

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

19 FEBRUARY 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Moorhouse (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Peat, Blissett, Miss Blissett, Chatterjee, Child, Harrison, Kirkbride, Sutherland, Wilkes and Hallimond.

Also in attendance: Mr M. Davis (CCLA) until item 110; one member of the press.

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

107. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Thompson.

Resolved – That the apologies be accepted.

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 12/May/17 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; none were declared at this juncture.

109. CCLA PRESENTATION

Pursuant to Resources Committee Minute 26/Sept/17, Mr Mark Davis of Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) attended the meeting to discuss its investment funds. CCLA was one of the UK's largest charity fund managers according to the latest Charity Finance Survey. It managed investments for charities, religious organisations and the public sector, including many local councils. Information on CCLA's relevant products (cash fund and property fund) was circulated.

The **cash fund** was AAA rated and could be used for day-to-day cash flow, being low risk with easy access, however, there was a low investment return. Approximately 250 parish and town councils accessed the fund.

The **property fund** had 80 parish and town council clients. There was a large differential between buying and selling. It was advisable to invest for a minimum of five years, with any capital growth viewed as a bonus.

The entry level for both funds was £25,000.

Resolved – That it be delegated to the Clerk to investigate options as to whether it would be appropriate to invest the town council's long-term balances in one or more investment funds, to be presented at Resources Committee on 5 March 2018.

110. THE BOWES MUSEUM – 125TH ANNIVERSARY SWAN PROJECT

Members recalled that at a Council meeting on 13 November 2017 (Minute 88/Nov/17 refers), a proposal was received from The Bowes Museum for the town council to contribute towards a light installation in the town as part of the Barnard Castle Christmas Festival. Members were asked to consider whether, or not, a light installation on Scar Top would benefit residents of the town in celebrating the 125th Anniversary of The Bowes Museum.

The town council subsequently resolved: (a) That approval is not given to spend £2,000 on a contemporary light installation on Scar Top;

(b) That the town council works in conjunction with community groups, to promote an event in the town around Easter 2018, to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of The Bowes Museum; and

(c) That, if necessary at year end, an earmarked reserve for The Bowes Museum 125th Anniversary be created for £2,000.

At Partnership Committee on 27 November 2017 (Minute 41(b)/Nov/17 refers), Mr Matthew Read from The Bowes Museum, gave a presentation on a draft proposal for a Swan Project to celebrate 125 years of The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, focussing on the iconic Silver Swan, with the aim of bringing the museum and the town closer together.

Members of Partnership Committee then resolved the following:

- (a) That £2,000 be used for working in conjunction with community groups;
- (b) That community involvement be led by the town council via representation on the steering group for the event;
- (c) That the project delivers clear community involvement for residents of the town;
- (d) That there is a project budget which includes a statement of income and expenditure and an update on progress, to be reported to Full Council; and
- (e) That there be involvement from Friends of The Bowes Museum.

At the last Partnership Committee meeting on 5 February, Matthew Read provided an update on the Swan Project. A project plan was circulated for a community 'fishdance'. It was subsequently resolved "That it be recommended that the conditions for town council contribution of £2,000 towards the Swan Project have been met, for onward referral to Special Council on 19 February."

Core funding was due to be confirmed by The Bowes Museum in mid-February. If there was a shortfall in funding, the project could be scaled back if needed. The steering group was to be formed by end February after funding was confirmed. There would be a press release and an open evening event to encourage retailers and businesses to get involved.

Councillor Mrs Moorhouse declared an interest and did not take part in any vote. She relayed information that there had been no involvement from Friends of The Bowes Museum. Councillor Sutherland was sceptical about The Bowes Museum's commitment to community involvement and Councillor Chatterjee stated that there had been limited, unclear communication with the Meet.

Councillor Blissett proposed that:

(a) the town council rescinds the offer of £2,000 to the joint project with The Bowes Museum as it is not a viable option to spend public money on; and

(b) the town council sets up a working group with the Friends of the Bowes Museum and other local groups, to use these already allocated funds to set up an event that will involve the whole community, such as businesses and the general public, on a date that does not infringe upon any other known local activities.

This was seconded by Councillor Harrison. A vote was then taken on (a).

Resolved – That the town council rescinds the offer of £2,000 to the joint project with The Bowes Museum as it is not a viable option to spend public money on.

A vote was then taken on (b) as follows: four votes in favour and four against, with two abstentions.

The Town Mayor ceded the chair to the Deputy Mayor and the vote was re-taken: four votes in favour and five against, with one abstention. The proposal fell.