



Blyth Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House on Thursday 17 September 2015

Present:

Councillors:

M Parker Mayor in the Chair, C Bruce, B Elliott, K Ellis, A Gibbs-Barton, R Parker, J R Potts, O Potts, D Rutter, A G Thompson

Also Present:

Officers:

S E Rickitt	Town Clerk (Democratic Services)
L Forsyth	Committees & Communications Officer
A McCabe	Office Manager
Sean Robinson	Assets Officer
D Clough	Assistant Assets Officer
M Hawthorne	Committee Clerk
Adam Spratt	Admin & Customer Services Assistant

The Chair welcomed members of the public and Nick Bradley, Town Champion for Blyth who will be working with Blyth Town Council and its residents.

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillors: A Cartie, G T Knox, K Nisbet, J Reid
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2.	<p>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS & THE GRANT OF ANY DISPENSATIONS</p> <p>The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) drew attention to the members resolution which is agenda item 12 regarding Councillor Parker. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) noted that a dispensation is granted on the grounds that all members of the Council have a relationship with Councillor Parker, be it positive or negative and this will enable the members to conduct the business. The Council agreed to grant a dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable us to participate in the discussion and vote on the position regarding the possible appointment of Councillor Parker to its Committees.</p> <p>The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) recommended to the Mayor that due to certain matters which have arisen, and for legal reasons, the business of the Staff Committee (relating to a matter dealt with by a Special Meeting of the Council in June) and Finance Committee should be dealt with in private at the end of the meeting.</p>
3.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2015</p> <p>2. Amendment Page 2 - Councillor J R Potts said this minute regarding LGPS should read Councillor J R Potts and not Councillor Ellis.</p> <p>These minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Mayor. The above amendment was noted.</p>
4.	<p>MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE</p> <p>In accordance with the Councillors Standing Orders the Mayor's Allowance Report was deferred at the last meeting. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) drew attention to the report which he circulated again and asked Councillors to give this matter consideration. Councillor Bruce proposed an allowance of £1,500 and The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) suggested that the payment is made in two instalments, the first following election of the Mayor at the Annual Meeting and the second at the end of October when the precept is received.</p> <p>These were agreed.</p>

5.

MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

5.1 TOUR OF BRITAIN

Congratulations were noted for both Blyth Town Council and NCC in respect of the hard work and effort from all staff involved in the Tour of Britain. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) added that the staff of Blyth Town Council were instrumental in making this a success and thanked Liam Forsyth who used social media to draw attention to the event. This was highly successful and generated a huge response from both Facebook and Twitter.

Councillor J R Potts said that thanks should also go to Jimmy Reith for his efforts. This will be raised at the Joint Partnership Board Meeting.

5.2 HMS BLYTH

A small contingent from HMS Blyth visited the Council last week and we held a brief but moving ceremony on the staithes before mixing with them over a buffet lunch. Ideas are already being worked on for revitalising our relationship with the ship. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) acknowledged the hard work of Alison McCabe who arranged the buffet and thanked the Sean Robinson for his work in arranging the visit.

5.3. Northumbria in Bloom

The Mayor gave congratulations to everyone who took part in the Town Council's entry for Northumbria in Bloom 2015.

- **Ridley Park** – Gold Award and overall winner of the Parks category.
- **Newsham and New Delaval Miners Welfare Park** – Silver Award
- **St Cuthbert's Church 'Holy Weeds'** – volunteers received a Silver Award.
- **Delaval Gardens Allotments** – Gold Award.
- **Mr J Gorman of Broadway** – entered in the Private Gardens category and received a Silver Award

This was warmly endorsed by the Council.

