

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING  
29 JUNE 2015**

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

**Also in attendance:** Sgt Simon Rogers (Durham Constabulary) (until Item 33); Mr Gordon Fletcher (Internal Auditor) (until Item 34); Rachel Tweddle (TCR Hub Manager) (until Item 31); nine members of the public; and one member of the press.

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

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

Apologies were received from Councillor Yarker.

**Resolved** – That Councillor Yarker's apologies be accepted.

**29. 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.

**30. PRESENTATION OF CHEQUE TO TCR HUB (MAYOR'S CHARITY 2014/15)**

Councillor Blissett and Mrs Karen Blissett presented Rachel Tweddle, Manager of Teesdale Community Resources Hub, with a cheque for £1267.78, raised from the Mayor's Charity 2014/15. Rachel Tweddle gave thanks and an annual report was circulated (Appendix A).

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

**31. ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAYOR'S CHARITY 2015/16**

Councillor Mrs Moorhouse reported that the Mayor's Charity for 2015/16 would be a community chest for small groups. A judging panel for distribution of funds would comprise of the Town Mayor and her Consort, Deputy Town Mayor, Town Clerk and Councillor Peat.

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

**32. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE**

Pursuant to Minute 20/May/15, Sergeant Simon Rogers of Durham Constabulary attended the meeting to report on relevant topics and current issues, including an increase in incidents at HMYOI Deerbolt and reporting of physical and sexual abuse from the 1960s and 1970s.

Overall, thefts, shoplifting and criminal damage had decreased; however, there was an increase in thefts from outbuildings, sheds and allotments at Mickleton, Romalldkirk and Gainford. It was reported that Farmwatch had 50 volunteers.

In relation to travellers, the number of reported incidents had dramatically decreased. A full evaluation was yet to be done. It was reported that although temporary stop over sites were provided, travellers could not be forced to use them.

A report was given on Operation Hawkeye (checking if vehicles were unlocked or had valuables on show).

Free property marking equipment was available as part of safer homes.

Sgt Rogers was now responsible for Weardale as well as Teesdale; however, there would be no reduction in staff and no cutbacks with move to new quad hub.

Councillor Deacon thanked Sgt. Rogers for community support in relation to Community Speedwatch.

**Resolved** – That Sgt Rogers be thanked for his attendance.

### **33. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2014/15**

#### **(a) INTERNAL AUDIT – PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT**

Received – the Internal Audit Report for 2014/15 presented by Gordon Fletcher (Internal Auditor); all satisfactory with no recommendations.

#### **(b) APPROVAL OF SECTION 1 and 2**

Section 1 (Accounting Statements) and Section 2 (Annual Governance Statement) were submitted for approval. It was noted that the Audit Plan for 2015/16 was submitted to Resources Committee on 15 June 2015. It was reported that the Annual Return and supporting information had to be received by the External Auditors, BDO LLP of Southampton by 6 July 2015, with the accounts approved by 30 September 2015. Members noted that due to the town council's income or expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015 being below the £200,000 threshold, an additional intermediate audit would not be required in support of the External Audit.

Councillor Cooke thanked office staff for providing information to auditor.

**Resolved** – (a) That the content of the Internal Auditor's report be noted and;

(b) That approval be given to Sections 1 and 2 of the 2014/15 Annual Return as submitted.

*Councillor Kinch proposed a motion under the Council's standing orders 10a (vii) that Item 40 be considered in confidential session. This was seconded by Councillor Cooke. A recorded vote was called for.*

*For 6; Against 4; Abstention 1.*

**Resolved** – *That Item 40 be considered in confidential session.*

### **34. ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING – 11 MAY 2015 – MINUTES**

**Resolved** – That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

### **35. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – 15 JUNE 2015 – MINUTES**

Councillor Peat raised an error with Item 26 in relation to Christmas trees outside shops/businesses. He clarified that he was purchasing a sample tree and there would be no cost to the town council, of the sample tree.

