

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

14 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Blissett (Town Mayor) (in the Chair), Harrison, Hinchcliffe, Peat, Yarker, Mrs Moorhouse, Kinch, Rowell, Sutherland and Mrs Thompson.

Also in attendance: Sgt Simon Rogers, Durham Constabulary (until item 63); DCC Councillors Richardson, Henderson, Bell and Rowlandson; six members of the public; Hannah Parratt (YMCA), Joshua Barker (YMCA) and five members of the Youth Council (item 68) and; two members of the press.

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

59. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooke, for personal reasons.

Resolved – That the apologies be accepted.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 17(b)/May/16 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.

61. BOUNDARY COMMISSION PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES REVIEW CONSULTATION

Received – a report considering an appropriate consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England's review of parliamentary constituencies in England, to reflect the opposition felt to any proposal which would split Barnard Castle between two constituencies.

DCC Cllr Bell was to speak at the Commission's consultation event in favour of retaining both parts of Barnard Castle in one constituency, within the Bishop Auckland constituency. All four county councillors were in agreement.

One member of the public spoke with the belief that Barnard Castle would be better suited in West Durham and Teesdale away from Bishop Auckland constituency.

Councillor Sutherland declared that the interests of Barnard Castle and its residents were better aligned to Bishop Auckland than Crook and Consett (50 miles away) as the centre of focus in the proposed West Durham and Teesdale constituency.

It was suggested that the Commission could include Barnard Castle as a whole within Darlington constituency.

The town council was unanimously opposed to the proposal to split Barnard Castle between two parliamentary constituencies and in favour of retaining Barnard Castle within the Bishop Auckland constituency. The Town Mayor confirmed he would be speaking at the Commission's consultation event on 17 November.

Resolved – (a) That, on the basis of retaining the parish, and town, of Barnard Castle within

one constituency and in respecting the proximity and relationship of Willington and Hunwick to Crook, the Commission should refine its proposals to move Barnard Castle West into the 'Bishop Auckland' constituency and to move Willington and Hunwick into the 'West Durham and Teesdale' constituency;

(b) That the names of the resultant constituencies should be: 'Bishop Auckland & Teesdale' and 'West Durham'; and

(c) That these responses be made in person, by the Town Mayor, on behalf of the town council at the Commission's consultation event in Darlington on 17 November 2016 and via the Commission's consultation website, by the Clerk, before the deadline of 5 December 2016.

62. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

Sergeant Simon Rogers of Durham Constabulary attended the meeting and gave advice on fraud, which was on the increase. There were 57 types of fraud. It was the time of year when there were increased thefts from sheds and outbuildings and vehicles, which needed to be secured and valuables hidden out of sight. Stolen coping stones and stone troughs were also a target for thieves and should be marked for identification. 'Keep in the Know' was promoted as a good way of finding out what was happening in the area (www.keepintheknow.co.uk).

Resolved – That the Town Council thanks Sgt Rogers for his presentation.

63. COUNCIL MEETING – 19 SEPTEMBER 2016

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

64. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Blissett gave thanks to the office and especially to Services Officer (Civic) Mrs Farren for all the hard work and organisation in making this year's Remembrance Sunday and Poppy Appeal a success.

It was also reported that the Mayor's Charity had given £50 to NEPACS towards its work with prisoners' families.

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

(b) That thanks be given to the office and in particular to Services Officer (Civic) Mrs Farren, for the successful organisation of this year's Remembrance Sunday and Poppy Appeal.

65. '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 – 3 October 2016

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

(2) Partnership Committee Meeting – 3 October 2016

It was reported that a response was still awaited from the Mayor of Louveciennes.

Resolved – That the Draft Minutes and information be received.

(3) Woodleigh Working Group – 13 October 2016

Resolved – That the Draft Notes be received.

(4) Planning Committee Meeting – 17 October 2016

Resolved – That the Draft Minutes be received.

(5) Services Committee Meeting – 17 October 2016

Resolved – That the Draft Minutes be received.

(6) 1940s Task & Finish Group – 25 October 2016

Resolved – That the Draft Notes be received.

