

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

18 JANUARY 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Moorhouse (Town Mayor) (in the Chair); Harrison, Marshall, Blissett, Peat, Mrs Grady, Cooke, Yarker, Kinch, Sutherland and Mrs Thompson.

Also in attendance: Nine members of the public; two members of the press.

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

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Having been duly notified prior to the meeting, a member of the public, Mr Woods, submitted a question of the Town Council regarding the Town Council's view on the location of the Meet funfair.

As the question had not been submitted to a particular councillor, the Town Mayor gave a response that as the Town Council had not considered the location of the Meet funfair, it currently had no view.

A second question was submitted by another member of the public, Mr Buchanan, asking the Town Council to support the residents of Marshall Street, Baliol Street, Vere Road, Farmers Way, Commercial Yard, Flatts Road, Raby Avenue, Vane Road, Cecil Road and Mayfield by opposing the Business Guild's proposition of moving the funfair to the Auction Mart.

As the question had not been submitted to a particular councillor, the Town Mayor gave a response that, as previously stated, the Town Council had not considered the location of the Meet funfair, so was not in a position to support or reject.

Resolved – That the matter be considered further and debated at next Partnership Committee on 8 February.

92. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hinchcliffe (personal reasons).

Resolved – That Cllr Hinchcliffe's apologies be accepted.

93. WELCOME TO THE NEW EAST WARD COUNCILLOR

Councillor Sutherland was welcomed to her first full Council meeting. She said that it was a pleasure and privilege to be working with the Town Council.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

94. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Councillor Mrs Moorhouse, reminded members that a Volunteer Celebration event was to be held in St. Mary's Parish Church on 24 January.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

95. 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. None were declared at this juncture.

96. COUNCIL MEETING – 16 NOVEMBER 2015 – MINUTES

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

97. '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 – 16 November 2015

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(2) Partnership Committee Meeting – 30 November 2015

Resolved – That the Draft Minutes be received.

(3) Planning Committee Meeting – 14 December 2015

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(4) Services Committee Meeting – 14 December 2015

Resolved – That the Draft Minutes be received.

(5) Woodleigh Working Group – 17 December 2015

Resolved – That the Draft notes be received.

(6) Planning Committee Meeting – 11 January 2016

Resolved – That the Draft Minutes be received.

(7) Resources Committee Meeting – 11 January 2016

Resolved – That the Draft Minutes be received.

(8) Town Mayor's Activities.

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 16 November 2015, the Town Mayor and Consort, along with the Deputy Town Mayor and Mayoress, had attended the following:

27 November	Mayors Charity Casino & Games and Nearly Paloma Tribute (Stockton on Tees Borough Council, Grosvenor Casino, Stockton on Tees)
29 November	'Lighting the Friends' Christmas Tree Event (Friends of The Bowes Museum, Newgate)
04 December	Christmas Festival Event (Town Council, Scar Top)
07 December	Mayor's Carol Service (Hartlepool Borough Council, St John Vianney Church, Hartlepool)
08 December	Coffee and Cake at Home for residents of Manor House Care Home, Charles Dickens Lodge, Beaconsfield and Kings Court
09 December	Chairman's Civic Carol Service (Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham)

10 December	Mayor's Civic Carol Service (Sedgefield Town Council, St Edmund's Church Sedgefield)
11 December	(Deputy Town Mayor) Christmas Charity Night (Shildon Town Council, Shildon Civic Hall)
12 December	Christmas Fayre (Manor House Care Home, John Street)
13 December	Civic Carol Service (Shildon Town Council, Shildon Civic Hall, Civic Hall Square, Shildon)
14 December	(Deputy Town Mayor) Civic Carol Service (Ferryhill Town Council, St Lukes Church, Ferryhill)
15 December	Christmas Festivities with Montalbo School (Beaconsfield Care Home, Galgate)
15 December	Civic Carol Service (Chilton Town Council, St Aidan's Church, Chilton)
16 December	Christmas Carol Service (Friends of the Richardson Hospital, John Street)
18 December	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols (Barnard Castle School, Newgate)
22 December	Festive 'Afternoon Tea' (Hartlepool Borough Council, Vestry Café, Christ Church, Hartlepool)
23 December	Christmas Party Day (Beaconsfield Care Home, Galgate)
25 December	'Christmas Day Visit' (Richardson Community Hospital & other local Care & Nursing Homes) Visits shared with Deputy Town Mayor)
08 January 2016	Pride and Prejudice production (Castle Players, The Witham)
18 January	Afternoon Tea (Durham County Council, Durham Town Hall, Market Place, Durham)

Resolved – That the information be noted.

