

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

16 MARCH 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Blissett (Town Mayor) (in the Chair), Chatterjee, Child, Hallimond, Harrison, Kirkbride, Mrs Moorhouse and Mrs Thompson.

Also in attendance: Three members of the public and one member of the press.

Officers: Mr King (Town Clerk), Mr Clark (Town Clerk Designate).

82. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Miss Blissett, Drew & Finlay.

Resolved – That the apologies be accepted.

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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.

84. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

Sgt Rogers gave members an update on Policing matters:

- Rural Watch 30th Anniversary – thanks to all volunteers
- Be aware of telephone scams
- Appleby Fair – At present, preparations are still going ahead for 4th to 7th June, but this could change given today's briefing from the Government. If new information becomes available, it will be passed on.
- There has been an increase in the number of house burglaries in the area. Suspects have been identified and Investigations were ongoing.

Resolved – That the Police report was noted

85. EAST WARD VACANCY

The Clerk introduced Paula Rogers and Alison Thackray who had put forward applications for co-option to the East Ward vacancy. Members were reminded of the council's co-option policy. Both candidates gave a short presentation to the council. Following the presentations, a vote was called:

Paula Rogers – 4 votes

Alison Thackray – 4 votes

The Town Mayor had the casting vote and chose to toss a coin. The result was Alison Thackray was co-opted on to Barnard Castle Town Council East Ward

Cllr Thackray signed her declaration of Office and was invited by the Town Mayor to join the meeting.

86. COUNCIL MEETINGS

- 1) Full Council - 20 January 2020**
- 2) Special Council Meeting – 3 February 2020**

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

87. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor began by thanking John Howard for filming the council meetings for the last 5 years. It was very much appreciated

1) Issues arising from the Annual Town Meeting

The condition of the Bowes Museum Grounds – particularly of a collapsed culvert causing localised flooding.

Resolved That the council write to the museum to seek assurances that repairs will be carried out

The continued issues relating to the diversion of HGVs through Barnard Castle, particularly during recent and projected works to the A66.

Resolved That the council facilitate a meeting with all relevant parties to discuss the concerns raised

Neighbourhood Planning. This was raised at the Town Meeting. The council had previously decided it would not be embarking on a Neighbourhood plan.

Resolved - That the Council's views remain unchanged.

2) General Update

Town twinning – On going discussions continue to take place. Updates would be given when available.

Covid-19 – A strategy meeting took place to discuss the issues of how the current issues will affect the council. These will be referred to later in the meeting.

Recommendation – That the information be noted

88. 'EN BLOC' ITEMS

This is a report arising from the decision at Minute 72/Aug/04 to amalgamate a number of agenda items so that the accompanying recommendations can be moved '*en bloc*'.

The items included in the report are as follows:

Planning Committee – 3 February 2019 – Minutes

Partnership Committee – 3 February 2019 – Draft Minutes

Services Committee – 17 February 2019 – Draft Minutes

Planning Committee – 2 March 2020 – Draft Minutes

Resources Committee – 2 March 2019 – Draft Minutes

Town Mayor's Activities

Since the Council meeting on 20 January 2020, the Town Mayor accompanied by the Town Mayoress and or Deputy Town Mayor had attended ten events.

Resolved – (a) That the minutes and draft minutes be received; and
(b) That the information be noted.

89. UPDATES AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

1) Services Committee

The Clerk referred to the decision to order a retractable bollard be ordered for the upper Demesnes and to look at alternative solutions for the lower Demesnes. Following further visits to the areas and taking on board Police advice the recommendation is to install a gate at the entrance, by the height barrier. The earlier decision on the location would adversely affect the 'Meet' plans and other events (fair/circus). The recommendation now for council is for a gate to be purchased to be located at the entrance with the height restrictor. This goes further than the decision by Services but is seen as the more appropriate solution to put to the council.

Resolved -That the Council purchases a gate to locate at the entrance to the Demesnes

2) Resources Committee

The General Power of Competence

A discussion on the 'power' took place. Members were informed that Martin, although CILCA qualified he is required to complete a further single module before the council can declare it wishes to use the 'power'.

Resolved - That the Clerk enrol to complete CILCA section LO7 as soon as practical.

90. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

1) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum

Cllr Blissett informed member that the temporary stopovers for Appleby were set for 22 May to 19 June as are the parking restrictions at Bridgegate. Durham County Council are reviewing how fresh water is made available at the stop over sites due to problems in the past. Next scheduled meeting is 30 April at Woodleigh but that could change given the current situation with Covid-19

2) Smaller Local Councils Forum

The Clerk reported the forum discussed the review of modern working practices – the council are addressing this by engaging Peninsula

A decision was made the council will in future attend the larger councils forum as it was more appropriate. Next meeting is scheduled for 21 May.

3) Dementia Friendly Communities

Cllr Kirkbride informed members that the group were getting a lot of support and they were pleased with the progress being made.

4) Society of Local Council Clerks

The Clerk informed members that at the Practitioners Conference the Chair and Vice-Chair were re-elected unopposed and will serve for a second year.

5) Barnard Castle Mechanic Institute and Witham Hall Community Association

Cllr Hallimond informed the meeting that he had not been invited to attend any meeting and therefore could not report.

The Town Mayor agreed to discuss the matter with the group to ensure they contact Cllr Hallimond as the council want to work with them going forward.

Resolved – Reports noted.

91. CLERKS' UPDATE

Submitted – A report outlining recent activities undertaken by the Clerk and staff including correspondence from the SLCC thanking Michael and the council for their support. Supplemental report summarising the current Covid-19 evolving situation and detailing those decisions required to maintain business and public safety.

The council website and social media had today had the Public Health England advice on Covid-19 uploaded.

The LGA 1972 requires councils to meet in person to make a decision. No provision is in place for Skype meetings etc. That said the exception is the council can delegate decision making to an officer.

The report recommends council in the event that government advice prevents meetings taking place or if the town council becomes functionally inquorate, the council empowers the Clerk and/or the RFO to do anything expedient and necessary, in consultation with members, to ensure the continuous business of the council, and to deal with mandatory undertakings in order to prevent the authority from incurring liability during the period that the delegation is applicable;

Resolved - (a) That the council accept the recommendation to delegate powers to the Clerk and RFO to ensure the business of the council continues that in the event that government advice prevents meetings taking place or if the town council becomes functionally inquorate, the council empowers the Clerk and/or the RFO to do anything expedient and necessary, in consultation with members, to ensure the continuous business of the council, and to deal with mandatory undertakings in order to prevent the authority from incurring liability during the period that the delegation is applicable;

(b) That the 1940s weekend be cancelled due to the advice being received from the Government on social contact during the current health crisis;

(c) That the Woodleigh office is closed to members and the general public during the current Covid-19 crisis;

(d) That the Coronavirus (Covid 19) policy is adopted by the council; and

(e) That the Council notes the messages regarding Covid-19 placed on its website.