

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2019**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Blissett (Town Mayor) (in the Chair), Mrs Moorhouse, Miss Blissett, Finlay, Child, Harrison, Sutherland, Thompson and Hallimond (until item 36).

**Also in attendance:** One member of the press, Sgt Simon Rogers of Durham Constabulary, one member of the public

**Officers:** Judith Mashiter (locum Clerk).

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

Apologies were received from Councillors Kirkbride and Chatterjee.

**Resolved** – That the apologies be accepted.

**26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 10/May/19 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. No declarations were made.

**27. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE**

Sgt Rogers reported that crime overall was not too bad, though acknowledging that crime figures don't provide the full picture. A major crime, locally as well as nationally, is scams involving claims relating to tax refunds, phones, computers, banks, courts etc. Councillors were encouraged to advise people, particularly the elderly or vulnerable, to simply ignore any such unsolicited requests for immediate payment and to view an 11-minute NatWest film 'Friends Against Scams' on YouTube.

The Force is reintroducing newsletters. All councillors present agreed to receive the newsletter by email.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras continue to be effective as part of the 'ring of steel' in combatting criminal behaviour.

The 2019 travellers' season saw 44 incidents in Teesdale (average is 20 per year directly related to travellers). Problems were caused by early arrival at the Broomielaw and Shaw Bank stop over sites and this will be communicated to the traveller community in future. Issues caused by horses/traps blocking pavements were noted and will be addressed through the Residents' and Travellers' Forum. The road closure order at Bridgewater and Deerbolt Bank had achieved its aim and was lifted early. Sgt Rogers confirmed that if the stop over areas were not provided, then the impact on the town would be much greater. A PCSO had surveyed many shops/businesses and reported that most reported no difference in trade, trade had skyrocketed in a few (jewellery, pizza shop and pubs) and there were minor thefts and antisocial behaviour in a small number (eg. theft of energy drinks).

The next PACT meeting takes place on 27 June, 7pm at the QuadHub. Although not usually well attended, the PACT meetings might develop as required.

Cllr Harrison asked Sgt Rogers to pass on appreciation to a PC and a PCSO who had assisted an injured duck at Grassholme Reservoir.

## **28. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2018/19**

### **(i) Outturn expenditure and income statement**

Submitted – a report providing an update on expenditure and income for the financial year ending 31 March 2019, summarising the year-end position and comparing the outturn with the originally approved budget. It also summarised movements in reserves, showing the year-end position of the general reserve.

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

### **(ii) Internal Audit – Presentation of Annual Report – G Fletcher (Internal Auditor)**

Mr Fletcher submitted apologies for not attending the meeting as he had been delayed by traffic.

Submitted – in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, a report of the Council's accounts for the financial year 2018/19, which showed that internal audit controls were satisfactory for the size of the Council and that a report on the planned audit work to be carried out during 2019/20 be determined based on the knowledge of the auditor and agreed with the Town Clerk.

**Resolved** - To approve the Internal Audit Report for the 2018/19 Annual Return.

### **(iii) Approval of AGAR Sections 1 and 2**

Submitted – the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) pursuant to (i) and (ii) above. Two separate votes were taken on the elements of the resolution:

**Resolved** -(a) That approval be given to Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) of the 2018/19 AGAR, as submitted

**Resolved** - (b) That approval be given to Section 2 (Accounting Statements 2018/19) of the 2018/19 AGAR, as submitted.

## **29. ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING – 13 MAY 2019 - MINUTES**

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

## **30. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor drew Members' attention to the 1940s weekend just completed, particularly thanking office staff, councillors and other volunteers for their efforts, and to the raising of the flag to mark Armed Forces Week.

**Resolved** - That the information be noted and the Town Mayor's appreciation endorsed.

## **31. 'EN BLOC' ITEMS:**

Submitted - in accordance with Minute 72/Aug/04, a further set of items with the accompanying recommendations be moved *en bloc*. The six items considered at the meeting were as follows:

**1) Planning Committee – 03 June 2019 – Draft Minutes**

**2) Partnership Committee – 03 June 2019 – Draft Minutes**

### **3) Services Committee – 03 June 2019 – Draft Minutes**

Councillor Child reported that the action resolved under 31(3)(9)(i)(b) was not possible as planting would cost more than £1,000.

**Resolved** - That bedding plants costing approx. £225 would be purchased and that volunteers would arrange to plant these very soon.

### **4) Resources Committee – 03 June 2019 – Draft Minutes**

Councillor Mrs Moorhouse reported that the resolution under 31(4)(10) would be considered under agenda item 37.

### **5) Resources Committee – 13 June 2019 – Draft Minutes**

#### **6) Town Mayor's Activities**

**Resolved** - That the *en bloc* items be received.

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

### **1) PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

#### **(i) Christmas Lighting 2019/20 (Barnard Castle Christmas Lights)**

Committee had resolved - (a) that the information be noted; and (b) that a contract be entered into with Christmas Plus, from within the £6,500 agreed budget and that the SLA with BCCL be restructured.

### **2) RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

#### **(i) Effectiveness of Internal Control 2018/19**

Committee had resolved - (a) that the Council's system of internal control is effective; and (b) that the review form part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

#### **(ii) Staffing**

It was noted that the matter be addressed under agenda item 37.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and (b) That approval be given for a contract to be entered into with Christmas Plus, from within the £6,500 agreed budget and that the SLA with BCCL be restructured.

## **33. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES:**

### **1) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum**

Reported under agenda item 27.

### **2) Teesdale Local Councils Forum**

Agreed that this item had been removed from the agenda,

### **3) Smaller Councils Forum**

Councillor Sutherland reported that planning is starting for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day in May 2020; that work is underway to introduce a Code of Conduct standardised across the country; that Audrey Christie is now working alongside Steve Ragg at the Co. Durham Association of Local Councils; and that the issue of single use plastics will be on the agenda for the next meeting and specifically Durham County Council's ability to collect separated waste from public bins.

#### **4) Dementia Friendly Communities**

In the absence of Councillor Kirkbride, Councillor Blissett reported that the 'No Batteries Required' event had been very enjoyable. Work with innovative twiddle muffs and fiddle mats was proving very successful with local care homes; and there is interest from all three schools in hosting a play if Teesdale Action Partnership funding is achieved.

#### **5) Barnard Castle HGV Action Group**

Councillor Sutherland reported that the group had attended and shared information at the A66 dualling consultation event and will keep in touch over potential diversion routes when work is being planned.

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

#### **34. WEST WARD VACANCY**

Submitted - an overview of the actions taken following the declaration of a casual vacancy in the Town Council's West Ward and the next steps to be taken by the Town Council.

**Resolved** - (a) That Members advertise the vacancy for co-option using approved specification, with those wishing to express an interest in the vacancy submitting a supporting statement by noon on 10 July 2019; and  
(b) that the co-option be determined using the mechanism outlined in Section 4 of the report at a Special Meeting of Full Council to be held on 15 July 2019.

#### **35. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING 2019/20 (BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS) (VERBAL UPDATE AT MEETING)**

Further detail will be discussed at the forthcoming Partnership Committee meeting.

#### **36. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF ITEM 37, BELOW)**

**Resolved** - That, under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2) the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matter referred to at item 37, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

#### **37. STAFFING (CONFIDENTIAL)**

**Resolved** - (a) That an additional £2,500 be allocated for legal/staff costs;  
(b) that NEREO be appointed to conduct an independent investigation into a staffing matter; and  
(c) that the actions of the Staffing Sub-Committee be approved.