5.4 Town and Parish Liaison Group

	<p>The Mayor advised that there will be new LED lighting in Blyth and phase 3 should be starting early next year. (Copies of the plan were displayed throughout this meeting). It was noted that the new lighting will save £292,000 in energy costs.</p> <p>5.5 Cottingwood Green MUGA & PARKOUR</p> <p>It was noted that full funding has been awarded from the S106 Housing Developer’s Fund for the installation of a brand new Multi Use Games Area and a Parkour Climbing equipment adjacent to the play area at Cottingwood Green, Newsham. The Town Clerk, Democratic Services) commended the Assets Officer’s work in securing the money.</p>
6.	<p>MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE</p> <p>There have been no meetings of the Allotments Committee. Councillor Ellis reported that a meeting of allotment holders was held with regard to discussion an allotments association. All allotment holders received consultation letters and the consultation period closes on 19 September 2015. A report will be submitted to the Allotments Committee in early October 2015.</p>
7.	<p>MINUTES OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JULY 2015</p> <p>The minutes of the Assets Committee were ADOPTED by the Council.</p> <p>Burns Avenue</p> <p>It was noted that the response from consultation has been extremely positive and the work will go ahead when funding is secured.</p> <p>Weed Control</p> <p>Councillor Parker expressed his concern regarding the ongoing issues with weed control and made reference in particular to the Cowpen Farm Estate area. He added that the standard of grass cutting has also been poor with some of the pathways being missed.</p> <p>Councillor Potts explained that monthly meetings are held with NCC as part of the Partnership Agreement and a great deal of</p>

time and effort has been spent in addressing these issues. The weather has affected the success of the weed spraying this year and both weed control and grass cutting are to be reviewed for next year. Councillor Potts reminded Councillors that they should be reporting concerns in their own areas to either the Town Council or NCC and encouraged residents to do the same. Councillor Ellis advised the meeting that concerted efforts have been made to tidy up problem areas.

MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP BOARD HELD ON 23 JULY 2015

The minutes of the Partnership Board were ADOPTED by the Council.

Grass Cutting

Detailed discussion took place regarding the number of grass cuts this year and the concerns Councillor Parker raised about the quality of the cuts. Councillor Potts advised that staff have been moved around to concentrate on problem areas and it has been agreed that identified areas will get extra cuts. In addition staff were moved around in order to prepare for the Tour of Britain.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) said that it is 18 months since BTC entered into an agreement with NCC. The agreement was designed to have flexibility in terms of the targets for grass cutting, not a set number. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) agreed to circulate a copy of the signed agreement to Councillors. The Assets Officer confirmed there are 23 permanent members of staff plus 8 seasonal workers and NCC have HR responsibility. The Assets Officer would be notified if there were issues with long term sickness. Councillor Ellis advised that staff turnover is high and there are training issues when staff are replaced. The Assets Officer explained that he will receive information regarding turnover rate and referred Councillors to the dashboard report which is circulated each month. He added that grass cutting was reduced before the Tour of Britain and focussed on the route.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) assured Councillors that all of the issues will be fed back to the next Partnership Board meeting.

MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP BOARD HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2015

Page 1 – should read minutes of Partnership Board held on 27

	<p>August and not 25 August.</p> <p>The minutes of the Partnership Board were ADOPTED by the Council.</p>
8.	<p>MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY GRANTS COMMITTEE</p> <p>There have been no meetings of the Community Grants Committee.</p>
9.	<p>MINUTES OF THE EVENTS COMMITTEE</p> <p>There have been no meetings of the Events Committee.</p>
10.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2015</p> <p>The minutes of the Planning and Development Committee were ADOPTED by the Council.</p> <p>Councillor J R Potts stated that the next meeting scheduled for 24 September 2015 was cancelled. The next meeting will be held on 22 October 2015 where the NCC Core Strategy will be discussed. Councillor Potts asked that if any issues come up on the weekly planning lists, the Town Clerk (Democratic Services) should be emailed.</p> <p>The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that the Local Transport Policy Programme document circulated with the minutes requires a response by 25 September 2015. The Council agreed that the bids made for the 2015/2016 Programme are repeated.</p>
11.	<p>RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ELLIS RECEIVED ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2015</p> <p>The Mayor and Councillor R Parker withdrew from the meeting whilst discussion took place. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) asked for a Councillor to chair this part of the meeting as the Deputy Mayor wasn't present. Councillor Ellis agreed to chair.</p> <p>Councillor Ellis moved "The Town Council notes that Councillor R Parker has completed the training required by the Standards Committee of NCC and therefore resolves to welcome the appointment of Councillor Parker to its Committees should Council</p>

