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## **BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL MEETING** held in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Quay Road, Blyth NE24 2AS on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 6.30pm.

### **Present:**

### **Councillors:**

A Cartie, A Gibbs-Barton, G T Knox, K Nisbet, J Reid, R Parker, M Parker, J R Potts, O Potts, L Rickerby and G Thompson.

### **Officers:**

Stephen Rickitt – Town Clerk (Democratic Services)  
Sean Robinson – Assets Officer  
Liam Forsyth – Committee Clerk

### **Also Present:**

Members of the Public: 8.

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting, Councillor M Parker wished to make a speech as she announced she was not to continue in her role as acting Deputy Mayor.

Councillor M Parker wished to thank her husband, family, Officers and Councillors for their support. Particular thanks were given to the Office Manager, Ms. Alison McCabe for her support. It was commented that

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there have been various successes across Councillor M Parkers tenure including a successful Summer Fayre and Halloween Event. Other achievements outlined include the £157,000 in support that Blyth Town Council had provided via its Community Grants Committee, work on the Allotments at Beatrice Avenue and Bolam Avenue and the Benchmarking Scheme.

Special mention was provided for the Partnership Scheme and the positive effect it will have on the environment in Blyth.

Councillor M Parker then called for nominations to the position of Mayor of Blyth Town Council.

### **098/14/01:ELECTION OF THE MAYOR**

Councillor G T Knox commented that with great pleasure he wished to nominate Councillor O Potts. It was noted that Councillor G T Knox has known Councillor O Potts for a long time and commented on her considerable experience as a Councillor and having demonstrated strong ability in difficult situations as chair of Committees.

Councillor J R Potts wished to formally second this nomination.

Councillor M Parker welcomed the new Mayor, Councillor O Potts.

### **099/14/02: RECEIVE THE MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Councillor O Potts signed her acceptance of Office form and became Mayor of Blyth Town Council for the upcoming year.

Councillor M Parker was thanked, Councillor O Potts commented that she represented the Town very well and was a very good attendee.

Before the commencement of the Meeting Council O Potts commented that Public Question time for this Meeting was to come after the Election of the Committees.

Councillor O Potts commented that the Office had received a request to record this Meeting. The guidelines for recording were then provided to the Members of the Public in attendance.

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### **100/14/03: ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

Councillor O Potts moved to nominate Councillor A Cartie for the position of Deputy Mayor for Blyth Town Council. Councillor O Potts commented that Councillor A Cartie was heavily involved in Community Work within the Town and that she was very much looking forward to working together in the upcoming year.

Councillor K Nisbet seconded the nomination.

### **101/14/04: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Bruce, K Ellis, B W Elliott, D Rutter and the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) and the Office Manager.

### **102/14/05: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND THE GRANT OF ANY DISPENSATIONS.**

None.

### **103/14/06: TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES: -**

<b>ORGANISATION (number of representatives)</b>
BRIC (2) - Councillor G T Knox and Councillor A Gibbs-Barton.
Blyth Young Peoples Centre (1) - Councillor A Cartie.
NALC County Committee (1) - Councillor J R Potts.
Friends of Ridley Park - Councillor M Parker
LMAPs Committee - Councillor J R Potts
Citizens Advice Bureau - Councillor G T Knox.

*NB Councillors appointed as representatives to Outside Bodies shall so act until the next Annual Meeting of the Council or until they cease to be a Town Councillor.*

### **104/14/07: TO AGREE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOLLOWING**

## COMMITTEES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

<b><i>Name of Committee (number of members)</i></b>	<b><i>Terms of reference and powers</i></b>
Allotments (9)	To supervise and make decisions or recommendations regarding the operation of the Council's allotments
Assets (9)	To supervise and make decisions or recommendations regarding any asset of the Council, except for assets relating to allotments.
Community Grants (9)	To award grants to outside bodies and to make recommendations for policies concerning the award of community grants.
Events (9)	To supervise and make decisions or recommendations regarding the Council's functions in providing entertainments or encouraging visitors
Finance (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) To supervise and make decisions or recommendations in respect of the Council's overall financial affairs.</li> <li>(2) To exercise the powers allocated to the Finance Committee by the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.</li> <li>(3) To supervise the audit of the Council.</li> </ul>
Planning and Development (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) To exercise the role of the Council under the Planning Acts, including responding to consultations.</li> <li>(2) To supervise and make decisions or recommendations concerning development within Blyth or its surrounding area.</li> </ul>
Staff (9)	To supervise and make decision or recommendations regarding the Council's role as an employer.
<i>Policy Working Group (all</i>	<i>To make recommendations</i>

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<i>Councillors and Town Clerks)</i>	<i>regarding policies of the Council, including making an annual review of all policies.</i>
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The Council **AGREED** to the Committees and Working groups outlined above with the creation of a new working group for Town Twinning.

