

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 9TH JANUARY 2017 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT: COUN K HAWLEY (CHAIR)

Mesdames:- S McDonnell, S Simpson, M J Thompson &
V Watson

Messrs:- G L Carne, S Miles, D Sillito, W M Jeffrey,
C Watkins, R J Curtis, R Kyle, J Alvey, C J Metcalfe & 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.**

84. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been submitted and accepted from Councillors K
Liddell, (work commitments), L M Wood, H Bennett, (MBE) and G
Cowie, L Cook & M A Cartwright.

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

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

86. CDALC/NALC MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Councillor David Bell, Chair of CDALC and Mr Steve Ragg, CDALC Executive Officer, to the meeting. Councillor Bell spoke on the advantages of membership of this body, his colleague Steve Ragg ran through some of the benefits including supporting parish and town councils, working closely with the Clerk, offering information, advice and support. 98% of the parishes in the area, (101 of the 103 parishes) were a member of CDALC. CDALC was owned and run by its members, for its members with its main focus being to work with the parish councils and DCC to make life better for people on the county.

The Chair opened the meeting for a short question and answer session and in closing the Chair thanked Councillor Bell and Mr Ragg for coming along to the meeting and reminding the council of the benefits of being a member of the Association.

RECOMMENDED he information given be noted.

87. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINTY MEETING of the 2nd December 2016

The Minutes from this meeting had been circulated to each Member for their consideration and information.

RECOMMENDED the minutes be accepted.

88. 2017/18 BUDGET – KEY PRINCIPLES

The Town Clerk gave a presentation to Members on the 2017/18 Setting out the key principles, financial pressures and opportunities facing the council in setting the 2017/18 budget and precept demand. The presentation included a visual illustration of the budget on a page which highlighted the main budget issues facing the Council in 2017/18. Members discussed various issues relating to the 2017/18 budget during the meeting and asked for further detail of the individual budget headings within the 2017/18 budget.

RECOMMENDED the contents of the presentation be noted and the detailed draft budget be considered further at the Parks & Cemetery Meeting to be held on Monday 16th January 2017.

89. KLASSIK IM PARK

Members were asked to consider the invitation to attend this event on Saturday 12th August 2017, Nordenham. It was felt that should anyone wish to take part, they do so at their own cost.

RECOMMENDED the Council not be represented officially at the Event, and Town Council staff or Members wishing to go along could do so at their own cost.

90. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 15TH DECEMBER 2016 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was approved.

91. CHEQUE AUTHORISATION PROCESS

This Motion had been submitted by Councillor Thompson and she spoke to Council on her views on the subject.

It was noted the *'Legislative Reform (Payments by Parish Councils, Community Councils and Charter Trustees) Order 2014,'* had removed the statutory requirements for 2 Members signatures on cheques or other forms of payment authorisation. However, it was also noted that the Council's Financial Regulations, revised and adopted by Council in October 2016, had continued the practice of 3 Members authorisation, on the basis of additional financial controls. The Town Clerk also advised the Council's Internal Auditors had carried out a review of Financial Controls in 2016 and had not raised the current practice of 3 Members signatures on cheques as an issue.

Members were referred to sections 6 & 7 of the Council's Financial Regulations. Members felt that the Financial Regulations currently in

place were robust and served the Council well and they had no wish to amend or change them in accordance with the suggested motion.

Members noted that the Town Clerk was currently pursuing a move to full internet banking, and that this would facilitate a move away from cheque payments to electronic transfer.

There motion was put to a vote and defeated.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council continue to use the Finance Sub Committee to authorise payments and Financial Regulations not be altered.

92. PUBLICATIONS, MINUTES, BULLETINS ETC

- (a) Durham Association News, December 2016
- (b) Public Service Ombudsman & Draft Bill
- (c) No extension of referendum principles
- (d) The Casey review
- (e) National Developments & Bulletins
- (f) NALC – Grants & Funding Bulletin
- (g) DIS Issue 897 & 898 – copies available

Members were requested to note the information listed and points of particular interest were given at the meeting.

RECOMMEDED the information contained in the bulletins and circulars be noted.

93. REQUESTS FOR A GRANT/CONCESSIONARY USE

- (a) Lowhills Bowling Club

Councillor Alvey advised that he had been instructed by this group to withdraw their application for funding.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

(b) Letters of thanks & appreciation, Acre Rigg Academy & All Stars

Members were circulated with expressions of thanks and appreciation following recent grants being awarded to these groups/clubs/organisations.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

(c) Joan Bailey MBE – Request for concessionary use of the Banqueting Suites, 9th January 2017

Members were advised the Mayor had agreed to use one of her concessionary uses for this event. Several Members felt that this was not necessary and that the Council should grant free use for this event as a mark of respect for the work and commitment Joan Bailey had given to residents of the Town.

RECOMMENDED free use of the Banqueting Suites be agreed for the wake held to honour Joan Bailey MBE at Shotton Hall Banqueting Suites.

94. RESIDENT EQUITY OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC PURSE FOR LEGAL FEES

A verbal report on access to s137 funding was given by Councillor Thompson.

Members noted that without further detail as to who specifically wanted the funding, what for and for how much, they were unable to properly consider the request.

RECOMMENDED that Councillor Thompson use the Members Initiative Fund grant application form as a template should the residents she spoke about wish to submit an application for s137 grant funding to the Town Council.

95. POLICIES

- (i) Officers Code of Conduct
- (ii) Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace

The Deputy Town Clerk gave Members a verbal update on progress with policies.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

96. LOCAL COUNCIL ADVISORY SERVICE SEMINARS 2017 – SHOTTON HALL WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2017

Members were advised of the invitation to attend this seminar and asked if they were interested in attending, to advise the office asap. This was also to be considered at the next SMT meeting and places reserved.

RECOMMENDED approval be given for places as required to be reserved on this seminar.

97. 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.

98. STAFF CHARITABLE DONATIONS VIA PAYROLL

Members considered a verbal report given by Councillor Thompson where she made reference to staff making charitable donations via payroll.

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted, however the Town Clerk clarify the process for staff charitable donations via payroll, with the information being forwarded to staff.

99. PETERLEE SHOW 2017 – SATURDAY NIGHT BANDS

Members had been circulated with a report of the Show Co ordinator.

RECOMMENDED this matter be considered at the Show Working Party and then be confirmed at the Parks & Cemetery Committee.