

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 10 MARCH 2021 – 7.15 p.m.

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, and virtually, on Wednesday, 10th March 2021 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Wendy Hillary (Chairman) and

Councillors Eddy Adam, M. Ashcroft, Derek G Atkinson, Jim Atkinson, Kathy Beetham, P.J. Bergg, Mrs. D. Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, R.S. Fleming, George C. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, Dave Hardaker, Jed Hillary, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, Mrs. V.M. Raw, Ken Robson, Michael Stead and Paul Symons.

OFFICERS

Mr A Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin. Officer)
Mrs. S. Stretch (Admin. Assistant)

216. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

217. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp.

218. MEMBERS' DISPENSATION

No dispensation requests had been received.

219. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

220. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

221. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council, held on the 27th January 2021, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council, held on the 3rd March 2021, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

222. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that he had received information that the Horndale Residents Association had been disbanded and they wished to record their thanks to the Council for the support they had received over the years.

The Town Clerk would be circulating information with regards to 'Purdah' and its implications prior to the forthcoming elections.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the information in regards to 'Purdah' be noted.
- (ii) That a letter be forwarded to the Chairman thanking him and the Horndale Residents Association for all the work they had undertaken over the years for the residents in that area.

223. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor M. Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor M. Iveson and

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 24th February 2021 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 M. Iveson and

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 24th February 2021 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.M. Raw and

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 3rd March 2021 be received and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

224. LAND AND PROPERTY MATTERS

The Town Clerk submitted a report to advise members of matters and progress relating to a Wayleave and Deed of Easement across Council property.

Information in respect of the following Wayleave and Deed of Easement had previously been reported to Council on the 2nd September 2020 and had now been completed.

- Clarence Chare Allotments – Deed of Grant of Easement
- Golf Course – HV Cable Replacement Works

The Town Clerk also advised that a further Section 104 Agreement will be required to be entered into as a ‘joined party’, as a relevant landowner relating to the future adoption of sewers by Northumbrian Water. The Council’s Solicitors are currently dealing with this matter.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That it be noted that the following Deed of Grant of Easement and Wayleave have now been completed in respect of:-
 - Clarence Chare Allotments
 - Golf Course – HV Cable Replacement Works.
- (iii) That it be noted that a further Section 104 Agreement is needed in regard to land at Clarence Chare Allotments.

225. STANDING ORDER – GENERAL REVIEW

The Town Clerk submitted a report following the result of a Motion to Council on the 28th October 2020 “That Officers review the Standing Orders of the Business of the Council by April 2021”.

A draft copy of the Standing Orders with suggested alterations to the following Standing Orders had been circulated for members comments.

- S.O. 2 Annual and Ordinary Council Meetings
- S.O. 3 Proper Officer
- S.O.13 Financial Administration
- S.O.19 Accounts and Financial Reporting
- S.O.20 Annual Budget / Precept
- S.O.32 Financial Controls and Procurement

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the recommended changes to the Standing Orders be approved.

226. STANDING ORDER 18 – EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETINGS

The Town Clerk had submitted a report following the results of a Motion to Council on the 28th October 2020 for Officers to review the procedure involving Extra-ordinary Meetings of the Council. The report sought to explore Extra-Ordinary Meetings, their legislation and use in regard to local government, with particular reference to Parish/Town Councils. A draft agenda of an Extra-Ordinary meeting had been circulated for reference / approval.

Detailed background information had been set out in the report and Members were asked to make a decision as to whether an agenda item to confirm previous Minutes should be considered at an Extra-Ordinary meeting together with the format of Extra-Ordinary meeting agendas.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the suggested format of items to be considered at an Extra-ordinary meeting of the Council be agreed with the exclusion of the item to accept previous Council Minutes.

227. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S SYSTEM OF INTERNAL AUDIT CONTROL

The Corporate Management Team had submitted a report to put forward for consideration and approval of members the annual review and effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control for the 2020/21 financial year.

Discussion took place on how background checks were carried out on applications for Grants and Donations.

