

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING  
19 JANUARY 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Blissett (Town Mayor) (in the Chair); Councillors Deacon, Mrs Grady, Harrison, Kinch, Marshall, Mrs Moorhouse, Peat, Robinson (from item 96.) and Yarker.

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

**Officers:** Mr King (Town Clerk), Mrs Woodward (Deputy Clerk)

**92. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cooke and Hinchcliffe.

**Resolved** – That Cllr Cooke's and Cllr Hinchcliffe's apologies be accepted.

**93. 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 that point of the meeting. Members were reminded that a declaration could be given later in the meeting if a need had arisen during discussion.

No declarations were made.

**94. COUNCIL MEETING – 17 NOVEMBER 2014 - MINUTES**

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

**95. EN BLOC ITEMS**

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

**(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 1 December 2014**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(2) Partnership Committee Meeting – 1 December 2014**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(3) Planning Committee Meeting – 15 December 2014**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(4) Services Committee Meeting – 15 December 2014**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(5) Planning Committee Meeting – 12 January 2015**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(6) Resources Committee Meeting – 12 January 2015**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be received.

**(7) Town Mayor's Activities.**

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 17 November 2014, the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor had attended the following:

17 November	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Judging of Mayoral Christmas Card Competition (Town Council, Galgate)
25 November	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Judging of Owl Competition (Friends of The Bowes Museum)
28 November	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Christmas Light Switch On and Owl Competition Presentation (The Bowes Museum)
5 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Christmas Festival Event (Town Council, Scar Top).
6 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Christmas Festival Grand Christmas Firework Event (Town Council, Scar Top)
8 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Carol Service (Ferryhill Town Council)
10 December	<b>(Accompanied by Consort Miss K Blissett)</b> Service of Nine Lessons and Carols (Barnard Castle School, Newgate)
11 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Chairman's Civic Carol Service (Durham County Council, County Hall)
12 December	<b>(Deputy Town Mayor Accompanied by Consort Mr I Moorhouse)</b> Retirement Reception (The Friends of the Richardson Hospital, Victoria Road)
14 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Chairman's Christmas Carol Concert (Stanley Town Council, Civic Hall, Stanley)
14 December	<b>(Mayor's representative Cllr F Harrison Accompanied by Mrs P Harrison)</b> Civic Carol Service (Shildon Town Council, Civic Hall, Shildon)
14 December	<b>(Deputy Town Mayor Accompanied by Consort Mr I Moorhouse)</b> Civic Carol Service (Spennymoor Town Council, Town Hall, Spennymoor))
15 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Civic Carol Service (Chilton Town Council)
17 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Carol Service (The Friends of the Richardson Hospital, Victoria Road)
19 December	Alzheimer's Society Christmas Singing for the Brain (Trinity Methodist Church, Scar Top)
21 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Christmas Carol Service of Nine Carols & Nine Lessons (Darlington Borough Council, St Michael's Church Heighington)

24 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress)</b> Crib Service (St Mary's Parish Church, Newgate)
25 December	<b>(Accompanied by Mayoress &amp; Deputy Town Mayor)</b> 'Christmas Day Visit' (Richardson Community Hospital & other local Care & Nursing Homes)

The Town Mayor reported that on 24 April 2015, there would be a Mayor's Function at Glaxo in aid of the Mayor's Charity for 2014/15 (TCR Hub).

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

## **96. UPDATES AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES**

### **(1) Services Committee**

#### **(a) Market Cross Lighting**

Council was updated on the feasibility study undertaken by the county council into the introduction of an external lighting scheme for the Market Cross, including Conservation, traffic and highways consultations; structural testing; along with a design and cost exercise to fully establish project costs for the lighting scheme. Design costs for the procurement, installation and testing of a suitable scheme totalled £11,613.72 (including VAT, where applicable). Phase 1 would use four clusters of floodlights mounted on street lighting columns to illuminate the exterior of the building all year round, with changeable colours to mark seasons or events, as with the castle floodlights.