**Resolved** – (a) That the minutes be amended and;

(b) That the amended minutes be approved as a correct record.

### 36. 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) Annual Town Meeting – 11 May 2015**

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

**(2) Events T&F Group – 15 May 2015**

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

**(3) Planning Committee Meeting – 18 May 2015**

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

**(4) Partnership Committee Meeting – 18 May 2015**

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

**(5) Christmas Lights Working Group – 28 May 2015**

**Resolved** – That the Draft Notes be received.

**(6) Planning Committee Meeting – 1 June 2015**

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

**(7) Services Committee Meeting – 1 June 2015**

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

**(8) Events T&F Group – 10 June 2015**

**Resolved** – That the Draft Notes be received.

**(9) Planning Committee Meeting – 15 June 2015**

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

**(10) Resources Committee Meeting – 15 June 2015**

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

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

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 11 May 2015, the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor had attended the following:

17 May	Thanksgiving Service for Services (Durham County Council, Durham Cathedral).
18 May	Mayor Making Ceremony (Richmond Town Council, Town Hall, Richmond)
21 May	Treasure Hunt (The Meet, Barnard Castle Cricket Club)
24 May	Pet Show (The Meet, Castle grounds)

25 May	Grand Parade (The Meet, Barnard Castle)
26 May	Care Home Visits accompanying the Meet Queen (The Meet, Barnard Castle)
17 June	Memorial Service for Cllr Robin Todd (Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham)
19 June	Open Day (Beaconsfield Court Care Home, Galgate, Barnard Castle)
19 June	Mayoress at Home (Sunderland City Council, Civic Centre, Sunderland)
20 June	The Secret World of Charles Dickens (Friends of The Bowes Museum & Dickens in Teesdale, Glaxo Sports & Social Club, Strathmore Road)
23 June	At Home with the Mayor (Bishop Auckland Town Council)
28 June	Mayor's Civic Sunday (Richmond Town Council, St Mary's Church, Richmond)

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

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

#### **(1) Planning Committee**

##### **(a) Planning Application DM/15/00352/FPA & DM/15/00353/LB – County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Station, Wilson Street.**

Pursuant to Minute 21 (4)/May/15), Council was updated on the formal letter of response sent to Durham County Council legal services, expressing the Town Council's concerns. It was reported that a reply had been received, finding no deficiencies in the application process.

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

#### **(2) Partnership Committee**

##### **(a) Bishop Auckland Eleven Arches Project**

It was reported that a submission in support of the planning application was made to Durham County Council. Planning consent had now been granted.

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

#### **(3) Services Committee**

##### **(a) Harmire Road Allotments Water**

It was reported that Committee resolved that cages be fitted round both water standpipes at Harmire Road, with coded locks, following the water supply being turned off for a short time. However, there had not been an opportunity to take a measured review of the views of allotment tenants on the site.

**Resolved** – That Services Committee re-examine the issues leading to the switch off of water from the standpipe on Harmire Road Allotments and the reaction of tenants.

#### **(4) Resources Committee**

##### **(a) Marwood Drive Flooding**

Council was informed that flooding was continuing to a rear garden adjacent to the Marwood Drive play area. Councillor Robinson queried existing engineer reports. It was clarified that more information was still needed to give assurance that works would be effective.

**Resolved** – (a) That the Terms of Agreements between Fields in Trust and the town council be confirmed and;

(b) That, subject to a positive response from Northumbrian Water or other hydrologist that the problem could be rectified, approval be given to funding £3,000 Phase 2 drainage works to the Marwood Drive Play Area from general reserves.

##### **(b) Financial Donations Policy**

The amended policy was submitted for approval.

