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**Blyth Town Council**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Events Committee** held in the Council Chamber at Arms Evertyne House on Tuesday 24 November 2015

**Present:**

Councillors:

A Cartie (Vice-Chair), C Bruce, M A Parker, J R Potts, L Rickerby

**Also Present:**

Councillors:

R Parker, O Potts

Officers:

S E Rickitt Town Clerk

A McCabe Office Manager

M Hawthorne Committee Clerk

A Spratt Administrative/Customer Services Assistant

Invited Guests:

J Houghton Carnival Rides

Karen Walker Blyth Development Trust

P Taylor Events Co-ordinator (Community Works)

Members of the Public: 1

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| 1. | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  Councillors - K Nisbet, A Gibbs-Barton |
| 2. | **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS & THE GRANT OF ANY DISPENSATIONS**  None. |
| 3. | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2015**  The Town Clerk advised that the minutes were ADOPTED by full Council 19 November 2015.  The Committee agreed to **ADOPT** the minutes. |
| 4. | **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**  None. |
| 5. | **POST EVENT DISCUSSION**  **Fireworks Event**  Councillor Cartie commented that a letter had been received from John Houghton together with a cheque for £1,200 as payment for advertising during the event. The Committee thanked Mr Houghton for the cheque.  The Town Clerk referred to the report prepared by Paul Taylor and noted that Councillors had not had a great deal of time to read it. Mr Taylor stated that he had tried to be open and honest about what happened at the event and added that he hoped to have a post-event meeting on Thursday 26 November with all relevant parties. Councillor J R Potts stated that the laser lights on the lighthouse and the back of Bath Terrace added to the attraction. However, a lot of people were disappointed that the rides did not stay open for a longer period. Councillor Rickerby reiterated her earlier comments that the event catered particularly well for younger children.  Mr Taylor said that there were approximately 16,000 people present. The Town Clerk asked Mr Taylor to provide him with an electronic copy of the list showing the number of people/organisations who received free wristbands. Mr Taylor handed over a list which the Town Clerk was to examine.  Mr Taylor’s report notes that security and crowd control was of a good standard.  The Town Clerk pointed out that the ARCH land, next to the lighthouse will not be available for a fireworks event in 2016 and asked Mr Taylor if he had considered alternative venues and asked if anyone had suggestions. Using the beach as a venue has been tentatively considered but it is felt there may be too many safety issues. Councillor J R Potts still feels this is an option and said the Council may wish to consider making it a free event.  Mr Taylor said that he met with the Port of Blyth last week where they had a discussion regarding potential sites and one suggestion is that the Bates Colliery site may be a possibility. There may be issues with land levelling, however, Stewart Balmer-Howieson had confirmed that they would be willing to support the event. He will be raising this with the Port Management Team.  Councillor J R Potts asked for clarification with regard to the site as it is in a development zone. An alternative would be to hold the event on the same area but with fewer rides. The Town Clerk has asked or some figures using the event guide to work out a safe capacity with the housing land taken out. The Town Clerk commented that a decision in principle will be made at the Events Committee in January 2016.  Councillor M Parker suggested Crofton Mill Pit site. There are a lot of houses around this site and the regulations state that there has to be a 150 metre exclusion zone for the public so this site is unlikely to be suitable.  In summary, the Committee felt that having discussed alternatives the first choice would be the Quayside.  **Christmas Lights Switch On**  An event log prepared by Mr Taylor was circulated to the Committee.  Councillor J R Potts commented that there was a good size crowd but he felt that people were perhaps disappointed that Joe McElderry was only available for a short period of time. He added that the Council need to be clear what their expectations are in terms of what they require from a compere for future events. The Town Clerk stated that the 2016 Christmas Event must be planned in good time in order to secure a headline act. John Houghton said the Council might wish to consider using a “Disney” theme as this has worked well in other councils.  Karen Walker said that Blyth Development Trust are organising a Christmas Fair on 5/6 December 2015 and suggested that perhaps the light switch on could be incorporated into a similar event in 2016. There would be several factors to take into consideration, for example, the timing of the switch on to maximise attendance; the date of the event to ensure it doesn’t co-incide with other activities taking place in Blyth. The Town Clerk proposed setting a date and publicising this so organisations and residents of Blyth are aware at a very early stage. The Committee agreed this needs further discussion and it was noted that Neil Brown, Market Manager will be attending a forthcoming joint partnership board meeting.  The possibility of changing the day to a Saturday or Sunday will also be considered. Councillor O Potts commented that the switch on is organised for a Friday evening to allow the school children to arrive with the lantern procession and this in itself attracts larger crowds. |
| 6. | **Budget for 2016/2017**  The Town Clerk advised that he and Joe Hughes have been working on the budget and the future that has been agreed for events is £153,000. If the Committee are in agreement with this figure then the Town Clerk suggested the Committee allocate amounts from the total to specific events. Councillors will have the opportunity to put proposals to the Committee. £50,000 has been identified for the Tall Ships.  Councillor J R Potts commented that he was not comfortable with the figure and unsure how it had been reached. The budget for this year is £168,000 and there is likely to be an underspend. He added that in his opinion the budget for the fireworks display and the Christmas lights was too small and that the Council could do more. Further clarification is required regarding which items are going to be affected if the budget is reduced. The Town Clerk referred the councillors to the paper which was circulated and explained that he would like the Events Committee to manage the events in a more flexible way.  Councillor Potts advised that if the Committee agree to the proposed budget of £153,000 then this will go to the budget meeting in January 2016 and there will be no chance to amend it. It was noted that £20,000 had been allocated to the Tour of Britain contribution therefore this was removed. Following detailed discussion the Committee agreed that the budget should remain unchanged at £168,000 ***(this figure was clarified after the meeting).*** |
| 7 | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**  None. |

**MEMBERS OF THE EVENTS COMMITTEE**

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| Councillors | C Bruce |
|  | A Cartie (Vice-Chair) |
|  | A Gibbs-Barton  K Nisbet (Chair)  M Parker |
|  | J R Potts  L Rickerby  A Turnbull |
| Officers | SE Rickitt, Town Clerk  S Robinson, Environmental Services Officer  A McCabe, Office Manager  M Hawthorne, Committee Clerk |
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