(7) Resources Committee Meeting – 31 October 2016

Resolved – (a) That the Draft Minutes be received.

(8) Town Mayor's Activities.

It was reported that, since the Council meeting on 19 September 2016, the Town Mayor, accompanied by the Mayoress and his Consort, had attended the following:

21 September	Mayor's Charity Quiz Night (Darlington Borough Council, Sadberge Village Hall)
30 September	Mayor's Charity Dinner (Colburn Town Council, Hanson Sports & Social Club, Colburn)
1 October	Civic Reception & Charity Evening – 191st Anniversary of the Opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (Shildon Town Council, Locomotion, Shildon)
15 October	Durham Juggling and Circus Festival (Durham City Jugglers, Teesdale School, Prospect Place)
20 October	Charity Cabaret Night (Great Aycliffe Town Council, The Phoenix Club, Newton Aycliffe)
29 October	Mayor's Charity Spooky Halloween Quiz Night (The Royal British Legion, Ferryhill Station)
10 November	Community Pride Awards (Teesdale Mercury, The Witham, Horsemarket).
11 November	Armistice Day Flag Ceremony, (Town Council, Remembrance Gardens, Galgate)
11 November	Remembrance Service (HMYOI Deerbolt, Startforth)
13 November	Remembrance Service

Resolved – That the information be noted.

66. UPDATES AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

(1) PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

At the Partnership Committee Meeting on 3 October, the following items were resolved and agreed for onward notification to full Council:

(i) Christmas Lights Switch-On Event Friday 2 December

(a) That approval be given in principle to extend the activities on offer for children utilizing a snow globe, skating rink or similar display, with delegated authority given to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and vice-Chair of Partnership, to purchase a suitable attraction within a maximum of £1,500; and

(b) That approval be given to Mr Mark Wilkes to assume the role of Town Crier for the Christmas event on 2 December, with costume hire costs approved of up to £100 from the 2016/17 Events budget.

(ii) Business Guild Update

That a letter be sent to the Secretary of the Business Guild to clarify its current position in representing the town's business community.

(iii) Christmas Lighting

(a) That the matter of delivering Christmas lighting displays from 2018 onwards be deferred to a meeting of Partnership Committee in 2017/18 municipal year; and

(b) That PAT testing of curtain lights and additional fixings needed to secure lights to Woodleigh, be funded out of the Christmas Display Support Fund earmarked reserves.

(iv) Rotary Club

That events organised by the Rotary Club of Barnard Castle be promoted and supported via a link on the town council's website, wayfinding units etc.

Councillor Mrs Moorhouse proposed that the remainder of the 2016/17 Events budget be spent on creating a town map to highlight Dementia Friendly Town and Walkers are Welcome.

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

(b) That the remainder of the 2016/17 Events budget be used to fund design and printing of a town map for visitors to highlight Dementia Friendly Town and Walkers are Welcome.

(2) SERVICES COMMITTEE

At the Services Committee Meeting on 17 October, the following items were resolved and agreed for onward referral and notification to full Council:

(i) Play Areas 2017/18

That Members review current arrangements for play area inspections for the 2017/18 financial year.

(ii) Mini Golf

(a) That the mini golf service be registered as a 'taxable supply' from 2017/18 season; and

(b) That three quotations for re-felting the course, prior to the start of the 2017/18 season, be obtained by the Clerk, with a decision on awarding a contract referred to full Council.

(iii) War Memorials

That up to date estimates be sought to clean the War Memorials, commencing in 2017/18.

(iv) Wednesday Market signage

That approval be given to purchase two clear signs for the market place toilets at a total cost not to exceed £20 to be funded from the Wednesday Market budget 2016/17.

(v) Floral Displays

- (a) That winter bedding plants be purchased for the gateway beds out of 2016/17 floral displays budget; and
- (b) That Lowfield Gardens be requested to carry out the 2017/18 floral displays watering service.