**Resolved** – That the Financial Donations Policy be adopted for 2015/16.

##### **(c) Consultation on Lease of Rugby Pitches to Barnard Castle Rugby Union Football Club**

It was reported that the Clerk had been contacted by David Jackson, Chairman of BCRUFC, to outline its intentions in seeking a thirty-five year lease for the area of the Demesnes which formed its pitch (Resources Minute 16/Jun/15 refers).

The club required a lease of this length to be able to apply for external funding to support improved drainage for the pitch and for replacement posts. The club was not seeking to build on the Demesnes and would continue to operate from its existing club house.

**Resolved** – That the town council supports a 35 year lease for rugby pitches on the Demesnes between BCRUFC and Durham County Council on the basis that no building takes place on the leased land and that the area remains accessible to all within the terms of the covenant for the Demesnes.

### **38. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES**

Verbal updates were given on some of this Council's representation on other bodies.

#### **(a) Barnard Castle Business Guild**

Councillor Peat reported that businesses were supporting the Yves Saint Laurent Exhibition at the Bowes Museum to draw people into the town. There were over 50 hanging baskets in the town. The bedroom browser was ongoing. There were two donations to the hanging basket tree outside the post office (Radio Teesdale and an anonymous donation).

#### **(b) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum**

Councillor Cooke reported that Shaw Bank had been upgraded and made accessible. Stainton Bank was cleaned and repaired. Barford Corner could be opened in an emergency. There were now six temporary areas of acceptance, with WC facilities adequate for traveller needs. There had been complaints about travellers at Harmire Industrial Estate. There was a liaison service to deal with complaints and a code of conduct for travellers. Photos of sites were taken before and after.

#### **(c) Teesdale Local Councils Forum**

There was no update.

#### **(d) Smaller Local Councils Forum**

Councillor Kinch was elected Vice Chair. Notes were circulated (Appendix B).

#### **(e) Castle Walls Trust**

There was no update.

#### **(f) Teesdale Marketing Ltd**

Councillor Peat reported that the Explore Teesdale website had been refreshed. The rope bridge project was in need of funding and the town council was invited to find out more, with a view to supporting the project. There was concern that much money had been allocated to the project already and that a planning application was still not forthcoming. Councillor Kinch stated that no proposal had been brought before full council for consideration.

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

### **39. CLERK'S UPDATE**

Submitted - A report outlining recent activity by the Clerk and staff correspondence received since the last Council Meeting on 11 May 2015. A verbal update was made.

It was reported that Since 11 May, four suitably qualified firms had been invited to submit quotations, under the specific express authorisation of Council (26(a)/Jun/15); two allotment tenancies had been granted under regulation 7(2)(b)(i) of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

#### **(a) Scar Top Play Area/Mini Golf Freehold Asset Transfer**

It was reported that lawyers for Durham County Council were liaising with the lawyer at Big Lottery in respect of the authority so that it could proceed with the freehold disposal to the Town Council.

## **(b) Asset and Service Transfer**

It was confirmed that an expression of interest form, for the County Council's Delivering Differently programme, had been completed, forming part of the town council's submission under the 'Durham Ask', seeking £20,000 to fund the purchase of capital grounds maintenance equipment. This was subsequently discussed at the Local Councils Working Group meeting on 23 June.

## **(c) Market Cross Floral Displays**

Pursuant to Council (Minute 21(1)a/May/15 refers), clarification had been received from Durham County Council's Conservation Officer, with respect to the suggested placement of floral tubs within or around the Market Cross. It was advised that flower tubs were not installed as continuous watering was likely to result in dampness and damage to the grade 1 listed structure.

## **(d) Wednesday Market**

It was reported that the town council's bid to operate the market remained under consideration. A meeting was held with various representatives of Durham County Council and Durham Constabulary to seek clarification on traffic orders which must be enforced to enable the market to take place.

## **(e) Woodleigh**

Progress had been made, with documents submitted by Durham County Council satisfying the conditions outlined by the town council's solicitor in terms of concluding the lease. There remained outstanding issues with safety certificates for gas and fire, which had lapsed during the period in which the building had been vacant. The Woodleigh Working Group had met to pursue procurement of the gas safety certificate and to programme hand-over and occupation of the building, under existing delegations.

