

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18TH JUNE, 2019

Present: The Mayor, Councillor Miss L Willis (Presiding) and Councillors R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, Ms R M Gratton, G N Hepworth, D McKenna, T Shepherd, R Whitehead.

Apologies: Councillors D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Mrs L Kennedy, Mrs S Pratt, B Taylor.

Officers: Mr P Fletcher (Deputy Town Clerk)

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.

FC19/19 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. Such interests must be submitted to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

FC20/19 OPEN SESSION

In accordance with established policy the Council provided the opportunity at the beginning of the meeting for a 15 minute session.

A member of the Field of Remembrance gave Members an update on the progress to date. 953 poppies have been placed around the fencing on the Terrace Green and they have all been fitted with new clamps. The only poppies that are missing are for 4 civilians in the area which the group are struggling to find their dates of death. The 4 were killed during an air raid on the 16th May 1943 and attempts are being made with several organisations to try and clarify this information. It was noted that there are some mistakes on the memorial at Princess Road Cemetery and some names have not been included. Mr Richardson will furnish the Council with this information and also the complete list of all 953 names on the poppies.

Mr Richardson stated that he is now starting the website for the Field of Remembrance with the soldiers details such as where they are buried and personal details and Mr Richardson read out to the Council an example of what would be included as a personal story and stated that he would need help from members of the public or family members to be able to include personal stories.

Mr Richardson also thanked the Town Council for their assistance in having the benches moved further back from the railings which has stopped a lot of the damage to the poppies.

Recommended that the request for personal stories should be publicised on the Town Councils website.

FC21/19 TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 10TH MAY, 2019

Councillor Sonia Forster's name to be added to the attendance list.

A Member raised a point of order stating that the minute book does not include the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Parks and Events Committee which took place an hour before the Annual Meeting of the Council. The Town Council made a decision to spend more than £200k and this needs to be rectified to avoid there being a huge annual audit problem as well as a problem for Councillors and Officers with this not being properly recorded. The minutes should be reported to the next Parks and Events Committee so Members are aware of them and they can then be included in the Minute Book to be confirmed.

A Member referred to the Annual Meeting minutes regarding the minute of Councillor K Shaw leaving the meeting at 7.20pm and questioned what happened between 6.30pm and 7.20pm as there is nothing reported in the minutes. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that he would have to refer this to the Town Clerk as he wasn't present at the meeting. A Member stated that the lack of minutes is due to the audio equipment failing on the night in question. A Member stated that everyone present at the meeting knew that some major statements were made between 6.30pm – 7.20pm and yet nothing is recorded so these minutes cannot be correct.

Recommended that:

- (i) The Special Parks and Events Committee minutes from the 10th May 2019 are placed on the next Parks and Events Committee agenda.
- (ii) The minutes of the Annual Meeting are not approved and are referred back to the Town Clerk for clarification.

FC22/19 REPORTS OF SERVICE COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the reports of the following Committees, copies of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved:

- a) Report of the Arts and Information Committee held on 28th May, 2019.
- b) Report of the Parks and Events Committee held on 28th May, 2019.
- c) Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 4th June, 2019.

- d) Report of the Planning and Environmental Committee held on 4th June, 2019.
- e) Report of the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee held on 4th June, 2019.
- f) Report of the Establishment Sub-Committee held on 4th June, 2019.

FC23/19

TERRACE GREEN PROPOSED NEW CAR PARKING BAYS ON SOUTHERN GRASSED AREA AND PROPOSED RELOCATION OF MINERS SCULPTURE

A Member stated that he felt it was inevitable that Durham County Council would be pursuing extra car parking spaces in light of Seaham becoming a popular visitor location. However, he felt that the proposal to move the Brothers statue to the Clock Garden which is mainly military based was not appropriate and felt that a better location for the statue would be the centre of Church Street in place of the current flower beds and he believed that the Church Street traders would welcome that the Council are bringing artwork into Church Street.

It was noted that there have been criticisms that the statue cannot be seen in its current location and it was also noted that the statue was purchased by Seaham Town Council and they should have a say as to where it is placed.

Recommended that the Deputy Town Clerk contacts Durham County Council and requests that the Brothers Statue is moved to Church Street to replace the current flower beds and this item is brought back to the next available meeting.

FC24/19

NOTIFICATION OF COMPLAINT

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that as of item 37.2 of the Standing Orders Durham County Council have notified Seaham Town Council of a complaint they have received alleging a possible breach of the Code of Conduct and at this point nothing further can be stated until Durham County Council inform the Town Council of the outcome of the complaint.

Recommended that Members note the information.

FC25/19

INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the budget for the insurance renewal had previously been agreed and he updated Members that the Public Liability had been increased from £10m to £25m at no extra cost. He also stated that it was recommended that the Town Council add cover for online crime which is not currently covered on the agreement but the cost would still be in keeping with the previously agreed budget.

The Deputy Town Clerk also informed Members of the Risk Management training available from the Insurers but felt that this was not necessary this year as the training had only been undertaken last year.

A Member questioned whether the Deputy Town Clerk could check the list of training that Councillors had undertaken as she felt that there was a list of training that Councillors should undertake to be able to carry out their role.

Recommended that

- (i) The online crime be added to the Town Council's agreement.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk to look into Councillors training which has been undertaken.

F26/19

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A Member questioned whether this item had been agreed and it was noted that it had been agreed previously. The Member noted that he had an interest in one of the outside bodies but accepted that he had missed the opportunity on this occasion. Members discussed that if anyone representing the Town Council could not attend meetings or no longer had an interest in their representation then they should bring it back to the Council and offer this to another Member to attend.

It was noted that the Member had raised this issue after the minutes had been discussed although it was stated that the minutes had not been agreed. A Member referred back to the minutes of the Annual Meeting and stated that he was appalled at the way the whole situation was handled, the fact that no minutes were taken either by machine or by hand and it is a disgrace for a Council like Seaham to have that situation. He also felt unhappy with the whole situation and felt that nothing of what went on that night had been replicated in the minutes. He stated that certain allegations were made and felt that this should have been recorded properly and also asked whether this meant that the Town Council were complicit in some of the allegations that had been made to which the Town Clerk had previously said no.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that he felt Members should be clear about which minutes are being discussed as there were three meetings held that night the Special Parks and Events, the Annual Assembly of Electors to which the Member above is referring to and the Annual Meeting of the Full Council. It was noted that it was the Annual Assembly of Electors meeting where the allegations were made and a Member questioned whether these minutes should not be discussed until next year. A Member stated that these minutes should be reported to the first available Arts and Information Committee meeting so that if there are any issues from members of the public they can be dealt with. A Member also requested that for future meetings a minute taker is always present.

Recommended that:

- (i) The minutes of the Assembly of Electors meeting are taken to the next Arts and Information Committee.
- (ii) A minute taker is present at all future meetings.