

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2015** at 7.15 p.m.

**PRESENT**                    **Councillor Mrs. W.P. Hillary (Chairman) and**  
Councillors E. Adam, D.G. Atkinson, J. Atkinson, W.M. Blenkinsopp, A.M. Chandran, J.D. Clare, N. Collinson, Mrs. M. Dalton, R.S. Fleming, G.C. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.P. Hillary, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, W. Iveson, P. Kjenstad, Mrs. V.M. Raw and C. Wheeler.

**OFFICIALS**                Mr. A. Bailey (Town Clerk)  
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)  
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin Officer)

151. **NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

152. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, J. Clark, M.A. Dalton and Mrs. A. Palmer.

153. **MEMBERS' DISPENSATION**

There were no applications for dispensations.

154. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There had been no declarations of interest received.

155. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no questions raised by the Public.

156. **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor J. Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

157. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor had submitted a list of events she had attended for the period 11<sup>th</sup> March to the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015.

The Mayor especially spoke of the exceptional events she had attended at the N.E. Autism Centre

**RESOLVED** – that the information provided by the Mayor be received.

158. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

(a) **Environment Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor J.D. Clare, seconded by Councillor J. Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the Environment Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015 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 J. Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the Recreation Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015 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 J. Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

159. **STAR COUNCILS**

Information had been submitted in connection with a NALC Star Councils awards scheme for 2015.

**RESOLVED** – that the Council does not make a nomination under this scheme.

160. **SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS CONFERENCE**

Information had been submitted in connection with the Larger Councils' Conference to be held in Stratford Upon Avon from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

It was proposed that the Town Clerk be authorised to attend the Conference on behalf of the Council.

**RESOLVED** – that the Town Clerk attend the Larger Councils' Conference to be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

161. **COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - UPDATE**

The Finance Manager submitted a report and updated copy of the Financial Regulations for consideration prior to their formal adoption at the Annual General Meeting of the Council.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the updated Financial Regulations be approved for final adoption at the Annual General Meeting.
- (iii) That the Finance Manager be complemented on his report which was very detailed and up to date.

162. **STANDING ORDERS – CONTRACTS AND PROCUREMENT**

The Finance Manager submitted a report and updated copy of the Council's Standing Orders for Contracts and Procurement which would be formally adopted at the Annual General Meeting of the Council.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the the updated Contracts and Procurement document be approved for final adoption at the Annual General Meeting.
- (iii) That the Finance Manager be complemented on the very detailed and consise report.

163. **PROTOCOL ON THE USE OF COUNCIL FACILITIES AND RESOURCES BY COUNCILLORS AND PURDAH GUIDANCE**

The Town Clerk had submitted a report and a draft protocol for members to consider in regard to Members use of Council Facilities and Resources together with useful guidance on Council publicity during the lead up to elections, commonly referred to as "Purdah Period".

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Protocol on the Use of Council Facilities and Resources by Councillors be adopted.

164. **MEMBER TRAINING UPDATE**

The Town Clerk submitted a report to provide information in respect of members attendances at training events during the municipal year 2014/15.

**RESOLVED** – that the information be received.

165. **CONSULTATION ON EXTENDING THE REMIT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN AND LARGER PARISH COUNCILS**

The Town Clerk submitted a report to advise members of a consultation being undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government in regard to extending the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman to Larger Parish and Town Councils to strengthen Parish and Town Councils accountability.

The consultation period was until the 30<sup>th</sup> June and Members were asked to consider a response to the five questions posted in the Government's Consultation document.

1. Should the Local Government Ombudsman's jurisdiction be extended to larger parish and town councils?
2. Should a large parish or town council be defined by having a population the same as or greater than 35,000 people, or should the population threshold be set at a different limit?
3. Should a large parish or town council be defined by having an annual precept of £1m or more?
4. Should a larger parish or town council be defined by both population and budget?
5. Once subject to the Local Government Ombudsman's jurisdiction, should the parish or town council remain so for a fixed time period?

