



Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 14th January 2016 at 6.30 pm at Bedlington Community Centre, Bedlington.

PRESENT:

Councillors: M Robinson (Chair) K Dalton J Dobie D Graham
 P Hedley A Hogg C Taylor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Town Clerk S Young
6 Members of the public.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations for this meeting.

OPEN SESSION

- A resident asked what the current situation was with regard to Northumberland County Councils Bedlington Champion.
The Chair was able to provide details of the initial Bedlington Steering Group meeting and the Clerk was instructed to provide the resident with contact details for the Bedlington champion.
- A resident suggested that it was the responsibility of West Bedlington Town Councillors to report to Northumberland County Council.
The Clerk was able to explain the separate roles associated with the different tiers of local government.
- A resident congratulated the Council on successfully arranging for road sweeping at Church Lane Bedlington. The resident requested Councillors to make a response to the current consultation from Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service "Working Towards 2020".
The Chair acknowledged the thanks and encouraged all members present to make a submission to the current consultation.
- A resident asked about continued absence of Councillors from Council meetings. The Chair supported by the Clerk outlined the legal provisions relating to Councillors attendance at meetings.
- A resident made a further request for the hedge to be cut at Choppington Lane.
The Chair advised that the hedge had already been cut prior to the residents previous request and that regrettably it was unlikely that the hedge would be cut again.

The meeting commenced at 6.45pm.

C235/15 - 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors J Tyler and S Tyler.

Resolved to accept the apologies received.

Chairman's initials

C236/15 - 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

Resolved that the minutes of the West Bedlington Town Council meetings of 10th December 2015 are approved.

C237/15 - 3. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair invited Mr Oliver (The Councils Planning Champion) to provide a verbal update of a meeting he and the Chair had with representatives of Northumberland Planning department in relation to special planning provisions and protection for Front Street Bedlington.

The Chair reaffirmed that he had previously provided details with regard to the wall at the corner of Front Street and Church Lane which had been the subject of residents' questions at previous meetings, the wall and property on the site is now owned by Arch.

C238/15 – 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest for this meeting.

C/239/15 - 5. CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair provided updates on the matters detailed in Appendix D – Chairs Update

C/240/15 - 6. COMMITTEE / WORKING GROUPS

- a. Finance and Governance – Councillor Robinson advised these meetings had opened up to all council members to discuss the 2016/17 budget proposals, the proposal is shown at agenda item 15.
- b. Events and Communication working group – Councillor Graham provided a verbal update in relation to the ongoing provision of a new website and confirmed that the Council had made some initial contact with event providers for future summer events in the town. Finally Councillor Graham submitted a request to trial the issue of Council Meeting documents electronically to those members with email capacity. Members will be asked to make a determination on the request at the next Council meeting.
- c. Services Committee – Councillor Hogg provided a verbal update and distributed a draft copy of the minutes from the Committee meeting held on 17th December 2015.

Resolved to accept all committee / working group reports

C241/15 - 7. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

- a. **Resolved to provide written owners permission in support of Bedlington Community Allotments funding application.**
- b. **The Council deferred a decision in relation to supporting the 200th anniversary of the birth of Daniel Gooch to receive further information about the type of support that is being requested.**
- c. **Resolved in principle to support the Tyneside Scottish Associations centenary march to commemorate the 100th anniversary of The Battle of the Somme. Councillor Hedley will represent the Council at future planning meetings with other Councillors making a determined effort to attend meetings.**
- d. **Resolved to enter into a “heads of terms” agreement for the option over land for the purpose of a community sports facility for Bedlington. Councillor Hogg voted against the resolution because he felt a different site to the one proposed would be more favourable.**
- e. The Council discussed the options available to it as a result of the changes to future external audit provisions. Members will be asked to make a determination at the next meeting.
- f. **Resolved to devise a policy that recommends to all Councillors that they should hold DBS certification.**

Chairman's initials

- g. The Council deferred a decision in relation to making an application for funding for CCTV until further information has been gathered.
- h. This agenda item was withdrawn by the proposer.
- i. Resolved to support the publically backed design of a clock at Baedling Manor to incorporate a white face and green and gold in colour.
- j. Resolved not to pursue the construction of a footpath at Schalksmuhle Road Bedlington on the basis of restrictive costs imposed by Northumberland County Council.

