County Council, the Witham Hall). |
| 14 February | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress)
Mayor's Valentine Charity Night (Chilton Town Council, Sacred Heart Catholic Church Social Club, Chilton) |
| 21 February | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress)
Leaving Commemoration (Barnard Castle Vision, the NEST, Newgate) |
| 25 February | HMYOI Deerbolt – Recovery (A) Wing Celebration (HMYOI Deerbolt) |
| 26 February | (accompanied by the Town Mayoress)
Sid Chaplin Short Story Competition Award Presentation (Shildon Town Council, Shildon Civic Hall). |

- 1 March 'Dogs in the Community' Event, Woodleigh
- 6 March Inaugural Annual Lecture (Darlington Borough Council)
- 16 March **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
Matins Service (Darlington Borough Council, St Cuthberts Church Market Place, Darlington)
- 18 March **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
School Musical 'Grease' (Barnard Castle School, Newgate)
- 20 March **(accompanied by the Town Mayoress)**
School Musical 'Timelord' (Barnard Castle Prep School)

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(8) Royal Garden Party

It was reported that, pursuant to Council Minute 95/Jan/14, the successful nominations, drawn completely at random, came from Belmont Parish Council and West Auckland Parish Council.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(9) Chairman's Medal

It was reported that, pursuant to Council Minute 96/Jan/14, those organisations nominated by the town council (The TCR Hub and Teesdale YMCA) had been unsuccessful and that the Teesdale Action Partnership would be contacting nominees to pursue local recognition of their achievements.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

107. UPDATES AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

(1) Partnership Committee

(a) Mayoral Event

Pursuant Partnership Committee Minute 52(5)/Feb/14, it was confirmed that a Town Mayor's Charity Fundraiser event was set to take place on 9 May 2014 and the details were outlined. Members were reminded that tickets were available at £10 each from the town council office.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(2) Services Committee

(a) Big Spring Clean 2014

At the Services Committee meeting on 24 February 2014, consideration was given to the town council getting involved with Litter Free Durham and Durham County Council's Big Spring Clean campaign again as it did in 2013.

Resolved – That the town council organises a team of volunteers to carry out a litter pick on Saturday, 5 April 2014 around Scar Top and the river bank as part of the Big Spring Clean 2014 and continues to work with the Civic Pride team to encourage enforcement of anti-littering on Scar Top.

(b) Dogs Trust Visit

It was confirmed that the 'Dogs in the Community' event took place on 1 March 2014 in conjunction with the Dogs Trust and was also attended by Durham County Council's Civic Pride Team. More than 30 dog owners took advantage of the free dog microchipping.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(3) Resources Committee

At the Resources Committee meeting on 10 March (the Minutes at sub-section 106(6) of this agenda refer), a number of pertinent council matters were discussed and recommendations for approval at this council meeting were subsequently made. The items were as follows:-

(a) Medium Term Financial Plan

Consideration was given to a report outlining the pressures affecting the Town Council's income and expenditure over the medium term – the next three years to establish a broad strategy for the council's financial management which could be used as the context for any future decisions about changes to services through successive budget cycles.

It was noted that the council's internal auditor had recommended that the council took a medium-term planning view on its income and expenditure to assist members in successive budget preparations and to provide a context for decisions about the scope and scale of the town council's services. The model MTFP, was submitted to aid members' deliberations.

Resolved - That the Medium-Term Financial Plan, as submitted, be adopted.

(b) Standing Orders

Consideration was given to proposed revisions to the Town Council's Standing Orders to reflect the model promoted by NALC, as revised in November 2013 following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, and some procedural simplification to remove ambiguous wording and the number of individual headings from earlier drafts as well as revising the order in which the sections appeared and were also adapted to meet the needs of this council. Whilst a number of further changes were suggested at the meeting, only one further amendment was agreed. The draft Standing Orders, as subsequently amended, were submitted to aid members' deliberations.

Resolved – That the draft Standing Orders, as submitted, be (a) approved and (b) adopted at the Annual Meeting.

(c) Financial Regulations

The Town Council's Financial Regulations were reviewed to meet the needs of this council and in anticipation of recent legislation reforms, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, being formally made and the subsequent issue of an updated Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - Practitioners' Guide (England).

