

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE 20TH AUGUST 2012

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

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HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 20TH AUGUST 2012

PRESENT: R CURTIS (CHAIR)

Mesdames: L Wood & J I Measor

Messrs: T A Jones, J Alvey, H Bennett MBE, W M Jeffrey, C Watkins, D Langan, G Cowie, C J Metcalfe, C Robbins , 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 MEETING, A 15 MINUTE “OPEN SESSION” WAS HELD TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUT QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL. THERE WERE NO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT AT THE MEETING.

59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted and accepted from Councillors J Hardy, (on holiday), Mrs M Milsom, (family bereavement), Mrs J Black, (on holiday) and R W Jones, (ill).

RESOLVED as letter of condolence be sent to Councillor Milsom.

60. POLICE -UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed PCSO’s Carol McCombe and Nicola

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Bowman to the meeting.

A report was given on the statistics collated since the last meeting for Member's information. Details were given of the targeted hot spots where regular patrols were carried out.

Updates were given on issues raised at the last meeting including:-

- Woodhouse Park;
- Theft of wheelie bins;
- The parking of a grey van in the Howletch Area – further details were requested and given;
- 101 contact number;
Details were given of information received from the Police Communications Department on the use of the various telephone numbers including 101 and 999. PCSO McCombe reported 101 was for “non-emergency” calls and these were classified as of a lower priority than “999” calls. 101 calls were held until 999 calls were dealt with. A Local Member questioned this system. It was suggested by the PCSOs that perhaps there should be a press release issued by the Police on the proper use of the various contact numbers by the public.
- Vehicles driving over grassed areas and footpaths all over the Town, which was of grave concern and frustration to Members and had been for many years. It was suggested this issue also be included in a press release from the Police, during discussions it was also offered that a leaflet drop could be carried out on the most affected areas where off road parking was occurring;
- Hampshire Place Play Area – vandalism;
- Eden Lane Cemetery it was reported there had been no further incidents, and regular patrols were being carried out;
- Seizures of off road motor bikes;
- PCSO coverage in the Town;
- A major piece of work to tackle the sale and use of drugs which had brought massive results for the Local Force.

Further statistics were given on crime figures this year compared to this period last year.

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The Leader gave the following items for attention:

- Vandalism of the Town Council's play areas;
- Chilton Garth and Hatfield Place residents that had received visits from the Police following their wheelie bins being burnt out;
- Youths drinking in the Dene area next to Hatfield Place;
- Dial a Drink Scheme;
- Youngsters on scooters using the travellers outside the Asda store.

The representatives were thanked for their very informative report.

RESOLVED progress be awaited on the items given for attention.

61. THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE 16TH JULY 2012 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed.

Matters Arising

- (i) Minute Number 45 – Vice Chairmanship of the Mayor's Committee

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she had taken further advice on this matter and it was recommended by the Governance Solicitor, Durham County Council, that Ms Taylor be requested to complete a Code of Conduct for Members Co-Opted Member undertaking pro forma relating to her role as Vice Chairman of the Mayor's Committee.

RESOLVED this course of action be agreed.

PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING MATTER COUNCILLOR C AUSTIN DECLARED AN INTEREST, HIS DAUGHTER LIVING NEARBY TO THE FENCE IN QUESTION, AND HE TOOK NO PART IN THE DISCUSSION WHICH ENSUED.

- (ii) Acre Rigg Junior School – Fencing Works

Members were circulated with details of the planning approval given to this application.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

62. THE MINUTES OF THE SKATEPARK WORKING PARTIES OF THE 4TH JULY & 24TH JULY 2012 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed.

Matters Arising

Members referred to the recommendation 10(iii) contained within the Minutes of the Skate Park Working Party of the 24th July 2012 regarding the security fencing around a damaged section of the facility being removed. The Leader advised that he and another Local Member were asked by the Parks Development Officer at this meeting could the fencing be removed as the youths had repeatedly taken this fencing down. At the meeting the fence in question was laid against the fence to the skate park and youths were using all of the area, including the damaged area, freely. It was felt that if that was the case, the Officer should have clarified this with, and taken advice from, his line Manager not Councillors.

The need for clear roles and responsibilities for both Officers and Members was an issue that needed to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. This had already been discussed at length at the meeting of the Health & Safety Committee on the 25th June 2012.

Members suggested that whilst the article relating to vandalism had appeared on the front page of the local newspaper, the Town Council should continue to promote the vandalism issues.

It was also advised that the next meeting of the Skatepark Working party had been re-arranged for Friday 24th August 2012 at 12 noon.

