

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE 1ST
OCTOBER 2012

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2012

PRESENT: COUN R CURTIS (CHAIR)

Mesdames: L Wood & M Milsom

Messrs: R Kyle, T A Jones, H Bennett MBE, W M Jeffrey, D
Langan, C J Metcalfe, R Huitson, D Milsom, C Austin, J Alvey,
& E W Hall

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

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted and accepted from Councillors
R Jones, J Hardy and G Cowie, (all ill).

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

Matters Arising

(i) Minute Number 47 - Local Council Tax Support Scheme and
review of Discretionary Council Tax Discount on Unoccupied
Properties – Meeting 24th September 2012

RECOMMENDED progress on this matter be awaited.

(ii) Minute Number 51(i) Mayoress at Home

RECOMMENDED the policy as discussed in relation to beverages at Civic Events, be agreed and communicated to all staff.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED the Town Clerk contact Caterpillar regarding their recent meeting room hire and a further report be made to Members.

55. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 20TH SEPTEMBER 2012, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was accepted.

There were several queries on the accounts listed, all of which had been answered; it was suggested that these queries and the answers to them, be circulated for the information of all Members prior to the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that this course of action be followed.

COUNCILLOR J ALVEY CAME INTO THE MEETING AT THIS POINT, (6.50PM) HAVING BEEN AT THE LOCAL RESIDENT'S MEETING.

56. MEETINGS/INVITATIONS

(i) Town Centre Meeting, 19th September 2012

RECOMMENDED the report of this meeting be considered at a future meeting.

(ii) Standards Session, County Hall Durham, 11th October 2012, 6.00pm

It was reported that four places had been reserved on this training and it was asked if any other Member wished to go along.

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.

(iii) County Durham Partnership Community Buildings & Localism Event, 29th October 2012, Bowburn

RECOMMENDED Councillors Metcalfe and Jeffrey attend this event on the Town Council's behalf.

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE 1ST
OCTOBER 2012

- (iv) Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, Annual Luncheon, Ramside Hall Hotel, Wednesday 14th November 2012 – Invitations received

RECOMMENDED these invitations not be taken up.

- (v) Parish Paths Partnership – 20th Anniversary Event, 19th November, Durham Town Hall, 12 – 3.00pm

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.

57. ELECTIONS

- (i) Vacancy – Acre Rigg Ward – Progress

It was reported that this vacancy closed on Tuesday 2nd October 2012 and Members would be advised of the outcome.

RECOMMENDED further information be awaited.

- (ii) Purdah Period – 18th March – 2nd May 2013

Members were circulated with information relating to this period prior to the elections. This would not interfere with Town Council Meetings.

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.

58. 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.

59. TOWN CENTRE CLOCK – SERVICE AGREEMENT

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council revert back to the annual contract for this maintenance with Smith of Derby, at the cost as given in the correspondence.

60. AUDIT

(a) Appointment of External Auditor 2012/13

RECOMMENDED the information given that BDO LLP had been appointed as external auditor for the five years from 2012/13, be noted.

The Town Clerk advised that she had received the Audit Report that morning from BDO LLP. There were two items in the report Section One did not add up by £1.00, (rounding up and down adjustment), and Financial Regulations and Standing Orders needed updating.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted and the items given in the report be attended to.

(b) Internal Audit Report - Cemetery

A copy of this report prepared by the Internal Auditor, which gave full assurance, was circulated to each Member.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted and the Action Plan given be followed in relation to the timely approval of fees and charges.

(c) Internal Audit Report - Payroll

A copy of this report prepared by the Internal Auditor was circulated to each Member.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted and the Action Plan given, be noted and taken into account when investigating alternative payroll providers.

(d) Internal Audit Report - Sport Lettings

A copy of this report prepared by the Internal Auditor was circulated to each Member.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted and the Action Plan given be followed in relation to the timely approval of fees and charges and charging for Teams outside the Town.

(e) Internal Audit Report - Democratic Costs

A copy of this report prepared by the Internal Auditor, which gave full assurance, was circulated to each Member.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted.

(f) Internal Audit - Terms of Reference - Parks General & Officers Travelling & Subsistence

A copy of the terms of reference for the next audits prepared by the Internal Auditor was circulated to each Member.

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.

