

EAST BEDLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 5th January 2016, 6:00pm at East Bedlington Community Centre, Bedlington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

A Douglas
J Dobie
D Graham
P Hedley
N Hogarth
A Innes
A Stewart
A Wallace (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Parish Clerk; Assistant Clerk, 3 members of the public.

OPEN SESSION

The Chair welcomed all present and wished them a healthy and prosperous new year before inviting questions from the public. Councillor Douglas on behalf of a resident raised concerns regarding parking on the pavement near Foundry House which appears to be causing damage to the paving stones which presented a trip hazard. It was agreed that this would be reported to NCC and Ward Councillor Tyler. Reverend Ian Hennebry referred to offensive graffiti on a bus shelter at Bedlington Station and it was agreed to address this at the earliest opportunity.

CO134/15 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received on behalf of Councillor Andy Watson (traffic delay) and Councillor Eddie Dickson (family bereavement).

RESOLVED

That the apologies for absence be accepted.

CO135/15 2.MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st December 2015 be agreed as a true record.

CO136/15 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Councillor Hedley advised that he had attended the England Coastal Path meeting however, there had been no interest shown in providing a pedestrian bridge across the river Blyth.

RESOLVED

To note the matters arising.

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CO137/15 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS & DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

CO138/15 5. POLICE REPORT

There was no police report.

CO139/15 6. CORRESPONDENCE

Councillor Stewart referred to item 576 relating to Council Tax Support and requested the Clerk to provide further detail.

The Clerk advised that Northumberland County Council had withdrawn Council Tax Support to Town /Parish Councils during 2014/15, contrary to clear instructions from government ministers. The Clerk explained that this action would reduce the Council's spending power in 2016/17 by approximately £60,000. He added that Councils with high levels of deprivation were those penalised the most. An independent review is now to be carried out which may result in the Government passing legislation to force principal authorities (including Northumberland) to pass on Council Tax Benefit Grant provided by the Government.

NALC has been invited to make representations as to the impact on Town and Parish Councils in Northumberland who have in turn invited each Council for their comments by 8th January 2016.

Councillor Douglas, whilst recognising the financial constraints placed on the County Council, commented that the Parish Council's duty was to represent the interests of East Bedlington.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the correspondence be noted and that the proposed actions be agreed.**
- (2) To instruct the clerk to make representations on behalf of the Council.**

CO140/15 7. CLERKS REPORT

The clerk provided a brief update advising as follows;

- NCC payroll section had offered to handle pension administration documentation for a small fee
- The Draft Lease between the Parish Council and East Bedlington Community Centre was now complete and ready for signing
- Provisional discussions had taken place with Sleekburn Estates with a view to relocating to 15, Station Street during the restoration period.

RESOLVED

That the Clerks report be noted.

Ch'n initials...

CO141/15 8. INVOICES & PAYMENT VOUCHERS

PAYMENT REFERENCE	DETAILS	AMOUNT £
V107	Elveden farms	594.00
V108	Hartford Catering	225.00
V109	MW Design	126.00
V110	R Thornton - clerk's expenses	39.56
V111	A J Thornton - Expenses	146.25
V112	Generation Hire	42.00
V113	Jenny Tindale - expenses	73.80
V114	Total Business Group Ltd	11.15
DBB	BT	112.82
V115	Northumberland County Council - payroll December	4622.22
DBB	Bank charges	18.50

RESOLVED

That the schedule of invoices and payment Vouchers be approved.

CO142/15 9. FINANCIAL POSITION

RESOLVED

That the Council notes the cleared balance as at 24th December 2015 of £161,465.23.

CO143/15 10. BANK RECONCILIATION

RESOLVED

That the bank reconciliation statement for the period ending 30th November 2015 be approved.

CO144/15 11. VACANT POSITION OF COUNCILLOR

The Clerk advised that he had received a letter of interest from Mr Keith Grimes, a resident of West Sleekburn who was then nominated by Councillor Alex Wallace and seconded by Councillor Allan Stewart. The Chair then invited Keith to introduce himself and to outline his aspirations should he become a councillor.

The Chair then invited any further nominations and with none forthcoming put his nomination to the vote.

RESOLVED.

That Mr Keith Grimes be co-opted on to the Council.

CO145/15 12. APPROVAL OF BORROWING APPLICATION

The Clerk presented a report seeking approval to borrow £400,000 over 20years. He advised that the Council needed to demonstrate that the loan is affordable, that it had considered the risks and that community consultation had taken place.