**Resolved** – That the town council leads on the procurement of phase 1 of lighting the exterior of the Market Cross on the basis of securing third-party funding for the scheme to the technical specification provided by Durham County Council.

### **(2) Planning Committee**

#### **(a) Street Lighting Standards**

Reference was made to circulation (Planning 59b/Dec/14) of the Durham County Council revised street lighting policy, subsequently in operation, and issues raised by members of the public and of the council regarding the quality of lighting in residential streets. It had been recommended by the Planning Committee that the town council should formally object to the implementation of the street lighting policy on the grounds of public safety. Councillor Marshall circulated a photograph of street lighting in Hilton Road at night. Much discussion ensued of the benefits and disadvantages of the new LED lighting. Members debated and considered options the town council might reasonably ask Durham County Council to consider.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information is noted and;

(b) That the situation be monitored but no action be taken at this time.

#### **(b) Traffic Calming 20mph zones/limits**

Submitted – a report on the current position of 20mph zones/limits within County Durham setting out options for further action in Barnard Castle, in relation to speeding around schools and the increase in traffic anticipated from the forthcoming Green Lane housing development. This matter was considered alongside Street Lighting Standards regarding their cumulative impact on road safety. Members debated and considered options the town council might feasibly take.

**Resolved** – That the town council endorses a local 20mph campaign for Barnard Castle schools under the '20s Plenty for Us' banner.

**(3) Resources Committee**

**(a) Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/18**

Submitted – A revised Medium Term Financial Plan, aligned with recommended budget for 2015/16.

**Resolved** – That the plan be adopted following approval of the 2015/16 budget.

**97. CLERK'S UPDATE**

Submitted - A report outlining recent activity by the Clerk and staff and correspondence received since the last Council Meeting on 17 November 2014. A verbal update was made.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

**98. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES**

Submitted – an update on some of this Council's representation on other bodies.

**(1) Barnard Castle Business Guild Meeting**

It was reported that the next meeting is on 21 January 2015.

**(2) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum Meeting**

The January meeting was postponed.

**(3) Teesdale Local Councils Forum**

There were no matters to report.

**(4) County Durham Association of Local Councils**

There were no matters to report.

**(5) Castle Walls Trust**

Cllr Marshall gave a verbal update at the meeting to expect significant news shortly.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

**99. APPROVAL OF BUDGET 2015/16**

Submitted – A report summarising the deliberations of the Resources Committee on a prospective budget for 2015/16, incorporating the Committee's recommendations. The report concluded with recommendations in respect of the Precept and the overall 2015/16 budget.

Background details for each budgetary item were provided and the budgetary figures for 2014/15 were included for comparative purposes, including projected 'end-of-year' figures for that year.

At the final budget consideration meeting of the Resources Committee, a recommendation was made to raise the precept by 2% as a basis for calculating the 2015/16 budget with an identified reduction in expenditure totalling £10,000. Amendments were moved, seconded and passed to raise the precept to represent a notional 2% increase per household (1.998%), rather than 2% growth in precept, with a reduction in expenditure required of £7,411. Discussion ensued in respect of a number of budgetary items, in particular the Christmas Lights, with a subsequent amendment moved,

seconded and passed to hold a public meeting to involve the local community. There was strong resistance to using any earmarked reserves.

The agreed Precept of £155,582, would result in an increase of £1.77 per year (or approximately 3.40 pence per week) for a Band D property in Barnard Castle. The annual contribution would be £90.36 compared with the 2014/15 contribution of £88.59. It was also confirmed that a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant of £11,292 would be received for 2015/16 from Durham County Council and that this amount needed to be taken into account and deducted from the total budget demand.

