

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE
ON MONDAY 6TH JUNE 2016

PRESENT: COUN K HAWLEY (CHAIR)

Mesdames:- K Liddell, S Simpson, L M Wood,
M A Cartwright & V Watson

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

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.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been submitted and accepted from Councillors S McDonnell, (work Commitments), C J Robbins, (hospital appointments), G Cowie, (ill), J I Measor, (ill), H Bennett MBE, (ill) and L Cook, (ill).

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the reason submitted for absence received from the Councillors listed, on the grounds given above, and their apologies for absence be recorded.

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

3. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF THE 28TH APRIL & 26TH MAY 2016 copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved.

4. PARKING PROBLEMS – SHOTTON HALL ACADEMY

This item had been referred from the Council Meeting held in May and was a request from County Councillor Joan Maslin for the Town Council to consider a contribution towards a proposal to tarmac the area to the front of Shotton Hall Academy and the grass verges to both sides of Passfield Way, at an estimated cost of £253,270.00. Councillor Maslin had saved £51,000 from her AAP Budget to go towards the works and she asked if the Town Council could look favourably to look to contribute some funds for the project to be either partially or fully completed.

Members commented that when the proposals for the new build Academy were first outlined parking provision had been one of the issues raised by the Town Council. It was felt that Road Safety was a County Council issue and one which they should be addressing outside very school. It had been suggested the income from advertising on the various roundabouts in the Town was supposed to finance tarmac works and works to pot holes etc, and apparently raised £4,000 a month. It was asked could this not be used towards the scheme.

RECOMMENDED this be taken up with Durham County Council and Members be advised of the response.

5. MAYOR'S CHARITY NIGHT

Members were circulated with a letter of thanks and appreciation received from the Macmillan Information and Support Centre, following the Mayor's Charity night where monies raised over the year were distributed.

RECOMMENDED the letter be received and the thanks be noted.

6. PLENARY POWERS FOR SPENDING

This agenda item had been requested by Councillor Hawley, who requested consideration of the reduction of Officers' authority to spend from £500 to £250, (Financial Regulations, No 4.1 budgetary control and authority to spend). There was considerable discussion on all purchases being made wisely and value for money being achieved, a message which the Acting Town Clerk assured was sent out to all staff and would be re iterated at the monthly Management Team meetings.

RECOMMENDED Officers be authorised to spend on items only below £250.00; for any expenditure that was not urgent, a resolution would be required by Council.

7. MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH APRIL, 22ND APRIL, 13TH MAY & 27TH MAY 2016 copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved.

Members were asked to provide feedback or any items they wished for this Working Party to consider.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

8. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS – DRAFT

Members were circulated with a review of the Standing Orders and there were several amendments suggested by the Scrutiny Working Party. Councillor Watson also put forward a proposal regarding the payment of Members Allowances suggesting that should a councillor not attend a meeting for a period of time, their allowance should be stopped.

RECOMMENDED further advice be sought in relation to some of the amendments to the Standing Orders and this be provided for Council. FURTHER RECOMMENDED in principle the Council agree to a Member's Allowance being stopped if after a period of 8 weeks they had not attended a Council meeting, and again advice be sought to ensure that this was acceptable practice.

9. PUBLICATIONS, MINUTES, BULLETINS ETC

- (a) Armed Forces Day – Fly the Flag, 20th June 2016
- (b) Don Robson’s Thanksgiving Service
- (c) Nominations for positions on the CDALC Executive Committee
- (d) DIS Extra Issues 881, 882, 883 & 884
- (e) NALC Newsletters
- (f) Neighbourhood Protection Team, Update, Monthly Performance Report February & March 2016
- (g) Bills Announced in Queen’s Speech 2016
- (h) Care Connect
- (i) ParkThatBike – free cycling parking
- (j) Minutes of the Larger Local Councils Forum of the meeting held on 12 February 2016
- (k) Bulletin on National Developments & Meetings
- (l) Purdah for EU Referendum

Members were circulated with extracts of the above documents and updates, with full copies being made available on request. It was asked how much the annual subscription for CDALC was.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted and Members be advised of the cost of this subscription.

COUNCILLOR W M JEFFREY DECLARED AN INTEREST IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM.

10. MAYOR’S PERSONAL ALLOWANCE

At the meeting held on 26 January 2016, it was agreed the Mayor’s personal allowance would be reduced to £1,500 for 2016/17, with a statement of intent to reduce this to £1,000 in 2017/18. The Mayor’s Civic Budget was halved from £10,000 to £5,000 and the duties would therefore be less/reduced and therefore the personal allowance was reduced. There was discussion on the costs involved in agreeing to take up this role on behalf of the Council and the Town.

Councillor R Curtis and Councillor R Kyle requested that this matter be considered further at the Council Meeting to be held on 20th June

2016 to re consider an increase in the Mayor's Personal Allowance, (previously it had been £2,175.00).