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Council respond as follows to the 5 questions of the Consultation:-
  - (1) The Council does not agree that the LGO jurisdiction should be extended to Larger Parish and Town Councils. If it is to be extended to that sector it should equally apply to all of the Parish / Town Council sectors.
  - (2) No.
  - (3) No.
  - (4) Should the proposal by Government apply only to Larger Parish / Town Councils it should be based on a combination of population and precept.
  - (5) It is agreed that the LGO's jurisdiction should be based on population size and for a stated time period.

166. **DELEGATION OF POWERS – FESTIVAL**

The Town Clerk had submitted a report for members to consider temporary delegation arrangements to enable the continuation of decisions to take place in regard to the organisation of the Aycliffe Festival.

At present the Festival Working Group reports its recommendations to the Recreation Committee for approval with the exception of approval of small grant awards (Council Minute No. 92 refers) all other decisions made by the Recreation Committee must be ratified at a meeting of the Council.

Owing to timescales of meetings to approve arrangements for the Festival it is necessary to make arrangements for delegation of powers for arrangements for the Festival to function.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That delegation of power on a temporary basis be given to the Town Clerk to consider and approve recommendations by the Festival Working Group, in particular to approve necessary expenditure within the budget allocation.

167. **HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Town Clerk submitted a report to provide an annual report to Council which covered accidents and reportable accidents (RIDDOR) and any reports from the Health and Safety Executive.

**RESOLVED** – that the information be received.

168. **REMOVAL OF ROAD LIGHTS ON THE A167 - GREAT AYCLIFFE AREA**

Information had been circulated following a response received from Durham County Council to this Council's letter objecting to the removal of the street lights from the A167 Road.

Members were extremely perturbed that the County Council were to go ahead with the removal of the lights even though there was strong objections to their proposals.

Following a great deal of discussion it was:-

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That a letter of protest be placed on record with the County Council stating that this Council did not agree with the removal of the lights on such a major road as the A167.
- (ii) That the Town Clerk include within the letter the feasibility and cost of taking over the lights that are planned to be removed via. a Service Level Agreement.
- (iii) That the Town Clerk look at the Localism Act to seek advice on how the decision had been made to remove the lights.

169. **FRIENDS OF STOCKTON AND DARLINGTON RAILWAY**

An invitation had been forwarded for up to 4 members to attend the Conference of the Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway to be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 with one members to attend the Conference Dinner on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> June in Redworth Hall Hotel.

A separate invitation had also been forwarded to the Mayor to attend the Conference and the Dinner.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the following members be nominated to attend the conference on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June:-

Councillor J. Atkinson  
Councillor I. Gray  
Councillor N. Collinson  
Councillor Mrs. V. Raw

- (ii) That Councillor J. Atkinson be nominated as the Council's representative to attend the Conference Dinner on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> June at Redworth Hall.

170. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Reports were given by representatives on the undermentioned Outside Bodies:-

- (a) Youth Council

Councillor J. Atkinson gave an update on the previous meeting.

- (b) County Durham Association of Local Councils (AGM)

No Meeting.

- (c) Aycliffe Village Community Association

Councillor Wheeler gave an update on the past meeting.

- (d) Woodham Village Community Association

Councillor N. Collinson gave an update on the Community Association.

- (e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Council's Committee

No meetings.

- (f) Larger Local Councils' Forum

Meeting date had been changed so nothing to report.

(g) Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre

Councillor J.D. Clare gave a verbal update on behalf of the Centre.

(h) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society

Councillor I Gray updated members on the work of the Society.

(i) Sedgefield Health Network

Vacancy on this Outside Body.

(j) Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve

Councillor I Gray reported on the progress of the Group.

(k) Friends of West Park

Nothing to report.

(l) Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway

Councillor J. Atkinson gave an update and it was noted that the Conference would be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> June.

**RESOLVED** – that the information given from the Representatives serving on the Outside Bodies be received.

171. **HONORARY FREEMAN OF THE TOWN**

The Mayor of Great Aycliffe, Councillor Mrs. W.P. Hillary, conferred the Honour of Freeman of the Town on Councillor R.S. Fleming in recognition of his long and distinguished service to the Council and the Community.

The Honour had been originated from a Notice of Motion from Councillor A. Chandran at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 (Minute No. 119 referred).

**RESOLVED** - that Councillor R.S. Fleming be presented with the official 'Freedom of the Town' Scroll.

**CHAIRMAN.**