98. UPDATES AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

(1) PLANNING COMMITTEE

(i) Vacancy on Planning Committee

As a result of Councillor Kinch's appointment to Chair of Partnership Committee, a vacancy had arisen on Planning Committee.

Resolved – That a member be elected to Planning Committee (considered at Minute 100).

(ii) Quad Station Development Plan

The transfer of the fire service to the police station site for the duration of the build was completed. Robertson Construction England had been appointed as the construction company. Work was envisaged to be completed end 2016.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(2) PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

(i) Community Events 2016/16

Key decision making relating to the events programme for 2016/17 would revert to Partnership Committee. An outline budget of £1,000 was set aside for the 1940s weekend (24-26 June) from within the 2016/17 Events Budget.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

99. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Following the election of Councillor Sutherland to represent the East Ward, it was noted that vacancies existed on Resources and Planning Committees.

Resolved – (a) That Councillor Sutherland be appointed to Resources and Partnership Committees.

(b) That Planning Committee membership be 4 members; and

(c) That Partnership Committee be 8 members, plus 2 co-optees.

100. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

(a) Barnard Castle Business Guild

There was a meeting on 25 November. The pre-launch of the bedroom browser would be Easter 2016.

(b) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum

There was no update.

(c) Teesdale Local Councils Forum

The next meeting was 17 February when Police and Crime Commissioner, Ron Hogg, would be in attendance.

(d) Smaller Local Councils Forum

A meeting was held on 20 November, which focussed on the North East Combined Authority (NECA). There was concern that Barnard Castle was not being recognised.

(e) Castle Walls Trust

Councillor Marshall reported that there were major problems with the castle walls, following recent bad weather. The Area Action Partnership had called a meeting on 19 January. Councillor Kinch was attending as Vice-Chair of TAP and Councillor Marshall as the Town Council's representative on the Castle Walls Trust. The Clerk would also attend to bring information back to the Town Council.

(f) Teesdale Marketing Ltd.

There was no update.

(g) South West Durham Heritage Corridor Partnership

There was no update.

(h) Dementia Friendly Communities

A meeting of Durham Dementia Action Alliance was held on 17 December. Spennymoor had completed the Dementia Friendly Communities recognition process. Bishop Auckland Town Council was now recognised as a Dementia Friendly Town Council. An event was to be organised in County Durham inspiring other communities to become Dementia Friendly. The next meeting was on 22 February.

(i) Walkers are Welcome

Councillor Marshall had attended a briefing in December. A meeting was to be held on 28 January.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and

(b) That the matter of the castle walls be referred to Resources Committee on 7 March.

101. APPROVAL OF BUDGET 2016/17

Submitted – a report summarising the Town Council's budget preparations for the next financial year and setting out comprehensive recommendations from the Resources Committee to establish the Precept and overall budget for 2016/17.

Background details for each budgetary item were provided and the budgetary figures for 2015/16 were included for comparative purposes, including projected 'end of year' figures.

At the final budget consideration meeting of the Resources Committee, a recommendation was made to 'calculate the budget on the basis of assumed need and incorporate growth items considered to date'. Savings of £9,089 were identified. The total proposed 2016/17 demand on Durham County Council would be £180,839 (Precept £171,734 and LCTRS grant £9,105). This would equate to an increase of £7.31 per annum (approximately 14 pence per week) for a Band D property in Barnard Castle. The annual contribution would be £97.67 compared with 2015/16 contribution of £90.36. This represented an increase in Band D equivalent to 8.09% of the 2015/16 Precept.

