

**Minutes of a meeting of East Bedlington Parish Council held on Tuesday 7 November 2023**

**at East Bedlington Community Centre**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor John Batey

Councillor Bill Crosby

Councillor Keith Grimes (Chairman)

Councillor Paul Hedley

Councillor Keith Scantlebury

Councillor Len Smith

Councillor Allan Stewart

Councillor Jayne Todd

Councillor Grant Ward

**In attendance:** Ron Thornton – Clerk & Responsible Officer

Jenny Tindale – Deputy Clerk

3 members of the public

County Councillor Alex Wallace

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
|  | **PUBLIC SESSION**  There were no questions from the members of the public |  |
| **CO62/23** | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  Apologies were noted from Councillor Rebecca Wilczek (work) and Councillor Dawn Crosby.  **RESOLVED:**   1. **That the apologies be accepted.** |  |
| **CO63/23** | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 5 September 2023 were circulated to the members prior to the meeting.  **RESOLVED:**  **That;**  **The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5 September 2023 be signed as a true record.** |  |
| **CO64/23** | **Clerk & Officers Update**  A written report was presented to members. The Deputy Clerk expanded on each point.  **RESOLVED:**  **That;**   1. **The Clerk & Officers update be noted.** |  |
| **CO65/23** | **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**  There were no disclosures or requests. |  |
| **CO66/23** | **POLICE REPORT**  A written report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members welcomed the increase in officer numbers and the re-introduction of PCSO’s to the Parish.  **RESOLVED:**  **That;**  **The Police Report be noted.** |  |
| **CO67/23** | **NCC COUNCILLOR REPORTS**  **There were no reports.** |  |
| **CO68/23** | **CORRESPONDENCE**  The Chairman expanded on correspondence item 189 and informed the members present that a further meeting would take place in January 2024 with the same members in attendance.  **RESOLVED:**  **That the correspondence be noted.** |  |
| **CO69/23** | **PLANNING**  **RESOLVED:**   1. **That the determinations 23/02962/PRUTPO; 23/03214/FUL; 23/03122/FUL be noted.** 2. **That no objections be offered in respect of application**   **23/03876/FUL** | **Deputy Clerk** |
| **CO70/23** | **FINANCE REPORT**  The Chairman presented a suite of reports:  **RESOLVED**  **That the,**   1. **Schedule of receipts and payments be approved.** 2. **Cleared balances of £368,317.93 as at 31 October 2023 be noted.** 3. **Budget report be noted.** 4. **Detailed Income and expenditure be noted.** 5. **Balance Sheet be noted.** |  |
| **CO71/23** | **WORKING GROUPS**  **RESOLVED:**  **That;**   1. **Minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 21 September be noted.** 2. **Minutes of the Finance & General Purpose Working Group held 26 September be noted.** 3. **Minutes of the Events Working Group held 10 October be noted** 4. **Minutes of the Services Working Group held 17 October be noted** 5. **Minutes of the Planning & Economic Regeneration Working Group held 24 October be noted.** |  |
| **CO72/23** | **MATTERS FOR DECISION**  **RESOLVED:**  **Members resolved that:**   1. **A Live music festival in Gallagher Park is delivered on 13 July 2024. Majority Decision 8 votes in favour 1 against.** 2. **That a donation of £3500 from County Councillor Alex Wallace’s Members Local Improvement Schemes fund be accepted.** 3. **That the Parish Office closure from 3pm Friday 22 December to Tuesday 2 January 2024 be approved.** |  |
| **CO73/23** | **CONCLUSION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT**  The Clerk provided formal feedback on the outcome of the 2022-2023 external audit as prepared by MAZARS. There were no issues of note or matters for consideration.  Members noted the comments in relation to Accessibility Regulations and would note on the Parish Council website that the documents presented for public inspection were a scan**.**  **RESOLVED:**  **That;**  **The Conclusion of External Audit be received.** | **Clerk/RFO** |
| **CO74/23** | **SMALL GRANTS & DONATIONS**  **RESOLVED:**  **That;**   1. **A grant of £400 to Wansbeck Toy Campaign 2023 be approved.** 2. **A grant of £300 be awarded to Bedlington United U10’s Purples towards outdoor training kit branded with EBPC logo.** 3. **A grant of £100 towards table sponsorship at the Pride Action North Progression Ball & Awards Event to be held 2 February 2024 be approved** |  |
| **CO75/23** | **STAFF CONTINUITY**  Members considered under Standing Order 68 that in the view of the special and confidential of the business to be transacted that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item, 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 related to employees.  **RESOLVED:**  **That the Press and Public be excluded**. |  |
| **CO76/23** | **STAFF CONTINUITY**  The Clerk presented a report which had been amended to reflect the recommendations of the Staffing Committee. He commented that staff continuity had been identified as a risk in the risk register and it was essential in terms of protecting the Council in years to come that there was a natural progression of competent staff.  Councillor Stewart felt that the agenda should have identified part 2 of the meeting as a special meeting. The view was not held by the other members in attendance who felt the purpose of the meeting had been clearly presented.  The Clerk advised that it was his intention to retire on 2 September 2024. After careful consideration the following recommendations were submitted to full council for approval by the Staffing Committee.   1. That the Council appoints an Assistant Clerk on grade LC2 [spinal column points 18-23] on a starting point of 18. 2. That the Council agrees the Assistant Clerk’s job description attached at Appendix D1 3. That the Council approves filling the post in accordance with the timeline attached at Appendix E. 4. That the new Clerk is re-graded to LC3 spinal points 33-36 on a starting point of 33. Additional increments to be awarded on completion of CiLCA. 5. That the Parish Clerk / RFO be re-designated as the Responsible Financial Officer and continues his existing terms and conditions with the exception that his working week is reduced to 16 hours per week from 1 April 2024. 6. That the revised job description for the Clerk and RFO be approved.   In response to a question from Councillor Crosby, the Clerk confirmed that the changing roles were immediate but the change in hours would not be effective until 1 April 2024.  Councillor Stewart requested a named vote at this point.  **RESOLVED:**  **That;**  **The recommendations proposed by the Staffing Committee be adopted in their entirety a majority vote resulted 8 votes in favour to 1 vote against.**  **Votes in favour**  **Councillor L Smith**  **Councillor P Hedley**  **Councillor J Todd**  **Councillor W Crosby**  **Councillor G Ward**  **Councillor K Grimes**  **Councillor J Batey**  **Councillor K Scantlebury**  **Votes against**  **Councillor A Stewart** |  |
| **CO77/23** | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  **Tuesday 9 January 2024 6.30pm** |  |

**Signed: ………………………………… Chairman Date: ……………………………………**