

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**11 MAY 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Blissett (the outgoing Town Mayor) (in the Chair for Minute 1 only), Councillor Mrs Moorhouse (Town Mayor) (in the Chair from Minute 2 onwards); Councillors Deacon, Mrs Grady, Hinchcliffe, Kinch, Cooke, Peat, Robinson and Yarker.

**Also in attendance:** Six members of the public; One member of the press.

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

**1. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015-16**

Councillor Mrs Moorhouse was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations.

**Resolved** – That Councillor Mrs Moorhouse be elected Town Mayor for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

Councillor Mrs Moorhouse signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. She thanked the Council for her election and support and hoped that she could be as successful an ambassador for the town as Councillor Blissett.

**2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015-16**

Councillor Blissett was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations.

**Resolved** – That Councillor Blissett be elected Deputy Town Mayor for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

Councillor Blissett then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors Harrison and Marshall.

**Resolved** – That Councillor Harrison's and Councillor Marshall's apologies be accepted.

**4. 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.

**5. COUNCIL MEETING – 23 MARCH 2015 – MINUTES**

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

**6. '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 eight items considered at the meeting were as follows:-

**(1) Planning Committee Meeting – 23 March 2015 - Minutes**

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

**(2) Events Task & Finish Group – 2 April 2015 - Notes**

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

**(3) Planning Committee Meeting - 13 April 2015 - Minutes**

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

**(4) Partnership Committee Meeting - 13 April 2015 – Draft Minutes**

Councillor Robinson queried Minute 69(iv) and asked for clarification pursuant to decision to purchase an events mat.

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

**(5) Services Committee Meeting – 13 April 2015 – Draft Minutes**

An amended page was circulated, which had removed the acceptance of Councillor Robinson's apologies, who was not part of Services Committee.

**Resolved** – That the amendment be noted and draft Minutes be received.

**(6) Events Task & Finish Group – 23 April 2015 – Draft Notes**

**Resolved** – That the draft notes be received.

**(7) Planning Committee Meeting - 27 April 2015 – Draft Minutes**

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

**(8) Resources Committee Meeting – 27 April 2015 – Draft Minutes**

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

**7. REVIEW OF 2014-15 MAYORAL YEAR (COUNCILLOR BLISSETT)**

The outgoing Town Mayor (Councillor Blissett) reported verbally on his 2014-15 Mayoral Year, based on the circulated list of events attended. He thanked a number of individuals, Councillors, current and former office staff for their support during an enjoyable and worthwhile year.

**Resolved** – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the cordial thanks of the Council be extended to Councillor Blissett, Mrs Karen Blissett, the Misses K Blissett and Master Isaac; Councillor Mrs Moorhouse, Mr Ian Moorhouse and Councillor Harrison on the manner in which they have conscientiously carried out the Mayoral role during the Municipal Year 2014-15.

(c) That the Town Council's Annual Report for 2014-15 be received.

(d) That pursuant to the Annual Town Meeting, formal support be acknowledged by the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, for the Hutchinson's Group to donate papers and documents to Palace Green Library in Durham City.

**8. CONFIRMATION OF COMPOSITION ON COMMITTEES**

Received – a report that presented a draft nomination roll for 2015-16 committee membership, based on membership of committees established for 2014-15, in line with Council Minute 6b/May/14.

It was reported that in respect of the official representative of the Barnard Castle Business Guild on Partnership Committee, that the Business Guild had only been represented at one meeting since July 2014. It was noted that there was a Guild meeting on 13 May that Councillor Peat attended as Town Council representative and would raise the issue of non-attendance with officers of the guild.

Members noted that Councillor Robinson had notified his willingness to the Town Clerk to sit on Services Committee, to broaden the Committee's voice. Members were reminded

that membership of the Services Committee was set at six in its terms of reference, with the proviso that the committee could co-opt other members 'as and when required'. Councillor Robinson was proposed and seconded to be a co-opted member of Services Committee, with voting rights.