(vi) Dog Fouling

- (a) That Members be in favour of the proposals from Durham County Council regarding a Public Space Protection Order;
- (b) That it be requested that all town council fenced play areas be included within the PSPO; and
- (c) That Members register interest with DCC in the town council providing a part-time warden service, to be funded out of operational surplus from the Wednesday Market budget.

(vii) Allotments Improvements Action Plan – Quotations for Path Improvements

That the path improvement works (Raby Avenue and The Demesnes) be awarded to 4 Nature at the gross sum of £1,388.

(viii) Grounds Maintenance Contract

That the 2017/18 grounds maintenance contract be awarded at full council on 14 November (to be considered in exempt session under item 76).

(ix) Green Lane TAP Application

- (a) That Members approve more detailed discussions with officers supporting TAP and Barratt Homes to identify an affordable scheme for developing the Green Lane play area for approval at a suitable forthcoming meeting; and
- (b) That in the event of non-payment of the lease for Ten Fields, the lease with the football club formerly known as Glaxo Rangers be terminated and that Bowes Football Club be approached as a potential tenant.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted;

- (b) That a decision on awarding a contract to re-felt the mini-golf course prior to the start of the 2017/18 season, be considered at a meeting of full Council in January or March 2017; and
- (c) That this Council considers quotations and awards a Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2017/18 under confidential item 76.

(1) RESOURCES COMMITTEE

At the Resources Committee Meeting on 31 October, the following items were resolved and agreed for onward referral and notification to full Council:

(i) Woodleigh Working Group

- (a) That the car parking arrangements be monitored and issues dealt with by the office as and when necessary;
- (b) That suggested cleaning contacts be approached to gauge interest in Woodleigh cleaning/ caretaking;
- (c) That the booking of the Dawson Room as provision for a town council ward surgery, commencing Friday 21 October, be advertised to other relevant councillors;
- (d) That Cllrs Peat and Blissett be emergency key holders for Woodleigh and be suitably trained in operating the alarm system;

- (e) That estimates be sought for the repair of gutters and flashing to be presented for consideration at a future Resources Committee, with costs reclaimed from DCC;
- (f) That the Dawson Room hire charges remain the same for a further 6 months;
- (g) That this committee approves the manufacture of an additional wooden board in the Dawson Room, at a cost of £450 out of Dawson Room expenditure budget, offset by Dawson Room hire income; and
- (h) That Cllr Mrs Moorhouse contact David Harper regarding replacement tiles for the hallway and that an article appear in the press to source replacement tiles.

(ii) Review of Governance Documents

- (a) That members of Resources Committee constitute the T&F Group; and
- (b) That all members be invited to highlight for review specific areas within the council's policies, standing orders and financial regulations to the Clerk by 9 December 2016.

(iii) Defibrillator Update

That a defibrillator training session be arranged on a suitable Wednesday morning at St. Mary's Parish Hall, Newgate, funded via a donation from The Mayor's Charity. It was further noted that pads would need to be replaced every 2 years and the long life battery would also need replacing. Consideration ought to be built into 2018/19 budget.

(iv) Training

That, pursuant to Financial Regulation 4(d), a two day training course on RBS software for town council staff be approved, at a cost of £649 plus mileage costs out of 2016/17 training and travel and subsistence budgets.

(v) Risk Register

That the revised Risk Register be reviewed by Governance Task & Finish Group prior to being recommended to Full Council for approval and adoption.

(vi) Staffing

That the confirmation of Miss Atkinson in the post of Services Officer (Finance) following satisfactory completion of the contractual probationary period be noted.

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

(b) That all council members highlight for review specific areas within the council's policies, standing orders and financial regulations to the Clerk by 9 December 2016.

67. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

(1) Barnard Castle Business Guild

There was nothing to report

(2) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum

A meeting was held on 1 November. There was nothing to report.

(3) Teesdale Local Councils Forum

There was nothing to report.

(4) Smaller Local Councils Forum

It was reported that at the AGM on 22 October, a public statement was adopted by CDALC against hate crime. All member councils in the County Durham Association were requested to join with CDALC and adopt the following statement:

We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, gender prejudice, xenophobia, homophobia, religious intolerance and hate crimes have no place in our county. Barnard Castle Town Council condemns all such intolerance and hate crimes unequivocally.

