

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ONLINE USING VIDEO CONFERENCING TECHNOLOGY

ON MONDAY 18TH JANUARY 2021 at 6.00PM

PRESENT:- COUN T DUFFY (CHAIR)

Mesdames:- S Simpson, K Liddell, K J Duffy, L Fenwick, K Hawley, M A Cartwright & D Howarth

Messrs:- S Miles, G Johnson, G Carne, R Moore, S Franklin, S D McGlen, A Wilkinson, C Watkins & A Watson

107. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were offered to the meeting.

108. To receive declarations of interest

Members were reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. None were offered. **RESOLVED the information given, be noted.**

109. Police Update

The Chair welcomed the new Neighbourhood Police Sergeant covering Peterlee, Horden and Blackhall, T/Sgt 2722 Charlotte Burn. T/Sgt Burn reported she had been working in the town for two months and appreciated the opportunity to join the meeting, and she invited feedback Councillors. Several issues were discussed including a quad bike using Woodhouse Park, the annual school leavers' party, and frustration with lack of feedback from calls to 101. She then provided a brief update on issues the Neighbourhood Team had been dealing with. She thanked the Council for the opportunity to join the meeting and offered to attend/join future meetings. **RESOLVED the Council's thanks be recorded for the Police attendance.**

110. To Approve the Minutes of the last meeting of the 21st December 2020
The minutes of the previous meeting were attached for consideration and approval, subject to the time Councillor Watkins left the meeting being amended to read 8.55pm. **RESOLVED the minutes be accepted and signed as a true and correct record.**
111. The Minutes of the Resources Meeting of the 11th January 2021
The minutes of the meeting of this meeting had been circulated for Member's information. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**
112. COVID-19 Update
The Town Clerk gave a verbal update to Members on the Council's response to the COVID-19 situation. He confirmed that there had been no further confirmed cases of COVID 19 in the workforce, whilst there had been several tests taken. He gave an update with the Shielding Support Scheme and the fantastic appreciation being expressed by those receiving the telephone calls and care packages. He confirmed that the next round of food and support packages were due to go out that week. Changes to regulations and the roll out of the vaccination were eagerly awaited. **RESOLVED the information given, be noted.**
113. Town Council Draft Budget 2021/22 and Precept Demand
Members were requested to consider the draft budget for 2021/22 and agree the level of precept to be set for 2021/22 and the report of the Clerk had been previously circulated to each Member.

In considering the budget the Clerk stressed the Council were going to have to make significant decisions in order to address the deficit budget over the next year, either increasing income and/or decreasing expenditure. A surplus budget would need to be set to contribute back into reserves to return them to an acceptable/prudent level.

The Resources Committee had previously considered the competing priorities of protecting reserves and protecting local residents from increased charges. Members of the committee expressed a concern that the current harsh economic climate and likely problems in the global, national and local economy due to the ongoing COVID crisis put additional pressures on the Council to avoid increasing charges to Peterlee residents. The Committee resolved to recommend to Council that a 0% precept 'freeze' be provided for 2021/22, and this was debated by Council before it was

RESOLVED:

- (i) the Peterlee Town Council outline budget for 2021/22 as detailed in this report be approved; and

- (ii) the precept figure for 2021/22 be set at £1,294.911.44, equivalent to a Band D Council Tax figure of £287.56 - a 0% increase from 2020/21

Councillor Kyle joined the meeting at 7.00pm.

114. Updated Policy

The following policy was for consideration, approval and adoption by Peterlee Town Council and was an updated and reviewed version rather than a new policy:-

- PTC Annual Leave Policy <https://bit.ly/3sbC8f8>

RESOLVED the policy be approved for immediate adoption by the Town Council.

115. Exclusion of the Press & Public

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the 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, Part 1, paragraphs 11.

116. Spokesperson of the North East Party's Report

At the last meeting, whilst appreciating there was investment needed to carry out at least essential repairs for the building to operate as a community building, Members felt a future operating model should be considered and the Clerk asked Councillors to consider what this would be and what their thoughts and feedback were. At this meeting Councillor A Watson said he felt optimistic with the roll out of the vaccine which he felt was amazing and one of the best in Europe. With this in mind he suggested facilities at Shotton Hall should be advertised and bookings be made. The Clerk advised that whilst anything was possible he would be reluctant to advertise unless there was full business plan/operating model on how Shotton Hall would be run. **RESOLVED the Clerk work with the Facilities Manager to prepare a basic concept and pricing structure for Shotton Hall Banqueting Suites and report back to the next meeting.**

Councillor Watson encouraged everyone to stay safe, and sent out a huge thankyou to everyone involved in delivering the vaccine, he said the NHS were fantastic. He asked everyone to stay safe again and his hopes the figures would improve and we could get back to normal soon. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

117. Spokesperson of the Labour Political Party's Report

Councillor Fenwick commented it was great news the vaccine was being rolled out so quickly. She felt there was still a long way to go and we were facing difficult times ahead. She felt things would be tough for a new council and councillors with times of austerity ahead and she wished them luck. She suggested that parents involved in home schooling should hang in there and do their best. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

118. CCTV

This item had been withdrawn and would be re submitted to the next meeting.

In closing the Mayor thanked one of our councillors who was involved in doing the paperwork involved to deliver the Covid vaccines and this appreciated was echoed by all present.