



Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday 14 January 2021 at 4.30 pm.

Present:

Councillors: W Taylor (Mayor), M Richardson (Deputy Mayor), E Anderson-Smith, A Cartie, K Nisbet, J R Potts, J Reid, L Rickerby, S Stanger, G Thompson, G Webb

Officers: Joseph Hughes, Town Clerk, Malcolm Wilkinson, Deputy Town Clerk, Maureen Hawthorne, Committee Clerk

Others Present: M Jackson, Events Co-ordinator, P Kemp

Members of the Public: 7

Invited Guests: 1

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question 1

Dear Sirs, A very interesting photograph of war defences, Blyth Beach was on your Facebook Page. This photograph illustrates how denuded of sand part of this beach has become. The council for some reason when cleaning Beach of rubbish take lots of rocks and stones. Doing this robs the beach of future sand, also stability in the beach area. You have done nothing to preserve the dunes, we have many dog walkers trampling them down, disregarding the purpose built path through the dunes. This path in itself vandalised the dunes, but too late to do anything about that now.

Answer

The Chair agreed that the dunes should be looked after and the beach and coastline preserved. Responsibility for coastal management lies with NCC and Arthur Cranson's details will be passed on to the resident who asked this question.

Question 2

Please advise when all details of the Council's spending will be available to view on its website. This will include detailed income/expenses in relation to each individual event, enhanced grass cutting etc.

Answer

The information for 2020/21 will be available on BTC website after the accounts are completed sometime after the end of March.

Question 3

I would just like to know if there are any plans to tidy up the Isabella heap? It is currently full of broken bottles, plastic bottles, general household waste and rubbish. It is such a popular piece of land now with walkers of all ages, dog walkers, families out exercising and runners especially from the surrounding estates, which are increasing in size.

It is so disappointing that it is such a mess as it could be utilised into a great piece of outside green space with some care and planning, look at Gallagher park which is also a pit heap albeit Isabella heap is on a smaller scale. It has such a great footfall including numerous wildlife and an extensive red squirrel habitat. There are not enough litter bins, the lightening is not sufficient, especially on a night time it is very daunting walking across with dog or on your own on the actual tarmac path. If some outside exercise equipment could be installed as there is in south beach, furnace bank and Cambois beach areas this would encourage people to stay fit and healthy for Free without having to go to gym or travelling to far which some people are unable to do. This could be such a great opportunity for a brilliant space in Blyth, just waiting for an upgrade.

Answer

Prior to Christmas BTC received a high volume of reports regarding litter in the vicinity of the Isabella Heap. The reports were forwarded to the Greenspaces Team as this area is their responsibility. It was agreed the NCC Partnership teams would be sent into clear the area and this took 2 days. It is quite clear from the reports that large numbers of youths are gathering in this area to drink and partake in other activities without being seen.

Week commencing 4 January 2021 further reports of littering were received with the Partnership Team clearing the area on Tuesday 5 January and Tuesday 12 January 2021.

Because of the level of anti-social behaviour Inspector N Hall has confirmed that officers will be patrolling the area over the coming weeks.

Question 4

Everyone can be happy with the benefits arising from recent investment in Blyth, such as the increasing new-build housing development, and especially the large sums dedicated to improving the commercial centre of the town.

My question is this, what is the council going to do to ensure that investment and development helps improve the lot of everyone in the town, especially those on low incomes. Specifically, what measures will be undertaken to help produce large numbers of low/unskilled jobs, and will the council help support the construction or creation of low cost housing, for those unable to finance a £200,000 new build?

Answer

Anne Lawson advised that the Head of Housing has made a statement on the matter of low cost housing. In terms of economic opportunity and inclusion, Anne said she hoped the presentation would reassure residents and referred to the Northern Energy Industrial Estate at Cambois and future investments that are being made there which should lead to significant jobs across the range.

Question 5

In 2017 and over the years since I have asked for the council to vacate their current base and seek to either go back to the original Civic Centre or move to another location as spending over £75,000 a year on a first floor office is extravagant to say the least. What is happening on moving out of the current location.

Answer

The Town Council have been investigating a number of options for relocating but have not yet made a decision due to the discussions about the town centre plans. It is hoped to have an accommodation working party meeting to explore the current situation as soon as possible.