It was acknowledged that references should be made within the regulations to the Financial Donations and Community Events budgetary allowances and associated policies. The draft Financial Regulations, as subsequently amended, were submitted to aid members' deliberations.

Resolved - That, pending the issue of a revision to Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners' Guide, the draft Financial Regulations, as submitted, be (a) approved, with the addition of a requirement that the council's internal auditor be invited, at least annually, to attend and report to a meeting of the Resources Committee, and (b) adopted at the Annual Meeting.

(d) Scheme of Delegation

The Town Council's Scheme of Delegation was reviewed for the forthcoming municipal year. It was noted that there were no proposed substantive amendments. The draft Scheme of Delegation was submitted to aid members' deliberations.

Resolved - That the draft Scheme of Delegation, as submitted, be (a) approved and (b) adopted at the Annual Meeting.

(e) Calendar of Council Meetings 2014/15

A proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2014/15 for the council and its committees was considered.

Resolved - That the following schedule of meetings for the municipal year 2014/15, be (a) approved and (b) adopted at the Annual Meeting:-

Partnership Committee	Services Committee	Resources Committee	Council
19 May 2014	2 June 2014	16 June 2014	30 June 2014
14 July 2014	28 July 2014	8 September 2014	22 September 2014
6 October 2014	20 October 2014	3 November 2014	17 November 2014
1 December 2014	15 December 2014	12 January 2015	19 January 2015
9 February 2015	23 February 2015	9 March 2015	23 March 2015
13 April 2015 ¹	13 April 2015 ¹	27 April 2015	11 May 2015 ²

All committee and council meetings commence at 6.00pm on Mondays.

Committees meet in The County Room, The Witham and Council meets in The Witham Room, The Witham.

1. Services will immediately follow Partnership on 13 April 2015
2. Annual Meeting

Planning Committee (Town Council Office)			
7 May 2014 ³	11 August 2014	17 November 2014	9 March 2015
19 May 2014	27 August 2014 ³	1 December 2014	23 March 2015
2 June 2014	8 September 2014	15 December 2014	13 April 2015
16 June 2014	22 September 2014	12 January 2015	27 April 2015

30 June 2014	6 October 2014	26 January 2015	
14 July 2014	20 October 2014	9 February 2015	
28 July 2014	3 November 2014	23 February 2015	

All Planning Committee meetings commence at 5.30pm on Mondays

3. Following a Bank Holiday Monday, 5.30pm on Wednesday – as indicated.

(f) Mayoral Seniority 2014/15

Consideration was given to the options available to the council, to determine or not, seniority amongst members to establish a precedence for choosing a town mayor and deputy for 2014-15 and beyond, including free vote, structured vote or formal seniority with a confirming vote. It was stressed that there was no legal limitation on eligibility for the office of Town Mayor (and Deputy) other than (s)he has to be a member of the council. An amendment that candidates for Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor should be, or should commit to be, trained in Chairmanship was moved, seconded and lost at a vote.

Resolved - That, in respect of a process for the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor for 2014-15 and beyond, a free vote system be adopted.

(g) Community Events – Grants

Consideration was given to a proposed policy and procedural framework, including the operating criteria, by which the Partnership Committee might consider applications for support from community organisations for specific events against the Community Events Budget, as part of a review of the Town Council's Community Events Policy. Further changes were suggested at the meeting. The draft Community Events Policy, as subsequently amended, was submitted to aid members' deliberations.

Resolved – (a) That the policy, as submitted, including consideration of grants to support community events, be approved.

(b) That equivalent changes to submission criteria be made to the Financial Donations Policy.

(h) Red Well Ownership

Pursuant to Resources Committee Minute 30(f)/Nov/13, a report providing information in respect of the Red Well enclosure's ownership status was submitted and sought members' views as to whether that status should be rectified. It was confirmed that enquiries lodged with Land Registry had verified that the area was unregistered and due to the fact that the town council had maintained the land for a number of years, it was possible for the town council to register the land in its name under adverse possession rules. It was noted that there was an associated cost of £40 to complete the registration but it was confirmed that the 2013/14 Red Well budget could withstand this expenditure.

