

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE
ON MONDAY 2ND JUNE 2014

PRESENT: COUN C BATY (CHAIR)

Mesdames:- L Wood, K Liddell, V Watson, S Simpson
& M J Thompson

Messrs:- R Curtis, W M Jeffrey, J Alvey, C Robbins, D Sillito,
S Miles, A Watson, C J Metcalfe, C Watkins, L Cook & R Kyle

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

Councillor R Curtis declined to take the Chair and it was agreed that the Vice Chairman, Councillor C Baty take the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted and accepted on behalf of Councillors G Cowie, (ill), P Price, (ill), D & M Milsom, (on holiday). A letter was read out from the Mayor and his wife, Councillor Milsom offering their apologies to the meeting.

2. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, a copy of which had been previously circulated, were approved.
Stadt Nordenham – Show Weekend

It was reported the invitation had been declined.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

3. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF THE 24TH APRIL & 22ND MAY 2014 copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved.

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PROTECTION TEAM – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR APRIL 2014

The Peterlee Area Performance Report for February 2014 was circulated for each Member's information.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

5. DURHAM POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER, PCC NEWSLETTER MAY 2014

A copy of this newsletter was circulated to each Member. It was asked that these be circulated to Members as soon as they were received and this was agreed.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

6. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID

Members were advised that the first asset of community value had been listed by Durham County Council and this was the first of what could be many assets which are of community value in the County. It was explained the listing of an asset did not mean the Parish Council had to purchase the property but it did give six weeks to express an interest in purchasing it and then balance of six months to raise the money if they were interested in purchasing it. It was hoped that other parishes would follow Sedgfield Town Council's lead and contact the County Council to express an interest in having valuable community assets in our area listed/registered just in case they are ever put up for sale. Reference was made to early discussions with the County Council on the White house at Eden Lane.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

7. LARGER LOCAL COUNCIL FORUM, MINUTES OF THE MEETNG OF THE 14 FEBRUARY 2014

The contents of the minutes of this meeting were noted. Councillor Jeffrey was pleased to report there had been a very positive mention for Peterlee and its work with Sports Development.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

8. CASTLE EDEN DENE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE – JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – EDUCATION OFFICER’S REPORT

Members were circulated with a copy of this report which had been forwarded by one of the Town Council’s representatives on this Committee. It was reported the Education Officer hoped to increase the number of schools visiting the Reserve form schools in Peterlee.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

9. DURHAM ASSOCIATION NEWS, ISSUE 47

Members were circulated with issue number 47 of the Durham Association News for their information.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

10. POLICIES FOR YOUR COUNCIL –ADVICE

Members were circulated with information received form CDALC by way of a reminder of the essential, recommended and good to have in place policies to assist with the smooth running of Councils. It was confirmed that all of the mandatory polices were in place, albeit some of them required updating and review, and most of the other policies were also in place. Councillor Jeffrey asked if it would be helpful for a small sub group to be formed to assist Officers in reviewing these policies and hi lighting particular issues. The Deputy Town Clerk felt

that this was not necessary and Officers were already well supported in this area of work by their professional bodies and various associations where policies were constantly reviewed and updated.

RECOMMENDED this be considered further at the Council Meeting.

11. ELECTRONIC SUMMONS

It was reported the Government had written to NALC confirming their intention to clarify rules on sending agendas electronically to councillors. NALC had long pressed for this change to help parish & town councils modernise how they operate.

Members made reference to the comments made by Brandon Lewis MP on this matter and to their concerns at where the funding to achieve such measures would come from. Councillor Watson made reference to government statistics on households having access to the internet with 3 in 4 adults in Great Britain using the internet every day. It was suggested by Councillor Jeffrey that he ask for this to be discussed at the next meeting of the NALC Executive and it was agreed this Council should take the lead on this issue, and a letter be sent to the Local MP asking for his support also.

RECOMMENDED the course of action as suggested in raising this at National level with NALC and with the MP be followed.