RESOLVED that it be re-affirmed that a clear protocol be produced to define the roles of staff and Members. This to be the subject of future awareness raising and training to optimize future working relationships.

63. THE REPORT OF THE MAYOR'S COMMITTEE OF THE 16TH JULY 2012 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was agreed.

Matters Arising

Minute Number – Mayoress at Home

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she had contacted Sunderland City, Spennymoor, Seaham and Great Aycliffe Town Councils and all authorities had an open house where people could come and meet the Mayor and Mayoress. No residency stipulations were made for the event.

A Local Member queried if this was appropriate for people from out of the Town to come along and asked for this matter to be considered further at the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Another Local Member reported that he understood from a hirer that there were raised voices from outside their meeting room on the day of this event. He asked could this be investigated.

RESOLVED that both matters be considered further at the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

64. THE REPORT OF THE SHOTTON HALL SUB COMMITTEE OF THE 23RD JULY 2012 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was agreed.

Matters Arising

Minute Number 55 – Woodhouse Park

It was reported that the recommendation that Woodhouse Park remain closed from 8 o' clock each evening had been implemented immediately by the Town Clerk following receipt of numerous telephone calls received from local residents objecting the Park being left open.

RESOLVED that the public meeting to consider issues at Woodhouse Park including the opening, closing, vandalism, access by dogs on leads etc, be held as soon as possible.

65. THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE 24TH JULY 2012 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was agreed, subject to Councillor M Milsom as being

shown as in attendance at the meeting. Councillor Langan had also endorsed the statement made by Councillor Mrs Milsom at the meeting. Councillor C J Metcalfe left the meeting prior to the motion not being carried. It was noted that it was normal practice to record if a Member left a meeting at a certain point.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and the amendments be accepted.

66. THE REPORT OF THE SHOW COMMITTEE OF THE 26TH JULY 2012 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was agreed.

Matters Arising

Minute Number 10 – Amelia Lily Performance – Cheque Payment

Members were advised that Amelia Lily had cancelled her booking with the Town Council and no suitable replacement had been offered by her Manager/Agent; a local band were to take up this performance slot. It was suggested that consideration should be given to having a policy whereby the Town Council would not pay for any service before it was received, it being noted that the Finance Sub Committee did not pass this cheque for payment.

RESOLVED that further consideration be given to implementing such a policy.

67. CODE OF CONDUCT & REGISTER OF INTERESTS – UPDATE

Members were circulated with further information circulating the further/updated version of the Code of Conduct which now incorporated the DCLG's latest definition of disclosable pecuniary interests.

An information session on the new Standards procedures which had recently been introduced was to be held on Thursday 11th October 2012 from 6.00pm and all Members were asked to advise the Office if they wished to attend and places would be reserved. Councillors Austin, Jeffrey and Langan advised that they wished to attend.

RESOLVED that the Town Council adopt the updated version of the Code of Conduct, as circulated, which incorporated the DCLG's latest definition of disclosable pecuniary interests, (set out in the annex to DCLG's Guide).

FURTHER RESOLVED places be reserved as requested at this session on 11th October 2012.

68. PETERLEE SHOW – THANKYOU RECEPTION – TO AGREE A DATE AND VENUE

It was agreed that this reception be held on Friday 7th September 2012 at the Pavilion Helford Road Peterlee. It was suggested that the Mayor and Chairman of the Show Committee be consulted by the Town Clerk and they agree the details of the evening.

RESOLVED this course of action be agreed.

69. LETTER OF RESIGNATION

RESOLVED the resignation of Councillor S McDonnell be accepted and Durham County be advised of this vacancy.

FURTHER RESOLVED the Town Clerk and Leader prepare a joint press release to be issued by the Town Council, the draft of which to be submitted to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval by Members prior to its issue.

70. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader gave his report covering the following items:-

- Letter from Steadfast Security;
- Budget monitoring;
- Closure of the Town Council's play areas;
- Larger Local Councils Forum Meeting where items including the Communities Right to Challenge, Safety Advisory Group,

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Street Warden Service were discussed. A Local Member asked why the reserve had not been asked to attend. It was reported that one of the Members attending had to not been able to attend due to a family emergency and there was not enough time to notify the reserve. This explanation was accepted.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) the information given in the Leader's report, be noted;**
- (ii) the letter from Steadfast Security be considered at the Finance & General Purposes Committee;**
- (iii) a system be used whereby if a play area was to be closed for any reason, a notice be displayed and local Ward Members be advised;**
- (iv) it be noted that the budget monitoring was to be considered by the Strategic Management Team and then submitted to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.**