



**Minutes of a meeting of East Bedlington Parish Council held on Tuesday 23 January 2024  
at East Bedlington Community Centre**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor John Batey  
Councillor Bill Crosby  
Councillor Dawn Crosby  
Councillor Keith Grimes (Chairman)  
Councillor Paul Hedley  
Councillor Keith Scantlebury  
Councillor Allan Stewart  
Councillor Grant Ward  
Councillor Rebecca Wilczek

**In attendance:** Ron Thornton – Responsible Financial Officer  
Jenny Tindale – Clerk  
Mike Slaughter

		<b>ACTION</b>
	<p><b>PUBLIC SESSION</b> The Chairman opened the meeting and advised that Mike Slaughter was in attendance as an independent minute taker for agenda item Part 2 item 3 only.</p> <p>There were no questions from the members of the public.</p>	
<b>CO78/23</b>	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Apologies were noted from Councillor Jayne Todd (holiday) <b>RESOLVED:</b> (i) <b>That the apologies be accepted.</b></p>	
<b>CO79/23</b>	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 7 November 2023 were circulated to the members prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> <b>That;</b> <b>The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7 November 2023 be signed as a true record.</b></p>	
<b>CO80/23</b>	<p><b>Clerk &amp; Officers Update</b> A written report was presented to members. The Deputy Clerk expanded on each point. <b>RESOLVED:</b> <b>That;</b> (i) <b>The Clerk &amp; Officers update be noted.</b></p>	

CO81/23	<p><b>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS &amp; REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION</b></p> <p>There were no disclosures or requests.</p>	
CO82/23	<p><b>POLICE REPORT</b></p> <p>A comprehensive written report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was noted that a pop up police station would be held in East Bedlington Community Centre on the last Friday of each month starting 26 January 2024</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b>  <b>That;</b>  <b>The Police Report be noted.</b></p>	
CO83/23	<p><b>NCC COUNCILLOR REPORTS</b></p> <p><b>There were no reports.</b></p>	
CO84/23	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>A member referred to log 191 – it was confirmed the Senior Citizen Lunch went ahead. Councillors were not present.</p> <p>A member referred to 228 – the Clerk advised that the correspondence was somewhat vexatious and the matters raised were incorrect. The complainant has been referred to the adopted policy.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b>  <b>That the correspondence be noted.</b></p>	
CO85/23	<p><b>PLANNING</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b>  <b>That;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) <b>Regular meetings be re-instated between Chair and Clerk to exercise delegated decision making where applications fall outside the Parish Meeting schedule.</b></li> <li>(ii) <b>No further comment be made on existing applications</b></li> <li>(iii) <b>The determinations be noted.</b></li> </ul>	Deputy Clerk
CO86/23	<p><b>FINANCE REPORT</b></p> <p>The Chairman presented a suite of reports:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b>  <b>That the,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) <b>Schedule of receipts and payments be approved.</b></li> <li>(ii) <b>Cleared balances of £314,499.65 as at 31 December 2023 be noted.</b></li> <li>(iii) <b>Budget report be noted.</b></li> <li>(iv) <b>Detailed Income and expenditure be noted.</b></li> <li>(v) <b>Balance Sheet be noted.</b></li> </ul>	

CO87/23	<p><b>WORKING GROUPS</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Minutes of the Services Working Group held on 12 December be noted.</li> <li>(ii) Minutes of the Finance &amp; General Purpose Working Group &amp; Budget Working Group held 19 December 2023 be noted</li> </ul>	
CO88/23	<p><b>MATTERS FOR DECISION</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Members resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A sum of £150.00 be set aside to support room hire for the Town Twinning Event to be held 6 September 2024.</li> <li>(ii) The delegated decision of Chairman /Vice Chairman/ Chair Finance &amp; General Purpose WG / Clerk / RFO to support Bedlington Academy Senior Citizen Christmas Lunch with a grant of £200 be noted.</li> </ul>	
CO89/23	<p><b>ANNUAL BUDGET &amp; PARISH PRECEPT 2024-2025</b></p> <p>The Chairman of the Finance &amp; General Purpose Working Group thanked the RFO for his diligence in preparing the budget and parish precept report.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That;</p> <p>The following recommendations as noted in the Parish Precept Report be approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Items of growth totaling £14,850 and budget reductions totaling £13,700 itemised at Appendix A &amp; B respectively.</li> <li>(ii) Non-recurring items of expenditure (totaling £1,625) itemised at Appendix C.</li> <li>(iii) Capital expenditure (totaling £95,000) itemised at Appendix D)</li> <li>(iv) No increase in Allotment rents for 2024/25.</li> <li>(v) The detailed budget proposal attached at Appendix G</li> <li>(vi) The Parish Precept for 2024 in the sum of £300,549 representing £143 for the Parish Council's element of the Council Tax for a Band D property.</li> </ul>	
CO90/23	<p><b>SMALL GRANTS &amp; DONATIONS</b></p> <p>Members considered the recommendations of the Finance &amp; General Purpose Working Group</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) An award of £220 be made to Bedlington &amp; District Red Squirrel Group to purchase capital items.</li> </ul>	

