

## PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Town Council** meeting held on **Monday 1st December 2025** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

**Present:** Councillor R. Moore (Mayor) and Councillors P. Brown, D Burrell, P Cartwright, B Fishwick, K. Hawley, D. Howarth, A. Laing, I. Pygall, L Sanders, S. Simpson, and D. Wright.

**Also Present:** Ian Hall (Chief Officer and Town Clerk), Deborah Woodhall (Resources Manager), and David Anderson (Locum Democratic Services Manager) and Louise Hudson (Democratic Services Assistant).

### **C.131/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Black, M A Cartwright, M-L. Franklin, S. Franklin, D. Hawley, D. Meadows, H. Pygall, M. Tough, E. Sanders and M Sanderson.

**RESOLVED:** That the apologies be noted.

### **C.132/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

### **C.133/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No Public were present.

### **C.134/25 MONTHLY UPDATES FOR DURHAM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Scott Woodhouse was not able to attend the meeting and had provided a written report, which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The report referred to recent parking issues at Shotton Academy, school and A19 junction.

Councillor Steven Franklin was unable to attend the meeting and had also submitted a written report to update members on recent parking issues. He also advised that there had been concerns and rumours that boarded up shops in the town centre may be converted into flats or HMOs. Cllr Franklin reported that no planning applications had been submitted. He was awaiting a response from Praxis about their intentions for the units.

Members reiterated their cordial invitation for all County Councillors to attend Peterlee Town Council meetings so that members could work together effectively to resolve issues affecting our communities. A standing item would continue to be included on the agenda for the first meeting of the month to receive updates from County Councillor, but they were welcome to attend all meetings.

**RESOLVED:** That the invitation be noted.

## **C.135/25 MINUTES**

- a. Council Meeting held on 17th November 2025

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the above meeting be approved.

## **C.136/25 COMPLETION OF THE 2024/25 EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to inform Members that the External Auditor, Forvis Mazars LLP, had completed the limited assurance review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 and confirms that the Council's financial management arrangements and governance statements for 2024/25 meet the expected standards.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the completion of the audited AGAR be noted.
  2. That Members are aware that the Council has used a gov.uk domain, with generic email addresses as well as staff email addresses for many years.
  3. That the publication of the completion documents on the Council's website be noted.

## **C.137/25 INITIAL DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to provide Members with an outline draft budget for the 2026/27 financial year based on the latest information, particularly Durham County Council (DCC) intention to withdraw the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant entirely from 2026/27. The outcome of the Member budget workshop held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 has been used to draft an initial balance budget for the forthcoming year.

Additional information relating to this item, which had been received from the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) after the Agenda had been issued, was circulated at the meeting. This included reference to a recent meeting attended by Councillor Nicola Lyons, Durham County Council Portfolio Holder for Communities and Civic Resilience, regarding the proposal to withdraw LCTRS grants to parish and town councils.

Members were advised that Councillor Lyons had urged all councils to respond to the current budget consultation.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That Members respond to the DCC budget consultation.
  2. That a further Budget Setting Workshop be arranged on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm.

## **C.138/25 EVENTS AT SHOTTON HALL**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to seek approval from Members to utilise the Brandling Suite function room (within Shotton Hall) for Council events while the building remains in the Council's ownership.

**RESOLVED:** That approval be given for use of the Brandling Suite for council events while the building remains in Council ownership.

**C.139/25 UPGRADE TO BUILDING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (BMS) CONTROLS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to seek approval for the upgrade and replacement of the existing Building Management System (BMS) controls at The Pavilion to improve energy efficiency, operational control, and reliability.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That approve the upgrade to the Building Management System at The Pavilion at a cost of £6,635.
  2. That the full amount be funded from reserves.

**C.140/25 PROVISION OF GARDENING AND LANDSCAPING SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to seek Members' consideration of the proposal for the Town Council to offer gardening and landscaping services to residents, community groups, and local organisations on a cost recovery or commercial basis, utilising existing staff expertise and equipment where capacity allows.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Town Council explores the potential to offer gardening and landscaping services to the public and community organisations.
  2. That the work be developed as part of the Council's wider Service Direct initiative aimed at increasing revenue and making best use of internal resources.

**C.141/25 PURCHASE OF FLAGS AND FLAGPOLES**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to seek Member approval for the purchase of flags and flagpoles further to the Council's previous resolution (Minute C.68/25) to install flagpoles and fly the Union Flag and Cross of St George across Council buildings and sites.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That Approve the purchase of 8 flags and 7 flagpoles at a total cost of £2,672.33, based on the lowest quotation (aluminium option).
  2. Approve that the total cost is funded from General Reserves.
  3. Delegate authority to the Chief Officer & Town Clerk to proceed with the procurement and installation once confirmation is received.