Resolved – That the Red Well enclosure be registered by the town council.

108. 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 correspondence with Durham County Council over a range of issues.

Resolved – (a) That Jenny Cooke, of the Environment Agency, be invited to attend the Annual Town Council Meeting on 12 May to celebrate the completion of the weir works and (b) That the information be noted.

109. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

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

(1) Barnard Castle Business Guild Meeting – 19 February 2014

It was reported that, following recent changes to the Guild's officer posts, the meeting on 19 February was to decide a way forward for the group, that the Guild should only be involved in issues/projects that were of a direct benefit to local business and to arrange a couple of events per year that could deliver a real impact for both residents and visitors.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(2) Teesdale Marketing Limited – Annual General Meeting – 4 March 2014

It was reported that the organisation's AGM on 4 March covered TML's project activities during 2013/14, including Love Food, an inter-school 'Come Dine with Me' cookery competition, the Teesdale Where to Stay Guide, Durham Dales Walking Festival and the fact that the suspension bridge project was still being progressed, albeit slowly.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(3) Teesdale Local Councils' Forum Meeting – 10 March 2014

It was reported that, the representative from Warm Up North, who had been invited to provide a presentation in respect of the help available to upgrade boilers and insulate homes for residents in Teesdale, did not attend.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(4) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum Meeting – 5 February 2014

It was reported that the security of both the lower and upper Demesnes entrances in anticipation of the 2014 traveller migration period was discussed and that the Section 14 Traffic Regulation Order would be initiated for the Bridgegate lay-bys again.

It was noted that, following advice from Durham Constabulary the Barnard Castle Meet Committee had determined not to invite participation from a Sulky Racing promoter as part of this year's carnival.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(5) Trustees of Dawson's Cottages Meeting – 12 March 2014

It was reported that a request from the Trustees had been received seeking the town council's support in its funding applications so that the cottages could be revamped.

Resolved – (a) That this Council writes a letter to the trustees of Dawson's Cottages in support of their grant funding applications and (b) That the information be noted.

(6) The Stannard Trust

It was reported that, following the demise of a number of the trustees and the fact that a similar fund existed, the trustees had agreed that The Stannard Trust should be closed and the funds be transferred into the existing Jamboree Fund.

Resolved – That the council acknowledges the necessity of closing The Stannard Trust with the funds to be transferred into the existing 1st Barnard Castle Scout Groups Jamboree Fund.

110. BARNARD CASTLE VISION

Submitted – A report detailing recent activity by, and promoted by, the Vision, including The Witham and The Witham's Heritage project, NeST, Barnard Castle Business Guild, Shop Share initiative, town centre vacancy rates and the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

111. ANNUAL TOWN AND COUNCIL MEETINGS – 12 MAY 2014 – PROCEDURES

Submitted – A report setting out proposals for the conduct of the Annual Town and Council Meetings to take place on 12 May 2014, for approval as the basis of procedures for the 2014/15 municipal year.

Resolved – (a) That the proposed format and procedures for the conduct of the Annual Town and Council Meetings, to commence at 6pm on Monday 12 May 2014, be adopted for the 2014/15 municipal year.

(b) That the Terms of Reference for committees be updated to allow for five seats on the Planning Committee.

(c) That the Annual meetings be advertised via noticeboards and the internet.

112. TOWN'S COAT OF ARMS FLAG

It was reported that a local resident had expressed an interest in funding the manufacture of a flag printed with the town's coat of arms to be flown from the recently installed flag pole located at Scar Top, by way of a donation in memory of her late husband, subject of the consent of the town council. Details of a recommended style of flag were outlined.

Resolved – That the council accepts the offer of a donation for the manufacture of a flag printed with the town's coat of arms to be flown from the Scar Top flag pole.

113. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF MINUTE 114 BELOW)

Resolved – That, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 §1(2), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matter referred to at Minute 114 below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

114. ALLOTMENTS (CLLR BLISSETT IN THE CHAIR)

Submitted – A confidential report on the proposal to sell land adjacent to an allotment and contained the surveyor's valuation.

Resolved - That an offer be made to the owners of both properties based on the received valuation plus costs (to be a 50% share of fees and disbursements associated with the sale).