

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 9TH JANUARY 2012

PRESENT: COUN L WOOD (CHAIR)

Mesdames: S McDonnell & J Black

Messrs: J Alvey, H Bennett MBE, W M Jeffrey, R Curtis,
C Watkins, R W Jones, D Langan, C J Metcalfe, R Huitson
D Milsom & C Austin

**MEMBERS WERE REMINDED OF THE NEED TO DISCLOSE ANY
INTEREST PREJUDICIAL OR PERSONAL IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT.**

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman wished everyone a Happy New Year.

It was also asked that it be confirmed, as it had been agreed previously, that the meetings would close at 9.00pm and any business not transacted would be submitted to the next meeting the following week.

RECOMMENDED that all Council Meetings conclude no later than 9.00pm.

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted and accepted from Councillors G Cowie, (family bereavement), C Robbins, (on holiday), T A Jones, (wife ill) and J I Measor, (ill).

97. EAST DURHAM CREDIT UNION

The Chairman welcomed Mr David Snowdon to the meeting and he gave an overview of his work in East Durham to promote the Credit Union and its services. He advised that there were now nine collection points in East Durham and he hoped to be able to open more to give residents easier access to their services. A very informative question and answer session ensued and Members suggested details of the East Durham Credit Union should be included in a future edition of the About Town Newsletter.

Mr Snowdon thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to attend the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that an article on the excellent work of the East Durham Credit Union be included in a future edition of the About Town.

98. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved.

Matters Arising

(i) Minute Number 61 – Halloween Party Budget 2011

Members were circulated with a further report detailing the costs for this event. It was noted that this did not include the purchase price of bar sales, whilst it did include the approximate income from the bar sales.

RECOMMENDED that this report be re submitted and for future reports of this nature actual income, expenditure and profit be included.

(ii) Minute Number 77 – Town Centre Clock – Progress

The Deputy Town Clerk circulated an update on the bell being taken down and asked for Member's ideas on where to re-site it.

RECOMMENDED that this item be added to the Town Council's insurance cover immediately. FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the Horticultural Supervisor submit a detailed scheme for the re-siting of the bell for Member's consideration.

(iii) Minute Number 87 – Proposed Stopping up of the Highway Adjacent to Number 1 to 33 Yoden Way, Peterlee

RECOMMENDED that Durham County Council be asked if they had received any responses from the tenants of the units on Yoden Way, and this be re considered as soon as the reply was received.

99. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 15TH DECEMBER 2011 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed, subject to Councillor Metcalfe being deleted from the attendance list.

There was a query regarding a payment made to PHS and this was appropriately dealt with. It was explained a full report on the changes that had taken place in this regard, would be submitted to the Shotton Hall Sub Committee to be held this month.

RECOMMENDED that this report be awaited.

100. LARGER LOCAL COUNCILS FORUM, MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 16TH NOVEMBER 2011

A copy of the minutes from this meeting were circulated to each Member for their information. The Leader of the Council reported that he had withdrawn his intention to seek election to the NALC Executive.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

101. SHOULD DENE SCHOOL BECOME AN ACADEMY? - CONSULTATION

RECOMMENDED the information that had been sent to parents/carers on whether Dene should become an Academy, be received.

102. ISSUES ARISING REPORT FOR PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL –
AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2011

Consideration was given to the report prepared by the Council's new Auditors BDO. They recommended the Council must implement the recommendations made by them to improve the financial systems of the town Council as soon as possible, or in any event before the end of the current financial year. The issues arising from the audit were considered and it was confirmed by the Clerk that the issues given would be attended to during this financial year.

RECOMMENDED an Action Plan be developed as a matter of urgency, to include the following issues which would need to be introduced and approved by Members before 31st March 2012:-

- (i) improved budget monitoring take place to include a review of the actual income and expenditure against the budgeted income and expenditure and this be included in the minutes;**
- (ii) the risk assessment is reviewed at least once a year. This review was for the Council to evidence as a whole that they are satisfied that all risks facing the Council have been identified and safeguards have been put in place to protect against those risks;**
- (iii) the Council update its fixed asset register to include the date acquired, purchase cost and location of each asset held;**
- (iv) the Council carry out a review of effectiveness of internal audit and control.**

103. ESTIMATES OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2012/13

To Clerk advised that Durham County Council required the details of the precept to be requested by the Town Council by no later than 23rd January 2012. She was to arrange a meeting with an Officer of Durham County Council to discuss the council tax base calculation and she would report back to the Parks & Cemetery Meeting with the outcome for Members to agree the precept to be requested from Durham County Council.

RECOMMENDED this course of action be agreed.

104. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED, THE COMMITTEE PASSED THE FORMAL RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING, PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT, 1961 & THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.

105. STOCK TAKE – LICENSED PREMISES

Consideration was given to the stock take report for both Shotton Hall and The Pavilion.

There was considerable discussion on this matter and it was **RECOMMENDED that:**

- (i) **the format of the wastage sheet prepared by the Facilities Team at the Pavilion, be the preferred format and the Team at Shotton Hall be requested to adapt their report;**
- (ii) **a bar takings report be produced by the Manager/Facilities Assistant for both Facilities, in the format to be agreed;**
- (iii) **this month's and future stock take reports be discussed further at the Shotton Hall Sub Committee and the Pavilion Management Board Meeting.**

106. TWINNING 2012 - CONSIDERATION

The Town Clerk asked for Member's consideration with this activity.

RECOMMENDED a Special Meeting be arranged to discuss this matter and members of the Peterlee & Nordenham Friendship Association be invited to attend.

107. PETERLEE INFORMATION CENTRE

- (a) Closure – Update

The Town Clerk gave Member's an update on the progress made with the closure of this service.

RECOMMENDED the progress be noted and the Clerk continue to monitor this work.

(b) Rental Obligations

RECOMMENDED that progress be awaited on the discussions with the landlord on the Town Council's rental obligations for this property.

108. CODE OF CONDUCT ISSUES

In considering this matter the Town Clerk referred to correspondence received from Grahame Morris MP.

RECOMMENDED a meeting be arranged with Grahame Morris to discuss various issues with him and all Town Council Members be invited to attend.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Shotton Parish Council be asked to confirm attendances by one of its Members at their meetings;
- (ii) the Town Clerk correspond with a Local Member expressing Member's concern over his non attendance at Town Council Meetings and report back on the current situation;
- (iii) the Town Clerk's actions regarding her notification to a local Councillor that the pending complaints, Code of Conduct and Standards Board issues, would only be dealt with via written correspondence, be endorsed;
- (iv) the Pavilion Management Board be asked about the allegations of outrageous behaviour next to the building, at the next meeting.
- (iv) A copy of the judgment in the Burroughs v Peterlee Town Council case be obtained and circulated to each Member.