**Resolved** – (a) That Councillor Robinson be co-opted onto the Services Committee, with voting rights.

(b) That the memberships of the Council's four principal Committees, for the Municipal Year 2015-16 be as follows:-

<b>Partnership (7+2)</b>	<b>Planning (5)</b>	<b>Resources (7)</b>	<b>Services (6)</b>
Thom Robinson	Frank Harrison	Tony Cooke	Roger Peat
Tony Cooke	John Blissett	John Blissett	Angela Grady
Tom Deacon	David Kinch	Tom Deacon	Frank Harrison
Angela Grady	Gary Marshall	Frank Harrison	John Hinchcliffe
John Hinchcliffe	John Yarker	David Kinch	Gary Marshall
Sandra Moorhouse		Sandra Moorhouse	John Yarker
Roger Peat		Thom Robinson	
+Bowes Museum Rep			+Thom Robinson
+Business Guild Rep			(co-optee)

(c) That a chair be appointed to each of the four standing committees from amongst those members duly nominated, at Special Meetings to be held immediately at the conclusion of the Annual Council Meeting.

(d) That Councillor Peat raise issue of Business Guild representation on Partnership Committee at Guild meeting on 13 May.

## **9. REVIEW OF DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, EMPLOYEES AND OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES – INCORPORATING A REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COMMITTEES**

Submitted – A report outlined a scheme of delegation, based upon the Terms of Reference of the Council's Committees and the job specification of the Town Clerk.

It was reported that there were two minor changes to the definitions of the Services Committee's remit, which reflected decisions of Council to pursue external floodlighting of the Market Cross and to support relocation of the Aviation Memorial into the Galgate Greens Memorial Garden, which was now completed.

It was also noted that the Town Council did not delegate any of its powers or duties to any other local authority.

**Resolved** – That the scheme of delegation (as appended) and the Terms of Reference of Committees (as in the Members' Handbook), be approved for the municipal year 2015-16.

## **10. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Submitted – A report outlined the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for the forthcoming municipal year.

It was noted that the amended Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were approved and adopted by Council in September 2014 (Minute 66/Sep/14 refers) and circulated for inclusion in the Members' Handbook. No further amendments were proposed for 2015-16.

**Resolved** – That the existing versions of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, be approved and adopted for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

#### **11. REVIEW OF CONCURRENT FUNCTIONS AND ASSOCIATED EXPENDITURE**

Submitted – A report summarised the concurrent functions and associated expenditure incurred by this Council and a list of services carried out by this Council that were paid for through the precept but were also services delivered by Durham County Council elsewhere in the County.

**Resolved**– That the concurrent functions and associated expenditure be noted.

#### **12. REVIEW OF REPRESENTATION ON OR WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR REPORTING BACK**

Submitted – A report presented a list of bodies to which the Town Council nominated representatives and reaffirmed the arrangements for reporting relevant business to the Council.

**Resolved** – (a) That, for the Municipal Year 2015-16, this Council's representatives on the various bodies listed be as follows:-

- |    |   |                                     |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| a. | Barnard Castle Business Guild (1)   | Councillor Peat                     |
| b. | County Durham and Cleveland Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks (1)   | Clerk                               |
| c. | Friends of the Upper Demesnes (2)   | Councillors Peat and Mrs Grady      |
| d. | Hall Benefaction (1)  | Councillor Cooke                    |
| e. | Police & Crime Commissioner Community Panel   | Councillor Harrison                 |
| f. | St Mary's Barnard Castle Parish Hall Association (1)  | Councillor Blissett                 |
| g. | Smaller Local Councils' Forum   | Councillor Kinch and Clerk          |
| h. | South West Durham Heritage Corridor Partnership   | Councillor Cooke                    |
| i. | Teesdale Local Councils' Forum (2)  | Councillors Kinch and Mrs Moorhouse |
| j. | Teesdale Marketing Limited (1)  | Councillor Peat                     |
| k. | Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum (2)   | Councillors Blissett and Cooke      |
| l. | Trustees of Dawsons Cottages (2)  | Councillors Hinchcliffe and Yarker  |
| m. | Barnard Castle Walls Trust (1)  | Councillor Marshall                 |
| n. | The Management Committee of Trustees of the Barnard Castle Mechanics Institute and Witham Hall Community Association(1) | Councillor Mrs Grady                |

(b) That the reporting arrangements, as submitted be affirmed.

### **13. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S AND/OR EMPLOYEES' MEMBERSHIPS OF OTHER BODIES**

**(A) Resolved** – That the Council confirms and agrees to renew its membership of the following bodies:

- (i) County Durham Association of Local Councils; and
- (ii) National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens.

**(B) Resolved** – That the Council confirms and agrees to renew its employees' membership of the following body:

- (i) Society of Local Council Clerks.

### **14. REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF LAND AND ASSETS INCLUDING BUILDINGS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

Submitted – The Town Council's Asset register to 31 March 2015. It was noted that the audit value was the actual purchase cost and gifted assets reflected the actual cost to the Town Council.

