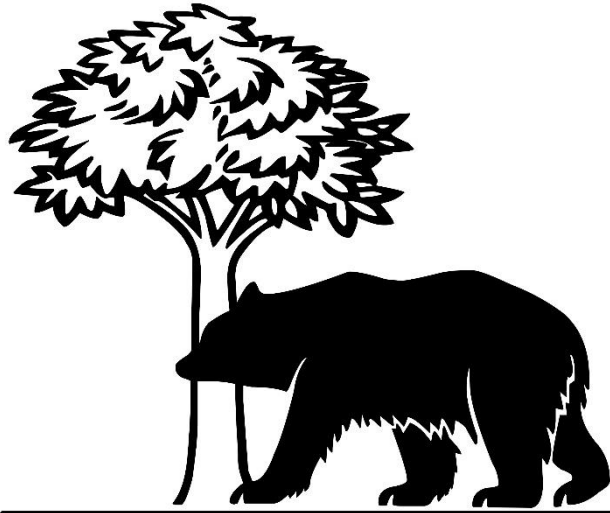


BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 24 June 2024 at
6.00 pm in The Meeting Room, Town Council Office, Unit 1, 82 –
88 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	J Robertson (Chair)	R Mackenzie
	J Bowden	G Smith
	G Brown	L Stephenson
	R Driver	T Stewart
	M Greener	J Turton
	L Hawken	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gareth Davies, Town Clerk
Stephen Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
Cty Cllr I Hunter
3 members of the public

MINUTE NO.	TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	Mover	Seconders	Decision
C024/24	OPEN SESSION			
	<p>Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. This is for a period of 15 minutes overall and is limited to 3 minutes per person.</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>A local resident made enquiries regarding resources for the tidying up of Spittal Promenade as well as recent national 80th D Day Celebrations.</p> <p>The Town Clerk provided answers including that Spittal Promenade is the responsibility of Northumberland County Council (NCC) whilst Berwick Town Council manage the play area and street furniture and are looking to install picnic tables in the area. Cllr T Stewart updated the meeting of a walkaround to look at issues in the area. Cllr J Robertson asked the Chair of the Communities & Local Services to investigate and, along with the Town Clerk provided an update on D Day Celebrations and it was noted to add the beacon on the Walls to the Action Plan.</p>

				Cllr M Greener provided an update on the emptying of litter bins and it was noted this would be investigated further.
C025/24	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE			
	To receive apologies for absence.	N/A	N/A	There were no apologies for absence.
C026/24	MINUTES			
	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 07 May 2024.	TS	JT	Cllr L Hawken made enquiries regarding the Leader of NCC, format and level of detail regarding Direct Debits and Schedule of Policies. After which, the minutes of the meeting held on 07 May 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
C027/24	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS			
	(i) Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest, (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest), they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 9 July 2012,	N/A	N/A	i. There were no disclosures of interest.

	<p>and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.</p> <p>(ii) To receive and consider requests from members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any items on the agenda an application for dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable members to participate in discussions and voting.</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>ii. There were no requests for dispensation.</p>
C028/24	TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS			
	To receive announcements from the Town Mayor.	N/A	N/A	<p>The Mayor provided details of events they had attended and been involved in, including that this year was slightly different due to the Mayor having been elected for a second term, therefore there was a Sheriff Making. Other events included Walking the May Fair which, it was noted, would be deferred to the Communities and Local Service Committee to investigate how to improve. Further events included the launch of the Lowry exhibition,</p>

				the opening of the Main Guard exhibition on the Old Bridge and the U3A 20 th Anniversary.
C029/24	INTERNAL AUDIT			
	To note the successful conclusion of the internal audit and to refer any issues raised to the Budget and Administration Committee.	Nem con		<p>Cllr T Stewart proposed, and it was unanimously agreed, that this item be considered before the Annual Governance Statements as questions in the latter are dependent on having considered the Internal Audit.</p> <p>The Town Clerk introduced the item including that the document was the report of the Internal Auditor which included recommendations for the website, draft minutes on the website and allotments.</p> <p>Further to this, Box I of the AGAR Internal Audit Report regarding bank reconciliations had not been completed so Officers would need to ask the Internal Auditor to complete.</p> <p>The Mayor drew Members attention to the summary which included the Internal Auditors belief that the Town Council is of a high standard.</p>

