

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 22nd SEPTEMBER 2010** at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT **Councillor Mrs. D. Bowman (Chairman) and**
Councillors S. Bambridge, W.M. Blenkinsopp, T.R. Bowman, Mrs. B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, V. Crosby, W. Curtis, Mrs. M. Dalton, P. Ducker, R.S. Fleming, P. Gittins, G.C. Gray, G.R. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, K. Henderson, Mrs. I. Hewitson, T. Hogan, W. Iveson, Mrs. A. Palmer, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, Mrs. V.M. Raw and A. Warburton.

OFFICIALS Mr. A. Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mrs. C. Walton (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin. Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE Mr. G. Barker (Audit Commission)
Mr. B. Haldane (Newton Aycliffe Town Centre Manager)
Mr. G. Hale (Bisham Group)

56. **NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

57. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors M. Iveson and Mrs. S.J. Iveson.

58. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of interest were submitted from Councillors Mrs. D. Bowman and Mrs. J. Gray in respect of Agenda Item No. 13 (Licensing Policy) as they are members of the Licensing Committee at D.C.C. They would be remaining in the meeting during the discussion but would not be participating.

59. **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 4th August 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor had submitted a list of appointments she had attended for the period 23rd July 2010 to the 22nd September 2010.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

61. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Town Clerk had received notification in writing of two questions to be put to the Council by Mr. A. Chandran.

The Chairman invited Mr. Chandran to put his questions to the Council. The following questions were then asked and duly answered by the Town Clerk.

1. "Does this Council accept that for a Councillor to be paid for 6 months with no attendance but to continue to receive their allowance, which is voluntary, is an outrage – or does this Council justify it".
2. "That is the Council going to do to prevent this happening again".

Response, Mr. A. Bailey, Town Clerk.

"The members allowance is paid to a member of the Town Council under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. (Part 5)

Members are paid the allowance whilst they are a member of the Council.

No allowance is payable to a member who is suspended or partially suspended.

The allowance ceases when a member is no longer a member of the Authority.

Para. 32

A member may, by notice to the Proper Officer, elect to forgo his/her entitlement or any part of their entitlement to allowances. This is a matter for individual members to consider.

There is no mechanism for this, or any Council, to not pay an allowance to a member who is still a member of the Authority. Therefore, the Council cannot withdraw or cease paying an allowance to a member for non-attendance at meetings until disqualification or resignation occurs".

62. **NEWTON AYCLIFFE TOWN CENTRE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Bryan Haldane and Mr. Gary Hale to the meeting to give an update on the town centre development.

Mr. Hale and Mr. Haldane's presentation was to give members:

- (a) An update since the last meeting.
- (b) What is happening at the moment.
- (c) What is happening in the future.

Display boards were erected and these showed details of the site with proposals for the town centre and detailed verbal reports were given.

Members asked questions of the two representatives and these were answered appropriately.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That Mr. Hale and Mr. Haldane be thanked for their attendance at the meeting to update members on the Town Centre.
- (ii) That members note that they can visit the Town Centre Manager's Office in order to view materials and colour schemes being used in the town centre project.
- (iii) That the two officers be asked to attend a future meeting as they feel necessary to give further updates on progress.

63. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT

Mr. Gavin Barker, Engagement Lead and Senior Audit Manager from the Audit Commission was in attendance to present his report on the 2009/10 Audit.

Mr. Barker gave his report on the Annual Governance Report, stating that the Audit Commission had given an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and also an unqualified opinion on the Value for Money aspect of the Council.

Mr. Barker also wished to thank the officers for their assistance during the Audit and the excellent work which was undertaken on the Council's accounts.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That Mr. Barker be thanked for his attendance to present the Annual Governance Report 2009/10.
- (ii) That the Officers and staff be thanked for their work to receive an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and the Value for Money aspect of the Council.
- (iii) That the amendments to the letter of representation be approved and re-submitted for signature.

64. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/1010 – RE-APPROVAL

The Finance Manager submitted his report and statutory Statement of Accounts for re-approval by the Full Council for the financial year 2009/10 as amended following the completion of the Audit of Accounts by the Audit Commission to be signed off by the Mayor and Finance manager.

The report also sought approval for the signing of the Management Representation Letter by the Chairman of the Audit Sub-Committee, Town Clerk and Finance Manager. This acknowledges the Council's responsibility for the accounts and confirms their accuracy, completeness and compliance with laws and regulations.

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor Mrs. V.M. Raw and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the Statement of Accounts for 2009/10, as amended following the Audit of Accounts by the Audit Commission, be re-approved and signed off by the Mayor and the Finance Manager.
- (ii) That the Management Representation Letter be approved and signed by Chairman of Audit Sub-Committee, the Town Clerk and the Finance Manager and be forwarded to the Audit Commission.
- (iii) That following receipt of the final audit opinion and audit closure certificate from the Audit Committee the Notice of Completion of the Audit of Accounts be published in the local press no later than the 30th September 2009 in accordance with the statutory framework.
- (iv) That the Council's thanks be recorded to the Staff involved with the exceptional high standard of the Council's accounts receiving an unqualified statement for the last three years.

65. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

(a) **Environment Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor V. Crosby, seconded by Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 8th September 2010 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(b) **Recreation Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor B. Hall, seconded by Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 8th September 2010 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(c) **Policy and Resources Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor Mrs. V. Raw and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 15th September 2010 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

66. **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH SCHEME**

Correspondence had been received from Mr. T. Farley seeking support to the Community Speedwatch Scheme and offering his name as a volunteer to undergo training for him to be able to operate a scheme on a regular basis.

The Speedwatch Scheme is under the jurisdiction of the PACT meeting. The Council would fully support this Scheme and the fact that Mr. Farley would wish to be involved.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the PACT Meeting be informed of Mr. Farley's offer to volunteer to assist with the Speedwatch Scheme.
- (ii) That this Council would offer its full support of the Scheme.

67. **LOCAL COUNCIL TRAINING SESSIONS – SECTION 106 AGREEMENT**

The Town Clerk submitted information with regard to training sessions in relation to Section 106 Agreements. The sessions were to be held in three locations and this Authority was asked to nominate a maximum of 4 representatives to attend the sessions.

Sessions were to be held in Chester-le-Street, Easington and Barnard Castle.

RESOLVED – that the following 4 representatives be nominated to attend the respective sessions for training in relation to Section 106 Agreements.

21 October - Barnard Castle	Councillor J.D. Clare Councillor I. Gray
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4 November – Chester-le-Street	Mr. A. Bailey Councillor W.M. Blenkinsopp
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68. **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – LICENSING POLICY**

Declarations of interest were submitted from Councillors Mrs. D. Bowman and Mrs. J. Gray in respect of this item as they are members of the Licensing Committee at D.C.C. They would be remaining in the meeting during the discussion but would not be participating.

Information had been submitted from Durham County Council in respect of the Statement of Licensing Policy who were seeking comments from this Council on the Draft Policy for 2011 – 2014.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the document be received.
- (ii) That the County Council be asked to notify this Authority of any licences which are granted in this Council's area.

69. **CASUAL VACANCY**

Information was given on the resignation of Mrs. H. Hutchinson from West Ward and to inform the Council that a casual vacancy had been declared on the 11th August 2010.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

70. **LOCAL REFERENDUMS TO VETO EXCESSIVE COUNCIL TAX INCREASES**

A report and Consultation Document on local referendums to veto excessive council tax increases was submitted by the Town Clerk. As the consultation document had been received during the Council recess period and the deadline for comments was the 10th September the Town Clerk had responded on behalf of the Council and attached a copy of his response.

RESOLVED – that the Town Clerk's response to the consultation document be received.

71. **CIVIC LIST – BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

Correspondence had been received from the newly formed 'Bishop Auckland Town Council' seeking permission for them to be added to our Civic List.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton, seconded by Councillor Mrs. V. Raw that 'Bishop Auckland Town Council' be added to our Civic List.

For the proposal	24
Against the proposal	2
Abstention	1

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That 'Bishop Auckland Town Council' be added to our official Civic List.
- (ii) That a report on the Civic Council List and Civic Events be a matter for consideration prior to the next A.G.M.

72. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

- (i) Correspondence had been received from Agnew Community Centre Association following the Council's response to the Council no longer being represented on the Association.
- (ii) The following reports were given by representatives on the various Outside Bodies:
 - (a) Youth Council
Councillor V. Crosby gave a verbal report on the activities of the Youth Council. He thanked the officers and members who have helped with the Youth Council.
 - (b) County Durham Association of Local Councils
No meeting.

- (c) Citizens Advice Bureau
Councillor V. Crosby gave a summary to date.
- (d) Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership (GAMP)
Councillor B. Hall gave an update from the meeting.
- (e) Woodham Village Community Association
Councillor Mrs. J. Gray gave an update from the meeting.
- (f) Great Aycliffe and Middridge A.A.P. Local Council's Committee
No meeting.
- (g) Durham Countryside Volunteers
Councillors V. Crosby and I. Gray gave an update from this organisation. Information was given with regard to an Exhibition on Biodiversity and it was agreed to circulate details of the event to all members if they were interested in attending.
- (h) Larger Local Councils' Forum
The Town Clerk gave a verbal update.
- (i) Lifelong Learning Committee
No meeting.
- (j) Normandy Veterans' Association
No meeting.
- (k) Woodham Community Technology College Forum Meeting
No meeting.
- (l) Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre
Councillor V. Crosby gave a verbal update.
- (m) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society
Councillor I. Gray reported on the activities of this Society.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the letter from Agnew Community Centre Association be received.
- (ii) That the reports from Outside Body representatives be received.

CHAIRMAN.