C242/15 – 8. CORRESPONDENCE

The Council were informed of the following correspondence:

250/15	Northumberland County Council	Book Banks	Noted and Circulated.
251/15	CAN	CAN e News – December 2015	Noted and Circulated
252/15	County Councillor Wallace	NCC Management Guide	Noted and Circulated
253/15	NALC	NALC e News – December 2015	Noted and Circulated
254/15	Northumberland County Council	Devolution Briefing Notes	Noted and Circulated
255/15	Northumbria Healthcare	December Stakeholder Update	Noted and Circulated
256/15	R Hogg	Daniel Gooch 200 th Anniversary	Noted Circulated and added to Agenda
257/15	Alcyone Healthcare Ltd	Clock Designs for Baedling Manor	Noted Circulated and added to Agenda
258/15	Northumberland CVA and VCS	Note of thanks	Noted
259/15	Northumberland County Council	Northumberland News	Noted and Circulated
260/15	NALC	Identity and website update	Noted and Circulated
261/15	Bedlington Town FC	Note of thanks and invite to Christmas party	Noted and Circulated
262/15	Northumberland County Council	Street Link Promotion	Noted and Circulated
263/15	Northumberland Community Development Network	Newsletter	Noted and Circulated
264/15	NALC	Localisation of Council Tax Benefits	Noted and Circulated
265/15	Community Action Northumberland	Community Action Award	Noted and Circulated
266/15	St Cuthberts Church	Tynside and Scottish Centenary Parade	Noted Circulated and added to Agenda

West Bedlington Town Council has been requested to give their opinion on the following consultations:

Owner	Description	Where and When
Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service	Working Towards 2020	Online by 15 th Feb 2016

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NALC	Localisation of Council Tax Benefits	To NALC by 8 th Jan 2016
Northumberland County Council	Animal Boarding Establishment Policy	Comments by 31 st Jan 2016

The following invitations have been received:

Date	From	Description	Comments
8 th Feb 2016	Doxford Youth Project	AGM	Circulated to all members

Resolved that all correspondence, consultations and invitations have been properly received and actioned.

C243/15 - 9. COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

Feedback from Councillor Representatives on external committees

- Town / Parish Liaison Committee (Councillor Robinson) – Written Report Circulated
- NALC – (Councillor Dalton) – No Meeting - Nothing to report
- LMAPS – (Councillor Hedley) – Written Report Circulated
- Northumberland In Bloom – (Councillor Taylor) – No meeting – Nothing to report
- Red House Farm residents Group – (Councillor Hogg) – No meeting – Nothing to report
- Joint Meetings with East Bedlington Parish Council – No meeting – Nothing to report
- Gallagher Park Steering Group – (Councillor Dalton) – No meeting – Nothing to report
- Dr Pit Stakeholder Meetings – (Councillor Dalton) – No meeting – Nothing to report
- Bedlington Steering Group – (Councillor Hogg) – Written report Circulated

Resolved to accept all reports provided.

C244/15 - 10. CLERKS REPORT

Resolved to accept the Clerks written report and verbal update (Appendix A).

C245/15 – 11. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

Resolved to approve the schedule of payments and receipts (Appendix B)

C246/15 - 12. PLANNING

There were no planning applications for this meeting

Planning decisions are shown in Appendix C for information only.

C247/15 – 13. COMMUNITY CHEST / PUPILS FUNDS APPLICATIONS

Resolved to award Leading Link £800 to renew / continue the Councils support to west Bedlington Schools in the Children’s University (Pupils Passport Scheme).

C248/15 – 14. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Resolved to approve the financial update provided by the clerk.

C249/15 - 15. 2016/17 ANNUAL BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUIREMENT

Resolved to approve a budget and precept requirement of £214,414 for the financial year 2016/17.

C250/15 - 16. RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

Councillors were reminded to submit any news item for inclusion in the next edition of the Councils residents’ newsletter as soon as possible.

C251/15 - 17. ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK ASSESSMENTS

Resolved to approve all the current risk assessments for:

- 1. Lone Working**
- 2. Slips and Trips**
- 3. Manual Handling**
- 4. Electrical Equipment**
- 5. Display Screen Equipment**
- 6. Stress**
- 7. Travelling Whilst At Work**

Chairman’s initials

8. Dealing with The Public

9. Fire Procedure

C252/15 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Taylor – Provision of an under 18 band night

Councillor Graham – Electronic Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Councillor Hedley – provided information on the Plessey Woods Project

Councillor Robinson – Northumberland Marathon

Councillor Robinson – Partners to assist with “heads of terms” land option.

C253/15 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved the next meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 14 January 2016 at 6.30pm at Bedlington Community Centre

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.44pm.

Signed by the Chair

11th February 2016

Chairman's initials

Appendix A, B and D Form Part of these minutes.

Appendix A – Clerks Report (Agenda Item 10).