## **(f) Sale of Land to the Rear of Bede Road**

Documents had been prepared to enable exchange of contracts imminently. A gate licence was to be issued.

## **(g) Meet Fun Fair**

A meeting was held on 24 June by Durham County Council to discuss a request from Barnard Castle Business Guild that the annual Meet Weekend Fun Fair be relocated from the town's main pay-and-display car park to an alternative location. The Town Mayor attended on behalf of the town council and gave a verbal update. The general consensus was that it needed to move. There were no actions for the town council at this time.

## **(h) Information Exchange**

Council was informed that there had been a complaint made to Durham County Council's monitoring officer by the Chairman of the Guild about the conduct of Councillor Robinson.

It was confirmed that in the period up until the next full meeting of the Town Council, on 21 September 2015, the Town Clerk would be on leave from 17-28 August.

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

#### **40. BARNARD CASTLE BUSINESS GUILD**

This item was considered to the exclusion of press and public.

Submitted – a notice of motion by Councillor Robinson, proposing that the town council would not recognise the Business Guild, until questions regarding its legitimacy were answered fully and satisfactorily. The motion was moved and seconded. Councillor Peat, as Business Guild representative on the town council, read out a statement from the Business Guild. An amendment to the motion was moved and seconded that the questions were answered before the town council considered not recognising the Business Guild and that the motion be deferred until Special Council on 20 July. A recorded vote was called for.

For 7; Against 4.

The amended motion was put to the vote.

For 0; Against 11.

**Resolved** – That the amended motion be dismissed.

#### **41. VISION UPDATE**

Submitted – a report from the Vision that detailed activities at The Witham, Town Centre and Heart of Teesdale (HoT) Landscape Partnership. It was reported that the Chair of the Vision Partnership Board had resigned and that the Vision had no resources to take forward further projects. New funding streams were highlighted.

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

#### **42. TAXI LICENSING POLICY REVIEW – CONSULTATION**

Submitted – a briefing note on Durham County Council's review of the hackney carriage and private hire licensing policy. The town council was asked to submit a response on the proposed changes to vehicle top signs, safeguarding, age policy and suspension of licensed vehicles by 26 August. There was concern over identification of licensed vehicles and different rules for special vehicles. It was noted that taxis were important for the town as public transport could be unreliable.

**Resolved** – (a) That the term 'special vehicles' be clarified and that further information be sought on the need for special vehicles to undertake MOT tests twice yearly instead of annually.

(b) That it be recommended that the suspension of licensed vehicles have some flexibility over testing dates.

(c) That it be recommended that all licensed vehicles and drivers be clearly identified; PHV should use top signs to be identified by the public.

(d) That it be highlighted that the proposed changes could put pressure on small businesses, with increasing red tape and associated costs.



#### **43. DRAFT RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP) – CONSULTATION**

Submitted – the draft implementation plan as part of Durham County Council's consultation on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan for County Durham 2015-2018. No comments were forthcoming.

**Resolved** – That the draft ROWIP be noted for information.

#### **44. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF ITEM 40. ABOVE AND 45. 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 in Item 40 above and 45 below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

#### **45. HONORARY FREEMAN SCHEME – NOMINATION**

**Submitted** – a report for members to consider the nomination of Mr Joseph Swinbank to the town council's Honorary Freeman Scheme. It was noted that under the Local Government Act 1972, the decision to appoint an honorary freeman must be made at a meeting of the full council, specially convened for that purpose. The town council was asked to consider the nomination against the scheme criteria and make an appropriate recommendation for onward submission to a future special meeting of the full council.

**Resolved** – That Mr Joseph Swinbank be nominated to the Honorary Freeman Scheme, to be considered at Special Council on 6 July.