Officers informed the Council that a 'Grant and Donation Policy' should be put in place setting out a format for the consideration and approval of applications.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control in respect of the 2020/21 financial year be approved.
- (iii) That the review be taken into account in providing the assurance that the Council requires in order to approve the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement, as set out in Section 1 of the 2020/21 Annual Return later in the year.
- (iv) That Officers prepare a 'Grant and Donation Policy' for consideration and adoption.

228. PROPOSED 50MPH CONSULTATION – A167

The Corporate Management Team had submitted information in connection with the proposed consultation email and supporting documents received from Durham County Council for members to consider 3 concept options:-

- **Do Nothing** – doing nothing at all. No improvements for cyclists/walkers in this location and severance of Aycliffe Village remains unchanged. This option was discounted as it offers no benefit.
- **Do Something 1** – Leave the existing national speed limit TRO in place and introduce the pedestrian and cycling improvement works in a location adjacent to and across the carriageway of a derestricted road with an AADT of 14000 vehicles. This option was discounted as the mean speeds reflect a 50mph speed limit is appropriate in this location, offering betterment in that it would reduce the likelihood and severity of road traffic accidents in this location.
- **Do Something 2** – Introducing all cycling and pedestrian improvements, including a toucan crossing across the A167 to reduce severance to the local area and increase connectivity to employment, education and retail destinations and amend the existing national speed limit TRO to introduce a 50mph speed limit in a location where it is felt the current average speeds are appropriate for a 50mph TRO.

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor Jed Hillary that there be a 50mph limit along the approach to Aycliffe Village with a proviso that the Council seek to change this to 40mph.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Option 'Do Something 2' be agreed with a proviso that this Council pursues the County Council to change the 50mph to a 40mph zone on the approach to Aycliffe Village.

230. AYCLIFFE VILLAGE GREEN – REQUEST TO USE A SECTION AS BEER GARDEN

An application for further use the Village Green as a beer garden had been received from The County Hotel, Aycliffe Village in respect of current Covid-19 restrictions.

Background information had been submitted from a previous application which had given permission for a licence to be granted due to Covid-19 restrictions applicable to previous use for a period up to the end of October 2020. It had been pointed out at that time that this would not be seen as a precedent for any future applications for the use of the Village Green, or use of the Green for this purpose on a permanent basis.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the Council enter into a further licence with The County Public House to allow them to use a part of the Village Green to site tables and chairs during the present Covid-19 restrictions.
- (ii) That the licence be granted for a period up to the 31st October 2021.

231. BUSINESS RISKS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/2022

The Corporate Management Team had submitted a report together with a full list of current corporate business risks for the Town Council for the Financial Year April 2021 to March 2022 for Members consideration.

RESOLVED – that the report be received and approved.

232. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor M. Stead.

“This Council agrees to work with Durham County Council and the community with a view to starting a Community Governance Review and to subsequently petition for this.

This council further agrees as part of this review to look at the Ward boundaries where there is currently electoral inequality which far exceeds the level the Electoral Commission advises in its guidelines.

This review should consider the minimum number of councillors needed to operate and the community view of reducing councillor numbers, taking into account the workload of the Town Council, whilst ensuring the number of electors per councillor is as balanced and democratic as possible”.

As there was no seconder forthcoming it was deemed that the Motion could not be considered.

RESOLVED – that as there was no seconder this Notice of Motion fell and did not proceed for consideration.

233. OUTSIDE BODIES

To receive reports from representatives on the following Outside Bodies:

- (a) **Youth Council**
No meetings.
- (b) **County Durham Association of Local Councils**
No meetings.
- (c) **Aycliffe Village Community Association**
No report.
- (d) **Woodham Village Community Association**
No meetings.

- (e) **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee**
No meetings.
- (f) **Larger Local Councils' Forum**
Councillor M. Iveson and the Town Clerk had attended a virtual meeting and gave members an update.
- (g) **Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society**
Councillor I. Gray gave an update report.
- (h) **Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve**
Councillor I. Gray gave an update report.
- (i) **Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**
Councillor Dave Hardaker gave an update report.
- (j) **GAMP – Community Safety Task Group**
No meetings.

RESOLVED – that the reports from Outside Body representatives be received.

CHAIRMAN.