Appendix A - Clerks Report (Agenda Item 10) (Circulated to members).

West Bedlington Town Council - Council Meeting Thursday 14th January 2016

Agenda Item 10 - Clerk Report

Services

A site visit to agree the location of new litter bins at Link Avenue / North Ridge and Eden Court / Whitely Memorial School per Services Committee needs to be arranged.

The Council is currently seeking a reduction in the cost of Christmas lights service from Northumberland County Council.

I have arranged a site visit with the bus shelter supplier for 19th and 20th Jan 2016 to look at all of our current and proposed new sites for shelters as part of the renewal project.

Events

Nothing to report

Communications

Work has commenced on the creation of a new website and the Communications Working Group is receiving regular update information from the supplier.

General

I will now work on Tuesday 19th Jan 2016 to accommodate the site visit for bus shelters.

I will now work on Thursday 4th Feb 2016 to accommodate a health and safety inspection for the proposed Jobs Fair.

The office will be closed Friday 5th Feb 2016 and Monday 8th Feb 2016.

The next internal audit will be on Friday 29th Jan 2016

Outstanding Council Resolutions

Still to order litter bins - awaiting outcome of site visit to determine the number to order

Still to purchase labels for our fixed assets.

Invitation to Air Cadets – Councillor Hedley

Chairman's initials

Appendix B – Schedule of Payments and Receipts (Agenda Item 12) Payment 1st November 2015 to 30th November 2015. – All payment GROSS of VAT.

Payee	Amount	BCC	Bloom	Description
Adele Young	15.00			Refund of Christmas Stall Rental
M Burkinshaw	15.00			Refund of Christmas Stall Rental
St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy	15.00			Refund of Christmas Stall Rental
Talk Talk Business	33.00			Telephone and Internet
M Dougherty	470.00			Church Lane Railings
Leading link	100.00			Band Night Event
Leading link	470.00			Youth Council Team Building Day
Tracie Cooper	(40.00)			Receipt – Christmas Switch On
K McBride	(10.00)			Receipt – Christmas Switch On
East Bedlington Parish Council	(60.00)			Receipt – Selection Boxes
2522 Bedlington Squadron Air Training Corps	(42.00)			Receipt – Remembrance Wreaths
Northumberland County Council	97.50			Planning Application Fee
Entertainment Unlimited	(98.00)			Receipt – Christmas Switch On
Elveden Farms Limited	1,374.00			Christmas Tree
Zen Internet Ltd	4.79			Internet Hosting
Bedlingtonshire Development Trust	800.00			Terrier Seat – Choppington Lane
St Bedes RCVA Primary School	1,500.00			Pupils Fund Award
Bedlington Town FC	200.00			Community Chest Award
St Cuthbert's Church, Bedlington	25.00			Advertisement Renewal
Viking Payments	59.91			Postage Stamps
Northumberland County Council	2,481.42			Payroll Costs
W L Straughan & Son Ltd	618.00			Installation of seat and bin
Sleekburn Welding Ltd	234.00			Repairs to litter bins
Entertainment Unlimited	(281.25)			Receipt – Selection Boxes
Foxora Ltd	500.00			Website Design

Appendix C - Planning decisions notified to WBTC by NCC - Information Only

Ref.	Description	Decision
15/02982 FUL	Construction of two storey side extension at 11 Link Avenue Bedlington NE22 6DN	Granted

Chairman's initials

APPENDIX D – Chairs Update (Agenda Item 5)

Chairman's update Jan 2016:

Well we have had Christmas and the New Year festivities and I hope everyone had a great time but it's now back to business. With the budgets needing to be done it's actually quite a busy time for councils.

One quick heads up.....the Annual Town Meeting for May. We are looking at making it as interactive as possible and we will be asking all Bedlington based community groups to take part. If anyone has anything they might like to suggest for this meeting please just let a councillor or our clerk know.

Slight change to my usual updates owing to the important nature of what we have been doing and the rationalisation and modernisation of Council's working practices. So instead of the normal varied list of what's been going on during the last month, I will concentrate on just three items.

The first is the fact that we were faced with a huge problem with regard to our fixed physical assets.....that's bus shelters, street furniture and playground equipment. No previous council has taken the necessary steps to facilitate a replacement programme for these costly assets which we do have unquestionable responsibility for and as such has meant the day of reckoning was fast becoming a financial black hole. Now we too could have walked away and hidden their true state but that isn't why I became a councillor and I am sure others here feel the same way!

Taking bus shelters first the fact is a lot of them are coming to the end of their useful lives and were going to start and cost us a considerable amount of funding to repair. Something sensible had to be done.

