

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ONLINE USING VIDEO CONFERENCING TECHNOLOGY

ON MONDAY 22nd MARCH 2021 at 6.00PM

PRESENT:- COUN T DUFFY (CHAIR)

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

Messrs:- S Miles, G Johnson, C Watkins, S McGlen, A Watson, R Moore,
A Wilkinson, G Carne, S Kirkup, R Kyle & T Duffy

140. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were offered to the meeting.

141. Public Participation Session

Mr Keith Groves from Peterlee & Horden Rugby Club joined the meeting to provide an update on the club's ambitions to invest in the site once the new lease was completed. A copy of a draft plan of a potential future extension to the club house had previously been circulated to Members, and Mr Groves spoke of the reasons for the extension. Several Members had already taken up the open invitation to visit the site and Mr Groves asked any other Members who wished to visit to contact him directly. Mr Groves and the Clerk explained that the lease was very close to completion and that the next step in the investment proposals was for the club to seek grant funding to enable them to get detailed designs drawn up for an application for planning permission. Members expressed support for the club's proposal to seek funding to further develop the plans and noted that the matter would come back to Council for formal approval as and when the detailed proposals were complete and planning permission attained.

RESOLVED the information given be noted.

142. Police Update

The Chair welcomed the Neighbourhood Police Sergeant covering Peterlee, Horden and Blackhall, T/Sgt 2722 Charlotte Burn. T/Sgt Burn reported the Police were working alongside DCC with CCTV and a tannoy system in the bus station. She reported on action being taken to try to address the recent upsurge in youth ASB issues in Woodhouse Park and issues with off road bikes, and she stressed intelligence passed on from residents was vital in the tracing these bikes and quads to their owners' homes.

RESOLVED the Council's thanks be recorded for the Polices' attendance.

143. Citizens Advice Update

The Chair welcomed Sarah Ward, Client Services Manager, Peterlee, Durham & Seaham to the meeting to provide an update on activity by Citizens Advice County Durham in Peterlee. Ms Ward thanked the Council for allowing the service to run remotely by telephone and e mail and she was pleased to report they had not missed a session although advice had been delivered in a different form. Clients and issues had changed with 138 clients with 406 issues with £320,000 identified in benefit claims that clients were entitled to. She felt figures would rise again along with the demand for the service and she gave details of two case studies where CAB had helped and supported clients. She advised the project funded by PTC was due to end 31 March and she asked if PTC would consider funding the project, providing a case worker, once again. The Chair thanked Ms Ward for her update and said how much the council appreciated the hard work and efforts of CAB. The funding was included in the budget submitted for discussion and approval later in the meeting.

RESOLVED the information given be noted.

144. To receive declarations of interest

Members were reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. None were received.

145. The Minutes of the last meeting of the 22nd February 2021

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, subject to it being amended to read Councillor K J Duffy and S McDonnell gave the report on behalf of the NE Party at the meeting and not Cllr Watson who was not present at the meeting.

146. COVID-19 Update

The Clerk reflected on the calendar year on from the first 'Stay at Home' TV broadcast by the Prime Minister. He was proud that PTC was first or one of the first to hold their meetings on line and host hybrid meetings, with PTC continuing to serve the people of

Peterlee the best we could. The Shielding Support Scheme was continuing with care packages being delivered and the weekly support telephone calls being made. He referred to the Government road map and how he hoped more services would open up, there had been no further positive cases and several staff had now been vaccinated. One of the local members said “well done” to everyone and that staff had done an amazing job. Reference was made to recent posts on social media being a positive reflection on the Town Council’s response to COVID in the town.

RESOLVED the information given, be noted.

147. NEP Fund Application(s)

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that no further applications had been received and that she had received suggestions from several Members that any unallocated funds remaining should not be used and instead be returned to reserves. **RESOLVED this suggestion be agreed to.**

148. Review of Fees & Charges

Members were asked to review and approve the Council’s fees and charges for the 2021/22 financial year and the suggested rates had been circulated to each Member prior to the meeting. **RESOLVED the fees and charges as detailed in the report of the Town Clerk, be accepted and applied as from 1 April 2021.**

