

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2016

PRESENT: COUN K HAWLEY (CHAIR)

Mesdames:- K Liddell, S Simpson, L M Wood, M A  
Cartwright, S McDonnell & M J Thompson

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

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

**The Chairman advised Members of the committee that part of the  
meeting may be recorded by both audio and video, and it may be that  
photographs were taken.**

103. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been submitted and accepted from Councillor G  
Cowie, (ill).

**RECOMMENDED the Council approve the reason submitted for  
absence received from Councillor Cowie on the grounds given  
above, and his apologies for absence be recorded.**

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

105. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2016 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was approved.
106. SUMMARY INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT, 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2015 – 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2015

Members were circulated with the above financial report for the Town Council. There were several queries, one in relation to the cost of telephones in the Banqueting Suites and another on the cost of licences at Shotton Hall and The Pavilion; these would be reported back on. The Acting Town Clerk identified the reasons behind the wages overspend with the back dated honoraria payment made which covered eleven months of the previous financial period.

**RECOMMENDED the report be accepted and the Member be given the details of the two areas raised, directly.**

107. AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015 – ISSUES ARISING REPORT

A copy of the Issues Arising Report for Peterlee Town Council relating to the Audit for the year ended 31 March 2015, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was considered.

**RECOMMENDED:-**

- (a) it be recognised and addressed as soon as it was possible for the Council to produce a Corporate Plan;**
- (b) all action plans following an internal audit be fully addressed and implemented where appropriate;**
- (c) it be noted that Terms of Reference had been approved for the Governance sub Group and that no committees had delegated powers;**
- (d) it was confirmed that when sub committees make resolutions on behalf of the Council these are agreed by full Council, again noting that there were no delegated powers granted to any sub committees of the Town Council;**
- (e) it be noted there was already a sub committee established to deal with personnel staffing issues of the Town Clerk however**

**Members wished for the Establishment Committee to continue to oversee all policies and procedures which are in place which are connected to the employment of individuals.**

- (f) A review of the Financial Regulations be carried out by the Scrutiny Committee/Sub Group, whilst it was noted that the NALC standard template had been adapted with the appropriate levels for the Town Council's operations included.**

108. NEIGHBOURHOOD PROTECTION TEAM UPDATE – MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT JANUARY 2016

A copy of the monthly performance report for January 2016 was circulated for the information of Members.

**RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.**

109. PUBLICATIONS, MINUTES ETC

- (a) NALC Newsletter
- (b) DIS Extra Issue 877 & 878
- (c) Bulletins on National Developments & Meetings
- (d) Durham Association News, March Newsletter
- (e) Community Safety Fund
- (f) Minutes of the Larger Local Councils Forum, 20 November 2015
- (g) Financial Inclusion
- (h) Draft Larger Local Councils Committee Minutes, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016
- (i) Minutes of the Local Council Working Group of 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015
- (j) NECA Poll & council tax setting
- (k) NALC Benefits of Membership

Members were circulated with extracts of the above documents and updates, with full copies being made available on request.

**RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.**

110. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This item had been requested by the Chair, Councillor Hawley. It was suggested there should be a scrutiny committee to consider all elements of the Council, procurement, tendering, finances, income and expenditure, considering everything in more detail and to consider where savings could be made. In considering this item a Local Member reported she was interested in the role of Town Clerk, and asked did the Town Council want a Town Clerk, and suggested that perhaps the Council may wish to consider a new business model with a person appropriately qualified with for example an MBA. It was agreed the Council needed to consider the role, agree the process all with the advice and guidance of DCC HR as previously agreed. It was asked that this suggestion be feedback to the Officer dealing with the appointment on the Council's behalf.

**RECOMMENDED a Scrutiny committee be established, with Terms of Reference be drafted for consideration and the following Members be appointed to sit on this committee:- L Cook, W M Jeffrey, A Watson, S Miles K Hawley, S McDonnell, M A Cartwright and M J Thompson.**

111. 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.

112. STOCK REPORTS PERIOD ENDING 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016  
(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.

**RECOMMENDED that the reports be accepted.**

113. CCTV THE PAVILION

Members were requested to endorse the action taken in renewing the camera and monitor at this site at the cost as detailed at the meeting.

**RECOMMENDED the action taken in this regard, be endorsed.**

114. COMPLAINT – ALLEGED BREACH OF MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were circulated with a letter received from Durham County Council in this regard. In response the Mayor advised that she felt the meeting was getting out of hand and she simply brought the meeting to order, followed usual procedures and had handled the meeting equally and fairly allowing residents to have their say.

**RECOMMENDED progress be awaited.**

115. INTERNAL AUDIT

(a) Terms of Reference for the Review of the budgetary control system

**RECOMMENDED the Terms of Reference for the review of the budgetary control system for Peterlee Town Council, be accepted.**

(b) Internal Audit report – Budgetary Control – Substantial assurance

**RECOMMENDED the internal auditor’s report on budgetary control, be accepted and the points given in the action plan, that a Corporate Plan be produced, linked to the Medium Term Financial Plan, and the newly established Scrutiny Committee be tasked to consider specific areas of spending, whilst it was noted the auditor commented that it was essential for a Council to have unallocated reserves to ensure that any unforeseen expenditure or loss of income was safeguarded.**

(c) Internal Audit report - Main Accounting – Full assurance

**RECOMMENDED the internal auditor’s report on the main accounting system, given full assurance with no action plan, be accepted.**

(d) Tender - Internal Audit Services

Members gave consideration to the report of the Acting Town Clerk in this regard, a copy of which had been previously circulated to each Member. Members considered the report and asked if contact could be made with Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor as to their internal audit service and details be provided at the Council Meeting.

**RECOMMENDED this matter be considered further at the Council Meeting.**

116. WEB SITE DESIGN & SUPPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Acting Town Clerk in this regard, a copy of which had been previously circulated to each Member. A Local Member expressed a preference for the web site operated by Seaham Town Council, and it was suggested perhaps a member of staff could be trained to upload and design a basic web site. Reference was made to the existing web site and the small yearly cost for Durham County Council to continue to support the web site.

**RECOMMENDED consideration of this matter be deferred.**

117. COSTINGS TO REPAIR THE ROOF OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING AT WOODHOUSE PARK

Members gave consideration to the report received in this regard and there was a lengthy discussion on the matter.

**RECOMMENDED this work be put back out to tender to the three businesses/firms that had submitted a price, and they be requested to provide details of guarantees and insurances etc., asked to price on strictly “like for like” basis and prices for this repair be re considered when received.**

118. TENDERS RECEIVED & REPORTED TO THE SHOW MEETING – 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

**RECOMMENDED the actions taken at the Show Meeting in accepting the various tenders for good and services for the Event, be confirmed, and plenary powers be granted in this regard.**