

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

15 JULY 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Blissett (Town Mayor) (in the Chair); Councillors Miss Blissett, Chatterjee, Child, Finlay, Harrison, Kirkbride, Mrs Moorhouse, Sutherland, Mrs Thompson and Drew (from item 41).

Also in attendance: Two members of the public (to item 40); one member of the press.

Officers: Mr King (Town Clerk) and Ms Atkinson (Services Officer)

38. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

None.

39. 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.

40. WEST WARD VACANCY

Received – a report containing an overview of the expressions of interest received in response to the advertisement of a vacancy on the Town Council for co-option and outlining a process by which members might consider those expressions of interest and vote to fill the vacancy.

Three expressions of interest had been received following the deadline. Two of the candidates were able to attend the meeting, the third had indicated her unavailability and had requested that her application be considered in her absence.

Each candidate was given two minutes to state his or her suitability for co-option. Members questioned both candidates. A secret ballot was held. Each member was handed a voting slip to record their vote for the West Ward vacancy. The Clerk counted the ballot papers in front of Members and the Services Officer acted as adjudicator on the counting of the votes.

Resolved – (a) That Ms Laura Drew be co-opted to fill the West Ward vacancy on the Town Council; and

(b) That Cllr Drew be appointed to the Services Committee and Resources Committee, Cllr Kirkbride be retained on the Services Committee and the membership numbers of relevant committees be adjusted to Resources (7), Services (7) and Partnership (7+2).

(Councillor Drew then signed the Declaration of Acceptance.)

41. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF ITEMS 42 AND 43, 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 at items 42 and 43, below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

42. ASSET TRANSFERS

Received – A settlement figure from the council's solicitor for the work to complete the leases for Woodleigh Grounds and the Demesnes and a proposal for work on additional leases to be agreed with Durham County Council.

Resolved – (a) That the completion figure of £1,000 plus disbursements be agreed; and
(b) That the terms offered for additional leases be approved - charging on a time recorded basis with capped at £ £1,250.00 plus VAT plus disbursements per lease, with regular updates on time spent and charging only for actual time spent on these matters.

43. STAFFING

Received – A verbal update from the Chair of the Staffing Subcommittee on the progress of the staffing matter.

Resolved – (a) That the outcome of the NEREO investigation be noted;
(b) That all staff be thanked for taking part in mediation;
(c) That the Clerk manage the phased return of the member of staff;
(d) That the Staffing Subcommittee act with delegation to resolve any issue arising from this staffing matter, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 §1(2), such that the press and public be excluded from any meeting during consideration of this matter, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted;
(e) That CLR Law be engaged to provide continued legal support on the existing terms in respect of this matter;
(f) That expenditure to date of £7,764.32 be noted and approved and delegation be given to the Staffing Subcommittee with respect to payments above this figure, consistent with the requirements of Standing Orders;
(g) That a decision on payment to B Piercy, consistent with the terms of his engagement, be delegated to the Staffing Subcommittee; and
(h) That the additional hours of the Services Officer (Finance) be continued until the next meeting of the Resources Committee on 9 September 2019.