

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 16 December 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)	P Rowe
	G Brown	G Smith
	J Bowden	L Stephenson
	R Driver	T Stewart
	M Greener	J Turton
	R Mackenzie	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stephen Robinson, Operations Manager
Steve Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace
Cty Cllr I Hunter
Cty Cllr C Seymour
2 representatives of Choices4Growth
2 members of the public

C114/24

1. OPEN SESSION

The direction of the Town Council regarding CCTV was raised as a concern by a resident who expressed their belief in its importance for protecting tourists. A response was provided that no information is available yet due to the Working Party having yet to meet.

C115/24

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

C116/24

3. MINUTES

Suggestions were made for the Open Session to make clear that no decision has been made to discontinue audio recordings and they will continue to be supplied.

An enquiry was made about the installation of bus shelters and the Operations Manager reported that the unit for opposite Asda had been delayed until January whilst it is hoped that installation at Cornhill Road will still take place before Christmas.

After which, the minutes of the meeting of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council held on 25 November 2024, including the amendments to the Open Session of those previously distributed by the Finance Officer, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C117/24

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

- i. There were no disclosures of interest.
- ii. There were no requests for dispensation.

C118/24

5. CHOICES4GROWTH

Representatives of Choices4Growth gave a verbal update of the project following on from grant money awarded by the Town Council. This included that the grant money was received at a good time due to the amount of referrals they are dealing with, that Choices4Growth are a North Northumberland Mental Health organisation that deals with all age groups and figures for counselling provided to various groups were also provided. Councillors then asked a number of questions including number of staff / volunteers, age demographics, is the organisation linked to any other groups, access to supervision and provision for cross border referrals.

Responses included that there are 2 staff and 2 volunteers, the organisation is linked to other local groups and has access to supervision whilst referrals are accepted from across the border.

After which, Councillors thanked Choices4Growth for their presentation and work.

C119/24

6. VAN

The Operations Manager introduced the item as current arrangements for the 2nd van may not be the cheapest option. After which Councillors asked a number of questions and raised a number of points including frequency of 3 people travelling together, height of base, need for a larger van, lease and purchase options, electric against diesel, hybrid options and location of servicing.

After which, Council **RESOLVED** to agree the need for a 2nd van and that options for purchase and lease are brought to the next meeting of Council.

C120/24

7. PROPOSALS FOR GROWTH AND SAVINGS

Cllr J Robertson introduced the item, distributed a draft budget and updated the meeting with regards to the break-down of salaries. After which Councillors asked a number of questions and raised a number of points including Schedule 3 income money from the Freeman Trustees and the need for caution over future amounts, that Stationery and Equipment for the Neighbourhood Plan be changed to wording that reflects the consultation and also CCTV which has £0 against it. Discussions included that £50,000 from the Schedule 3 money for this year be moved into Reserves, to note that CCTV has not yet been agreed and that £15,000 assigned to 'Other Events Grants' be redistributed as £12,000 allocated to 'Grants / Support' and £3,000 be allotted to 'Community Services Support'.

After which, Council **RESOLVED** to agree the changes and note the draft budget.

C121/24

8. POLICIES

- i. Points raised on the Sickness and Absence Policy included wording at 'Return-to-work meetings' and that Statutory Sick Pay be paid after 3 qualifying days. After which, Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Sickness and Absence Policy.
- ii. Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Flexible and Predictable Working Policy.
- iii. Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Staff Training and Development Policy.

C122/24

9. DESTINATION TWEED

Points raised and updates provided by Councillors included is any areas south of the River Tweed incorporated with nothing being finalised, possible location of start / finish of routes, that benefits will cover Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth, cycle camping and that the aim of the project is to be finished in 4 years.

After which, Council **RESOLVED** that the Operations Manager link with the Destination Tweed Team pending the arrival of the new Chief Officer with feedback provided to the Communities and Local Services Committee.

C123/24

10. CCTV

Points raised and updates provided by Councillors included that the Town Council currently doesn't pay maintenances costs, that pub watch should be included in any recommendation and that as a reassurance to the public, the system in the town is working.

After which, Council **RESOLVED** that:

1. A working group be formed to review the need for CCTV and/or a shop watch system, a pub watch system, or any other security monitoring in the town centre, following a request from the North Northumberland Police Team, and
2. The membership of the Working Group to include Cllr J Bowden, Cllr J Robertson, Cllr P Rowe, Cllr G Smith and the Operations Manager with feedback provided to the Communities and Local Services Committee.

C124/24

11. PLAY PARK INSPECTION TRAINING

Clarification was provided that training is mandatory and will be a one-off expense without the need for repeat training.

After which, Council **RESOLVED** to approve spending of up to £1,130 so that 2 members of staff can be trained in Level 2 Play Park Inspections.

C125/24

12. NORTH-EAST MAYORS LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Operations Manager updated the meeting that the consultation is currently underway and that the current system is unusable for submitting the Town Councils comments. Therefore the recommendation is to produce a document for submission to the consultation. It was further noted that a video conferencing meeting with the North-East Mayor's Office is possible once ideas for comments have been put in place.

After which, Council **RESOLVED** to form a working group comprising Cllr R Driver, Cllr R Mackenzie, Cllr J Robertson, Cllr G Smith, Cllr T Stewart and the Operations Manager with appropriate partners to be invited.

C126/24

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Council **RESOLVED** that Cllr J Robertson and Cllr P Rowe join the Staffing Committee.

C127/24

14. BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

- i. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr T Stewart, seconded by Cllr R Mackenzie to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 11 November 2024 (noted at the meeting of 25 November 2024).
- ii. Amendments were provided regarding negotiating the lease for the market and Schedule 3 income from the Freeman Trustees.

After which, it was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr T Stewart, seconded

by Cllr M Greener to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 09 December 2024.

C128/24

15. PLANNING COMMITTEE

- i. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr M Greener, seconded by Cllr J Robertson to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 21 October 2024 (noted at the meeting of 25 November 2024).
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr R Driver, seconded by Cllr T Stewart to note the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 18 November 2024.
- iii. Cllr T Stewart updated the meeting as to the reason for holding an extraordinary meeting, i.e. to consider in public an application deemed important as it involved the Barracks.
After which, it was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr M Greener, seconded by Cllr J Robertson to note the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Planning Committee held on 04 December 2024.

C129/24

16. STAFFING COMMITTEE

- i. Cllr J Robertson thanked members who had put a lot of extra work in during recent months.
After which, it was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr R Mackenzie, seconded by Cllr G Brown to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 17 September 2024 (noted at the meeting of 30 September 2024).
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr G Brown, seconded by Cllr J Bowden to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 02 December 2024.

C130/24

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday, 27 January 2025 at 6 pm.

Council RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was appropriate to exclude the media and public from the discussion of the following items of business on the basis that public discussion might prejudice the Council's position and staffing or personal issues might be discussed.

18. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

- i. It was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr G Brown, seconded by Cllr J Bowden to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 17 September 2024 (noted at the meeting of 30 September 2024).
- ii. Cllr J Robertson highlighted the importance of reading the recommendations in full.

After which, it was **RESOLVED** on the motion of Cllr J Bowden, seconded by Cllr G Brown to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 02 December 2024.