We will not allow hate to become acceptable and will work with the Police and Crime Commissioners and others to fight prejudice and hate crimes. We reassure all people living in the area that they are valued members of our communities.

(5) Teesdale Marketing Ltd.

There was nothing to report.

(6) South West Durham Heritage Corridor Partnership

There was nothing to report.

(7) Dementia Friendly Communities

A meeting of Dementia Action Alliance was held on 28 September. The minutes of the meeting and Guidance for Councils on Dementia Friendly Communities was circulated. The next meeting was on 16 November and a meeting was also arranged on 8 December to action plan Barnard Castle getting Dementia Friendly Community status.

(8) Walkers are Welcome

There was nothing to report. The next meeting was on 15 November.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That the Council adopts the CDALC public statement against hate crime.

68. YOUTH COUNCIL

Received – a report presented by Joshua Barker, Youth Work Apprentice, updating the town council on topics discussed at the Youth Council's first meeting. Young people wanted to see lighting improved at Dawson Road Play Area. There was currently no lighting in the park and it was very popular with young people in the area. If lighting was improved, more young people from the area would use the park which could create less trouble and anti-social behaviour in the town as the young people would have somewhere that they could go to do different activities such as play football and socialise with friends. The youth council was enthusiastic to work alongside the town council.

Resolved – (a) That the report be noted;
(b) That a lighting project for Dawson Road MUGA be referred to Services Committee in partnership with Youth Council;
(c) That Youth Council have a non-voting place on the town council's Services Committee and Partnership Committee.

69. NOTICE OF MOTION – CLOSURE OF HSBC BARNARD CASTLE BRANCH

Councillor Cooke submitted a notice of motion, under the provisions of the Town Council's Standing Order number 10a(vii). The HSBC Barnard Castle branch was to close in January 2017. Councillor Peat proposed an amendment to the motion, which was seconded and moved and the amended motion was unanimously voted in favour.

Resolved – (a) That the town council condemns the decision of HSBC to close its Barnard Castle branch in January, which will increase the isolation of vulnerable people throughout Teesdale; and

(b) That local people be encouraged to support businesses remaining in Teesdale when other businesses close and move out of Teesdale.

70. NOTICE OF MOTION – ANNUAL TOWN MEETING TO BE HELD IN MARCH

Councillor Kinch submitted a notice of motion, under the provisions of the Town Council's Standing Order number 10a(vii).

This council had traditionally held the annual town meeting on the same date as the annual town council meeting, but this had led in recent years to confusion and to time constraints on both meetings. Furthermore, the power of a parish council to transact business was defined by Section 16(1) of the 1972 Act, in that, 'The number of elected parish councillors for each parish shall not be less than five'. In an election year, it was important that the practical consequences of this clause were defined by the National Association of Local Councils.

Resolved – (a) That the next Annual Town Meeting to be called by the Town Mayor be held on Monday 13 March 2017;

(b) That it should be established that the Annual Town Meeting be held on a date other than the Annual Town Council Meeting; and

(c) That the town council should seek clarification from NALC on the correct interpretations of Section 16(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

71. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2015/16 – FINAL REPORT

Received – a report providing the up to date position in respect of the 2015/16 Audit of Accounts.

Pursuant to Minute 56/Sept/16, the audit was completed on 18 September and notice received from BDO on 23 September. There were no issues arising from the audit. The full and complete Annual Return was submitted for Members' attention. The notice had been displayed for the required fourteen days with no enquiries.

Resolved – That the 2015/16 Annual Return be approved and accepted.

72. 2017/18 NEW BUDGETARY ITEMS

Submitted – a report outlining new budgetary projects/items which were recommended for progression through the 2017/18 budgetary process following the meeting of the Resources Committee on 31 October 2016.

The town council's four standing committees had each considered their budgetary bids with the Resources Committee giving consideration to new budgetary items put forward by members.

Three new items were recommended for consideration by full council. These were Youth Council, Dementia Friendly Town and Elections.

