

Blyth Town Council

Full Council – Thursday 14 October 2021

Public Question Time

These notes are not verbatim

Question 1

Please can you advise on what grounds the current organiser has been yet again granted permission to carry out duties as Remembrance Parade Master?

Answer

The Town Council doesn't organise the event. Currently the Town Clerk is trying to clarify matters relating to the responsibility of the event.

Question 2

Would BTC be willing to sit with interested and concerned parties as soon as possible to hear their concerns and issues as regards this matter?

Answer

The Town Clerk is currently communicating with the RBL with a view to arranging a meeting between relevant parties to address issues and the future organisation of the Remembrance service.

Question 3

Is the Council happy with the removal of our bus station as part of the development of Blyth.

Answer

Councillors are not happy with the proposal but this is the responsibility of NCC and there are 2 Officers here tonight who are going to deliver a presentation on the Energising Blyth project – you will see what is planned if you stay for the presentation.

Question 4

Earlier in the year the Council said they were looking for new premises, is that search still ongoing?

Answer

There is nothing available that is suitable for the Council at the moment.

At the last Accommodation Working Group it was confirmed that the leaseholder of the current building has agreed to rolling the current agreement on an annual basis with a year's notice. We also continue to look at buildings within the town centre and are monitoring the Energising Blyth programme to see what might happen and we will be notified if anything suitable comes up.

Question 5

The Town Council should be in the old Miners Welfare building, it is the home of BTC. You had to use a different location because the BTC Council chamber was not big enough to accommodate everyone during the pandemic

Answer

BTC has never been based in Miners Welfare building. It was occupied by Blyth Valley Borough Council pre-March 2009. Discussions took place with NCC about the leasing part of the old Civic Centre and they were prepared to come to an agreement but the space did not meet the needs of BTC. We booked Port of Blyth for our Committee meetings as the space was large enough to ensure social distancing.

Question 6

It is with regret that I have to raise the misuse of public fund. BTC has a partnership agreement with NCC and it appears that NCC are abusing the agreement in relation to vehicles and staff. At the beginning of the agreement there was in total NCC had 7 ride on mowers and BTC had 4 ride mowers and staff. Now there are only 8 – 4 and 4 respectively. This would mean that there is a shortfall of some £60,000-£80,000. The auditor should be called in to investigate

I raised this on 10 October 2019. The issue was not raised at the next Environment Committee.

Answer

The Town Clerk requested details of this claim in order that it could be looked into further and a response will be provided.

NB Please see below the response from the Town Clerk following further investigation:

Following investigation, it can be confirmed that at the start of the Partnership Agreement, the 7 and 4 vehicles and staff as referred to earlier were in place. The Council can confirm that no further investigation or discussion with NCC is necessary.

A continual review is in place covering the many aspects of the Partnership Agreement and changing in vehicles and machinery have taken place. The County Council have increased their capacity by an additional vehicle whilst also changing the specification of the original fleet from 2019 to more productive/efficient machines.