It was outlined that the Town Twinning Working Group is to have the following members: Councillors C Bruce, K Nisbet, O Potts and L Rickerby.

**105/14/08: TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEES FOR THE NEXT MUNICIPAL YEAR.**

*NB Councillors appointed to committees shall so act until the next Annual Meeting of the Council or until they cease to be a Town Councillor or they are removed by a resolution of the Council.*

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an outline for this agenda item.

The following Councillors were elected to the following Committees:

<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2014/15</b>	
<b>ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE</b>	
Cllr K Ellis (Chair)	Cllr J R Potts (Vice-Chair)
Cllr C Bruce	Cllr B Elliott
Cllr O Potts	Cllr L Rickerby
Cllr D Rutter	Cllr G Thompson
Cllr A Turnbull	
<b>ASSETS COMMITTEE</b>	
Cllr K Ellis (Chair)	Cllr O Potts (Vice-Chair)
Cllr B Elliott	Cllr M Parker
Cllr J R Potts	Cllr J Reid
Cllr L Rickerby	Cllr D Rutter

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Cllr A Turnbull	
<b>COMMUNITY GRANTS COMMITTEE</b>	
Cllr J R Potts (Chair)	Cllr O Potts (Vice-Chair)
Cllr C Bruce	Cllr A Cartie
Cllr B Elliott	Cllr K Ellis
Cllr A Gibbs-Barton	Cllr K Nisbet
Cllr M Parker	

<b>EVENTS COMMITTEE</b>	
Cllr K Nisbet (Chair)	Cllr A Cartie (Vice-Chair)
Cllr C Bruce	Cllr A Gibbs-Barton
Cllr M Parker	Cllr J R Potts
Cllr L Rickerby	Cllr G Thompson
Cllr A Turnbull	
<b>FINANCE COMMITTEE</b>	
Cllr J R Potts (Chair)	Cllr G T Knox (Vice-Chair)
Cllr C Bruce	Cllr B Elliott
Cllr K Ellis	Cllr A Gibbs-Barton
Cllr K Nisbet	Cllr O Potts
Cllr J Reid	
<b>PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>	
Cllr G T Knox (Chair)	Cllr J R Potts (Vice-Chair)
Cllr A Cartie	Cllr A Gibbs-Barton
Cllr K Nisbet	Cllr O Potts
Cllr J Reid	Cllr G Thompson

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Cllr A Turnbull	
<b>STAFF COMMITTEE</b>	
Cllr O Potts (Chair)	Cllr K Nisbet (Vice-Chair)
Cllr K Ellis	Cllr G T Knox
Cllr J R Potts	Cllr J Reid
Cllr L Rickerby	Cllr D Rutter
Cllr A Turnbull	

***The Council shall then stand adjourned for a short period to enable the Committees to elect their respective Chairs and Vice-Chairs***

**106/14/09: ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AFTER AGENDA ITEM 8 TO ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor K Ellis was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Allotments Committee with Councillor J R Potts as Vice-Chair.

**107/14/10: ASSETS COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AT RISING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING TO ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor K Ellis was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Assets Committee with Councillor O Potts as Vice-Chair.

**108/14/11: COMMUNITY GRANTS COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE RISING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE TO ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor J R Potts was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Community Grants with Councillor O Potts as Vice-Chair.

**109/14/12: EVENTS COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AT RISING OF THE COMMUNITY GRANTS COMMITTEE MEETING TO ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor K Nisbitt was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Events Committee with Councillor A Cartie as Vice-Chair.

**110/14/13: FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AT RISING OF THE EVENTS COMMITTEE MEETING TO ELECT THE**

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## **CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR.**

Councillor J R Potts was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Finance Committee with Councillor G T Knox as Vice Chair.

