

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH, 2021**

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

Apologies: K Shaw.

Officers: P Fletcher (Town Clerk)  
Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer)  
Miss 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.*

A minute's silence was given for all of the people who have lost their lives over the past year.

### **FC19/21 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.

### **FC20/21 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.

### **FC21/21 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 of the public raised an issue stating that he felt slanderous accusations were made at the last meeting of the Allotments Working Party meeting regarding animals being kept in unsatisfactory conditions, of running a business and selling animals for slaughter and requested a public apology.

The Acting Town Clerk stated that if a member of the public has a complaint to make regarding a Councillor, they should take this to the Standards Board at Durham County Council.

**FC22/21**      **TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 23<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021**

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.

**FC23/21**      **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 Special Planning and Environmental Committee held on 16th February, 2021.

A Member requested that the recommendations of placing an article in the Seaham Today magazine regarding the car parking and car boot sale be placed on the Council's website for public consultation as he thought the Council were no longer going to publish the Seaham Today magazine. The Acting Town Clerk noted that there has been no decision as yet on the future of the magazine and hopefully next month the Council will have made a decision on the towns events which will be published, and these articles can also be published. Further discussions will take place regarding the publication of a magazine.

- b) Report of the Parks and Events Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021.

The Acting Town Clerk stated that the Town Council are in the early stages of negotiations regarding the Coast to Coast cycling from Whitehaven to Seaham and will update Members when he has further information.

- c) Report of the Planning & Environmental Committee held on 9th March, 2021.

A Member questioned whether there had been any update from Durham County Council regarding the cutting of the trees and hedgerows at Seaham Hall. The Acting Town Clerk stated that he had not received an update as yet but will report back once this is received.

- d) Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

- e) Report of the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

- f) Report of the Establishment Sub-Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

**FC24/21 DRAFT STANDING ORDERS**

RECOMMENDED that the draft Standing Orders be referred to the Annual General Meeting due to be held in May to be adopted by the Town Council.

**FC25/21 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the following items which relate to issues of a commercially sensitive and confidential nature Members agreed to pass the formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1960.

**FC26/21 SPORTS CLUB LEASES**

The Acting Town Clerk updated Members following a meeting of the Sports Club Lease Working Party held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021, where the Town Council's Solicitor was present.

The Sports Clubs had given feedback to the Solicitor on what they wished to be included in the lease.

The Working Party had discussed a 21 year lease in order for the clubs to be able to apply for grant funding to improve their facilities. Also discussed was a 3 year break clause, 5 year rent review, 50% discount for community based facilities rent (starting point for negotiation). It was also noted that permission would need to be granted from CISWO and the Town Council would need to show that the facilities are open to all age groups, genders and people with physical disabilities which the Council noted the facilities are inclusive to all.

Members of the Working Party also agreed that in order to give clubs a boost they would not be charged rent for the next 12 months as the clubs have suffered greatly due to the current pandemic and this would enable the clubs to get back on their feet.

Members of the Working Party requested approval from Full Council for the Town Council's Solicitor to enter into negotiations with the Sports Clubs following the recommendations of the Working Party.

A Member noted that it is important in looking at the lease that there should be standardisation in terms and conditions for all of the sports clubs.

RECOMMENDED that approval be given for the Town Council's Solicitor to enter into negotiations with the sports clubs in order for a lease to be finalised.

The Meeting was then closed by the Chair.