

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Amended - Minutes of a meeting of Bishop Auckland Town Council held on

19th January 2021 at 6.00pm via Zoom

Present: - Cllrs. J Allen (Mayor) L. Chappell, D. Fleming, D. Wilson, L Zair, J Cullen.

In attendance: - Mrs. S. Harris Town Clerk, Ms. C Boylan, Events Officer, Mr N Bryson, Town Team, Mr D Land, Stronger Towns Board.

FC 93.00/2020 - Notice of Meeting – Agreed

FC 94.00/2020 - Agree Notice of Motion - to call the meeting to be held on 15 December 2020.

FC 95.00/2020 - Apologies absence – Cllrs. A Zair and S Zair.

FC 96.00/2020 - Declarations of interest –

FC 97.00/2020 - Minutes – Members approved the Minutes of the Town Council 15 December 2020.

FC 98.00/2020 - Matters Arising – No matters arising.

FC 99.00/2020 - Public Participation – No Members of the public were in attendance.

FC 100.00/2020 Reports

FC 100.01/2020 Stronger Towns Board

David Land Chair of the Stronger Towns Board attended the meeting and updated Members on the development of the bid for to the Stronger Town Programme. The Board have set out a vision for a vision for Bishop Auckland to become a world-class heritage visitor destination of UK national importance. The Bid focuses on 9 projects across the town including:

- Developing new road infrastructure to support Bishop Auckland's development as a World class Heritage Destination
- Creating new workspaces with associated enterprise support
- Developing a Skills and Training Hub - providing a springboard into employment for residents
- Creating a Durham Dales Gateway, through developing the Weardale Railway offer
- Town centre diversification projects
- Infrastructure improvements at Tindale Crescent to address current traffic flows
- Establishing Bishop Auckland as a digital 5G enabled town
- Improving heritage walking and cycling routes, signage, waymarking and interpretation
- Securing a new heritage transport museum

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The Board received 960 responses to their survey on the bid. The bid will be formally submitted at the end of January 2021. Decisions are expected in April/ May 2021. It is a 3-5 Year delivery programme. The Stronger Town Board will oversee the programme.

Questions

Cllr Chappell asked when the car park is built who will own it? David Land responded, Durham County Council will own it.

Cllr Chappell responded – residents have three main issues, with the proposals, the new road bypasses the Town, money is being used to rectify traffic issues at Tindale which had been caused by poor planning by DCC.

David Land - the new road will support The Auckland Project numbers, as it is expecting 1 million in visitors. The idea is that the bypass roads keep the town roads free for local people. He agreed that the road problems at Tindale could have been prevented with better planning but the only way to fix it is to change it.

Cllr Wilson asked if the car park at the Newgate centre would be charged for?

David Land – I don't know, ideally we would have free parking for local people to support the high street. But he doesn't know how or if this could work.

Cllr Cullen – the flow of traffic through the market place and changing it to pedestrianised, is proposed to has it been considered how this will affect traffic on other roads such as Kingsway.

David Land – Yes traffic management and DCC David Wafer are looking into it all. We know it will change things, but it will improve the market place over all.

Cllr Chappell – the bridge at the River is unstable, have adequate surveys been done?

David Land – feasibility has been done, it will be used for pedestrians and not vehicles. Further drilling studies etc are to be undertaken.

Cllr L Zair – the Market Place changes traffic issues will have a significant knock on effect, so this does need addressing.

The Mayor thanked David Land for attending, and he left the meeting.

FC. 100.02/2020 Town Team

Nigel Bryson was in attendance to provide a Town Team Update. The Events team were optimistic that events would run in the Town but being sensible they were not planning anything until the Autumn, and only if guidance allowed.

Advent windows were put in the Newgate Centre for Christmas. Previous Christmas videos were put out, as well as a video in collaboration with Eileen Harrop from the Church.

The WIFI System reported that foot fall had been significantly affected by the November 2020 lockdown.