12. NO STOPPING ON ENTRANCE MARKINGS – OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Comments from the Town Council were invited on this proposed Order.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted and no comments or objection be made.

13. B1320 BURNHOPE WAY, EASTBOUND CLOSURE

Members had been previously circulated with this information relating to a recent road closure. Councillor Watson expressed his concerns that whilst the road was closed from the early hours of the morning, works did not commence until nearly mid day and the closure had caused considerable disruption to both residents and visitors to the Town. He was concerned that there were further closures planned for the site.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted and further details be awaited on future closures.

14. CHANGES TO OAKERSIDE DRIVE POST OFFICE - UPDATE

Members were circulated with further details of changes that were to take place with this Post Office where feedback was invited. Members were asked to contact the Office with any comments/feedback so that it could be relayed to the Area Manager.

RECOMMENDED any comment be given to the Office as soon as possible.

15. ANNUAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2014

Members were circulated with a copy of the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014. It was asked as they had just been given to Members at the meeting, they be placed on the Agenda for the Parks & Cemetery Meeting on 9th June to allow Members the opportunity to fully examine the accounting statements submitted.

The Deputy Town Clerk asked for authority to act as the RFO for the purposes of the submission of the Annual Return to the Town Council's Auditors should the Town Clerk not be available at the time of a submission, (14th July 2014), and this approval was given.

Members were also circulated with and gave approval to Sections 1, Accounting Statements & 2 Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return.

RECOMMENDED approval be given for the Deputy Town Clerk to act as RFO, if necessary, for the purposes of the submission of the Annual Return and Sections 1 & 2 be approved.

16. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS & STANDING ORDERS

The update of Financial Regulations & Standing Orders in accordance with the NALC model, had been circulated to each Member.

Within the Financial Regulations the values needed to be set that were appropriate for this Council. Whilst accepting these were dynamic documents and would be subject to change as and when statute/regulation dictated, they were accepted in the form submitted,

RECOMMENDED the updated version of the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, be adopted by the Town Council.

17. 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, 1960 & THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.

18. STOCK REPORTS PERIODS ENDING 1ST APRIL & 1ST MAY 2014
(A) Shotton Hall
(B) The Pavilion

Consideration was given to the stock reports for the above period for all of the Town Councils licensed premises. There was comment on one of the wastage reports.

RECOMMENDED that the reports be accepted.

19. SHOW 2014 - CATERING TENDERS

Consideration of the report of the Show Co Ordinator, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was given.

Details of the quotations received from companies for the various units were given.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) that the tender from Unwins Ices from Seaton Carew Company in the sum as detailed in the report, be accepted;**
- (ii) the tender from Company Sweet Treats from South Hetton, in the sum as detailed in the report, be accepted.**
- (iii) the specialty food tender from Ronnies Plaice from Washington, for the amount as detailed in the report, be accepted.**

FUTHER RECOMMENDED the Show Co Ordinator be granted plenary powers to action these tenders immediately.

20. CIVIC CAR CONTRACT

Members were circulated with an offer made by the Town Council's provider of civic transport, Peterlee Executive Cars Ltd.

There was considerable discussion and consideration of this service and reference was made to how a nearby authority had recently dealt with their contract and how this Town Council had gone out to tender and the difficulties experienced in the past. It was felt the offer made was value for money; the service offered for the last four years by this company had been excellent with no issues; the historical difficulties in obtaining this service in the past should be considered along with

the costs of going out to advert; obtaining a comparable level of service had been extremely difficult to achieve. Reference was made to the award of contracts and the Financial Regulations covering this area.

RECOMMENDED Financial Regulation No 11.1 c be waived in this instance and the offer made by Peterlee Executive Cars Ltd, to provide the taxi and civic car contract at the existing rates, as detailed in the offer circulated, upon the award of a further two year contract until April 2015, be accepted.

21. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Members were circulated with details of this request.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.