**Resolved** – That the inventory of land and assets, as submitted, be noted.

### **15. REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSURANCE COVER IN RESPECT OF ALL INSURED RISKS**

Submitted – A report presenting the arrangements for insurance undertaken by the Town Council for 2015-16. It was reported that this was the final year of a three-year agreement with Zurich Municipal. Following a review of insured risks, the following arrangements were made to the schedule of insurance for 2015-16:

- (i) All risk items had been indexed.
- (ii) Adjusted figures had been made due to IT Equipment and Software being replaced; revised Inventory of Equipment; addition of silver links to Mayoral Chains of Office and addition of Santa's Sleigh.

It was noted that a full copy of the insurance schedule was maintained in the office for inspection. It was confirmed that following the relocation of the Aviation Day Memorial from HMYOI Deerbolt to the Garden of Remembrance in lower Galgate, the Town Council now had responsibility for the Memorial. Following receipt of a replacement valuation being obtained, the Aviation Day Memorial would be added to the Town Council's insurance schedule and encompassed within the War Memorial service responsibilities.

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

### **16. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Submitted – A report outlining nine operational policy and procedure documents for adoption for the 2015-16 municipal year. It was reported that the documents had been approved and adopted at the annual meeting of the Town Council on 12 May 2014 and that they continued to be applicable.

It was noted that the Media Policy and Procedure had been reviewed and revised by the Governance Document Task & Finish Group and was adopted by Council in November 2014 (Minute 85(2)(a)/Nov/14 refers).

Councillor Kinch queried why the Transparency Code was not included. It was clarified that the Town Council was not legally required to adopt a Code from 1 April 2015, but as good practice, a local code would be presented to Resources Committee for approval and adoption later in the 2015-16 municipal year.

It was noted that all documents formed part of the Councillors' Handbook and were available on the Town Council website.

**Resolved** – That the existing policies and procedures be approved and adopted for 2015-16.

## **17. SETTING THE DATES, TIMES AND PLACE OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE FULL COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR AHEAD**

Submitted – A schedule of the dates, times and place of Council meetings and Partnership, Services, Resources and Planning Committees during the Municipal Year 2015-16.

**Resolved** – (a) That the following schedule of Council meetings during the Municipal Year 2015-16 (all Mondays) be confirmed:-

<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
29 June 2015	18 January 2016
21 September 2015	21 March 2016
16 November 2015	9 May 2015 (Annual Meetings)

(b) That it be confirmed that the official starting time for all the Council meetings listed be 6.00 p.m., with a public participation 'slot' comprising the first 15 minutes at each ordinary meeting, if invoked.

(c) That it be confirmed that Council meetings be held in The Witham Room, The Witham and Committee meetings (except Planning Committee) be held in The County Room, The Witham, or in the Dawson Room, Woodleigh, should that room be available.

## **18. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2015-16**

### **(A) Internal Auditor**

It was determined at Minute 21(A)/May/14, that the Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year 2014-15 should be Mr Gordon Fletcher. In accordance with standard procedures, a decision in respect of the financial year 2015-16 was sought.

**Resolved** – That Mr Gordon Fletcher be appointed as this Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year 2015-16.

### **(B) External Auditor**

It was reported that, in accordance with Section 3 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, BDO LLP had been appointed as this Council's External Auditor for a period of five years. This appointment commenced on 1 September 2012.

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

## **19. APPOINTMENT OF BANKERS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2015-16**

It was determined at Minute 22/May/14, that Barclays Bank PLC should be appointed as this Council's Bankers for the financial year 2014-15. In accordance with standard procedures, a decision in respect of the financial year 2015-16 was sought.

**Resolved** – (a) That Barclays Bank PLC be appointed as this Council's Bankers for the financial year 2015-16.

## **20. REVIEW OF POLICE ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Based on the agreed dates of the council meetings during the 2015-16 municipal year, the meetings that a Police representative should attend needed to be determined.

Members were reminded that in addition to the Police attending council meetings, the public were invited to attend the regular PACT (Police and Communities Together) meetings should they wish to raise specific issues.

**Resolved** - That a representative from the Police be invited to attend the Council meetings scheduled for 29 June and 16 November 2015.

