



**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday 14 May 2020 at 4.30 pm**

**Present:**

Councillors: W Taylor (Mayor), M Richardson (Deputy Mayor), A Cartie, E Anderson-Smith, D Carr, K Nisbet, A Parsons, J R Potts, O 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: 1

Members of the Public: 7

Invited Guests: 0

**The Mayor stated that no questions had been received from the public. Anyone wishing to observe the meeting was invited to do so.**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>  There were no apologies for absence.
<b>2</b>	<b>Disclosure of Interests and the Grant of any Dispensations</b>  There were no disclosures of interest.
<b>3</b>	<b>Decision Report – Regulations 2020</b>  The Town Clerk referred to his report which detailed the 2020 regulations due to Covid -19. A discussion took place and Councillor J R Potts moved to agree the recommendations that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Mayor, Chairs and Vice Chairs remain in office until the next Annual General Meeting in May 2021.</li><li>• The next Town Meeting will be held in 2021.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council note the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act and Act accordingly.</li> <li>• The Councillors assigned to outside bodies remain the same.</li> </ul> <p>This motion was seconded by Councillor Webb and unanimously agreed by Council.</p> <p>It was noted that the Town Clerk has clarified with NALC that there has been no change in the legislation with regard to Section 85 (the time a Councillor can be absent from Committees without permission). All of the statutory requirements have been carried out with regard to the Councillor vacancy and members are aware that the Council have the ability to co-opt if needed as there may be an election called if more than the required number ask for one. However, there will not be an election immediately as the next one will take place in May 2021.</p> <p>Councillor Anderson-Smith has offered her assistance to Councillor Thompson in the Newsham ward.</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Establishment of Committees</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk stated that there are now 15 Councillors representing BTC therefore the proportions for Committees have been recalculated (please see below).</p> <p>8 labour for each committee = 24  7 lib/democrat  5 conservative</p> <p>Sub committees  6 labour= 24  7 lib/democrat  5 conservative</p> <p>The Town Clerk asked members to provide the Committee Clerk with any changes and a revised Committee membership list will be circulated.</p>

## **5 Mayors Announcements**

The Mayor took the opportunity to reflect on the work of Members and Officers over the past 8 weeks:

- BTC have arranged for slow cookers to be purchased for a support group.
- Colouring sheets for children have been created online, promoting the stay safe rainbows. Councillor Carr has also created his own pages depicting Blyth beach huts, for adults and children.
- Councillor Anderson Smith has produced and arranged safe delivery of over 100 craft packs for children in Blyth. She has also coordinated delivery of these, in conjunction with North East Legion, via Star Wars characters. These initiatives have proved extremely popular throughout Blyth. Councillor Anderson Smith is to be commended for this work.
- Several Councillors have taken on the role of 'phone buddies' for local people. This has had a knock-on effect with other residents recruited to help and even virtual coffee mornings being held.
- Blyth in Bloom will continue, in a virtual format. Residents are being asked to send in photographs via email.
- Councillor Nisbet donated money from her Councillors Allowance to purchase Easter eggs for a project being delivered by 'Bad Apples' across the county.
- The seats to commemorate VE day, paid for by Councillor Webb, are now in place and look splendid. The VE carpet bedding is going in at the beach soon.
- BTC have donated £2,000 to the foodbank. This was a very timely contribution as donations to the foodbank had almost ceased.
- £1,000 was donated from BTC to purchase tablets for residents in care homes, allowing them to maintain contact with the family and loved ones.
- The Mayor read out a poem from a young resident, Sophie Moan, aged 9, who has recently moved to the Blyth area. It is hoped this will be included in a book by Chris Hillman.

	<p>The Mayor added that he would like BTC to support Sophie and the author.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council staff have fielded hundreds of enquiries from the public, constantly updated the BTC website, promoted local businesses, highlighted public concern e.g. over the Free School Meal voucher scheme, received applications for Covid-19 funding, and continued to maintain the business of the Council, whilst working from home.</li> </ul> <p>The Mayor wanted to thank all the staff for their efforts in these difficult times and paid particular tribute to Mel Jackson in her role as Community Link Key Coordinator. He had heard, from a number of different sources, the positive impact Mel was having, particularly with vulnerable people in Blyth</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Special Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18 February 2020 (Part I and II)</b></p> <p>Members agreed the minutes as a true record.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Community Funding Sub Committee</b></p> <p>To note the minutes of the Special Community Funding Sub Committee held on Tuesday 4 February 2020 as a true record.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Community Development Committee</b></p> <p>To note the minutes of the Community Development Committee held on Tuesday 18 February 2020 (Part I and II) as a true record.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Environment Committee</b></p>
<b>9.1</b>	<p>To note the minutes of the Environment Committee held on Thursday 30 January 2020 as a true record.</p>
<b>9.2</b>	<p>To note the minutes of the Special Environment Committee held on Tuesday 18 February 2020 (Part I &amp; II).</p>
<b>9.3</b>	<p><b>Partnership Working Group</b></p> <p>To note the minutes of the PWG held on 16 January 2020 as a true record.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Governance Committee</b></p>

	To note the minutes of the Governance Committee Part I & II held on Thursday 30 April 2020 as a true record.
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Register of Interests</b></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that, following feedback from NCC, the Councillors Register of Interests could be updated electronically.</p>
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council's Internal Auditor's Report</li> <li>2. Annual Internal Audit Report for 2019/20</li> <li>3. Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20</li> <li>4. Accounting Statements for 2019/20</li> </ol> <p>Council approved the above papers which will be signed by the Mayor and sent to the External Auditor.</p>
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Decision Report</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk referred to the report which shows the annual review of all policies and procedures of the Council. He commented that the policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to give members confidence that the risks are covered, these include key policies such as Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Risk Management. There is a list of the policies indicating where amendments have been made and also showing new ones.</p> <p>It was noted that a new Health and Safety Policy has been introduced together with a DSE checklist.</p> <p>All risk assessments have been reviewed and now include a one for Working Alone and at Height.</p> <p>Members noted the amendments and agreed to a change in Standing Orders that "the quorum for Committees and Sub Committees should be one third".</p> <p>The Mayor welcomed this information stating that it demonstrates Officers of BTC continue to review and improve policies to ensure they are relevant and up to date, stating that the new Social Media Policy is very good and gives clear advice for Councillors who want to social media more. It was noted that he would like an addition to the Health and Safety Policy in the future to include a reference to members.</p>

	<p>The Mayor spoke of a proposal from Councillor Anderson-Smith and Councillor Carr about the possibility of have a weekly Councillors page so residents can be kept informed of what Councillors are doing. Councillor Potts commented that he would not wish to see Officers responding to questions from the public. It was agreed to discuss this in more detail at a future Council meeting.</p> <p>Members unanimously agreed to approve the amendments to existing policies as well as the new ones.</p>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Delegation Decision Report</b></p> <p>There are no delegated decisions to report.</p>
<b>15</b>	<p><b>Information Report</b></p> <p>There are no items for information.</p>
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>A discussion took place around the timing of public question time and it was decided that this will be the first agenda item at Full Council hence removing the delay in starting the meeting should no questions be received. The same arrangement will be put in place for Allotment Holders Question Time.</p>
<b>17</b>	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Thursday 23 July 2020. If the current restrictions continue this will be an electronic meeting.</p>
<b>18</b>	<p><b>PART II</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>There were no part II items.</b></p>

**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