

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2011

PRESENT: COUN L WOOD (CHAIR)

Mesdames: M Milsom, J Black & J I Measor

Messrs: C Austin, H Bennett MBE, C Robbins, R Curtis,
D Milsom, D Langan, T A Jones, C Watkins, R Huitson,
C J Metcalfe, J Alvey & W M Jeffrey

**MEMBERS WERE REMINDED OF THE NEED TO DISCLOSE ANY
INTEREST PREJUDICIAL OR PERSONAL IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT.**

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted and accepted from Councillors
S McDonnell, (on holiday), E W Hall, (Ill), & G Cowie, (asthma).

32. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING a copy of which had
been circulated, were approved.

Matters Arising

(i) Minute Number 24 – Town Centre Clock

To note that an order had been placed for an urgent report on the
condition of the clock and the workings.

(ii) Minute Number 27 – Payment to DTA – The Pavilion

To note at the Council Meeting it was agreed a meeting be arranged
with the Town Clerk, Councillor Huitson and DTA to resolve this
matter and arrangements were being made to arrange this meeting.

33. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF THE 14TH JULY, 28TH JULY & 25TH AUGUST 2011 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed. There were several queries on the payments and it was **RECOMMENDED:-**
- (i) **that these items be clarified with the Leader;**
 - (ii) **a review be undertaken of financial regulations and the procedures for awarding minor works, (a Select Tender list/approved contractor list) and also reporting from the Finance Sub Committee;**
 - (iii) **an up to date budget monitoring report be prepared for consideration by the Finance/Budget Working Party established to consider the budget for 2011/12, comprising of the Chairs of all Major Committees.**

34. DURHAM ASSOCIATION NEWS – ISSUE 36, JULY 2011

Members were circulated with a copy of this publication.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

35. LARGER LOCAL COUNCILS FORUM – SEDGEFIELD, 19TH AUGUST 2011

Members were circulated with details of this meeting and with the minutes form the meeting held in May 2011.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

36. NALC MAILBOX

- (i) Localising Support for Council Tax in England
- (ii) E Bulletins 22nd July, (including item on New powers to drive community services) & 19th August 2011
- (iii) DIS Extra
 - Issues 762 (including item on Cameron to give new powers to Parishes; new Inspiring Communities guide launched; new report reveals rural doubts about Big Society),

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- Issue 763, (including Local Councils to get new powers to drive community services; Audit Commission had to go),
- Issue 764, (dramatic simplification of planning guidance to encourage sustainable growth; Audit Commission to outsource audit practice next year; first every national play survey)
- Issue 765, (including support vital for community assets; green light for Audit Commission's audit firm; area based budgeting)
- Issue 766, (including £363m fund for rural broadband; call for evidence on bus services; communities can help safeguard libraries; £1.9 to support recession-hit communities)

Members were advised of receipt of these documents/publications

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

37. STOCKTAKE SUMMARY SHEETS 5th JULY & 2ND AUGUST 2011

Members were circulated with a copy of stock take sheets for the three licensed premises belonging to the Town Council. Reference was made to an item on the waste sheet for Shotton Hall where a customer had refused to pay for his drink.

RECOMMENDED that the stock take reports be accepted, although Members felt these reports should be enhanced/made clearer to provide information that would better assist Members in proper and full examination of the stock takes. FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the price of soft drinks be considered further at the Parks & Cemetery Committee.

38. SHOWMENS GUILD ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 9TH NOVEMBER 2011, RAMSIDE HALL HOTEL

It was reported that invitations had been received for the Mayor, Leader and Town Clerk to attend this event.

RECOMMENDED that authority be given for those invited to attend on the Town Council's behalf, it being noted that a further

invitation may be received in due course for the Co Ordinator.

39. POLICY ON CORKAGE

Consideration was given to a letter received and the report prepared by the Assistant Facilities Manager, The Pavilion. Following considerable discussion it was **RECOMMENDED that the verbal corkage offer made by the Facilities Manager. It was stressed that this was a one off exception to normal practice and was being sanctioned as a gesture of good faith, for this occasion only. FURTHER RECOMMENDED a further report be prepared by the Facilities Manager, (Shotton Hall and Hill Rigg House), for consideration at the next meeting, on the issue of corkage at all of the Town Council's licensed premises.**

40. REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE – TO ADVISE ON CHANGE OF ROUTE

Members were advised that the Royal British Legion were to use a shorter route for their Parade this year commencing at the Central Club.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

41. THE 2011/12 GUIDE TO PETERLEE – ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY

Consideration was given to supporting this publication at a cost of £385.00 plus vat.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council not take up this advertising.

42. LAND AT HELFORD ROAD

Members were circulated with a letter of reply received from Durham County Council following the enquiry made about surplus land at Helford Road.

RECOMMENDED that a further letter of enquiry be sent to Durham County Council with a request for the reasons behind they not wishing to lease or sell the subject area of land to the Town Council.

43. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED, THE COMMITTEE PASSED THE FORMAL RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING, PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT, 1961 & THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.

At this point in the meeting a Local Member asked what sanctions were in place should a Member or Officer break the confidentiality required following this resolution being passed.

The Town Clerk assured that this was to be the subject of a Special Meeting where the Code of Conduct for Officers and Members would be discussed and reviewed. The Code would include clear and appropriate sanctions for any breach of the Code, including any breach of confidentiality.

44. RECOVERY OF BAD DEBTS

Details were given on the progress with pursuing two bad debts through Hartlepool County Court and the further options open to the Town Council.

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RECOMMENDED that these debts be pursued through the bailiffs and plenary powers be granted for this to be done immediately.