

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ONLINE USING VIDEO CONFERENCING TECHNOLOGY

ON MONDAY 26th APRIL 2021 at 6.00PM

PRESENT:- COUN T DUFFY (CHAIR)

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

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

Prior to the start of the meeting, as it was the final one of the current council, the Chairman thanked Members, saying it had been a pleasure working with them all, he referred to the e mail circulated on behalf of Councillor McGlen and he thanked him for this and said he echoed his sentiments. He commented it had been a big task and felt there was a big task ahead.

163. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were offered by Councillor A C Long to the meeting.

164. Public Participation Session

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

Whilst there were no members of the public present the Chair wished to clarify several matters that had been taken up by residents with him recently, and he asked the Clerk to confirm the answers:

- Shotton Hall has not been sold nor has a decision been made to sell it
- The Council is not bankrupt
- Wages are being paid from the Council's ongoing budget
- At the end of 2020/21 financial year the Council's reserves are approximately £390,000

- The Town Council has reduced or frozen the Town Council element of the precept demand for local residents every year for the last four financial years, including the 2021/22 financial year 'precept freeze'

165. Police Update

The Chair offered apologies from the Neighbourhood Police Sergeant covering Peterlee, Horden and Blackhall, T/Sgt 2722 Charlotte Burn and her report was given verbally to the meeting by the Clerk.

A Local Member again expressed his frustration with the use of the 101 Police reporting telephone number, and the live chat service. The Chair reported issues with a fire near to the Thorntree Gill leisure garden site. **RESOLVED the report be noted.**

166. 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 had been received.

167. To Approve the Minutes of the last meeting of the 22nd March & Special Meeting held on 1st April 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting and Special Meeting were attached for consideration and approval. **RESOLVED the minutes be accepted and signed as a true and correct record.**

168. Continuation of online/hybrid meetings by Town Council

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk to review the use of online meetings by the Council and to consider revising the Council's Standing Orders to specifically allow for hybrid/online meetings and live streaming of meetings to the public. **RESOLVED this be considered further by the new Council in June 2021.**

169. Acceptance of apologies for Council Members in relation to the COVID pandemic

Council were asked to review the Council's position of accepting apologies from Council Members who were unable to attend Council meetings due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. **RESOLVED this be considered further by the new Council in June 2021.**

170. Live Streaming of Council Meetings on social media

The report of the Democratic Services Officer requesting member's consideration of live streaming the monthly Council Meeting was considered and it was **RESOLVED this be considered further by the new Council in June 2021.**

171. COVID-19 Update

The Council received an update from the Chief Officer on the Council's response to the COVID-19 situation. The Clerk reported the Council was returning to business as usual with the Bistro re launch and the enquiries for Shotton Hall being generated into bookings. He wished to reflect now on the Council's response to COVID-19 along with the work of this council over its term of 4 years. Santa's Wish had been a huge success along with the Shielding Support Service project that had delivered thousands of care packages and made thousands of befriending telephone calls to local vulnerable residents. The Town Council had achieved the Investors In People standard, a council wide staffing re structure had been completed, new apprenticeship placements had been created and the Kickstart Youth Employment scheme supported. The Council had been awarded Green Flag status for its cemetery at Eden Lane, and gained substantial assurance for its internal audit systems. The parks and play areas in the Town opened up on a 24/7 basis, and there had been substantial investment in most of the Town's play areas, fencing had been installed at Lowhills Road and Helford Road, protecting residents and the open spaces. A new community building had been built at Thorntree Gill Leisure Gardens Site, fitted with state of the art photo voltaic panels and other green initiatives. Leases had been entered into with CALM CIC and the Rugby Club. The Council had supported the cost of a support worker for the CAB service, youth provision via Groundwork and work and development of the Woodhouse park Community Garden. Two Christmas trees were now provided for the residents to enjoy, events such as the Young Heroes awards ceremony, Soap Box Derby, Family Fun Days, Armed Forces Day, two 'Fake Festivals', along with other annual events as the Show and Fireworks had taken place, where possible. This had been his first Council as its Chief Officer and he expressed his tremendous thanks and respect for the Councillors that had served during this Council term. Members in reply thanked the Clerk and his staff. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

172. Updated Policy

The updated Redundancy Policy had been submitted for consideration, approval and adoption by Peterlee Town Council. **RESOLVED the policy be approved and adopted.**

173. Notice of Motion

Councillor L Fenwick has submitted the following notice of motion for consideration:-

Abandoned Shopping Trolleys

"There has been a noticeable rise in the number of shopping trolleys around the town lately. I was recently alerted to the issue by two of our Dene House ward residents. They both reported separate incidences of shopping trolleys abandoned in the O'Neill drive area and along Manor Way. I request that we as a council contact the Asda Store and

also the new Lidl and Home Bargains stores at the retail park and ask them to better secure their trolleys especially on an evening. The abandoned trolleys are making our town look neglected. I am aware that there are tighter security measures the stores can take as seen in other towns and I urge this council to support the motion”.

The Clerk advised the Town Council was already working with Trolley wise on the collection and removal of trolleys around the Town. Members offered various suggestions and following discussion it was **RESOLVED a letter be sent to all major retailers in the Town that operated a trolley system to seek their help and support in stopping their trolleys being mis used and abandoned. FURTHER RESOLVED a report be made to a future meeting with options and recommendations on how to tackle this problem.**

174. Code of Conduct Complaint Decision Notice COM 336

The Clerk confirmed the Decision Notice in respect of Code of Conduct complaint ref COM 336 in relation to Cllr C Watkins. Councillor Watkins apologised for his breach of the code of conduct. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

175. Purchase of New Tractor

The report of the Parks Manager seeking approval for the purchase of a new tractor was considered. **RESOLVED the Council approve the purchase on the basis of the grant approval letter that PTC received from DCC on 20th April 2021. The NHB grant award was for £23,394.55 and this would leave a balance of £6,575.45 to pay from the town council's budget.**

176. Emergency Lighting at the Pavilion Sports & Community Centre

The report of the Pavilion Centre Manager recommending the replacement of the emergency lighting system at the Pavilion Sports & Community Centre, was considered.

RESOLVED the Council award the contract for the replacement of emergency lighting at the Pavilion to Harry Burnicle Electrical & Mechanical Contractors of Sunderland, at a cost of £4,906.63 inc VAT, with the £300 for the survey deducted from the contract sum as per the report.

177. Code of Conduct Complaint notification

The Clerk confirmed that the Council had been notified of a new Code of Conduct Complaint in respect of a Member of the Town Council and that the matter had been referred for preliminary investigations. An update would be given when the matter had been resolved. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

178. Spokespersons of the North East Party's Report

Councillors K J Duffy and S McDonnell reported that when you looked back over the list of achievements, whilst last year had been stressful, the Council had still met and that was down to the Council's "can do attitude". They said the Council should be commended for its work in the recent years, and long may it continue. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

179. Spokesperson of the Labour Political Party's Report

Councillor Fenwick said the last four years had gone very quickly, she said it has been a great honour to be elected onto the Town Council and would recommend the role to everyone to do. She said well done to the Council and goodbye to those that were not standing for re election and good luck to those that were. She thanked the staff and her Labour colleagues for electing her as their spokesperson which had meant a lot to her. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

180. 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.

181. Horden Cemetery

The Town Clerk gave an update on the Horden Cemetery dispute, the settlement figure agreed had now been paid and the issue was now resolved. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**