However when people were allowed to shop etc. people did stay local and numbers increased. At the beginning of January 351,852 people had registered on the system.

The Hording has come down on the Spanish gallery.

The 19.9 million Future High Street Fund is coming to fruition. Nigel explained that he had done an ITV which had aired that day.

Questions

Cllr L Zair – in the interview you said Town Team were leading the way in the regeneration of the town. I feel that it should be the Town Council doing this. The Town Team were born from the Town Council, yet we get no recognition, or involvement in things like this and we should – it looks like we aren't doing anything.

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Cllr Chappell – agreed

Nigel Bryson – fine, go ahead, the Team were established in 2012 to help regenerate the Town and increase the footfall. The Core team and events team were formed to do this. The Team has reps from DCC regeneration etc.

Cllr Zair – Town Council should have more of a leading role, and it was set up by the Town Council with the Mary Portas bid. The Town Council have supported the likes of the wifi too but get no recognition.

Nigel Bryson – the 10K Mary Po rtas fund was the start and the team have developed.

Cllr Allen – I saw the piece and I thought it was very positive. Yes the Town Coucnil funded the Town Team initially, and still supports them. There are lots of volunteers too and it is positive for the town.

Cllr Chappell – I didn't see the interview, however it is state that the Town Council finance the Town Team?

Nigel Bryson – No.

Cllr Allen thanked Mr Bryson for the update, and he left the meeting.

FC.100.3/2020 Durham County Council Report

Cllr Allen updated to say that 5 million had been issued in Business Support Grants of between 100-40K

14 million has been given in business rates grant support

212 pubs, clubs and bars, have been supported.

We want out businesses to survive. Still encouraging people to apply.

FC. 100.4/2020 - Mayors Report – Mayor was formally invited to attend the funeral of veteran Tom Robson who sadly passed away.

FC.101/2020 - Events Update

An events update was presented. It covered a summary of the Christmas event programme which had successfully been delivered despite the coronavirus pandemic and the local lockdowns. An events committee will be called in early February to discuss events moving forward in 2021.

The report requested that the funds from the summer events activities which had not been used for 2020-21 due to the pandemic be rolled forward into the 2021-22 programme to support the Town Hall with their 'through a soldiers eyes' programme. Members agreed to this proposal.

Resolved: Members agreed that £2000 from 2020-21 budget be added to the 2021-22 budget making the allocation 2021-22 year.

FC 102./2020 - Armed Forces Covenant

The Events Officer presented a report on the Armed Forces Covenant.

Resolved: Members agreed to that the Town Council would sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Members agreed that the Town Council would work towards the Bronze Certificate.

FC 103/2020 - Lease of office space at Kingsway – deferred awaiting further information.

FC104/2020 - Finance

FC104.01/2020 - IT System – Finance Software. – Deferred awaiting further information.

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FC104.02/2020 - Budget for 2021-22

The 2021-22 budget as recommended by the finance committee was presented.

Resolved:

- Members agreed to the recommendations of the finance committee and agreed the 2021-22 budget.
- Members agreed to support the 2021 Food Festival, Summer Events at the Town Hall.
- Members agreed that where community donations are made by the Town Council, that an appropriate report back to Members on the use of the donation and the benefit to the organisation will be compulsory.

FC104.03/2020 - Precept 2021-22

A report on the precept proposal for 2021-22 was presented. It proposed a 0% increase in precept for 2021-22.

Resolved:

- Members agreed to the zero increase in Council Tax for 2021-22. Resulting in a precept of £52.10 for a band D Property.

FC104.04/2020 - Community Fund Applications

a. Woodhouse Close Community Centre Van – Update

An update was provided that the paper work had been received and the final amount from the Town Council.

Resolved: Members noted the information.

b. Application from Bishop Auckland Cricket Club

The Clerk advised Members that the Cricket Club had approached looking for funding so they had been directed to the Community Fund.

Resolved: Members the information and looked forward to receiving the application.

c. Lunch food packs support in partnership with Woodhouse Close Community Centre Food bank.

