

MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY, 2016

Present: Councillor E Bell (Chair) and
Councillors R Arthur, Mrs J A Bell,
Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Snr, B Burn Jnr,
S Cudlip, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, K Shaw
C Snowball, B Taylor, R Whitehead.

Apologies: Councillor B Allen, Mrs B E Allen,
Mrs H J Cahill, Mrs S Forster, I Paul,
K Younger.

1. CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee, Councillor E Bell was nominated to take the Chair at this meeting.

(Councillor E Bell in the Chair)

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.

2. 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.

3. PRESENTATION – SEAHAM SEA CADETS

The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Barber, Seaham Sea Cadets who was in attendance to provide Members with information on their new facility.

Mr Barber began by thanking the Town Council for the opportunity to attend the meeting. He informed the Committee that it was in 2011 when the cadets had made initial enquiries about moving to the new building and that they would move in during the next few weeks. There is still a small amount of cosmetic work remaining on what has been a renovation at a total cost of approximately £200K.

The cadets are promoting their link to HMS Seaham and after contacting the sons of the former captains various items items of memorabilia, including the ship's bell have been donated for display in the new premises. Mr Barber reaffirmed the previous request which had been made to the Town Council for the silver cigarette case and other artefacts to be displayed in the new unit on loan.

The cadets currently have a membership of 18 young people and Mr Barber is confident that the new unit will attract many new members hopefully up to 40 plus in the future. The only full time member of regional staff is attending 8 assemblies at

the local primary schools in order to raise the profile of the cadets and hopefully encourage new members. This will be followed by an open evening in early March to exhibit the new premises and secure the new members prior to organising the fun sea-based activities.

The Seaham Sea Cadets began in 1943 and hopefully the new base will ensure it continues to flourish for many more years. Mr Barber took the opportunity to thank the Town Councillors for all of their support over the years.

At this point comments and questions were invited and the following questions were asked:

- (i) *A Member asked that given the current numbers has there been a decline in interest.*

Mr Barber stated that there had been a decline in interest but after acquiring new staff the interest was increasing and the only thing which had held the cadets back was the condition, accessibility and toilet provision in the old building. He was confident that moving to the new building would change all of that.

- (ii) *A Member asked if the new water activities centre planned for the marina would benefit and help increase interest in the cadets.*

Mr Barber stated that he thought it would and that he hoped the cadets could be involved with activities centre in the new marina but had been unable to contact the appropriate people. Members indicated the Town Clerk would be able to provide the contact details of the appropriate person to contact.

- (iii) *A Member asked if both girls and boys made up the membership of the scouts.*

Mr Barber stated that the scouts had both girl and boy members and that one of the advantages of the new unit over the old one was that there were now adequate toilet facilities to accommodate members of both sexes. He said that the higher proportion of members were boys but there are attempts to encourage more girls to join one of which being the attendance at primary school assemblies during February.

- (iv) *A Member asked if within the scout unit there were individual groups named after ships.*

Mr Barber informed Members that currently the groups were separated on the basis of age, juniors 10-12yrs, cadets 12-14yrs and senior cadets 16-18yrs, but they hope to have each group named for a particular ship. The cadets have just changed their unit name to Training Ship (TS) Seaham after HMS Seaham. Prior to that it was TS Brazen which had been named after a visit to the unit by HRH Prince Andrew who was serving on HMS Brazen at the time. Even earlier it had been TS Swiftsure, so the intention for the names of the cadets groups is to have Seaham, Brazen and Swiftsure.

- (v) *A Member asked if the new building was suitable for use by individuals with disability.*

Mr Barber stated that the entire building was legally compliant with full accessibility for those with a disability or restricted mobility.

- (vi) *A Member asked if there was an intention to have an opening event and inviting local Councillors, sponsors etc.*

Mr Barber confirmed that he had discussed with the AAP about holding an event. The intention was to have two or three official events and also an official opening in October 2016 for local Councillors, dignitaries, Royal Naval top brass and sponsors both local and national. They were also going to make the premises available for anyone to call in on an ad hoc basis.

- (vii) *The Chair informed the Committee that HMS Bulwark, the adopted ship of Durham County Council, was coming to visit the city in summer 2016 and hopefully there was a potential to coordinate some activities for the sea cadets with the visit with hopefully a simulated beach landing.*

Mr Barber stated that it would be excellent if some activities could be coordinated with the visit. He added that the sea cadets were keen to expand with a marine detachment and an activity showcasing the activities of the Royal Marines would be an excellent activity for the visit.

At this point the Chair thanked Mr Barber for his informative address and all of his hard work in raising the funds to enable the cadets to move to the new facility. Mr Barber then left the meeting.

Councillor B Burn Jnr informed the Committee that he had been approached by Mr Barber and it was his intention, in his capacity as an individual, to produce a painting, completely free of charge, for the cadets to auction in order to raise funds.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 5TH JANUARY, 2016

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.

5. CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS

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

6. CONFERENCES, COURSES AND SEMINARS

a) Conference Evaluation Forms

The Committee considered the Conference Evaluation Form, completed by

the Council's two delegates who attended the Cohesive Communities Conference at Carlisle, organised by the National Association of Councillors.

RECOMMENDED the Council accept the reports.

b) NAC Annual General Meeting and Conference

The Committee considered details of the Tackling Family Poverty Conference arranged by the National Association of Councillors, a copy of which had been previously circulated. The conference was to be held in Wakefield on 26th to 28th February, 2016.

RECOMMENDED that 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.

c) SLCC North East Regional Roadshow

The Committee considered details of the Northern Regional Conference of the Society of Local Council Clerks to be held at Hardwick Hall Hotel in Sedgefield on Wednesday, 6th July, 2016.

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for the Town Clerk to attend this conference as part of his continued professional development, and such attendance rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

7. DESTINATION SEAHAM

The Committee considered the minutes of the Destination Seaham group which met on 26th November, 2015. In discussion, Members expressed their disappointment at the negative comments made about the fireworks display under item 2.4.

Members also expressed their concerns that with regard to item 3, the Byron Event, the Town Council had not been informed and other than the Mayor, Town Councillors hadn't been invited to the unveiling of the sculpture.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting of the above Group which met on 26th November 2015, be noted.
- (ii) The provision of information with regard to the Byron Event is deferred for consideration to the next meeting.

8. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

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