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Although these considerations had been taken into account in reaching the original decision to borrow £350,000 it was necessary to revisit the risks and affordability of the loan in the light of the greater amount now proposed. He advised that having formally considered these issues he was satisfied that the loan was affordable and did not expose the Council to unacceptable risk and that he had concluded that the Council was in full compliance with DCLG requirements.

RESOLVED

That the Council authorises the loan application to borrow £400,000 for the purpose of providing a grant to East Bedlington Community Centre.

CO146/15 13. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Clerk presented a report with proposals to amend the Council's existing banking arrangements, outlining the significant benefits of on-line banking.

RESOLVED

That the Council;

- (1) Authorises the Clerk to implement the on-line banking arrangements as outlined in his report providing he with full access and Councillor Stewart with read only access.**
- (2) Approves the removal of former Councillor Colin Parker's name from the existing bank mandate and that in future cheques would require 2 signatures from the remaining 3 named signatories.**

CO147/15 14. BUDGET REPORT

The Clerk presented a budget report outlining proposed growth and non-recurring items and capital project expenditure. He advised that subject to their approval there would still scope to increase spending by circa £20,000 (or more subject to successful grant applications) whilst staying within the Council Tax parameters previously agreed. He referred to various options that the Council may wish to consider some of which generated lengthy debate in connection with which Authority (NCC or EBPC) should be providing these services.

RESOLVED

That the Council;

- (1) Approves the items of growth; non-recurring expenditure and capital as outlined in the Clerks report**
- (2) Notes the impact on the 2016/17 Parish Precept and scope for further spending**
- (3) Authorises the Clerk to convene a Special Budget Working Group to finalise the 2016/17 budget for presentation to the Parish Council on 2nd February 2016.**

CO148/15 15. SMALL GRANTS AND DONATIONS

RESOLVED.

That Community Action Northumberland be awarded a donation of £200.

CO149/15 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Chair moved suspension of standing order 1(B) in order to allow an additional 30 minutes to conclude the business.

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RESOLVED

The motion was carried unanimously.

CO150/15 16. MATTERS FOR DECISION.

16.1 Appointment of representative on the Bedlington Advisory Group (Tesco Site).

16.2 Determination of eligibility & application process – Tall Ships

Councillor Stewart referred to the proposed composition of the Bedlington Advisory Group advising that in his opinion the Group should be made up of democratically elected County Councillors and representatives from the Parish / Town Councils and he tabled the following motion, (seconded by Councillor Allan Douglas) ***“that East Bedlington Parish Council does not participate in the Group”***.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Stewart’s motion is defeated by a majority decision.

There followed lengthy debate as to who would be best placed to represent the interests of East Bedlington on the advisory group. The Chair advising that there was, or could be perceived to be, a potential conflict of interests applicable to those members who served on West Bedlington Town Council. Taking account of this, the views of other Councillors relating to participation on the group and the availability of members remaining it was suggested the Parish Clerk should represent the Council.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Parish Clerk represent the Parish Council on the Bedlington Advisory Group.**
- (2) That the eligibility and application process outlined in the Assistant Clerks report be approved**

CO151/15 17. OUTSIDE BODIES

(17.1) **Friends of Gallagher Park** – Councillor Graham advised that no meetings had taken place since the previous meeting.

(17.2) **NALC** – The Chair advised that no meetings had taken place.

(17.3) **East Bedlington Community Centre** – The clerk provided a progress report advising that;

- Tenders were due to be received mid - January
- Both draft leases were complete and legal formalities were being dealt with by solicitors
- A new company “Platform Trading LTD” a wholly owned subsidiary of East Bedlington Community Centre had been established
- VAT matters, including registration and the “Option to Tax” were being progressed
- Provisional discussions had taken place with the licencing authority and a meeting the police licencing officer had been arranged

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(17.4) **Bedlington Forum** – nothing to report.

(17.5) **Parish Liaison Working Group** – the chair advised that no meetings had taken place with the next scheduled for January 2016.

RESOLVED

That the delegate's reports be noted.

AOB

Councillor Stewart drew member's attention to minutes of the working groups that had been circulated for member's information.

DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of East Bedlington Parish Council will be a Parish Council Meeting to be held at 6.00pm Tuesday 2nd February 2016 at East Bedlington Community Centre.

Meeting Closed 8:00 pm.

Signed by the Chairman: Date:

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