Information and discussion was had regarding the poor quality of food boxes the Government had provided to vulnerable people during the first stage of lockdown three for those in receipt of free school meals. A U-turn had been made and shopping vouchers being provided. However, the food bank is still seeing high numbers of people needing support. Lunches were being provided through some AAP and police funding on a Wednesday.

Cllr Chappell highlighted that some people still didn't know support was available. A gentleman had been in contact with her, as he had no food at all left, and didn't know where to go for support.

Discussion was had and it was agreed that the Town Council would look at how it could support the food bank with promotion to those not on social media etc.

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Resolved: Members agreed that some support for holiday hunger would be considered and asked for further information to be brought to the next meeting.
Member agreed that the Events Officer work with the Foodbank to promote their services to those who may not have access to social media etc.

FC104.05/2020 - Monthly Payments and Cheques

The payments were considered and agreed. Including the purchase of the Charles Arnold Baker Book. Copy of payments agreed attached to the end of these minutes.

Resolved: Members agreed to the payments presented, Including the purchase of the Charles Arnold Baker Book.

FC105/2020 - HR Policies – Deferred

- d. Adoption of Sickness Policy
- e. Other Policies for Staff Handbook

FC106/202 - Correspondence – details of any Correspondence (letters or email received) including:

- NALC Chair's Open Letter to All Councillors
- 105 Year Young Birthday Request
- Licencing Applications to note
- Election Training
- Request for Selfie Videos

Resolved: Members noted the correspondence.

Exclusion of Press and Public In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the press and public for the remaining item on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

FC107/2020 - Ongoing HR issue

An further update was given on the ongoing HR issue.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

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FC104.05/2020 - Monthly Payments and Cheques – list of Payments authorised as below:

Chq	Current Account (To be authorised)	Detail	£	Authorised	Notes
DC	Post Office	150x Large 1 st Class, 100x 1 st Class and 100x 2 nd Class Stamps	£313.50	Chair of Finance	To be cost effective ahead of price increase on 1 st January 2021
2008	Anderson & Co. Accountancy & Taxation	Payroll Services: November 2020 - January 2021	£180.00	Finance Committee	
2009	Total Business	Printing Costs: July 2020 - December 2020	£13.15	Town Council	
DC	Argos	Hetty Vacuum Cleaner, Dust Bags and Black Ink Cartridge	£172.47	Chair of Finance and Mayor	
EP	LMG Cleaning Services	3.5 Hour Clean of Offices	£45.50	Town Council	
EP	LMG Cleaning Services	Office Clean	£32.50	Town Council	
EP	LMG Cleaning Services	5 Hour Clean of Offices	£65.00	Town Council	
EP	LMG Cleaning Services	3.5 Hour Clean of Offices	£45.50	Town Council	
2010	Durham County Council	HR & Guidance Services - November 2020	£168.00	Town Council	
2011	Durham County Council	Repairs to Gate at West Mills	£477.60		Overdue invoice
2012	RC Event Services	Christmas Light Gobo Projections in Market Place (6 Nights)	£3,304.00	Town Council	
DD	British Gas	Electricity: Skate Park 22/11/20- 22/12/20	£10.73	Town Council	
EP	Darlington Borough Council	1x Watch Ticket - Virtual Burns Supper Night - 23rd January 2021	£12.00		
EP	Salaries, Superannuation	January 2021	£5,067.30	Ongoing	
EP	HMRC - Tax and NI, Salaries	January 2021	£1,553.79	Ongoing	
EP	D.C.C. Pension Scheme	January 2021	£1,614.25	Ongoing	
EP	Members Allowances	January 2021	£347.37	Ongoing	
EP	HMRC - Tax and NI, Members Allowance	January 2021	£55.80	Ongoing	
EP	SLCC	Charles Arnold Baker text Book	£140.00		For CILCA Completion and as Clerks Guide
		Total	£13,518.46		

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