61. DONATIONS & CONCESSIONARY USE APPLICATIONS

(a) Peterlee Town Bowls – further information

Further information had been received from the bowlers, and a balance sheet/Treasurer's report was awaited.

RECOMMENDED this request be considered further when all of the information was received.

(b) Durham Cricket League – Junior Cricket Presentation Evening – 26th October, Shotton Hall

RECOMMENDED the Banqueting Suites be offered at 50% the normal rate of hire for this function.

(c) The Royal Signals Association – 25th August 2013, The Pavilion

RECOMMENDED the Pavilion be offered free of charge for this event.

- (d) Welding Academy – Infinite Learning & Development/Caterpillar

RECOMMENDED this request be clarified explaining that the Town Council may not be able to assist financially but would like to visit the site and to support the apprenticeship scheme in other ways.

COUNCILLOR E W HALL CAME INTO THE MEETING AT THIS POINT, (7.20PM) AND GAVE HIS APOLGIES FOR BEING LATE, NOT REALISING THE MEETING STARTED AT 6.30PM.

62. STOCK REPORTS PERIOD ENDING 24TH AUGUST 2012

- (A) Shotton Hall
(B) The Pavilion

Consideration was given to the stock reports received for the licensed premises. Members asked that the issues with wastage at The Pavilion be investigated further with the Facilities Manager.

RECOMMENDED the reports be accepted. **FURTHER RECOMMENDED** that the Stock Takers be invited to attend a future meeting of the Shotton Hall Sub Committee to explain their reports to Members.

63. USER REPORTS

- (a) Shotton Hall
(b) The Pavilion

It was asked that totals be included at the end of columns on the report. It was also suggested that a cancellation policy be implemented that would improve financial safeguards for the Town Council in relation to bookings being cancelled or not being held.

RECOMMENDED the booking terms and conditions for Shotton Hall and The Pavilion be amended to cover the issue of cancellations/no shows.

64. NOISE LEVELS – SHOTTON HALL BANQUETING SUITES

It was asked that this matter be considered further at the next meeting when information would be available on the monitoring equipment available and on what was classed as acceptable noise levels.

RECOMMENDED a further report be awaited.

PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM COUNCILLOR JEFFREY DECLARED AN INTEREST AND LEFT THE MEETING FOR THIS ITEM, THE REQUEST BEING FROM HIS DAUGHTER.

65. REQUEST FOR A CLOTHING ALLOWANCE – MAYOR’S BALL

The Town Clerk gave Members details of this request.

RECOMMENDED that the request for a clothing allowance be refused, a uniform of a black skirt and white blouse be provided for the event to ensure all staff on duty were presented in the same standard/manner.

66. OUTSTANDING DEBTS – PROGRESS

Members were advised that arrangements were being made for the bailiff to levy execution against the assets of both debtors and tight control would be kept on this and a progress report would be given in due course. Comment was made at the length of time this matter had taken to progress.

RECOMMENDED progress be awaited.

67. CIVIC TAXI CONTRACT

It was reported that the current contract was due to expire in December 2012.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council go out to tender to local companies for the provision of this service.

68. BAN FROM THE BUILDING

It was reported that this three month ban expired on 25th September 2012. Consideration was given to the verbal report given by the Town Clerk on this matter.

RECOMMENDED the person in question be advised that the ban was now up and they were welcome to re enter the premises, whilst it being stressed a certain level of behaviour would be expected by all of the Town Council's' customers.

69. PUBLIC MEETING WOODHOUSE PARK – DATE

Consideration was given to the setting of a date to hold a public meeting to consider all of the current issues with Woodhouse Park. The Town Clerk suggested that this was perhaps a series of meetings that needed to be held with various partners as well as members of the public. Members asked that the following, plus any other relevant organizations, be invited to take part in discussions – the Youth Club, One Point, Neighbourhood Wardens, AAP, the Police, County Councillors, residents and Friends of Woodhouse Park. It was also suggested the press be requested to help with publicising the issues, meetings etc.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) a press statement be issued and a scoping report prepared with a Project Plan for Woodhouse Park;**
- (ii) a pre meeting be held with multi agencies;**
- (iii) then a public meeting/consultation event be held at Shotton Hall;**
- (iv) then a further meeting be held to discuss the way forward.**