### **111/14/14: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AT RISING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING TO ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor G T Knox was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Planning and Development Committee with Councillor J R Potts as Vice-Chair.

### **112/14/15: STAFF COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AT RISING OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TO ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor O Potts was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Staff Committee with Councillor K Nisbet as Vice-Chair.

### **113/14/16: POLICY WORKING GROUP MEETING TO BE HELD AT RISING OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE MEETING TO ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR.**

Councillor O Potts was **ELECTED** as Chair of the Policy Working Group with Councillor A Cartie as Vice-Chair as the Mayorality for the forthcoming year.

***The Council meeting shall then resume***

### **114/14/17: PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**Q:** A member of the public posed a question regarding a business in Blyth who can no longer afford the lease due to the costings being cheaper elsewhere. An enquiry was therefore made as to what Blyth Town Council can do about costings and rates. It was also enquired as to which Committee would be responsible for support in this area.

**A:** Councillor J R Potts provided a response to this question. Regarding rent it was commented that as Blyth Town Council does not own the property it has very little authority and can't intervene in private owned property with the price being set by the land lord. Regarding business rates it was commented that these are set by central government not by



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Blyth Town Council and that Northumberland County Council has limited powers to reduce rates.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton commented that whilst business rates are the same across the County and based on square footage he understands the concern that rent within Blyth does not compare favourably to other areas within the Region.

Councillor K Nisbet reiterated that the responsibility for Business rates lay with Central Government.

Discussion was then held regarding the Town Team and its role in supporting businesses within Blyth.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that the Planning and Development Committee are using the land registry to create a database of landlord and owners. It was commented as to the logistics of this scheme and how the benchmarking scheme has informed the Committee as to its influence.

**Q:** A member of the Public enquired as to whether this database would be available to the public.

**A:** The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he would have to check for issues around the Data Protection Act and thus was unable to give a commitment.

**Q:** A member of the Public enquired as to whether the Town Council could look into using CPO powers to purchase the former Hedley Young's building.

**A:** Councillor J R Potts commented that an application from the owner of the building (Pound Stretchers) had been received for the refurbishment of the building.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that the Planning and Development Committee is to receive a report on Compulsory Purchase orders.

## **115/14/18:MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 were **AGREED** by the Council and signed by the Chair.

*NB For items 18-25 the Committee Chairs were requested to draw the*

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*Council's attention to any matters which require specific approval or endorsement by the Full Council.*

## **116/14/19: MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE**

There have been no Meetings of the Allotments Committee since the last Meeting of the Town Council.

Councillor J R Potts brought to the Council's attention an outstanding land issue regarding land. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an outline of the situation and the proposed exchange with Persimmons.

The Town Council provided their formal consent for this proposal.

## **117/14/19:20 MINUTES OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE**

20.1 To adopt the Minutes of the Assets Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014

The Minutes of the Assets Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014 were **ADOPTED** by the Council.

20.2 To receive a verbal report on the meetings of the Partnership Board which have not yet been reported through the Assets Committee

Councillor J R Potts provided an outline of the partnership due to absence of the Chair Councillor K Ellis.

It was outlined that the partnership is a committed expenditure project over the next 5 years which will allow for the delivery of a dedicated badged workforce for the people of Blyth and the environment. It was commented that areas such as the grass cutting and enhanced cleaning of bus shelters cleaning service and seats are covered within the partnership. It was also noted that there was potential for other parties to become involved in the partnership such as the Town Team who could support the feedback. It was also commented that potential for expansion with apprenticeships was being investigated.

It was commented that the enhanced bus cleaning service is to begin from Monday and that the Council would be seeking feedback.

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The Partnership Board was also discussed and it was outlined that this met monthly and the full workforce attending on a quarterly basis. It was noted that Councillor K Ellis is to report back findings to the next Committee/Council.

### **118/14/21: MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY GRANTS COMMITTEE**

There have been no Meetings of the Community Grants Committee since the last Meeting of the Town Council.

### **119/14/22: MINUTES OF THE EVENTS COMMITTEE**

22.1 To adopt the Minutes of the Events Committees held on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014

The Minutes of the Events Committee held on the 25<sup>th</sup> Match 2014 were **ADOPTED** by the Council.

The Minutes of the Events Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014 were **ADOPTED** by the Council.

