

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER, 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, K Shaw, T Shepherd, B Taylor.

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (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.*

### **FC143/20 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.

### **FC144/20 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.

### **FC145/20 OPEN SESSION**

In accordance with established policy the Council provided a fifteen minute opportunity for any members of the public to raise questions. During this period no issues were raised.

### **FC146/20 TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020**

A Member requested an update regarding the mobile CCTV footage quality from page 84 of the minutes and that the Deputy Town Clerk was speaking to the Police about this matter. The Town Clerk stated that there had not been any update regarding this from the Police, however, they have updated to say that they did not think they would find the person or people responsible for the damage to the Town Park.

A Member referred to the Town Clerks Update on page 84 of the minutes regarding the apologies and a further Councillor stated that there would be a small working party meeting taking place regarding Standing Orders.

A Member questioned from page 87 of the minutes if there was any progress relating to the CCTV at Terrace Green/Marina. The Town Clerk stated that she had spoken to the Police Inspector and was awaiting further information back and was hopeful that she would have this to update Members at the next Parks & Events Committee meeting.

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.

## **FC147/20     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 Parks and Events Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 subject to a Member stating that Councillors had not been provided with any information regarding complaints about animals on the allotments. The Town Clerk stated information received from Durham County Council would be provided at the next Parks & Events Committee.

A Member raised an issue regarding the lights not being on at the underpass on the Incline. The Town Clerk stated that the Deputy Town Clerk was looking into this matter and was in the process of looking for a quotation to replace the bulbs as this is something that the Town Council could do as a matter of community safety due to how dark it is. However, the Town Clerk noted that the Town Council do not own the land and the Deputy Town Clerk was still trying to find out who should take responsibility for the lighting, whether this be Network Rail or Durham County Council. A Member noted that if the Town Council pay for the repairs, they will end up with the responsibility for them. A Further Member noted that the Land Registry would be able to inform the Town Council who owns the land. It was noted that Network Rail were identified a few years previously, however they have not come forward to repair or maintain the lighting.

- b) Report of the Establishment Sub-Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 subject to a Member questioning whether a letter of best wishes had been passed on to the Apprentice who had secured full time employment. The Town Clerk stated that she believed this had been done and that there would also be an article in Seaham Today magazine regarding the Apprentice.
- c) Report of the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 subject to a Member stating that it was agreed that all meetings would be held via Zoom. However, the Member had received an agenda regarding a meeting to be held in the Town Hall which she felt was unacceptable. Members discussed this matter further with some Members feeling that confidential staffing matters should not be

discussed on zoom and other Members felt that all Councillors should be duty bound to ensure that confidentiality is assured by all Members regardless of how or where the meeting takes place. A further Member requested that the Town Clerk looks into the legalities in this matter.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk seeks clarification on holding confidential staffing issues meetings via Zoom.

- d) Report of the Annual Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 subject to a Member questioning whether there were any changes to the Committees following the meeting. The Town Clerk stated that a Member no longer wished to stand as the Town Councils representative on both the AAP and Coastliners and if any Member is interested in being the Town Councils representative for either of these organisations they should contact the Town Clerk directly.

RECOMMENDED that if any Members are interested in representing the Town Council on the AAP or Coastliners to contact the Town Clerk.

**FC148/20 BEST CARER AWARD FOR CARE HOMES**

A Member had brought this suggestion to the Town Clerk to be added to the agenda. The Member suggested that due to Covid could the Town Council recognise a carer who has gone above and beyond in their duties.

Members discussed this item and felt every carer should be recognised and agreed that a letter along with a bouquet of flowers should be sent to all Seaham Care Homes thanking them for their hard work and dedication during this current crisis.

Members also discussed a memorial in an appropriate place with a plaque to recognise all keyworkers during the pandemic. A Member noted that it is important that this is done at an appropriate time as the pandemic could go on for a considerable amount of time.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) A letter and bouquet of flowers are sent to all Seaham Care Homes thanking them for their hard work and dedication.
- (ii) A memorial and plaque to recognise all keyworkers is placed in an appropriate place at an appropriate time.

**FC149/20 COVID RESPONSE 2**

The Town Clerk referred to the report she had shared with Members prior to the meeting.

Following the report the Town Clerk had prepared a powerpoint presentation regarding the scoping work she had carried out with various organisations which she delivered to Members.

