

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24th NOVEMBER, 2020

Present: The Mayor, Councillor B Taylor (Presiding) and Councillors R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, Ms R M Gratton, G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, T Shepherd, B Taylor.

Apologies: K Shaw.

Officers: P Fletcher (Town Clerk)
Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer)
Ms A Rountree (Minute Taker)

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.

FC150/20 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.

FC151/20 ACCEPTANCE OF AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the amendment to the standing orders to incorporate the new regulations from the Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, to conduct virtual Council meetings.

FC152/20 OPEN SESSION

In accordance with established policy the Council provided a fifteen minute opportunity for any members of the public to raise questions.

A Member stated that the narrative on the agenda which had been in place for many years regarding the open session had been recently changed and he felt that the new wording stifles members of the public from attending Council meetings to discuss items they wish to raise. The wording had been changed to state that members of the public could only discuss items on the agenda and would have to wait for the next months meeting for any other issues to be heard. The Member suggested that the wording be reverted back to the previous wording so members of the public can raise any issues they may have at the Council meeting.

It was noted that the Town Clerk proposed the change but this had not been agreed by Council.

The Chair requested that the wording be looked at by the Deputy Town Clerk and to be re-worded.

A member of Parkside Allotment Association stated that as previously discussed he was requesting on behalf of Parkside, Fishbone and Wagon Works Associations that they be given an opportunity to discuss their proposed amendments to the allotment agreement before the associations would sign the new lease. The associations felt that by discussing their proposed amendments this would make the agreements suitable for them to sign and to be able to uphold what was in the lease. In the agreements current format, the associations would not be able to work with what is expected under the new lease.

A Member suggested that a meeting of the working party, along with two Officers and the associations could take place to hear what the associations issues are. These issues could then be discussed to see if there is a compromise that is acceptable to everyone. As there is a deadlock currently it would be in everyone's interest to try and move this issue forward.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Deputy Town Clerk to look at the wording on the open session of the agenda and for this to be re-worded.
- (ii) A meeting of the Allotments Working Party, along with two Council Officers and the Associations to be arranged for Members to hear the issues the Associations have in relation to the new allotment agreement.

FC153/20 **TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 27TH OCTOBER, 2020**

A Member informed the Council that she had spoken to Inspector Malkin regarding the criminal damage at Seaham Town Park. The children involved had received a visit and a letter from the Police and since this action there has been no further incidents at the Town Park.

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

FC154/20 **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 & Information Committee held on 3rd November, 2020.

- b) Report of the Parks and Events Committee held on 3rd November, 2020 subject to a Member questioning whether there had been any updates from the Crime Prevention Officers regarding the Terrace Green CCTV. The Deputy Town Clerk noted that he will report this back to Members at the next Parks & Events Committee.
- c) Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on held on the 17th November, 2020.
- d) Report of the Planning & Environmental Committee held on 17th November, 2020 subject to a Member questioning whether Seaham Town Council had objected to a four storey building in North Terrace. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that an objection had been placed.

A Member questioned whether the Town Council had corresponded with Mr Latimer. The Deputy Town Clerk noted that he had been in communication with Mr Latimer recently but would be sending letters as requested at the Planning meeting.

- e) Report of the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee held on 17th November, 2020 subject to a Member questioning whether there was any progress with the agreement which had been signed by the café tenant. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that it was in the hands of the Solicitor.

FC155/20 **2021 COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

RECOMMENDED that the 2021 meeting dates which were provided to Members be approved.

FC156/20 **MEMORIAL**

A Member requested that the Town Council discuss a memorial in Seaham for the late Mr John Hays who started his Hays Travel business in Church Street. The Member noted that Mr Hays has helped many people across the country.

RECOMMENDED that this item be discussed at a future meeting.