

**Minutes of** a **Virtual** Meeting of the **Full Council held on Thursday 23 July 2020 at 4.30 pm**

**Present:**

Councillors: W Taylor (Mayor), M Richardson, (Deputy Mayor), D Carr, A Cartie, K Nisbet, A Parson, S Stanger, J Reid

Officers: Joseph Hughes, Town Clerk, Malcolm Wilkinson, Deputy Town Clerk, Maureen Hawthorne, Committee Clerk, A McCabe, Office Manager

Others Present: M Jackson, Events Co-ordinator

Members of the Public: 5 Invited Guests: 0

The Mayor welcomed members of the public who were observing the meeting. The meeting opened with Public Question Time where members of the public can ask a maximum of two questions each. 5 questions had been received from a member of the public and the first two were responded to:

Question 1 – What is happening with the progress on the development of Bowes Street?

Answer – This was originally a Blyth Town Council initiative and then become part of the NCC Local Transport Plan, funded by them. Unfortunately, whilst doing some explorative work issues were discovered with the sub-structure leading to an increase in the cost of the project from £130,000 to £290,000. BTC are now working with NCC to try and identify further sources of funding for the project to go ahead.

Question 2 - Since May 2017 I have asked on numerous occasions if the council would support our group and others (in a combined effort) in making superficial changes to the granite blocks on the Market Square and, at the same time this will lead to a community project of training in woodwork skills and the high possibility of establishing a company that will employ people off the training programme.

Answer – No-one would have an issue with a member of the public developing a community project and helping people with develop their skills with training. The Future High Street Project has taken over from the plans for the market place and that was following a two-stage public consultation. The consultation identified issues around the market place and those have been taken on board and put into a consultation brief. The consultants and members of the Blyth Town Forum have come up with an exciting and innovative plan to regenerate the market place and town centre and it is hoped that these plans can be shared soon. In terms of community involvement this is something that could be considered as part of the High Street Fund and will be borne in mind at the Town Forum Meetings.

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| **1.** | **Apologies for absence**Councillors: E Anderson-Smith, J R Potts, O Potts, L Rickerby |
| **2** | **Disclosure of Interests and the Grant of any Dispensations**Councillor K Nisbet and Councillor J Reid declared an interest as NCC Councillors. |
| **3** | Mayors AnnouncementsThe Mayor paid tribute again to the individuals and organisations who continue to provide food and support to the most vulnerable people in Blyth during Covid -19. Some Councillors are also still involved. The Mayor spoke of the work of the Food Bank, now operating 5 days a week, as well as the Community Food and Friendship who have moved into new premises at Blyth Community Enterprise Centre. Engage have developed links with the food bank and Briardale House are doing some sterling work in helping the community.The Mayor extended his thanks to the staff of Blyth Town Council who have continued to work during this crisis and kept everything going despite the challenges. He added that over the next few months we have to consider how we as a Council are react to a potential second wave or spike in the town and we may have to look at different ways of operating as a Council.On a personal level the Mayor has not had any Mayoral engagements to attend but has continued to work with the Bernicia Fund and has provided a letter of support on behalf of BTC to support the High Street Fund application. This will be submitted by the end of July with an announcement expected in the autumn. The Mayor ended by saying this is an exciting time for Blyth in terms of regeneration of the town centre. |
| **4** | **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 14 May 2020** The minutes were agreed as a true record. |
| **5** | Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 26 May 2020 (Part I & II)The minutes were agreed as a true record. |
| **6** | **Minutes of the Community Funding Sub Committee held on Tuesday 2 June 2020 (Part I & II)**The minutes were agreed as a true record. |
| **7** | Minutes of the Community Development Committee held on Thursday 11 June 2020The minutes were agreed as a true record. |
| **8** | **Minutes of the Governance Committee held on Tuesday 7 July 2020**The minutes were agreed as a true record. |
| **9** | **Partnership Working Group held on Tuesday 9 June 2020**The minutes were agreed as a true record. |
| **10** | **Decision Report** The Council considered the information in the Decision Report and RESOLVED to:1. To adopt the proposed Model Member Code of Conduct and respond to the document by 17 August 2020. Members did feel it was lacking in terms of sanctions for misconduct by Councillors.
2. To approve the lease agreement with NCC in order to display the sculpture at Elphin Walk.
3. 3. To adopt the new Council Co-option Policy.
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| **11** | Delegated Decision ReportThere are no delegated decisions to report. |
| **12** | Information ReportThere were no items of information. |
| **13** | Northumberland Local Plan Examination – Consultation on additional evidenceCouncillor Reid declared an interest and left the meeting whilst a discussion took place. The Mayor commented that there was nothing of relevance to Blyth in the document and asked the Town Clerk to speak to NCC and ask if there is anything they would like to bring to the Council’s attention. |
| **14** | **Any Other Business**There was no urgent business. |
| **15** | **Date and Time of Next Meeting**Thursday 8 October 2020. If the current restrictions continue this will be an electronic meeting.  |
| **16** | **PART II**Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and they are instructed to withdraw. |

**MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL:**

Councillor W Taylor (Mayor)

Councillor M Richardson

Councillor E Anderson-Smith

Councillor D Carr

Councillor A Cartie

Councillor K Ellis

Councillor K Nisbet

Councillor A Parsons

Councillor J Potts

Councillor O Potts

Councillor J Reid

Councillor L Rickerby

Councillor S Stanger

Councillor G Thompson

Councillor G Webb