Resolved – (a) That the following rentals and charges be agreed

(A) Play Areas

(i) Ten Fields

£100 for 2016/17 (no change) and £100 in years 2017/18 & 2018/19 (no change)

(ii) Gate Licence Fees

Per property fee remain at £1.00 – total for 2016/17 £17.00 (no change)

(B) Allotments (per plot)

(i) 2016/17 (already determined) - £45 (increase of £3.00)

(ii) 2017/18 - £45 (no change)

(C) Mini Golf – 2016 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 any contingency budgetary requirement continues to be transferred from the Council's general reserves, up to a maximum of £1,500;

(c) That the total current call on General Reserves of £45,835 be noted;

(d) That a 2016/17 precept of £171,734 be approved (being the Town Council's net budget demand of £180,839 less the LCTRS Grant of £9,105); and

(e) That the revenue budget for 2016/17 be as detailed in the Appendix to this minute.

102. CLERK'S UPDATE

Submitted – A report outlining recent activities undertaken by the Clerk and staff and providing updates in respect of correspondence with Durham County Council over Scar Top Play Area/Mini Golf Freehold Asset Transfer and Asset and Service Transfers.

It was noted that under delegated powers, a licence to occupy rooms within Woodleigh was agreed with County Durham Citizens Advice Bureau and signed on behalf of the town council by two members.

Scar Top Play Area/Mini Golf Freehold Asset Transfer

The legal details of the transfer were now agreed. Completion was subject to works being carried out by Durham County Council to repair damage to the play equipment and fencing of the play area, which had occurred due to damage from a falling tree on 4 December 2015.

Asset and Service Transfer

Heads of Terms were being prepared regarding floral and grassed areas including the Demesnes, Scar Top, Woodleigh Grounds, Bridgegate and Galgate Greens and, also, public toilets in the Market Place and off Galgate. These would be divided between freehold, long leasehold, short leasehold and management agreements. Responsibilities for the Demesnes, Scar Top and Woodleigh Grounds would include the authorisation of events on those areas, which would also be incorporated into the council's scheme of delegation.

It was reported that following resolution of Services Committee on 14 December, the potential for transfer of the town's pay-and-display car parks was raised with Durham County Council. There was no scope for this to proceed as such a transfer was outside of the accepted scope of both the 'Durham Ask' and the Delivering Differently programme.

Castle Walls

A meeting was arranged for 19 January, convened by Teesdale Area Action Partnership, to discuss the current state of the outer bailey of the castle, following recent rock falls. Councillor Kinch was attending as Chair of TAP and Councillor Marshall as the town council's representative on the Castle Walls Trust. The Clerk would also attend to bring issues back to the town council for consideration. It was reported that Durham County Council was commissioning further investigative surveys.

Wall Hangings

It was reported that 11 hangings, made by the Green Explorers Group, depicting different aspects of Teesdale from the Council Chamber at Teesdale House, had been taken out of storage at County Hall and given to the town council for future display in Woodleigh.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

103. SECTOR LED BODY FOR AUDIT PROCUREMENT

Submitted – a report setting out changes to the audit arrangements affecting local councils from 2017/18 and seeking a decision regarding opting in to the sector led body for audit procurement. A new sector led body called the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd (SAAAL) had been established to act as the procurement body to appoint auditors and manage audit contracts. The company would formally appoint external auditors on behalf of parish and town councils, for a five year period from the financial year 2017/18. This would happen automatically unless councils decided to opt out and set up an independent Audit Panel to procure external audit itself. The deadline for opting out was 31 March 2016. The annual fee for the town council would be £600. The town council's current contract with BDO would expire by 30 September 2017.

Resolved – That the town council opts in to SAAAL as the procurement body to appoint auditors and manage audit contracts on its behalf from 2017/18 for a five year period at an annual cost of £600.

