

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2023 at 6.30PM

PRESENT: - Cllr A Laing (Chair)

M McCue, S Simpson, R Moore, J Black, D Hawley, K Hawley, R Scott, D Howarth, M A Cartwright & M Sanderson

65. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were offered from Councillors K Duffy, T Duffy, R Burnip, A Stockport & K Lidell. **RESOLVED Council note the apologies that had been submitted.**

66. Public Participation Session

There were several members of the public present at the meeting representing the Lowhills Road Leisure Gardens site. Their spokesperson circulated a list of the gardeners' concerns relating to a recent spate of crime and vandalism at the site. Following questions from Members, the Clerk proceeded to respond to the points raised. Assurances were given that an on-site meeting was to be held soon with the Police to make progress with some of the issues. The group thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to come along to the meeting and for them listening to their concerns. **RESOLVED the information given, be noted.**

67. Lowhills Road allotments - vandalism and thefts

This item had been requested by Councillor Rob Moore and in the public open session the council discussed the issue of vandalism and thefts from the allotments at Lowhills Road. It was suggested CCTV and security lighting might help with the problem and that further information and pricing should be sought by council officers. **RESOLVED the site meeting be held with the Police and Community Safety Team and a further report be prepared for options to improve the security at the site.**

68. To receive declarations of interest

Members were reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. No interests were declared.

69. To Approve the Minutes of the last meeting of the 25th September 2023
The minutes of the previous meeting were attached for consideration and approval as a true and correct record subject to Councillor R Scott being shown as in attendance. **RESOLVED the minutes be approved and duly signed.**
70. Notes of the Finance Sub Committee of the 25th September 2023
Members confirmed and endorsed the resolution of the Finance Sub Committee to approve BACS payments paid.
71. The Minutes of the Community & Environment Meeting held on Monday 9th October 2023
The notes of this meeting were attached for information. **RESOLVED the minutes be noted.**
72. The notes of the Scrutiny Meeting held on Monday 16th October 2023
The notes of this meeting were attached for information. **RESOLVED the contents be noted.**
73. External Audit for 2022/23 completion
The Clerk presented the meeting with a summary of the feedback received from the External Auditor on the 2022/23 AGAR. **RESOLVED the notice of completion of the 2022/23 Audit from the Town Council's external auditor, be accepted.**
74. East Durham AAP Neighbourhood Budget Funding
(a) Santa's Wish/Toy Appeal
(b) Peterlee's Unsung Heroes
The Deputy Town Clerk provided details of these two applications for grant funding via the East Durham AAP. **RESOLVED the applications be supported with the match funding from PTC and progress with the grant funding applications, be awaited.**
75. Policies
Members considered and reviewed the Flexible Working Policy that was discussed and recommended for approval at the Scrutiny Committee meeting of 16th October 2023. **RESOLVED the flexible working policy be approved and adopted with immediate effect.**

76. Circus Eden Lane 2024

Members were asked to consider the request from Planet Circus to use the site at Eden Lane on 2-9th June 2024. This circus had been very well received by the community in the past and it was **RESOLVED that permission be granted for the use of land at Eden Lane in June 2024 the week in June.**

77. Budget Setting Priorities

This item had been referred from the Scrutiny Meeting held on 16 October 2023, to further consider future service provision by PTC. The Clerk provided a summary of the Council's budget, reserves and precept costs since 2016 and highlighted the fact that the Council's household precept and annual expenditure are both substantially lower 'in real terms' (ie after inflation) compared to 2016 levels. The Clerk highlighted a number of budget pressures facing the Council next year, including the proposed reduction of grant by Durham County Council and also general inflationary pressures. It was agreed a series of workshops be arranged to make progress on the new budget, with the first informal meeting of members agreed for Friday 27th October 2023. **RESOLVED this course of action be agreed.**

78. Spokesperson of the Independent Party's Report

Councillor K Hawley reported the Warm Welcome Café hub at Shotton Hall had now closed having utilised its grant funding. She thanked the volunteers and staff who had helped to make it a success. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

79. Spokesperson of the North East Party's Report

Councillor Cartwright reported on visitors being invited into the newly refurbished Leisure Centre. She reported on tinned vegan and vegetarian food being donated by Heather Mills and assured she would provide the telephone number for Members to make contact should they have groups/organisations that might make use of this. In closing she advised that the Peterlee Care Home at Westcott Road was to hold 5th November celebrations. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

At this point Members were advised that the Hearts of Oak had informed that the Council that they had decided to withdraw their proposal for a firework display, and had thanked everyone at PTC for their help and support in trying to make this event happen.

80. Spokesperson of the Labour Political Party's Report

Councillor R Scott reported the Winter Warmer café at the Methodist Church was still going well with 20-30 people regularly attending. He reported that the Mayor's Civic Events were going well and he encouraged more Councillors to take part in them. In

closing he reported how pleased he was with the recent by-election results around the country. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**