22.2 To receive a verbal report on the meeting of the Events Committees held on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014

An update was provided by the Chair of the Committee, Councillor K Nisbet.

It was commented that discussion focused around the Maritime Festival and the launch of the Skiff.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) also commented that the Community Rowing boat could be entered into a Towns Alive Competition following on from the Benchmarking Scheme. This was **AGREED** by the Council.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton also wished to note that the advert for the Maritime Festival was in the middle of this month Local Links publication.

### **120/14/23: MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

23.1 To adopt the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014

The Minutes of the Finance Committee held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014 were

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**ADOPTED** by the Council.

### 23.2 Approval of the 2013/2014 Accounts and Governance Statement

The Council formally **APPROVED** the 2013/2014 Accounts and Governance Statement.

### 23.3 Consideration of the Internal Auditor's Report

For this Agenda Item Councillor J R Potts provided an outline of the process and commented that the Auditors report put forward no urgent items for attention.

It was noted that future inspection of the accounts by the public is to be arranged and advertised.

### 23.4 Reappointment of the Internal Auditor

It was **AGREED** that Richard Slater be re-appointed as internal auditor for the Council Year 2014/2015.

Councillor R Parker enquired as to the footpath at Wensleydale Allotments has been paved rather than gravel as discussed. The Assets Officer, Sean Robinson commented that this arose from the underspend Meeting and the price between the 2 quotes was negligible. It was outlined that the Office has received compliments for this work and that it will provide a more long term and sustainable outcome.

## **121/14/24: MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

### 24.1 To adopt the Minutes of the Planning & Development Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014

The Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014 were **ADOPTED** by the Council.

### 24.2 To consider any urgent planning related issues

There were no urgent planning related issues for consideration.

## **122/14/25: MINUTES OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE**

Councillor O Potts provided a verbal report on the extraordinary meeting of the Staff Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014. It was outlined that

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the Council is to take on an administrative apprentice who is to start in post on the coming Monday. It was also noted that Blyth Town Council is recruiting an Assistant Assets Officer and that the short listing and appointment will be completed as soon as possible.

### **123/14/26: MINUTES OF THE POLICY WORKING GROUP**

There have been no Meetings of the Policy Working Group since the last Meeting of the Full Council.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that Standing Orders had been provided with amendments to all Councillors for consideration at the forthcoming Policy Working Group Meeting.

### **124/14/27: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014 were **NOTED** by the Council.

The Public Information Session provided by the Town Clerk (Democratic Services) and the Committee Clerk was also discussed. It was commented that both Officers enjoyed providing this presentation and were investigating scope to provide further potentially upon Europe and Local Government.

### **125/14/28: RECORDING MEETINGS**

See attached report from the Town Clerk (Democratic Services).

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that as of the time of the Meeting there was still not draft statutory instrument nor guidance which places the Town Council's position in limbo until further information is forthcoming.

Councillor G T Knox commented on the report noting his experience in the previous Borough Council. It was outlined that key to any consideration would be value for money and that the expected costs were justified by an appropriately used service.

Councillor J Reid also commented that he had also been involved in the Blyth Valley Borough Council. It was commented that he also reiterated the need for value for money but cited that technology was significantly cheaper.

The Town Council **NOTED** the report and it was **AGREED** that it is to be brought forward to the future meeting of the Full Council or Policy

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Working Group.

### **126/14/29: ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND/OR URGENT MATTERS**

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided a brief outline regarding the Town Twinning Working Group. It was outlined that this is in order to co-ordinate the 2015 Civic Exchange. Councillor A Gibbs-Barton requested that the Town Twinning Group be invited to the Meeting in order to avoid duplication of efforts. This was **AGREED**.

The Parish Liaison Working Group and its work were also discussed. It was noted that the Town Clerk (Democratic Services) had met with Barry Rowland from Northumberland County Council to discuss such matters.

An update was also provided regarding the use of the Blyth Logo upon a Community Flag. It was commented that Officers were in discussions with the Flag Institute and that the Officers were seeking the formal support for the flag. This was **AGREED**.

### **127/14/30: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Full Council is to take place on Thursday the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber.

### **128/14/31: PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The Council **RESOLVED** to consider the remaining business in private with the press and public excluded pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the basis that the business involves consideration staff related matters.