				<p>Members raised a number of points including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, updating and improving the website, Training Policies and the need to make sure we don't miss items from the previous years document such as training policies and risk assessments. Cllr L Hawken proposed, and it was agreed, that congratulations to the Officers involved be noted.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED to note the successful conclusion of the internal audit and to refer any issues raised to the Budget and Administration Committee.</p>
C030/24	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT			
	<p>To consider the Council's response to the individual statements contained in the Annual Governance Statement section of the AGAR and to authorise the Mayor to sign the Annual Governance statement.</p>	<p>Nem con</p>		<p>The Town Clerk introduced the item with the Annual Governance Statement being Section 1 of the AGAR.</p> <p>After which, Council considered each of the questions asked by the Annual Governance Statements in turn, and RESOLVED:</p> <p>To answer with 10 votes in favour in the affirmative to question 1,</p>

				<p>To unanimously answer in the affirmative to question 2,</p> <p>To unanimously answer in the affirmative to question 3,</p> <p>To answer with 10 votes in favour and 1 abstention in the affirmative to question 4,</p> <p>To answer with 9 votes in favour in the affirmative to question 5 after the Town Clerk had provided a response to enquiries made regarding external insurance cover and the risk assessment,</p> <p>To unanimously answer in the affirmative to question 6,</p> <p>To answer with 9 votes in favour in the affirmative to question 7 after clarification was sought that there were some matters arising from last year's internal audit that still required work to be done, and</p> <p>To unanimously answer in the affirmative to question 8.</p>
C031/24	ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS			
	To approve the Accounting Statements for the year 2023-24.	Nem con		The Town Clerk updated the meeting on items that were required to be restated for the

			<p>last financial year including 'All other payments', 'Balances carried forward' and the asset register.</p> <p>Cllr T Stewart requested, and it was agreed, to consider the background papers provided with both the Annual Governance Statements and this item. The Town Clerk introduced the documents and drew Members attention to the explanation of significant variances report, the detailed version of the variance report, the asset register and the bank reconciliation report.</p> <p>Members asked a number of questions and raised a number of issues including on the differential figure stated in staff costs, the asset register not being on the website, Christmas Lights, revaluation of Civic Regalia and amounts in the various accounts which is over the total value to be protected under any financial services compensation scheme.</p> <p>As part of this discussion Council</p> <p>RESOLVED that Christmas Lights be given its own section in the Asset Register and a</p>
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				<p>more detailed approach be given to Civic Regalia.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED to accept the accounting statements.</p>
C032/24	PUBLICISING THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk introduced the item and the Assistant to the Clerk provided an update on the notice to Members.</p> <p>After which, it was RESOLVED, to complete and publish the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.</p>
C033/24	STREET FURNITURE			
	To receive an update from the Town Clerk for licenses to place benches and picnic tables adjacent to Adams Drive and Spittal Play Park.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk updated Members that Officers have liaised with the relevant officers at NCC and completed plans have been sent so they can now prepare a licence after consultation with the local County Councillor. Cllr J Robertson updated Members of a site visit to Spittal and as a result of this, benches would be sited within the Play Area and picnic benches out side the Play Area.</p>

				After which, Council RESOLVED to note the update of the Town Clerk and the Mayor.
C034/24	LITTER BINS FOR MARYGATE			
	To consider the recommendation of the Town Clerk that authority be delegated to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Community and Local Services Committee to spend up to £5,000 to procure replacement litter bins for Marygate.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk updated Members on previous discussions and Cllr G Brown provided an update on previous discussions of the Town Centre Working Group. Members asked a number of questions including on the issues involved and the procurement process following the usual procedures.</p> <p>The meeting noted the update of Cllr G Brown that along with Berwick Community Trust additional property owners had been identified who were willing for us to apply vinyls to vacant shop windows.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED to approve the recommendation of the Town Clerk that authority be delegated to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Community and Local Services Committee to spend up to £5,000 to procure replacement litter bins for Marygate.</p>

C035/24	LEAFLET DROP / RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Summary of responses to survey. ii. Town Clerk's summary on results. 	<p>Nem con</p>		<p>The Town Clerk introduced the item and the explanation included that some useable data has been obtained but shouldn't be used as a single source, that resources aren't available to undertake a more complex survey and there were significant issues engaging young people and men, after which, an update on the Summary of Responses was provided. Members then raised a number of points and asked a number of questions including the option of sending the survey to school councils, improving the high street, numbers of people who like correspondence by email, number of responses from, and demographics, of the age ranges and the idea of completing a field test.</p> <p>A concern was raised that if sending a survey to school councils, a summary of services provided by the Town Council should be included.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED to defer the item to the Communities & Local Services</p>