1	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Councillors: D Carr, A Parsons</p>
2	<p>Disclosure of Interests and the Grant of any Dispensations</p> <p>None.</p>
3	<p>Mayors Announcements</p> <p>Since the last Full Council in October 2020 there have been few Mayoral engagements due to Covid. The Mayor took this opportunity to talk about the success of Operation Elf, paying tribute to the various agencies as well as Officers from BTC who worked so hard to make this a great success; Operation Elf supported 536 individuals, supplied 70 emergency food boxes and 50 hampers. Thom Bradley echoed the Mayor’s comments, adding that work is ongoing to secure accommodation for the ongoing work of Operation Elf. Referrals were received from partner agencies as well as schools. Thoughts were also shared on how the work could be extended to provide support in other ways, for example providing essential items for those who are going into hospital, bereavement support and virtual ante-natal classes.</p> <p>The Mayor referred to the Santa visit organised by BTC, stating that this is one of the best events the Council has delivered and again thanked the Events Co-ordinator, Customer Services Assistant and everyone else who worked hard to make this such a success. The event opened with a wonderful blessing from St Mary’s Church. This event highlighted how social media can be used to good effect and the Council need to look at how it can be used in the future. BTC gained 3,000 extra likes on Facebook and received lots of photographs and videos from families who had enjoyed the Santa visit. The first post reached over 120,00 people.</p> <p>The Mayor also spoke about what BTC has done so far to support residents through Covid, including providing grants, advertising which businesses are opening, signposting residents to the right help etc. He asked members to email suggestions to him about what the Council can continue to do over the coming weeks to continue this. A working group will be organised to progress the work.</p> <p>The Town Clerk asked the Mayor to moved Standing Orders in order to extend the meeting for 30 minutes.</p>

	The Mayor noted an additional item for Part II – Request from Newsham Primary School.
4	<p>Future High Streets Fund</p> <p>This presentation formed the first part of the meeting and Full Council business followed</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Anne Lawson, Senior Programme Officer, who was in attendance to deliver a presentation (please see attached). The Chair added that BTC have representation on the Town Forum and the Town Deal Board.</p> <p>Some key points to note: the full amount of £11.121 million was awarded and Blyth is one of only 15 towns to receive the full application amount. There is still a lot of consultation to take place to build on the feedback received from the ones that took place in 2019 and 2020. Residents have raised concerns about the bus station being moved as well as the anti-social behaviour in the market place. The programme of regeneration “Energising Blyth” has been split into different elements and Phase 1 - The Northern Gateway (Bowes Street) was initiated by BTC.</p> <p>Anne responded to a number of questions from members confirming that there will be greenery in the Bowes Street area, all areas will be accessible to disabled users and the time capsule at the entrance to the Keel Row will not be affected by the developments.</p> <p>Anne also gave a lot of information on the Town Deal and this is included in the presentation.</p> <p>The Chair said this is an exciting time for Blyth and it is a privilege to be involved in the work of the Town Forum and Town Deal. Councillor Webb thanked Anne and her team for their hard work over the past 12 months.</p>
5	<p>Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 23 July 2020 (Part I & II)</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true record.</p>
6	<p>Actions from Full Council held on Thursday 23 July 2020</p>
6.1	Minute No 12 – Planning for the Future White Paper – a BTC response was made. (Achieved) .

<p>7</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p>	<p>Minutes resolved by the following Standing Committees (Any Councillor wishing to raise a matter from the minutes below should speak to the Chair/Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk in advance of the meeting)</p> <p>Minutes of the Planning & Development Sub Committee held on Tuesday 3 November 2020.</p> <p>Minutes of the Community Funding Sub Committee (Part I & II) held on Tuesday 17 November 2020.</p> <p>Minutes of the Community Development Committee held on Tuesday 1 December 2020 (Part I & II).</p> <p>Minutes of the Partnership Working Group held on Thursday 15 October 2020.</p> <p>Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Thursday 26 November 2020.</p> <p>Minutes of the Governance Committee held on Tuesday 5 January 2021.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Decision Report 1</p> <p>Council RESOLVED to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget and Precept 2021/2022 • Internal Audit Interim Report agreed by Governance Committee for Council Approval <p>Councillor Potts said the individual Committees have agreed their budgets as has Governance.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Decision Report 2</p> <p>Revised Standing Order Section 18 – Financial Controls and Procurement</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that since the report was prepared for Council the situation has changed and as a result of advice from Government he proposed that the tenders are opened virtually by the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk and Chair of Environment. A secure email address has been set up to receive the tenders and this cannot be accessed until the closing date.</p> <p>Councillor Reid moved to accept this motion, seconded by Councillor Potts therefore the motion was moved.</p>

10	Delegation Actions Report There were no delegated actions to report.
11	Information Report There were no items for information.
12	Any Other Business There was no other business to report.
13	Date and Time of Next Meeting Thursday 13 May 2021. If the current restrictions continue this will be an electronic meeting. Councillor Reid proposed this meeting is moved as it take place one week after elections. Councillor Potts pointed out that there are strict rules about holding the meting within 14 days of the elections.
14	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. Councillor's non-attendance at Committee

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 J Reid
Councillor L Rickerby
Councillor S Stanger
Councillor G Thompson
Councillor G Webb