

MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 3RD MARCH, 2015

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, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, N R Page, I Paul, K Shaw, B Taylor, R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors B Allen, Mrs B Allen

Observers: Ms W Berry, Mr J Scollen

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

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 3RD 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.

4. CONFERENCES, COURSES AND SEMINARS

a) North East Regional Event

The Committee considered correspondence from CDALC which advised of a free Regional Event to take place at County Hall, Durham on 28th March, 2015, arranged by The Cleveland, County Durham and Northumberland County Associations. The Town Clerk had indicated his interest in attending this event.

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for the next two Councillors from the non-overnight rota, together with the Town Clerk, to attend this event as the Council's representatives and such attendance rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

5. MEMBER AND OFFICER TRAINING EVENTS

a) Audit Process, Annual Returns and the Transparency Code

The Committee considered a communication from CDALC which provided details of a training event to be held on 24th March at County Hall. The event topics would be audit process, annual returns and the transparency code. The Town Clerk had indicated his interest in attending this event.

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for Councillor B Burn Jnr together with the Town Clerk to attend this event as the Council's representatives and such attendance rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

b) HR Training – Employing People

The Committee considered details of a range of Human Resources training courses which were to be provided by Durham County Council's HR staff on a range of subjects including:

- Employing people
- Employee relations
- Worklife balance
- Attendance management
- Performance management

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had indicated their interest in attending these training events.

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for the Chair of Establishment Sub-Committee, namely Councillor K Shaw, together with the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to attend this event as the Council's representatives and such attendance rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

6. SCHEDULES OF MEETINGS FOR 2016 AND 2017

The Committee considered the suggested schedules of meetings for both 2016 and 2017 which were submitted for approval in advance to ensure availability of the Chamber for Council meetings going forward.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council approve the schedules and agree their inclusion in the on-line Town Hall diary and the printing of diaries at the appropriate time.
- (ii) The Town Clerk include in the schedules dates for at least 2 more meetings of the Allotment Sub-Committee.

7. NALC/CDALC ISSUES

a) Meetings Update

The Committee considered the communication from the Chief Executive of NALC which provided feedback from the All Party Parliamentary Group on local democracy and on Civic Societies, the Local Government Finance settlement and the Resource and Financial Management Scrutiny Panel.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now provided.

b) North East Combined Authority

The Committee considered a communication from the County Durham Association of Local Councils in relation to the objectives of the North East Combined Authority in negotiating with the Government to obtain devolved powers, funding and responsibilities to the North East. A consultation event was to take place in Durham on 17th March, 2015 commencing at 6 pm, when their proposals would be put forward and discussion invited.

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for the Town Clerk and any interested Councillor to attend this event as the Council's representatives and such attendance rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

c) NALC Meetings Update

RECOMMENDED the Council note the update from recent NALC meetings provided in the e-mail communication of 27th February, 2015.

8. ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

RECOMMENDED the Council note the successful nominations to attend the Royal Garden Party in May, 2015.

9. DURHAM ASSOCIATION NEWS

RECOMMENDED the latest edition of the Durham Association News, dated February, 2015, be noted.

10. SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Committee considered the information provided in relation to the Town Council's website provision, and the proposal to upgrade at the end of April to a newer version at a cost of £750 plus VAT.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree to upgrade the Seaham Town Council website to the new V6 version when launched at a cost of £750 plus VAT.

11. EAST DURHAM AAP: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PRIORITY GROUP

RECOMMENDED the Agenda for the next meeting of the East Durham AAP Mental Health and Wellbeing Priority Group to be held on 6th March, 2015 and the minutes of the previous meeting be noted.

12. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

13. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the following item, 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.

14. SALE OF FORMER CIVIC OFFICES, ADELAIDE ROW, SEAHAM

The Committee considered a letter from Kimmitt and Roberts, the Estate Agents marketing the sale of the former Civic Offices in Adelaide Row, a copy of which had been previously circulated. The letter indicated that the offer received for the sale of the above property demonstrated value for money for the Town Council in the current market.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the acceptance of the offer for the former Civic Offices, 3/4 Adelaide Row.

15. THANK YOU CARD

RECOMMENDED the card received from Mr D Birkett, which thanked the Town Council for the £50 awarded to him in respect of his 20 year service, be noted.

16. EAST COAST TRAIN SERVICE

A Member reported that, as reported on tv, Virgin Trains had been awarded the franchise for the East Coast rail line and it was also announced that they intended to run a once a day service from Sunderland to London each way. It was suggested that as Grand Central had no plans to stop their service at Seaham, it may be an appropriate time to write to Virgin Trains and enquire as to their proposed stopping points on this route.

RECOMMENDED the Town Clerk explore with Virgin Trains their intentions and report back to Members at a future meeting.