				Committee, noting that other Committees can have a contribution.
C036/24	GRANT APPLICATION			
	To consider a grant application from Choices4Growth CIC.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk provided a background to the meeting which included that this is not an application that is congruent with the existing grant scheme. However, there is no legal barrier to making a grant as long as Members are satisfied that the application is of benefit to the residents of the town. Further to this, the money would be spent from Section 137 money which allows Councils to spend money on projects they believe will benefit some or all of their residents.</p> <p>A number of points were raised by Members including the importance of the scheme, lack of funding from other sources, amount asked for is insufficient, uniqueness to Berwick, not being registered with the Charities Commission, awareness of the organisation and sustainability of paying someone a wage.</p>

				<p>During the discussion Standing Orders were suspended sufficiently to allow Cty Cllr I Hunter to provide an update.</p> <p>After which, it was RESOLVED to make a grant of £2,500 on the condition that satisfactory financial information can be provided by the organisation and that this meets the approval of two or more Councillors from the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Co-Chairs of the Budget and Administration Committee.</p>
C037/24	MUNICIPAL CALENDAR			
	To note the report.	Nem con		Council RESOLVED to note the report.
C038/24	APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES			
	To note the report.	Nem con		Council RESOLVED to note the report and agreed that the Assistant to the Clerk make NALC aware that Cllr M Greener is the Town Council representative to this organisation.
C039/24	ACTION PLAN			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the item with the explanation that as this the full format, a

				<p>reduced format may come to future meetings and substantial updates are required.</p> <p>An enquiry was then made regarding bunting and updates were received on the Berwick Bridge 400 project, Christmas Lights and the electric vehicle purchased by the Town Council and the omissions saved against using a diesel vehicle.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The document be updated before further discussion, and 2. The document be discussed at the next meeting of the Chairs / Vice-Chairs.
C040/24	PLANNING COMMITTEE			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 07 May 2024. ii. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14 May 2024. 	<p>RD</p> <p>TS</p>	<p>TS</p> <p>JR</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 07 May 2024. ii. Cllr L Hawken made a general point that all of the Minutes have items that need to be added to the action plan and enquired about an email regarding green spaces, the latter of which Cllr T

	<p>iii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 17 June 2024.</p>	TS	JR	<p>Stewart would liaise with relevant staff. After which, it was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14 May 2024.</p> <p>iii. It was RESOLVED to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 17 June 2024.</p>
C041/24	COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES COMMITTEE			
	<p>i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Local Services Committee held on 07 May 2024.</p> <p>ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Local Services Committee held on 03 June 2024.</p>	JR	GB	<p>i. It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Local Services Committee held on 07 May 2024.</p> <p>ii. Cllr L Hawken raised the point of the wrong notation and double use of minute numbers whilst Cllr J Turton enquired of the water system for the compound at the ramparts to which the Town Clerk provided an answer. After which, it was RESOLVED to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the</p>

				Communities and Local Services Committee held on 03 June 2024.
C042/24	BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE			
	i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 07 May 2024.	TS	RM	i. It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 07 May 2024.
	ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 10 June 2024.	TS	LH	ii. Cllr R Mackenzie expressed the importance of including in the minutes if a Councillor raises a point or action. After which, it was RESOLVED to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 10 June 2024.
C043/24	STAFFING COMMITTEE			
	i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 07 May 2024.	JT	JR	i. It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 07 May 2024.
	ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 18 June 2024.	JT	GB	ii. It was RESOLVED to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 18 June 2024.

C044/24	DATE OF NEXT MEETING			
	The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday, 05 August 2024 at 6 pm.	N/A	N/A	Noted.
<p>The Council RESOLVED under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the media and public from the discussion of the following business on the basis that public discussion may prejudice the Council's position and/or staffing issues may be discussed on the motion of the Mayor seconded by Cllr M Greener.</p>				
C045/24	LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE STAFFING REVIEW			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		<p>Cllr G Brown proposed that the report from the Town Clerk should be rejected and not discussed further on the grounds that it was not objective, lacked accuracy, did not offer lessons learnt and had been written by the Town Clerk without reference to, or involvement of the two Councillors who had carried out the review.</p> <p>The Town Clerk provided an explanation as to his reasoning for publishing the report to Members.</p> <p>During the following discussion, the Town Clerk left the meeting.</p>

				After which, Council RESOLVED to defer the item to a future meeting so that a report including reviews and input from those Councillors involved in the process can be considered by Members.
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