	<p>(ii) An award of £250 be made to the Bedlington Air Training Corps for the purchase of IT equipment.</p> <p>(iii) A grant of £300 be awarded to the PCC of St Andrew, Cambois to support the continuation of Tasty Tuesdays Food Kitchen</p>	
CO91/23	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 5 March 2024 6.30pm</b></p>	
	Members considered the exclusion of the press and public under Standing Order 68 in view of the special and confidential nature of the business to be transacted.	
CO92/23	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF PRESS &amp; PUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That; The press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, permitted under part 1 (1) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings ) Act 1960) as the matter is confidential and relates to employees.</p>	
CO93/23	<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT CLERK</b></p> <p>The Chairman referred to interviews which had been held on 15 January 24. A scoring matrix had been applied and the candidate selected had achieved 100% score. They are currently employed as a Deputy Clerk and have already obtained ILCA qualification. He added that satisfactory references had been received.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That; (i) Members approve the recommendation of the Staffing Committee and appoint Christina Rowell as Assistant Clerk 30 hours per week scale LC2 SCP18 £29,269 (pro rata) (ii) Assistant Clerk to take up post 1 March 2024</p>	
CO94/23	<b>MEMBERS APPROVED MOVING OF STANDING ORDERS</b>	
CO95/23	<p><b>REPRESENTATIONS FROM FORMER TRUSTEES OF EAST BEDLINGTON COMMUNITY CENTRE.</b></p> <p>The Chair referred members to the recent detailed and lengthy correspondence that had been received from two former Trustees of East Bedlington Community Centre (EBCC).</p> <p>The Chair reminded members that whilst the correspondence had been addressed to himself as the Chair of the Parish Council, for reasons best known to themselves, the senders had also forwarded a copy to some, but not all, of the Parish Council members. The</p>	

Chair informed members that in the interests of fairness, completeness and transparency he had requested that all members received the correspondence.

Members were asked to be mindful that the correspondence, for obvious reasons, should be treated in the very strictest of confidence by the Parish Council as it referred to the recent internal events within EBCC, a third-party and separate organisation.

The Chair reminded members that the correspondence also contained referenced personal employee data and unsubstantiated views that quite clearly should not have been public in such a way and could potentially give rise to legal challenge.

The Chair reported that the correspondence primarily focused on two areas, namely:

- (I) The current management and governance of East Bedlington Community Centre: and
- (II) The conduct and outcome of a recent grievance procedure matter within East

**Bedlington Community Centre**

The Chair stated that clearly while there was fundamentally a strong integral connection between the Parish Council and EBCC, it was important to focus on the correct Parish Council response at this time and that any formal resolution should not and could not include comments or views on internal employees, officers or grievance matters within EBCC.

The Chair stated that, in making this view, he was mindful and recognised that as the former trustees were known to many, clearly this was a matter in which members, in a personal and private capacity, may well and understandably hold strong views and differences of opinion.

**RESOLVED:**

**(i) That an early meeting be convened between the Parish Council and the Trustees of East Bedlington Community Centre to consider, discuss and review the governance of the organisation; the meeting be restricted to 4 members of EBPC, 4 Trustees EBCC and 2 Directors Platform Trading Ltd.**

**(ii) The Chair, in writing, on behalf of the Parish Council inform the former Trustee correspondents that the matter is now formally closed and no further correspondence, written or otherwise, will be entered into.**

**Signed: ..... Chairman Date: .....**