

**MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH MARCH, 2014**

Present: Councillor C Snowball (Chair) and Councillors R Arthur, Mrs M R Baird, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Snr, B Burn Jnr, Mrs H Cahill, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, I Paul, K Shaw, G A Shepherd, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen

**1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 4TH FEBRUARY, 2014**

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

**3. CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS**

RECOMMENDED the list of conference appointments a copy of which had been previously circulated, be approved.

**a) Conference Evaluation Report**

RECOMMENDED the Conference Evaluation Form, completed on behalf of the Council's three delegates who attended the NAC Training and Development Seminar in York in February be accepted.

**b) What next for Localism Conference?**

The Committee considered details of the National Association of Local Councils' one-day Conference entitled 'What next for Localism?' to be held in London on 26th March, 2014.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council is not represented at the NALC one day conference to be held on 26th March, 2014.

4. **NALC/CDALC ISSUES**

a) **E-Bulletins for County Associations and National Council**

RECOMMENDED the latest E-Bulletin issued by the National Association of Local Councils, dated 31st January 2014, be accepted.

b) **NALC CEO Recruitment Update**

The Committee considered a communication from the Chairman of NALC which provided an update on the recruitment of a new CEO.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

c) **Giving People More Power Over What Happens in their Neighbourhood**

The Committee considered a communication from Durham County Council, a copy of which had been previously circulated, which provided information on the rights of communities with regard to local public services and planning issues.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

d) **Queen's Garden Party**

RECOMMENDED the communication from the County Durham Association of Local Councils which advised of the individuals selected to attend the Royal Garden Party on 3rd June 2014, be noted.

e) **Digital Durham Project**

RECOMMENDED the Council accept the CDALC communication in relation to the Digital Durham project.

f) **CDALC Larger Local Councils Forum**

The Committee considered a communication from CDALC which provided a summary of ideas developed by break-out groups at the last meeting of the NALC Larger Councils Committee.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

g) **Local Audit and Accountability Act**

The Committee considered a communication from Durham County Council with regard to the Local Audit and Accountability Act. NALC had requested that responses be submitted by 10th March and the Committee was asked to

provide their views to enable a considered response to be given prior to the deadline. A discussion ensued on the content of the Act particularly with regard to video and audio recordings being taken by members of the public at meetings. Members expressed concern with regard to the potential for such recordings being edited and taken out of context and also the potential for use on social media. The Town Clerk stated that the consultation was with regard to the guidance document and how the Act with regard to this issue would be applied at meetings. It was considered that guidance should be sought from NALC and the Council's Standing Orders be revised to accommodate the possibility of recordings being taken by members of the public. Contrary to the normal practice of audio recordings of Committee meetings being deleted after a six week period, recordings of meetings when members of the public are present should be retained so that an accurate record can be verified, if required, at a later date.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (i) Guidance be sought from NALC as to the protocol to adopt when members of the public are present at meetings to ensure that whilst no censorship is applied, the correct measures are taken to protect the Council.
- (ii) Audio recordings of meetings taken by the Town Council be retained for an indefinite period when members of the public are in attendance.

**5. DESTINATION SEAHAM**

RECOMMENDED the minutes of the last meeting of the Destination Seaham group, a copy of which had been previously circulated, held on 23rd January 2014, be noted.

**6. POLICY CONSULTATION: DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee considered details of Durham County Council's 2014/17 Consultation and Engagement Strategy, a copy of which had been previously circulated. Members were asked to submit their views at the meeting to enable a response to be submitted prior to the deadline date of Monday, 14th April, 2014. The Town Clerk provided a summary of the policy consultation and elaborated on the key issues. In discussion it was felt that the only time there was a concern with regard to consultations was when they were received just prior to recess when extensions of time had then to be requested.

RECOMMENDED the Town Clerk submit an appropriate response on behalf of the Town Council.

**7. VISIT COUNTY DURHAM**

**a) Wednesday Grapevine**

RECOMMENDED the recent editions of the Wednesday Grapevine, published by Visit County Durham, dated 29th January, 5th and 12th February, 2014 be noted.

**b) Focus on Durham's Ambitious future**

The Committee considered a letter from the Visitor and Industry Services Manager of Visit County Durham which provided details of their Spring Conference to be held at Auckland Castle on Tuesday, 1st April, 2014.

RECOMMENDED the next two Councillors from the appropriate rota be authorised to attend this event as the Council's representatives, and such attendance rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances; the bookings would not be made until places were confirmed by Members wishing to attend

**8. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Committee considered Durham County Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, a copy of which had been previously circulated, which covered the period of 2014/15 to 2016/17.

RECOMMENDED the Council note Durham County Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

**9. MY NHS**

The Committee considered a letter from the North of England Commissioning Support unit within the NHS which detailed their efforts to try and raise awareness of My NHS on behalf of Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG. They had requested that the Town Council display a copy of their article on the website or in the Civic Offices window.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree to display the My NHS article in the Civic Office window.

**10. LEGALITIES FILMING AT PUBLIC EVENTS**

The Committee considered the information previously provided in relation to the legalities of filming at public events and the display of photographs of members of

the public attending Town Council events. In discussion a Member stated that there were related guidelines produced by the NSPCC which protected people in work and also members of the public.

RECOMMENDED the Deputy Town Clerk acquire the guidelines outlined and submit these for consideration to the next meeting of this Committee.

**11. SEAHAM SEA CADETS – NEW UNIT**

The Committee considered a communication from the Seaham Sea Cadets who had provided an update on the purchase of their premises.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

**12. EAST DURHAM LEADER**

Consideration was given to an e-mail from Durham Community Action with regard to the proposed new Local Development Plan for the 2015-2020 phase of East Durham LEADER. The communication conveyed a wish to work with Town and Parish Councils to develop the idea of a “village hub” and in this respect had asked whether it would be possible to attend a meeting of the Council to further discuss this idea. Details of the LEADER launch consultation events were also detailed.

RECOMMENDED the Council authorise the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk to attend the launch consultation event to be held at Murton on 3rd April, 2014.

**13. NAC EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FORUM NEWSLETTER**

The Committee considered a communication from the General Secretary of the National Association of Councillors which provided information on the Equality and Diversity Forum Newsletter which could be accessed on their website.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

**14. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

RECOMMENDED the Council note that no press opportunities existed from this meeting.

**15. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the following item to be discussed at this meeting, the formal resolution be hereby passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1961.

**16. NEW TOWN HALL –KITCHEN EXTENSION**

The Chair of the New Town Hall and Community Facility Working Party provided a brief summary of the discussion that took place at the meeting held on Thursday, 27th February in relation to the proposed kitchen extension within the new facility. This issue had been brought to this Committee under emergency powers because of the short time-frame involved. A copy of the full report of the Working Party would be circulated to Members later in the week.

RECOMMENDED the Council accept the recommendation of the Working Party to instruct the contractor to proceed with the kitchen extension, subject to the Quantity Surveyor undertaking the appropriate negotiations on price in line with the Town Council's expectations of a maximum cost of £25K.