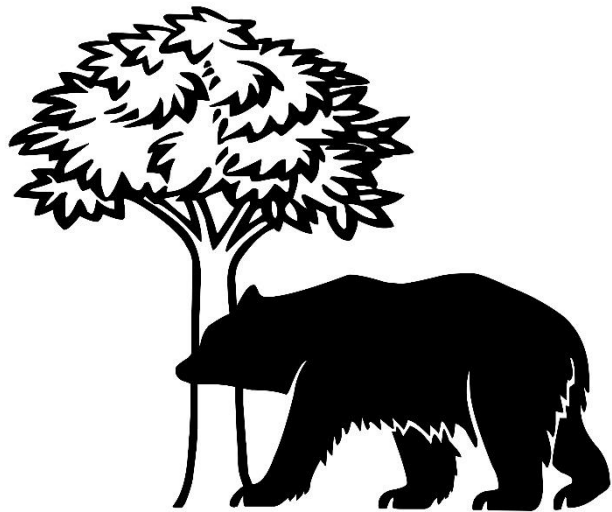


BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



**Berwick-upon-Tweed
Town Council**

Minutes of the Town Council Budget and Administration Committee
Meeting held on Monday, 22 July 2024 at 6.00pm in The Meeting
Room, Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Office, Unit 1, 82 – 88
Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: T Stewart (Chair)
R Driver
M Greener
L Hawken
R Mackenzie

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stephen Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
Cllr J Robertsons
Cllr G Smith
2 members of the public

MINUTE NO.	TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	Mover	Second	Decision
BA023/24	OPEN SESSION			
	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.	N/A	N/A	Millie and Ray McRobbie, directors of the Berwick Food and Beer Festival, questioned why their recent request for a grant of £2,500 to support the demo kitchen, gazebo and toilets, was declined as they believed they met all 10 criteria as on the Berwick Town Council (BTC) website. Cllr J Robertson explained that these grants were more for start-ups to help people get on their feet, not available in perpetuity. He offered use of a BTC new gazebo and possible donation of an old one if they can use it. He will arrange meeting with warden team. BTC need to update the website and grant response procedures.
BA024/24	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE			
	To receive apologies for absence.	N/A	N/A	There were no apologies for absence. In future, quorum for each meeting to be on the agenda.
BA025/24	MINUTES			
	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Budget and Administration Committee meeting held on 10 June 2024.	TS	LH	Matters arising from the minutes: Costs of maintaining the Splash Park – Finance Assistant requested to investigate Rialtas to gather all expenditure and report to the next meeting.

				<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024, including the amendment to the draft minutes previously circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>Thanks were extended to the Finance Assistant for all his hard work in preparations for the meeting.</p>
BA0026/24	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS			
	<p>(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, 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>i. There were no disclosures of interests.</p>
		N/A	N/A	<p>ii. There were no requests for dispensation.</p>

BA027/24	RESPONSES TO AUDIT			
	To note the successful conclusion of the internal audit and to deal with any issues raised.	Nem con		<p>Thanks were extended to the Finance Assistant for all his hard work on responses to the audit report.</p> <p>Follow-up: Risk Register on website is not dated.</p> <p>Annual staff appraisals – referred to Staffing Committee.</p> <p>Allotment Practice Note referred to Communities and Local Services Committee (C&LS).</p> <p>Cllr J Robertson raised the issue of apparent double insurance of the civic regalia – both by the Freemen Trustees and BTC. The Finance Assistant to investigate.</p>
BA028/24	TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Town Council Website. ii. Volunteer Database. 	Nem con		<p>The Report prepared by the office staff was noted and appreciated with thanks to the officers for their efforts.</p> <p>In summary, need to simplify, remove unnecessary information and use links wherever possible. A digital archive could be used for all previous meetings documents.</p> <p>The Committee RESOLVED to approve an amount of up to £1,000 for work to progress on improving the website.</p> <p>The Community Database was referred to C&LS Committee. It needs to be promoted so that organisations will populate it.</p> <p>Officers are requested to investigate whether it can be part of or linked to the improved website.</p>
BA029/24	SCHEDULE OF POLICIES			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To receive an update and consider priorities. 	Nem con		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Schedule of Policies needs further updating.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. To consider a Lone Working Policy for adoption. iii. To consider a Job Evaluation Appeals Procedure for adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LH LH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD RD 	<p>Emergency Community Plan – it was RESOLVED to create a task and finish group whose membership would comprise Cllr R Driver, Cllr M Greener, Cllr J Robertson and an Administration Officer.</p> <p>All policies need to be dated and have page numbers. Financial Regulations and Standing Orders on website need checking. Code of Conduct replaced with Civility and Respect.</p> <p>Schedule of delegations to be updated with suggestions from the HR adviser.</p> <p>Administration Officer to work on Health & Safety Policy and GDPR.</p> <p>Protocol for meetings, Social Media Policy and Complaints Policy all with the Communication Strategy approved November 2023. The Complaints policy also needs to be available separately. Finance Assistant to list all appendices of Communications Strategy as on the website, to clarify on the Schedule of Policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. The Committee unanimously RESOLVED to recommend that Council adopt the Lone Working Policy. iii. The Committee unanimously RESOLVED to recommend that Council adopt the Job Evaluations Appeals Procedure.
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BA030/24	FINANCE QUERIES LOG			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		This to be a standing item on the Budget & Administration (B&A) Committee agenda. This is to be a log for all public queries and all councillor queries. The Committee RESOLVED to unanimously agreed the update.
BA031/24	SIGNATORIES			
	<p>i. To confirm the list of signatories to the bank accounts held by the council.</p> <p>ii. To confirm the role of the signatory.</p>	Nem con		<p>The Committee RESOLVED:</p> <p>i. That for resilience the Town Council requires 3 Officers and 6 Councillors to act as signatories with Councillors confirmed as Cllr G Brown, Cllr R Driver, Cllr M Greener, Cllr R Mackenzie, Cllr J Robertson and add Cllr T Stewart. Cllr L Hawken to raise need for additional officers at the staff meeting on Wednesday,</p> <p>ii. To confirm that the role of the signatory is to sign cheques and approve payments and that when receiving the email for approval, at least 2/6 Councillors need to respond within 24 hours,</p> <p>iii. To note that the Unity Trust Bank account is not yet set up. The move needs to be done in stages, with the first as soon as possible, so that BACS payments with the new accounts can be tested, while Barclays accounts still open.</p>
BA032/24	FINANCE TRAINING			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		All on the Budget and Administration Committee need to do basic finance training offered by NALC.