Youth Council – New Item

It was proposed that a sum of £2,000 be committed to establish a youth council for the town. This budget would cover minor expenses plus badges of office for the junior leader etc. and any other expenses that would occur in the setting up and running of this body. It was felt that this item warranted further discussion with the prospective youth council to determine parameters and set up costs.

Dementia friendly town – New Item

In the near future, it was hoped that Barnard Castle would be classed as a Dementia Friendly Town. This would be community led, but as the council would offer support and advise the community group and perhaps occasionally organise events, it was proposed that a budget heading of £500 be established as a standby in case of need.

Elections – Additional Revenue Budget Item

In 2016/17 the costs of two by-elections held in 2015 were submitted by Durham County Council's electoral services and funded from reserves. There would be an all-out election in 2017/18. If contested, this was likely to cost the town council up to £10,000. Resources Committee considered it prudent to roll-forward a budget to cover this and future by-elections with an earmarked reserve fund.

Resolved – That the following items be approved for the draft budget 2017/18:

- (a) Youth Council - £2,000, in principle, subject to further discussion (new item);
- (b) Dementia Friendly Town - £500 (new item); and
- (c) Elections - £5,000 (additional revenue budget item) plus an earmarked reserve of £5,000 funded by a movement from General Reserves.

73. CHRISTMAS/ NEW YEAR OFFICE ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Council office would close for the public holidays of Monday 26 December, Tuesday 27 December 2016 and Monday 2 January 2017. It was proposed that, the office closed at 4:00pm on Friday 23 December and remained closed to the public in the interval between Wednesday 28 and Friday 30 December, inclusive. Members noted that CAB would also be shut over this period but that the ATDC would be operating on 28 and 29 December. Staff could use their existing leave allowances to cover these days. It was proposed that the office reopened to the public on Tuesday 3 January 2017. Members noted that staff would cover the operation of the Wednesday market on 28 December and that the December payroll would be processed on 22 December.

Resolved – That the Town Council's office be closed from 4:00pm on 23 December 2016 and reopen at 10:00am on Tuesday 3 January 2017 for the Christmas/New Year holiday period.

74. CLERK'S UPDATE

Submitted – a report providing opportunity to review activities undertaken by the Clerk and staff and summarising the Clerk's forthcoming leave 21 to 23 December.

There had been a number of substantive issues moving forward since 19 September:

Asset and Service Transfer including **Scar Top Play Area/Mini Golf Freehold Asset Transfer** – Further comments on the draft lease for the Woodleigh Grounds had been returned by the council's solicitor to DCC as of 28 September.

Separately, further correspondence had been circulated by the solicitor acting for the Big Lottery Fund in respect of the transfer of the Scar Top play area. The issues raised had not yet been satisfactorily resolved between the county council and the town council's solicitors.

The Clerk attended a meeting with Gordon Elliott and David Taylor on 20 October to explore issues affecting these transfers. It was evident that there was little appetite to use Section 101 of the Local Government Act. It was also clear that issues had been raised by services within Durham County Council which had delayed the resolution of the leases by legal services, even when these issues had been inconsequential.

Insurance Claim – The claim related to Green Lane play area was denied by the Town Council's insurers in August. To date, no further correspondence had been received.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

75. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF ITEM 76, 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 76, below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

76. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Received – a report seeking to determine which company should be awarded the town council's Grounds Maintenance Contract for the 2017/18 season.

Members noted that Resources Committee on 31 October had resolved to recommend that the 2017/18 floral and open spaces budgetary bid included a growth bid of an additional £4,400 (total budget £13,900), to cover the costs of additional open spaces to be transferred from Durham County Council.

There was concern expressed that taking over management of further open spaces from DCC would result in double taxation for residents of the parish i.e. increase in precept and no reduction of council tax. Members felt that further consultation was needed.

Resolved – (a) That the 2017/18 baseline grounds maintenance contract be awarded to Robson Horticulture Ltd, along with additional grounds maintenance if transferred from Durham County Council; and

(b) That a public consultation be held to gather residents' views before resolving to take over responsibility for the proposed leased open spaces from Durham County Council.