Going through this current year's budget line by line with Steven I identified any unused and potentially underused funding and suggested we bring forward a limited asset replacement programme into this current year which members agreed to. This had the effect of relieving a little bit of pressure on next year's precept.

Next litter bins and the associated costs. We are currently going through an exercise with NCC to rationalise our litter bins and have some in much more publicly desirable places. Changing post mounted bins to floor standing bins actually gives us some flexibility in terms of ongoing costs so although there will be a capital cost the associated revenue costings should be at least cost neutral.

Lastly the play equipment in our play areas. The life expectancy of all this equipment is up this year and I for one don't want our children playing on sub-standard equipment! Again we could have walked away but that's not the solution.

So the main eye watering costs we were looking at were replacing bus shelters and the play area equipment. To give some idea of what these costs are we are looking at around £200K to replace sub-standard items with new. Now we could have spread these costs over the next few years and replaced our assets piecemeal and really that's exactly what previous administrations should have done but replacing them in one go now gives future councils the advantage of being able to properly budget for their next replacement. I would expect to see something like asset replacement costs in all future budgets from now on. This way the costs can be spread over 10-15 even 20 years for a minimal annual cost! In other words we do what every housewife out there does with her household account and instigate something resembling a proper responsible fiscal budget from now on.

Chairman's initials

This quite naturally brings us into the budget negotiations we have been going through. Instead of the finance and governance group working on budget proposals for council I opened these negotiations up to all members from the very start.

We all wanted to deliver more and some very ambitious and valuable projects came out in our initial budget deliberations but because of what we were looking at we had to prioritise and getting our fundamental and core deliveries in the best shape we can will deliver gives us the freedom we need in future years to enable some of those suggested projects to be given life.

We propose to fund asset replacements in this budget though a mixture of cost savings, reserves and an increase in precept. This keeps the precept increase to a minimum.

I believe we have set a responsible budget with the majority of ratepayers paying an extra 13p per week for about £200K worth of new assets. Even band D properties will only be paying about 20p per week extra! based on the indicative tax base we have been provided.

We can discuss this in more detail at the appropriate juncture in the agenda, item 15, but there is one thing I do want to bring to everyone's attention.

I sat in the public gallery for the 4 years of the previous administration and commented at each budget. My concern was the relationship between the costs of council and its deliveries. This relationship gives anyone an insight into the value for money any council delivers. 6 years ago this equation was around 80/20! In other words it cost 80% of the precept for a measly 20% service delivery! Absolute madness in my view and anything like that in the private sector would have been laughed out of existence!

Even the first 2 years of this council that relationship stayed at about 70/30 and we can probably put that down to the political way council was run for those 2 years. The average for councils up and down the land is around 60/40.

Now, taking a non-political, responsible and pragmatic approach that relationship, if this budget goes through, is around 40/60 the other way, it's actually a little better than even that, but adding in the new projects into service delivery that reduces even further to around 26/74.

That is better than a 100% turnaround and in all likelihood the best percentage relationship of its type for any comparable council certainly in this county if not the whole region! It's probably unheard of within one year of taking office and I commend your courage and that of our clerk for helping see it through to a proposal.
XXXXXXXXXXXX

Now one further important update and possibly even more important than what we have just been talking about. Again I don't want to pre-empt any debate listed for the agenda but only to give some background because until I had an offer in writing I didn't want to inflame expectations. This is item 7D on the agenda.

We all heard the outline planning application for the new housing at Blue House Farm and you all know we objected on the grounds of a lack of supportive infrastructure, such as health, education, highways and leisure. Well I listened to what the Landowner and his agent had to say in the meetings we had with them and at their outline planning application at County Hall, and once they had been awarded outline planning I asked if they might like to come into our office for a no obligation chat. They duly obliged and it became clear the landowner, who I have to say I already knew personally, wasn't against helping satisfy a pent up

Chairman's initials

frustration the people of Bedlington have had for the last 50 years and one which might actually alleviate one part of that lacking infrastructure we had complained about.

I will discuss this in more detail when we get to it in the agenda but basically I managed to negotiate a 5 year option on a parcel of land adjacent the new development at Blue House Farm for the provision of a Bedlington sports facility!

We have that legal offer in writing in the office now.

This will be a multi-million pound development and one which might finally address an open running sore this community has had for over half a century. IT won't be on the same huge unadulterated scale as neighbouring towns I am afraid, but it will be.....it will be all ours!

I hope members show the same courage with this as I expect they do with the budget!

Chairman's initials