	<p>choose to do so.”</p> <p>Councillor Bruce seconded this resolution.</p> <p>Councillor J R Potts stated that the resolution said that NCC Standards Committee required Councillor Parker to undertake training, however, it was Blyth Town Council who took action. The motion implied the reason Councillor Parker was removed was to have training. He added that training was not the reason for Councillor Parker’s removal, he was removed from all Committees because he broke the code of conduct and was found guilty. Councillor J R Potts said it should not be on the agenda in this format and should be withdrawn.</p> <p>A Vote was taken: 4 in favour, 4 abstaining. The motion was carried.</p> <p>(The Mayor and Councillor R Parker returned and the Mayor retook the Chair).</p>
12.	<p>TOWN PLAN</p> <p>The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) advised that he amended the original plan and asked Councillors to agree the Plan with a view to reviewing it as part of the Policy Working Group. Councillor Gibbs-Barton suggested reviewing the plan before April 2016 and annually thereafter.</p> <p>The Council agreed to ADOPT the Plan with the suggested proviso.</p>
13	<p>LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME</p> <p>The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he would like the Council to move towards this and will submit additional papers to the November meeting of the Town Council with a view to submitting an application at the meeting in January 2016.</p> <p>The Council noted the report.</p>
14	<p>PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS</p> <p>The Committees and Communications Officer referred to the paper he circulated. A number of events will be held 16-22</p>

	<p>November with a view to setting up a programme of sessions. It is hoped that members of the public will engage and provide information and ideas. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) said he would encourage people who are interested in becoming Councillors to come along to the sessions. It is envisaged that there may be some costs incurred for printing etc. and therefore the Council were asked to consider a request for £1,000 to cover the costs.</p> <p>The Council agreed to this.</p>
15	ANY FURTHER INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR URGENT ATTENTION
16	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL Thursday 19 November 2015 at 6.30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Councillors

M Park (Mayor)

K Nisbet (Deputy Mayor)

C Bruce

A Cartie

B W Elliott

K Ellis

A Gibbs-Barton

G T Knox

R Parker

J R Potts

O Potts

J Reid

L Rickerby

D Rutter

G Thompson

A Turnbull

Officers

S E Rickitt

S Robinson

D Clough

A McCabe

Liam Forsyth

Maureen Hawthorne

Adam Spratt

Town Clerk (Democratic Services

Assets Officer

Assets officer

Officer Manager

Committees & Communications Officer

Committee Clerk

Administrative/Customer Service
Officer

PART 2 (CONFIDENTIAL)

Minutes of the meeting of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House on Thursday 17 September 2015

Present:

Councillors:

M Parker (Chair), C Bruce, A Cartie, B W Elliott, K Ellis, A Gibbs-Barton, R Parker, J R Potts, O Potts

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors: L Rickerby, D Rutter, G Thompson

	<p>MINUTES OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2015</p> <p>MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2015</p>
	<p>The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) explained that whilst working with Peter Kemp it has become apparent that the systems the Council have for management and finance have not been applied properly. Whilst clearing the paperwork a number of concerns have been identified.</p> <p>The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) gave the following One of the submissions for external audit is an explanation of expenditure and whether it has gone up or down – last year’s report did not contain this information but contained very detailed submission about the variance between budget and expenditure in the same year it was granted. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) stated that he would like to defer the outturn report until the next meeting as it is not possible at present to get a clear picture. Peter Kemp will be preparing a report which will be distributed to Councillors following a review of current systems in the Council which appear to be outdated and not fit for a Council of this size. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) said he and Peter Kemp are</p>

also looking at outstanding staffing issues and drew attention to the staff not being aware of their leave entitlement for the current year. The Council was asked to endorse the proposals for annual leave(including leave starting at the birth month of the employee).

There is a lack of clarity around job descriptions and pay scales and which require further investigation. All job descriptions will be rewritten to reflect the work and tasks that staff are carrying out now. And also agree to the key policy documents which were circulated. One of the systems agreed by the Staff Committee is an HR packaged by SAGE which will incur a one-off payment.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) has also asked Peter Kemp to look at Committee structures and decision making structures. He also clarified that if there is money available then he would like to opportunity to identify areas for spending with Councillors in the next round of Committees.

Councillor Potts expressed his concern around the budget and reiterated that Parish Councils should have 3 months budget to work with.

The Council agreed to adopt the following HR policies and proposals for staff holidays referred to in the Staff Committee Minutes.

- Absence Management Guidelines
- Absence Management Policy and Procedures
- Sickness Reporting Process
- Self Certification Form
- Performance Appraisal Guidance Notes
- Performance Appraisal Form
- Pre-Employment Check List
- Pre-Employment Declaration Form

The minutes of the Finance Committee and Staff Committee were **ADOPTED** by the Council.