

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020**

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

Apologies: Councillors D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Mrs S Pratt.

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (Town Clerk)  
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.*

### **FC63/20 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.

### **FC64/20 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 public questioned whether Members were aware that he had made a formal complaint on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and asked whether Members would receive the complaint via the clerk email address or whether he had to email Members individually.

The Town Clerk stated that she had returned an email to the member of the public with the procedure. The member of the public stated that he had received this 3 weeks later. He stated that he had emailed on the 28<sup>th</sup> January and didn't receive any confirmation that the email had been received until a week later after chasing this up twice and then received a telephone call from the Town Clerk stating that she had reviewed the complaint and had spoken to the Mayor and then she had followed this up with an email stating that she would respond in due course. The member of the public stated that he had to contact the Town Clerk again to chase this matter up and then informed him that it wasn't for her to investigate this complaint. He then questioned why he wasn't sent to the correct place after the initial complaint was made.

A Member stated that if this was a complaint that the Town Clerk couldn't deal with then it should not be discussed at this meeting.

The member of the public stated that he was just questioning the procedure and how to take this forward to inform other Councillors. The Town Clerk stated that if a complaint was about a Member then the complaint goes to the Monitoring Officers at Durham County Council.

The member of the public questioned if the complaint should be addressed to the Monitoring Officers then why would the Town Clerk investigate it. The Town Clerk stated that she spoke to the Mayor about the complaint.

The Town Clerk stated that she had explained implicitly to the member of the public about what happened at the meeting and felt that it wasn't appropriate to discuss this at this meeting as it was about one of the Members.

A Member stated that the Town Clerk will forward a copy of the Council's complaint procedures to the member of the public.

The Town Clerk stated that through the Code of Conduct if a member of the public has a complaint regarding one of the Members it is not for her to investigate.

A Member stated that the member of the public only wanted to be signposted to what he can do with this complaint but had not received any information for three weeks and it was a straightforward email to say what he must do.

The member of the public then showed Members an email he had received from the Town Clerk which was read out at the meeting.

The Town Clerk felt it was inappropriate that she could be scrutinized at the meeting and no Members were offering their support by stating that this was inappropriate. Members stated that they didn't know anything about the complaint. A Member agreed that the procedure for advising a member of the public to contact the Monitoring Officer was correct but felt that the timescale was not correct. Another Member felt that a timescale could not be set because nobody knows what is happening in the interim.

A Member stated that a complaint regarding a Member would not be circulated around to other Members it would go to the Monitoring Officer and it was not appropriate to bring this to Full Council.

A member of the public addressed Members regarding the parking issues on Westlea estate. Members stated that this is a County Council issue and the Town Council have intervened a few times and spoken to the Police and the County Council but do not have any powers to enforce anything or to take matters any further.

A County Councillor stated that these are historical complaints and there is a 20mph speed limit in the Deneside Ward and there is a schedule of works for

white lines to be repainted on the roads soon. The Highways Department have stated that they will not change Westlea estate to a one-way system.

**FC65/20**      **TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2020**

A Member requested that the minutes were looked at on a page by page basis.

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.

**FC66/20**      **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 and Information Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2020, subject to Councillor Mrs B E Allen's apologies to be added and Councillor Mrs L Kennedy to be added to the Members present.

A Member stated that he had received two tickets for the Scam Awareness Event if any Member also wished to attend.

- b) Report of the Parks and Events Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 subject to Councillor Mrs B E Allen's apologies to be added and Councillor Mrs L Kennedy to be added to the Members present.

A Member suggested that the Deputy Town Clerk could attend the National Lottery Heritage Fund meeting on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020. It was noted that Mr N Benson at Durham County Council could be contacted to see if the meeting is open to all.

- c) Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.
- d) Report of the Planning and Environmental Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.
- e) Report of the Twinning Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 subject to removing Councillor R Arthur's name from the list of apologies.

The Chair of the Twinning Committee questioned whether an itinerary had been pulled together for the upcoming visit to Seaham. The Administration Assistant gave Members a brief update on the proposed itinerary which was almost finalised.

Members discussed the changes to the former Civic Ball. The Mayor stated that this was still a Civic Event and would still follow a similar

format with the addition of the awards ceremony to involve members of the public. The Mayor noted that she had emailed Members on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 to inform them of the changes. Some Members stated that they had not received the email.

RECOMMENDED that a copy of the email sent to Members on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 was to be recirculated.

**FC67/20      TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE**

The Town Clerk furnished Members with a revised costing for Dawdon Park Cricket Club and stated that they were now looking to purchase new furniture, a mobile scoreboard and to carry out works to the external soffits. There had been a saving of £2k on the original costs.

A Member noted that most of the furniture needs replacing and this would be consistent with Seaham Town Park Cricket Clubs refurbishment and noted that the works to the soffits etc is essential. He felt that the mobile scoreboard was outside of the remit of the building works and suggested that the Cricket Club could get their own funding for a mobile scoreboard. A further Member noted that whenever the Council have been approached by other organisations they have been asked if they have applied for funding from other sources such as the ECB. If funding could be sourced elsewhere then the money could be saved to spend on other projects.

A Member stated that Dawdon Cricket Club have already received some external funding for new nets which were expensive.

Members agreed to the purchase of new furniture and for works to be carried out on the soffit boards.

A vote took place regarding the purchase of the mobile scoreboard.

For:            12  
Against:       1  
Abstained: 2

The vote was carried that the Town Council should purchase a mobile scoreboard.

A Member questioned what would happen to the old score room. It was noted that this had been re-plastered and painted and would be used as a prayer room for overseas players.

RESOLVED that:

- (i)      New furniture to be purchased for the Cricket Club.
- (ii)     Work to be carried out on the soffit boards.
- (iii)    A mobile scoreboard to be purchased.

The meeting was then closed by the Mayor.

