

BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
(Convened following consultation with the Town Mayor)

28 JULY 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Blissett (Town Mayor) (in the Chair); Councillors Cooke (Minute 53 only), Deacon, Harrison, Hinchcliffe, Kinch, Marshall, Mrs Moorhouse, Peat (Minutes 50 to part of 53), Robinson and Yarker.

Also in attendance: One member of the public and two members of the press (Minutes 50 to part of 53).

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

50. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES:- None.

51. 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.

52. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF MINUTE 53 BELOW)

Resolved – That, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 §1(2), after a full debate on the principle of responding to the proposed lease, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during any subsequent consideration of financial detail relating to the matter referred to at Minute 53 below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted: in that it would put into the public domain an offer, the sum of which, if disclosed, might prevent the council from effectively tendering.

53. CONSIDERATION OF OFFER TO LET WOODLEIGH

Submitted – A report outlining the options open to the town council to put in a bid to lease Woodleigh from Durham County Council. The building's history was summarised and the fact that this council had recently been successful in registering the building as an 'asset of community value' with DCC. It was noted that the closing date for the receipt of tenders was 1 September 2014.

Discussion ensued. Disappointment was expressed in respect of the county council's perception that the building would be suitable as a restaurant as described in the tender document, bearing in mind the number of eateries already located in the town. It was considered that the building needing saving from further deterioration and any commercial use.

It was recognised that this council's office was insufficient for its current needs and that this should be the main factor in the creation of a business plan.

Resolved – (a) That the Clerk be given delegated powers to draw up a business plan to accompany the submitted tender for Woodleigh.

NOTE – At this point, the press and public were excluded from the meeting.

Potential expenditure for the running of the building was outlined, which took into account the fact that the lease was a full repairing lease over a term of 15 years and considered possible income streams.

The Clerk advised that another organisation had expressed an interest in sharing the building with the town council and that this could be factored into the business plan.

Discussion ensued to determine a practical and realistic figure to be submitted as a bid for Woodleigh.

Resolved – (b) That the town council submits a bid for Woodleigh, as now agreed, supported by an appropriate business plan, which demonstrates minimal additional demand on Barnard Castle's council tax payers.

(c) That the business plan be submitted to Durham County Council by the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Resources Committee.