104. SUPPORT FOR RICHARDSON HOSPITAL SERVICES

Councillor Blissett proposed that the Town Council supported the retention of community services and clinics at the Richardson Hospital for Barnard Castle and wider Teesdale, which were in danger of being withdrawn for local people. The hospital was currently controlled by County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT). Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield Clinical Commissioning Group (DDES CCG) determined the patient services to be provided.

Resolved – That the Town Council sends a letter of support for retention of Richardson Hospital Services for local people.

105. SUPPORT FOR BARNARD CASTLE FOOTBALL CLUB

It was reported that a request was received from the Treasurer of Barnard Castle Football Club for a letter of support from the Town Council. The Club had secured a 15 year lease at Green Lane Primary School, to include the use of grass pitches and gym changing rooms. The Club was applying to Sport England for a grant of up to £75k to renovate existing school changing rooms to create a kitchen and café area and changing facilities for players and officials.

Resolved – That the Town Council sends a letter of support for Barnard Castle Football Club's project.

106. ROYAL GARDEN PARTY NOMINATIONS

CDALC had been allocated four places for the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 24 May 2016. Invitations were in recognition of past service and nominated Councillors or accompanying guests should not have previously attended. Submissions would be entered into a draw and the winning two pairs of attendees drawn at random on 1 February.

Resolved – That Councillor Blissett be nominated to be entered into a draw to attend the Royal Garden Party on 24 May 2016.

107. REGIONAL TRAINING EVENT – MANAGING EVENTS – 9 MARCH 2016

Town and Parish Councils were encouraged to attend County Durham and Cleveland County Training Partnership's second regional training event on 9 March in Shotton Hall, Peterlee. "Your Region, Your Community, Your Event" would focus on "Managing Events." The cost was £30 per delegate. Members were reminded that the future leasehold transfer of Scar Top, Woodleigh Grounds and The Demesnes under the Delivering Differently Scheme also included Event Management, currently managed by DCC.

Resolved – That Councillors Harrison, Blissett, Kinch, Cooke, Marshall and Mrs Grady be nominated to attend Managing Events Training on 9 March, together with the Deputy Clerk, at a total cost of £210 from 2015/16 training budget.

108. COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – CONSULTATION

Submitted - County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service's (CDDFRS) public consultation document. The deadline was 8 February 2016, after which spending levels would be set for the financial year ahead. There were five consultation questions as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation 2016/17. Members were reminded that they could respond to the consultation as individuals.

Resolved – That the Town Council responds to the five consultation questions as part of CDDFRS Integrated risk management plan consultation 2016/17 as follows:

1) Strategic review of fire control – Do you support our intention to review how we provide our fire control and 999 call handling function including exploring collaboration opportunities with other partner agencies to improve efficiency?

Yes, as it provided joined up thinking.

2) Extending the role of firefighters to assist public health services – The role of a firefighter could potentially include activities supporting the wider public health agenda, such as undertaking health prevention work. Do you support our proposal to participate in research and trials to test the viability of such initiatives?

Yes, but with reservations. The role of a firefighter should include making referrals but not giving advice.

3) Expanding the emergency medical response (EMR) scheme – Last year firefighters in Teesdale and Weardale were trained to respond to specific medical emergencies in support of North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). Do you agree that, providing the costs do not negatively affect our medium term financial plan, we should explore options to extend this trial to other areas of County Durham and Darlington in partnership with NEAS?

No – more clarity was needed. The clock should not stop until a clinician arrived. The apparent emergency medical response improvements benefited NEAS response times and monitoring, not patient care.

4) Further collaboration – support services, estates and fire stations – CDDFRS already works collaboratively with partner organisations in the provision of information and services across many areas of work. Do you support our intention to explore further collaboration opportunities in the areas of estates management, use of fire stations, administration and office functions?

Yes

5) Extending the Young Firefighters' Association (YFA)/ Fire Cadets' Scheme – Youth engagement schemes currently operate out of five fire stations across the service. These have successfully improved resilience; strengthened community ties and helped the service to fulfil its role as a provider and supporter of education and training for young people. Do you agree with our proposal to invest in extending such schemes to other fire stations?

Yes