149. Town Events – Peterlee Show 2021

Members were asked to consider the decision deferred from the February 2021 Council meeting about whether or not to hold the Peterlee Show in the first weekend of September 2021. In considering the event Members discussed other countries moving into a lockdown and felt the ripple effect would make the risk too high. Social distancing would be difficult with the type of event it is and the suggestions such as operating at 50% capacity, asking for negative tests, vaccine passports etc which may be required would be very difficult to manage. **RESOLVED there be no Peterlee Show be held this year.**

150. Peterlee Town Council budget 2021/22

Members were asked to approve the detailed final budget for the Council for the 2021/22 financial year. This included an allocation of £20,00 towards the costs of a case worker for the CAB service as per the previous presentation from a representative from Citizens Advice County Durham. **RESOLVED the detailed final budget be accepted.**

151. Updated Policy

The new Document Retention & Disposal Policy had been submitted for consideration, approval and adoption by Peterlee Town Council. **RESOLVED the policy be approved and adopted.**

152. Code of Conduct 2021

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk/Democratic Services Manager requesting the Council to consider, review and adopt the new version of the Code of Conduct was considered. There were several points in the suggested model that were challenged and it was **RESOLVED adoption of the model code be deferred until the new administrative year, pending further advice and consistency across other councils in County Durham.**

153. Arrangements for Town Council Annual Meeting in May 2021

Members received a verbal report from the Town Clerk on proposals for a 'hybrid' (physical and online) meeting for the Annual Meeting of the Town Council following the Council elections in May 2021. The Clerk suggested a hybrid meeting be held, with the meeting being streamed live via social media. The public could access the meeting via the live stream, and any Members who were unable to attend the meeting in person could still attend via Zoom. **RESOLVED this item be considered further and arrangements be finalised at the next meeting in April 2021.**

154. 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 11.

155. Horden Cemetery Dispute

The Town Clerk provided Members with an update on the latest situation re the dispute with Horden PC over cemetery contributions and sought instructions on action to be taken. The Clerk outlined clearly what options were available to the Council and suggested what would outcomes could be. Following considerable discussion it was **RESOLVED the Council ratify the Clerk's prior action to reject the initial settlement offer**

made by Horden Parish Council and the Clerk be given continued authority to deal with the claim.

156. Shotton Hall – Business Plan

Members considered the verbal report of the Clerk and the Council's Facilities Manager on options for the future operating model for Shotton Hall. This report was proposed for discussion as an excluded item as it related to the commercial operations of the Council. Following discussion it was **RESOLVED Shotton Hall re open in line with the Government's road map with:-**

- (i) **Bookings being taken for an initial six month forward window;**
- (ii) **The Banqueting Suites be available for hire every alternate weekend to enable the Council to manage within the current staffing capacity;**
- (iii) **Customers be allowed to bring their own food, the kitchen will not be available for any use;**
- (iv) **The charges given in the report be accepted and reviewed and changed if necessary; and**
- (v) **This would be for a 6 month trial only to enable some level of revenue generation while the council continues to consider the medium-long term future of Shotton Hall.**

157. Operation Forth Bridge

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk/Democratic Services Manager outlining suggested actions should they be necessary was considered. This report was proposed for discussion as an excluded item as it related to sensitive information relating to an individual.

Councillor A Watson declared an interest in the item as he knew the individual that may be given the task to light the building, and left the meeting for the entire consideration.

Members were requested to contact the Town Clerk/Deputy Clerk outside the meeting should they have any proposals on the protocols suggested.

RESOLVED the suggested action and protocols be accepted.

158. Spokesperson of the North East Party's Report

Councillor A Watson reported he had called into the new retail park and it was very busy; he was concerned there would be major problems with this junction, especially at

Christmas and he asked the Council to consider lobbying for road traffic improvements to combat this. Whilst having a few concerns he nonetheless felt that the new retail park was excellent for the town. He reported there had been a record number of vaccinations carried out, he said it was remarkable and felt everyone should get it and hopefully this would help eliminate this virus from the world. He referred to concerns about allegations from local residents that political marketing calls had been being carried out at the houses of elderly residents who were registered with the Telephone Preference Service and stressed that such calls should be happening. **RESOLVED the information given, be noted.**

159. Spokesperson of the Labour Political Party's Report

Councillor Fenwick reported on litter picking being done by residents, she felt this was heart warming and showed renewed pride in the Town. She reported on proposals for funding for Leisure Centre, including Peterlee, she felt it was exciting to see investment for Peterlee. **RESOLVED the information given, be noted.**