RECOMMENDED this matter be reconsidered at the Council meeting.

11. REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE ONE POINT LAB MEETING

Members were circulated with an invitation for the Town Council to be presented on this organisation.

RECOMMENDED a representative not be elected to One Point at this time.

12. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER FOR THE EAST DURHAM AAP

Members were circulated with a letter of introduction received from Mr Wayne Gibson, Community Development Project Officer for the East Durham Area Action Partnership, who had taken up the post in April 2016, and he welcomed members getting in touch with him and offered to come to a future meeting if requested to.

RECOMMENDED the letter be received and should any issues that were relevant to the AAP arise, Mr Gibson be invited along.

13. CHARING SKILLS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS, 29TH JUNE 2016

Members were advised of details of this learning and development available from NEREO. Members discussed the need for good quality training for Members and it was asked that further details be obtained on the various training that may be available.

RECOMMENDED no places be reserved on this training. FURTHER RECOMMENDED details of all training available for the sector be obtained.

14. REQUESTS FOR A GRANT

Members were advised of the following requests for grants under the new Members grant scheme:-

- (a) Sophie Allen – local gymnast
- (b) The Sunshine Day Nursery
- (c) Oakerside Mother & Toddlers
- (d) Peterlee Youth Centre – All Stars
- (e) Learning Library
- (f) My Sporting Chance Foundation
- (g) Peterlee Helford United FC

RECOMMENDED these request be considered further at the next meeting.

Councillor R Kyle left the meeting at 8.00pm.

15. REQUESTS FOR CONCESSIONARY USE OF FACILITIES, THE PAVILION, PETERLEE HELFORD UNDER 7,8 & 9'S AWARDS EVENING, FRIDAY 10TH JUNE 2016

Members were circulated with a request for concessionary use of the Pavilion for this presentation of Awards Evening.

RECOMMENDED free use of the Pavilion be agreed for this event, and plenary powers be granted in this regard.

16. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (a) Governance Accountability for Local Councils – new edition applicable from 2016/17

Members were circulated with details of the update to the Practioner's Guide to Proper Practices to be applied by smaller authorities in England in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements. Early adoption of the Guide for 2015/16 was on a voluntary Basis and work on the 2017 edition of the Guide which would reflect changes in legislation applying form 2017/18 onwards would be underway shortly with the associated consultation.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted and progress with the 2017 Edition be awaited.

(b) Statement of Accounts for 2015/2016

Members were presented with the statement of accounts prepared for the year ended 31st March 2016. Councillor Watkins asked for his name to be corrected in the accounts.

RECOMMENDED the statement of accounts for Peterlee Town Council for the year ended 31st March 2016, accepted as a true and fair view of the financial position of Peterlee Town Council as at 31st March 2016 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2016.

(c) Annual Audit Return – Sections 1 & 2

Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 was presented for Member's approval, along with Section 2, Accounting Statements for 2015/16 for the Annual return for the external audit.

RECOMMENDED approval be given to these statements and approval be given for the Mayor and Acting Town Clerk to sign them for submission to the Auditors on the Town Councils' behalf.

(d) Summary of Income & Expenditure from 1 April 2015 to the 31 March 2016

Members were circulated with a summary of the income and expenditure for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. The Acting Town Clerk gave a summary of the expected expenditure and income levels, with expenditure being over the budgeted figure by an amount of £135,157.00 and income being £11,531.00 less than expected. It was asked the full costs of the legal fees and associated costs with the recent HR issue be reported to Council.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted. FURTHER RECOMMENDED the full costs of the legal fees and associated costs with the recent HR issue be reported to 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 30TH MARCH & 7TH MAY 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. It was commented that the line cleaning costs for Shotton Hall seemed unusually high. It was assured this would be clarified with the Manager and the Member would be advised as to the reason why.

RECOMMENDED that the reports be accepted.

19. LAND ADJACENT TO 9 MARWOOD GROVE, PETERLEE

Members were circulated with a letter from DCC giving details of a request received to purchase land to be used as a domestic garden.

RECOMMENDED the Ward Members arrange to view the site in question and this be re considered at the Council Meeting.

20. RISK IMPROVEMENT REPORT

Members were circulated with a copy of the report prepared by Zurich Municipal following their Risk Analyst visit to Shotton Hall Civic

Offices and Banqueting Suites. Six Risk Improvement Actions had been identified with critical or importantly requirements with action required by the Target Implementation date shown within the Risk Improvements Report. These had been considered and discussed with the Facilities Team Manager to action.

RECOMMENDED the report be received and the actions identified in the report, be implemented or actioned.

21. THOMPSON v PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Members were advised that this claim was no longer being pursued.

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.

22. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS NOS 30, 31- 32, DECISION NOTICES

Members were circulated with copies of these decision notices where no further action had been recommended.

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.