The presentation elaborated on the mission statement, project concept, agency referral engagement which includes Age UK, GP Practices, Health Visitors, District Nurses, Citizens Advice Bureau and Dementia Friendly.

Engaged foodbanks in Seaham which include Dawdon Community Centre, Flanders and Seaham Youth & Community Centre, the delivery plan which includes Seaham Town Council staff taking telephone referrals and signposting members of the public to the correct foodbank, there is a map of the Seaham area to pinpoint which foodbank members of the public should be referred to.

The Town Clerk stated that during meetings held it was identified that the foodbanks have difficulty in storing food donations and suggested some options to Members these being:

1. A central location for all food donation deliveries;
2. The Town Hall was requested for consideration as a packing area;
3. Use of the café at the Town Hall could be an option as it is now closed.

The publicity for the project will be advertised as a double pull out page spread in the next edition of Seaham Today magazine as well as on social media via the Councils website, via Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK and the Durham County Council Community Hub.

The Town Clerk stated that the project wishes to have business involvement who could possibly assist with PPE, funding, volunteer drivers (DBS checked), food donations and publicity.

The Town Clerk requested funding of £2000 for each of the three foodbanks to assist the start up of the project. It was noted that Dawdon Community Centre and Seaham Youth Centre have received outside funding, but this could be absorbed very quickly if the demand arises. Flanders have not received any funding and purely manage on public and business donations of food and they could also assist with drivers and volunteers.

There will be monthly or even weekly meetings held with Foodbank Managers, Agency Managers and the Town Clerk in attendance. The Town Clerk will also issue a monthly report to Councillors. There will also be an opportunity for surveys for members of the public to say how the project has impacted on the community.

A task force will be created for the Covid recovery which will consist of the organisations who participated in the project. The task force will be in place in the eventuality of a third wave or if the pandemic continues. There will be a recovery plan put in place by the task force to assist the community in moving forward and a return to normal.

The Town Clerk then opened up the meeting for Members questions.

1. A Member questioned whether the schools had been contacted in light of the Government vote to not extend free school meals during half term?

*A County Councillor stated that the County Council have engaged and are providing vouchers for free school meals.*

2. A Member thanked the Town Clerk for the good brief on the project and questioned whether the Foodbank Managers were happy with their areas of responsibility?

*The Town Clerk stated that as in her presentation she mentioned that she had held zoom meetings with the organisations and they are happy with any help the Town Council can offer and are appreciative of the support. The project is not about the Town Council taking over its about helping in anyway the Council can. It is a support system.*

3. A Member questioned whether the Town Council staff were happy with the overall plan?

*The Town Clerk stated that the actual impact is on two members of staff who are happy to take this on board. They have been briefed and have been informed that they are not there to delve into any realms and are there for signposting only.*

4. A Member stated that she would like the mission statement to be changed as it states the Council are co-ordinating and felt it should say liaising.

*The Town Clerk stated that the Council are a referral service and there is no intent to take over the running of the foodbanks.*

5. A Member stated that Parkside is part of the Dawdon Ward.

*The Town Clerk stated that Seaham Youth & Community Centre and Dawdon Community Centre are working together to cover the areas.*

A Member stated that Dawdon Community Centre do not need any more drivers but possibly Seaham Youth & Community Centre may need volunteer drivers. She also noted that Dawdon do not need assistance with storage space or support from volunteers at this present time.

It was noted that the referral service by telephone was a good idea as not all people have access to social media.

A Member questioned whether the foodbanks have asked about PPE as there is Covid 19 funding from Durham County Council who provide PPE and sanitising items.

A Councillor asked if Members were contacting people who live alone in their wards who they know and can have a chat with them, so they don't feel so isolated. A further Member noted that Seaham Youth & Community Centre have referrals for a Befriending Service.

It was suggested that if funding is available from the Town Council that organisations apply for it as not all foodbanks need it at this present time. It was noted that Dawdon Community Centre are quite comfortable at the moment but not to say they might not need support at a later date.

A Member stated that he had concerns regarding using the café at the Town Hall as it is currently leased and the tenants have their own equipment in the building, if this was damaged the Town Council would be held responsible. However, he suggested that the Town Hall could be used for storage.

Members approved the use of the Town Hall for storage for the foodbanks and also for funding.

The Town Clerk thanked Members for their comments and noted that she would take these on board.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Funding be approved.
- (ii) The Town Hall can be used for food storage.

The meeting was then closed by the Chair.