				Rialtas does good online training for new Ops Manager and any Officers who need refresher. The Committee RESOLVED to note the update.
BA033/24	INTERNAL CONTROLS			
	To delegate to two Councillors authority to carry out internal control duties.	Nem con		The Committee RESOLVED to delegate authority to carry out spot checks initially by Cllr J Robertson and Cllr L Hawken, then Cllr L Hawken and Cllr T Stewart.
BA034/24	COMMUNICATION			
	To consider progress and follow through including newsletters.	Nem con		The Committee RESOLVED that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Because of short staffing, the second mail out to all households to be cancelled for 2024 and resumed in 2025. ii. 6 weekly newsletters to continue. Cllr L Hawken and Cllr J Robertson to discuss with staff on Wednesday.
BA035/24	TOURISM OFFICER			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		The Committee RESOLVED to defer the item to full Council. Cllr G Brown will present to Full Council. Earlier decision to cease funding was made on incomplete information.
At this point it was unanimously RESOLVED to suspend standing orders sufficiently to allow the meeting to proceed beyond 8pm.				
BA036/24	EXPENDITURE VS BUDGET YEAR TO DATE			
	To note the report.	Nem con		Committee members commented on: 4050 – Rent – gets paid in September, 4100 – requires a virement, 4200 etc Insurance – paid end August,

				<p>4501 – Public seat purchases – Expenditure but no budget, 4505 – as item over £2,500 needs a note to B&A to authorise, 4614 – Horticultural Assistant – no expenditure – entered elsewhere, a journal entry is required to correct, 4701 – Splash park – needs detailed report on all costs, 4909 – Market – not spent – needs business plan – to Full Council 5 August, 5000 – Festive lights – task and finish group work with Rotary and suppliers; tenders need to be started very soon, 5050 – Tweedmouth Feast not spent – need to apply for grant, 5051 – no longer needed, and 5451 – Riding of the Bounds – need detailed expenditure report, £1179 overspent on £6674 budget.</p> <p>The Committee requested that a list of reserves with amounts always accompany Expenditure v Budget year to date reports; then the committee RESOLVED to note the report.</p>
BA037/24	NOTIFICATION OF PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS			Committee Members were requested to email the Co-Chairs with anything they note or wish to query on the remaining items.
	To note payments and receipts in May and June.	Nem con		The Committee then unanimously RESOLVED without division to note the schedule of payments and receipts.
BA038/24	BANK RECONCILIATIONS			
	To note the bank reconciliation processes for May and June.	Nem con		The Committee unanimously RESOLVED that the Chair sign and receive the bank reconciliations for May and June 2024.

BA039/24	PURCHASE ORDERS			
	To note the purchase orders raised.	Nem con		Members unanimously RESOLVED to note all active Purchase Orders for the previous time-period.
BA040/24	ACTION PLAN			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		<p>The Committee RESOLVED that:</p> <p>BA50 (Produce Precept leaflet and survey) be suspended until the Spring 2025,</p> <p>BA51 (Review on IT system, website and report) to be scheduled for Spring 2025,</p> <p>BA52 (Report on Communications) to be scheduled for Spring 2025,</p> <p>BA53 (preparation schedule for all civic events) to be scheduled for September 2024,</p> <p>BA54 (Develop a Community Emergency Plan) Cllrs R Driver, M Greener and J Robertson to start work with the Operations Manager in September 2024,</p> <p>BA55 (Use of £95,069 without need for specific power to spend?) be removed,</p> <p>BA56 (Costs of splash park maintenance) be deferred to Budget & Administration and Communities & Local Services Committees in September 2024, and</p> <p>Riding of the Bounds be considered by the Communities & Local Services Committee with representatives of that organisation to be invited.</p>

BA041/24	DATE OF NEXT MEETING			
	The next meeting of the committee will be held on Monday, 09 September 2024 at 6:00 pm.	N/A	N/A	Noted.