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

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

#### **(a) Floral Displays – Market Cross**

It was reported that, at the Services Committee on 13 April, it was confirmed that the Market Cross could be visually improved with floral displays in wooden planters inside the arches, subject to County Council Neighbourhood Services approval. An amendment to this proposal was received from Councillor Mrs Grady to move the existing stone troughs from the post office corner to around the outside of the Market Cross, on the cobbles. Members debated various issues, including health & safety, insurance, watering and County Council permissions.

**Resolved** – That a meeting be arranged with Durham County Council Highways and Neighbourhood Services and a report be presented to next Council meeting.

### **(2) 2015 Events Task & Finish Group**

#### **(a) Gateway Bed Mondrian Dress Floral Display**

It was reported that, at the Events Task & Finish Group on 23 April, Councillor Peat had requested funding from the Events budget toward the cost of plants for redesigning the Gateway bed as a floral 'Mondrian dress' (outside Spitfire Cycles). This was part of the town's efforts to support and promote the Bowes Museum's Yves Saint Laurent (YSL) Exhibition 11 July to 25 October 2015. The redesign of the Gateway Bed had much community involvement and donations in kind from local businesses. Durham County Council was preparing the bed for planting and had offered to plant architectural spirals and shrubs worth £1,000 in both Gateway beds. Members noted that £2,000 had already been committed from the Events budget to design and produce 20,000 copies of a generic town leaflet, to signpost and encourage visitors to the town, after viewing the YSL exhibition. Council members were asked to consider approval for £200 allocation from Events budget. Councillor Robinson praised the community aspect of the scheme.

**Resolved** – That £200 be allocated from 2015 Events budget, for floral plants, to further support YSL exhibition.

#### **(b) Streets Of...**

It was reported that the Town Council had been asked to contribute £3,000 to the event out of 2015 Events budget.

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

### **(3) Resources Committee**

#### **(a) Barnard Castle Methodist Church Spire Appeal**

It was reported that, at the Resources Committee meeting on 27 April, consideration was given to a Town Council donation to the cost of repairing the Methodist Church spire. Council members were asked to consider supporting the Spire Appeal with £1000 out of the Town Council's general reserves, under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972, on the basis that it would bring a benefit to the area commensurate with the expenditure and that this was not otherwise covered by a power of the Town Council.

It was subsequently reported that another local Town Council had highlighted their difficulty operating under this legislation, due to restrictions still in force under the Local Government Act 1894, preventing town councils from contributing towards ecclesiastical buildings. The Clerk had received advice from NALC and the Town Council's external auditor that this was the case, although no case law was so far apparent.

**Resolved** – That this matter be referred back to Resources Committee for further investigation by Members.

#### **(b) Aviation Memorial**

It was confirmed that work to relocate the Aviation Memorial to the Galgate Greens had now largely been completed. A simple, official ceremony to mark the relocation of the memorial was to be organised in advance of Aviation Day on 1 July. Councillor Yarker had requested that Council consider he be named custodian for the memorial, on behalf of the Town Council, having been a founding member. It was noted that day to day responsibility was delegated to Services Committee (war memorials) but there could be a specific named individual.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted and that Councillor Yarker be named Custodian for the Aviation Memorial.

#### **(4) Planning Committee**

At the Planning Committee meeting on 27 April, it was noted that The County Council had resolved to grant planning permission for planning application **DM/15/00352/FPA & DM/15/00353/LB – County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Station, Wilson Street.**

Members discussed their concerns at the process and determination of this planning application by Durham County Council. It was proposed and seconded that Planning Committee formalise an official response.

**Resolved** – That letter of response be formalised at next Planning Committee on 18 May, expressing the Town Council's concerns and dissatisfaction at the way the planning application was handled and determined by Durham County Council.

#### **22. CLERKS UPDATE**

Submitted – A report outlined recent activities undertaken by the Clerk and staff and provided updates in respect of correspondence with Durham County Council over a range of issues, including: Scar Top Play Area/Mini Golf Freehold Asset Transfer; Asset and Service Transfer; Woodleigh; and Sale of Land to Rear of Bede Road.

It was reported that Durham County Council had released details of the £90,000 fund to support 'delivering differently', for town councils to take over 'Clean & Green' services, up to a share of £20,000. An expression of interest should be submitted by 17 June.

There was also an update in respect of an allotment matter and a request from Barningham for prospective tenants on the Town Council's waiting list to consider empty plots at Barningham.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted.

(b) That the Clerk submit a bid to the 'Delivering Differently' fund in support of the expression of interest already made to take over grounds maintenance in Barnard Castle under the 'Durham Ask', with a view to acquiring suitable equipment.