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

(A) **Play Areas**

(i) Ten Fields

£100 for 2015/16 (no change) and £100 in years 2016/17 to 2018/19 inclusive (no change)

(ii) Gate Licence Fees

Per property fee remain at £1.00 – total for 2015/16 £17.00 (increase of £3.00)

(B) **Allotments** – (per plot)

(i) 2015/16 – (already determined) - £42 (increase of £2.00);

(ii) 2016/17 - £45 (increase of £3.00)

(C) **Mini Golf** – 2015 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 the following changes be made to the 2015/16 budget recommendations:

(1) Mini Golf – Expenditure £9000 (**reduction of £1000** on previously proposed figure)

(2) Christmas Lights - £6,500 (**reduction of £3,500** on previously proposed figure)

(3) Community events - £13,589 (**reduction of £411** on previously proposed figure)

(4) Removal of Emergency Fund (new item) – **reduction of £1000**

(5) Removal of Defibrillator (new item) – **reduction of £1500**

(c) That £150 be approved as a one-off item for purchase of a digital voice recorder from the 2015/16 budget.

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

(e) That £7,500 remain as an Earmarked Reserves in relation to Neighbourhood Plan (Resources Committee Minute 31 (21)/Nov/14 refers).

(f) That, should the Ten Fields lease renewal be delayed, £500 from the Play areas 2014/15 budget be earmarked (Services Committee Minute 27(b(i)/October/14 and Resources Committee Minute 31/Nov/14 refers).

(g) That a 2015/16 precept of £155,582 be approved (being the Town Council's net budget demand of £166,874 less the LCTRS Grant of £11,292).

(h) That the revenue budget for 2015/16 be as detailed in the Appendix to this minute.

(i) That funding from the health sector and other grant bodies be explored to fund a defibrillator, working in partnership with the community.

(j) That the administration of a public meeting to identify alternative ways to fund/provide Christmas lighting displays and a means of handling feedback be agreed at the next Partnership Committee meeting on 9 February 2015.

## **100. PARISH POLLS CONSULTATION**

Submitted – A report setting out the main points of a consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government on amending the triggers to call a parish poll, polling rules and subsequent reporting. Members were asked to consider the proposals and submit a response.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted and;  
(b) That the Town Council supports the proposals with the exception of the proposal by the Government to restrict the calling of parish polls to those subjects in which the parish has a specific power or duty (including its duty as a consultee) as an infringement of the democratic right to raise issues of general concern via this mechanism.

## **101. ROYAL GARDEN PARTY NOMINATIONS 2015**

It was reported that CDALC sought nominations from parishes to enter into the county-wide draw for places at the 2015 Royal Garden Party.

**Resolved**– That Cllr Blissett (Town Mayor) be nominated to be entered into the draw.

## **102. LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME**

It was reported that the Local Council Award Scheme (replacing the previous Quality Council Scheme) was officially launched on 6 January 2015.

It was proposed that the town council should initially register an interest in applying to the scheme (£50 via NALC) and then should, through the Resources Committee, assess its preparedness to achieve an awards against the relevant criteria for Foundation, Quality or Quality Gold. An amendment was moved, seconded and passed to delegate the entire decision to Resources Committee to consider at its next meeting on 9 March 2015.

**Resolved** – That the Resources Committee considers the town council's preparedness against the Local Council Awards Scheme criteria and determine whether (or not) to register for the scheme at a cost of £50 and what level, if any.

## **103. PROPOSED NALC 2015 CEREMONY**

The Town Council was informed that NALC is considering reinstating an achievement ceremony to recognise the best of the local council sector in November 2015.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

## **104. LCR OPINION POLL**

Submitted – A request from NALC to contribute to its precepts opinion poll.

**Resolved** – That the following responses be submitted to NALC:

1. Should parish and town councils have to have a referendum to increase their precepts? Please give reasons for your answer:

**No, because of the cost to taxpayers.**

2. Is the government being centralist over this? Please respond with one of the following: **Yes**

3. Is your council planning to increase its precept by more than 2% this year? Please respond with one of the following: **No**