

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER 2014

PRESENT: COUN C J METCALFE (CHAIR)

Mesdames:- L Wood, K Liddell, S Simpson &
M Milsom

Messrs:- W M Jeffrey, D Sillito, S Miles, C Watkins, L Cook &
D Milsom

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

**In the absence of both the chair and the Vice Chair Councillor Metcalfe
was nominated to take the Chair.**

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted and accepted on behalf of
Councillors G Cowie, (ill), J Alvey, (another meeting), A Watson, (on
holiday), C Baty, (ill). Apologies for absence had been submitted by
Councillor M J Thompson but they were not accepted.

39. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING a copy of which had
been previously circulated, were approved.

Matters Arising

Minute Number 10 – Policies for your Council Advice

The first meeting of this small working group to assist with this matter
was held 12th August 2014 and the next meeting is to be held on 11th
September 2014.

RECOMMENDED that the progress be noted.

40. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF THE 17TH JULY & 7TH AUGUST 2014 copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved.

41. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY REPORT 2013-2014

It was report a copy of this report had been received and was available to view on the County Council’s web site and copies were available for Members at the meeting.

RECOMMENDED the information given be noted.

42. FLY A FLAG FOR THE COMMONWEALTH – 9TH MARCH – COMMONWEALTH DAY 2015

Members were circulated with details received on this new Annual Event asking if the Town Council wished to take part in this unique, historic, annual occasion on 9th March 2015, Commonwealth Day 2015.

RECOMMENDED this be considered further at the Council Meeting.

43. EAST DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL, MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE 10TH JUNE 2014

A copy of the minutes of this meeting were circulated for Member’s information.

RECOMMENDED the information given, be noted.

44. COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

(i) Council Responsibility

Members were circulated with advice from CDALC to all councils to protect themselves from any possible fraud by introducing the correct procedures for their council. It was agreed issues in the e mail should be considered in more detail by the small working group established to consider and update council policies.

RECOMMENDED this course of action be agreed.

(ii) County Training Partnership Courses for the rest of 2014

Details of course as follows were circulated:-

- Delegation, Terms of Reference, Financial Regulations & Standing Orders – 30th September, Billingham
- Setting & Controlling Budgets, Precepts and Grants – 15th October 2014, County Hall, Durham;
- Policies, Social Media & the Press, Health & Safety Risk Assessments – 10th November 2014, Shildon.

RECOMMENDED places be reserved on these sessions for the Deputy Town Clerk and Councillor Jeffrey, and further places be booked should other members wish to attend, (and they advise the Deputy Town Clerk asap so that a place could be reserved for them).

(iii) Larger Local Councils Forum Meeting – Minutes of the last meeting & Update

(iv) Durham Association News – Issue 48

(v) National Council Bulletin following Meeting on 1 July 2014

(vi) Fracking money should be drilled down to parishes

Copies of information relating to the above issues were circulated to each Member for their information. It was felt that there needed to be clear guidelines established with the introduction of the new legislation relating to the recording of meetings etc and the suggested alteration/amendment to the Standing Orders to include this be awaited.

RECOMMENDED the documents be received and the suggested amendments to Standing Orders be awaited.

45. 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, 1960 & THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.
46. STOCK REPORTS PERIODS ENDING 5TH AUGUST 2014
(A) Shotton Hall
(B) The Pavilion

Consideration was given to the stock reports for the above period for all of the Town Councils licensed premises.

RECOMMENDED that the reports be accepted.

47. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Copies of the report prepared by the Internal Auditor were circulated to each Member as follows:-

(i) Allotments

Whist noting the substantial assurance Members made reference and considered fully the Action Plan given with the report. They then agreed they were happy to amend the current agreement that was in place for the management of the leisure gardens and to grant approval to the Leisure Gardeners Association to determine the rents to be applied to the holders, rather than as it was in the terms of the agreement that the amount of rent payable would be approved by the Council.

RECOMMENDED that the conditions within the current agreement be amended to reflect the decision made and also a review of the annual rent to the Leisure Gardeners Association be carried out at the time of setting the budget for 2014/15.

(ii) Cemetery Income

It was reported this audit had been given full assurance and there was no action plan to follow from it, although reference was made to the setting of fees and charges. It was suggested the timing of the review of fees and charges be raised at the Training Session to be attended in October by those attending, for advice on what was best practice.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted and the review of fees and charges be raised as a query at the Budget Training.

(iii) Accounts Receivable

It was reported this audit had been given full assurance and there was no action plan to follow from it.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted.

(iv) Helford Road Pavilion

Whist noting the substantial assurance Members made reference and considered fully the Action Plan given with the report. The Acting Manager had acted upon the items raised in the action plan already and consideration was to be given to the room hire charges at the Pavilion Management Board Meeting to be held the next evening.

RECOMMENDED the report be accepted and the action taken be accepted.

(v) Town Clerk

The report advised it was essential that the Town Council had adequate policies in place and the Internal Auditor recommended a Governance Committee be established to develop and review these.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported this had been recognised as a priority and at the recent Council Meeting the following Members had been selected to form a small working group to assist with this matter:- Councillors L Cook, C Baty, W M Jeffrey, C J Metcalfe & A Watson. This Group had met on 12th August 2014, to begin the consideration of the first draft of the Managing Sickness Absence Policy. In considering the recommendations in this report it was agreed that this Group be re named the Governance Sub Group and Terms of Reference be agreed to fully reflect their purpose and roles & responsibilities. It was asked that all policies be supported and

agreed by the Trade Unions.

RECOMMENDED the report be received and the action as suggested at the meeting on the Governance Sub Group, be agreed.

48. OPERATION OF THE BISTRO

Members gave consideration to the report of the Acting Business Manager on the operation of the Bistro. They fully supported the operation of this service and felt that it added value to the customer experience of users of the building. Members felt it was a valuable asset and a well used hub for the building and the community, and whilst not expecting it to provide a large income stream for the building, they were happy with the progress it was making.

RECOMMENDED the bistro service continue and at the current time the staffing of one catering assistant, remain unaltered.