

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD IN THE BRANDLING SUITE & ONLINE USING VIDEO CONFERENCING TECHNOLOGY

ON MONDAY 28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 at 6.00PM

PRESENT:- COUN T DUFFY (CHAIR)

Mesdames:- K Duffy, D Howarth, V Watson, S McDonnell, M A Cartwright, K Hawley, L Fenwick, & K Liddell

Messrs:- A Wilkinson, S McGlen, G Carne, S Miles, A Watson, S Franklin, S Kirkup, C Watkins & R Moore

52. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were offered to the meeting from Councillor S Simpson & G Johnson.

53. Mayor's/Chair's Report

The Mayor reported he had visited the new retail site along with students of East Durham College to see the progress made at the site. He had also visited the Woodhouse Park Community Garden for photographs. **RESOLVED the information given, be noted.**

54. To receive declarations of interest

Members were reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. Councillor A Wilkinson declared an interest in item 62(i) as his son played for football for the Under 13's; Councillor Watkins declared an interest as his grandson plays for the Blackhall Monks U10's Team.

55. Disposal of Town Council land - former bowls grounds and tennis court, Lowhills Road

The report of the Town Clerk seeking approval to dispose of the former bowls site at Lowhills Road to CALM CIC on a 30year leasehold agreement was considered. Following

discussion about various elements of the lease and the proposed new cabin/cube it was **RESOLVED the contents of this report be noted and Council:-**

- (i) **approve the leasehold disposal of the subject site to CALM CIC at a peppercorn rent (£1 per annum, if demanded);**
- (ii) **delegate responsibility to the Chairman of Council and Town Clerk to ensure that any objections to the advertised disposal are properly considered and responded to;**
- (iii) **subject to (ii) above, authorise the Town Clerk to complete all requisite legal documentation in relation to execution of the lease; and**
- (iv) **subject to the successful execution of the lease, authorise the Town Clerk to notify CALM CIC of approval of the request to install a new cabin/cube on the site for the provision of classes and other services in line with the terms of the lease.**

56. To Approve the Minutes of the last meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting were attached for consideration and approval. **RESOLVED the minutes be accepted and signed as a true and correct record.**

57. To Note the Minutes of the Scrutiny Meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> August & 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**RESOLVED the content of the minutes be noted.**

58. COVID-19 Update

Council received an update from the Town Clerk on the Council's response to the COVID-19 situation. He reported the first member of staff had received a positive test result and had self quarantined. He spoke about the latest Government restrictions and lock downs. It was hoped a Remembrance Service would take place, by invite only for 30 people, inside the church with a small wreath laying ceremony and this was to be discussed further and agreed. Members agreed the Clerk's recommendation that the tree lighting would go ahead at both Shotton Hall and the town centre, with the town centre tree procured through Durham County Council. A Local Member felt that the tree in the town centre did not have enough lights on it and asked for this to be increased this year. The Mayoress sent her and her colleagues best wishes to the member of staff that had been unwell and suggested the Town Council should consider having (a) COVID champion(s). **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

59. Annual Meeting May 2021

Council were asked to consider and confirm arrangements for the Annual Meeting, with the suggestion that the meeting be suspended for this year and it be held in May 2021 after the local elections. **RESOLVED this course of action be agreed to and the next Annual Meeting be held in May 2021 following the Town Council elections, if allowed.**

60. Audit of Accounts 2019/20

The Council considered the External Auditor's report on the Council's Accounts for 2019/20.

Members noted the External Auditor's recommendation that for 2020/21 the council should ensure that it documents its annual risk assessment.

One other matter was brought to the Council's attention regarding a subject access request under the Data Protection Act.

**RESOLVED the external auditor's report be accepted.**

61. New Policies

The following policies were for consideration, approval and adoption by Peterlee Town Council. Several of the policies were updated and reviewed versions rather than new policies.

- (a) Review of Mobile Device Policy
- (b) Mutual Respect & Dignity at Work Policy
- (c) Equality & Diversity Policy
- (d) Learning & Development Policy
- (e) Maternity Policy
- (f) Volunteering Policy Statement
- (g) Appeals Policy
- (h) Attendance Management
- (i) Disciplinary Policy
- (j) Grievance Policy

**RESOLVED the policies listed above, be adopted and applied immediately.**

62. NEP Funding Applications

(i) Blackhall Monks Under10s, Originals FC - grant of £400.00 requested towards some new equipment and sports wear.

**RESOLVED a grant of £400.00 be made to this Team.**

(ii) Peterlee Town Bowling Club – a grant of £405.00 requested towards the purchase of new equipment.

**RESOLVED a grant of £360.00 be made to this Club.**

63. Spokesperson of the North East Party's Report

Councillor Karen Duffy reinforced the NEP's best wishes for a speedy recovery for the member of staff that had tested positive for COVID 19. She made reference to an article in the Durham County News about a funding stream for Employment and Business, and stated that it was a sad state of affairs it did not apply to Peterlee. Again, in the DCC Magazine, she referred to an article on private landlords and she felt this change to licensing would push landlords underground and would be a negative move for those living in private rented accommodation in the County. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

64. Spokesperson of the Labour Political Party's Report

Councillor Fenwick acknowledged and thanked the work of Peterlee Schools and Nurseries for their hard work and efforts in keeping children safe and allowing parents to be back at work. **RESOLVED the information given be noted.**

Councillor Mc Donnell reminded Members that it is illegal to sell or use fireworks before the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and she asked everyone to be vigilant about this and to report any shops selling fireworks before the 15<sup>th</sup> to report this to the Police or Durham County Council.

65. Exclusion of the Press & Public

**RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the 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, Part 1, paragraphs 1 & 11.**

66. Shotton Hall

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Town Clerk providing an update on the current situation with the financial impact of COVID on the Council's commercial operation at Shotton Hall. Following extensive deliberations on the matters discussed in the report it was **RESOLVED the Council cease commercial operations at Shotton Hall with immediate effect. FURTHER RESOLVED the Town Clerk be authorised to engage a professional construction & property consultant to work with the council to review the various condition surveys and design proposals and to consolidate these into a costed capital investment plan. The Council could then make an informed decision about the long term future of Shotton Hall.**

**R Moore asked for it to be recorded he had voted against the option to cease commercial operations at Shotton Hall.**