

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2021**

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, D McKenna, T Shepherd.

Apologies: Mrs L Kennedy, K Shaw, Miss L Willis.

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.*

### **FC1/21      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.

### **FC2/21      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.

### **FC3/21      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.

### **FC4/21      TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2020**

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.

### **FC5/21      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 Parks and Events Committee held on 5th January, 2021.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that he had emailed today to pay the G99 for the Solar Panel Project. This will allow the network company to look at the capacity of the Town Hall.

The CCTV for the Town Park is currently on hold until the contractor is able to install the CCTV safely.

The first part of the drainage works at Seaham Cemetery has been completed. If this is proved successful, then the Town Council can move forward with the next phase in the next financial year.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that he is still trying to make contact with Mrs Hays regarding a suitable memorial for the late Mr John Hays.

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members regarding the clearing of the vegetation at the Incline and noted that Network Rail have cleared a few meters of land up to the fence line. Members requested that the Deputy Town Clerk contacts Network Rail to request that they clear all of the land.

Network Rail have also agreed to pay in full for the lights at the underpass. The Town Councils contractors will carry out the work on their behalf and will be reimbursed by Network Rail.

The Deputy Town Clerk is holding discussions with the Royal British Legion regarding the memorial at Princess Road Cemetery as further names need to be added to the memorial. Once this has been agreed then the Deputy Town Clerk will look for a suitable memorial to be placed at the Clock Garden. It was also noted that some names already included on the memorial should maybe not have been included as these people were not killed during the bombings. The Deputy Town Clerk will bring this information back to the Council once it has been verified.

It was noted that one Sports Club had stated that they would like to see modern sports stars included as a mural. Members agreed that the purpose of the mural was to commemorate local sports heroes and wished to keep this theme.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that he had written to Durham County Council to place Seaham Town Council's objection to the proposed caravan site. It was noted that the Police, Heritage Coast and a number of other organisations had also objected.

A Member requested that the Deputy Town Clerk passes on Members thanks to the members of staff who worked on the burials over the Christmas period.

It was noted that a meeting with the Police Crime Commissioner has been arranged to discuss the new Police Hub and Members will have the opportunity to discuss the Police precept at that meeting.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Deputy Town Clerk contacts Network Rail to request that they carry out a full clearing of the land next to the incline.
  - (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk passes on Members thanks to the staff who worked on the burials during the Christmas shutdown.
- b)** Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.
- c)** Report of the Planning & Environmental Committee held on 12th January, 2021.

Members discussed the problem with social distancing issues on the seafront and requested that the Deputy Town Clerk makes enquiries as to how far people should be travelling from their homes for exercise as it is felt that a lot of people who are visiting the seafront area are not local residents.

RECOMMENDED that the Deputy Town Clerk contacts the Police regarding the social distancing issue and whether anything can be done to prevent people from travelling to Seaham.

- d)** Report of the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.
- e)** Report of the Establishment Sub-Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.

**FC6/21**

**FOODBANKS**

Members were provided with a report regarding the situation with the local foodbanks prior to the meeting. Following discussions Members agreed to approve £2000 each to the local foodbanks.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve a donation of £2000 each to the local foodbanks.

**FC7/21**

**TABLETS FOR SCHOOLS**

Members were provided with a report following Officers contacting local schools regarding their needs for digital technology for home schooling. Following discussions Members agreed to provide each school with a £500 donation towards the costs of purchasing digital equipment for pupils.

RECOMMENDED that a donation of £500 be provided to each school towards the purchase of digital equipment for home schooling.

**FC8/21**      **COVID UPDATE**

Members were provided with a report prior to the meeting updating them on the current situation. The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that he had contacted Dr Mansingh to offer the Town Hall as a possible vaccine centre. It was noted that this will be considered but as yet the NHS have not confirmed whether it will be needed.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

**FC9/21**      **SEAHAM HARBOUR NURSERY**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that he had received a thank you from Seaham Harbour Nursery for the donation they received from the Town Council at Christmas. The donation enabled the nursery to provide a pantomime for the children.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

**FC10/21**      **APRIL TWINNING VISIT & MAYORS BALL**

The Deputy Town Clerk suggested due to the current situation with the pandemic that the above two events should be cancelled.

A Member requested that a letter is sent to Gerlingen informing them of this decision due to the pandemic.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the Christmas video which was sent to Gerlingen was much appreciated and suggested that the Town Council do something similar at Easter to mark the occasion especially as this years visit will not be taking place.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i)      The April twinning visit and the Mayors Ball be cancelled.
- (ii)     A letter to be sent to Gerlingen informing them of the decision due to the current pandemic.
- (iii)    A video of Seaham to be recorded and sent to Gerlingen over the Easter period.

**FC11/21**      **UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK**

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the Town Council are doing a lot of positive work at present such as assisting the foodbanks with donations, grants, helping schools with financial assistance and suggested that the

Town Council could do a short video/presentation to show local residents how the Town Council is actively offering support.

**RECOMMENDED** that a short video/presentation is filmed for the Town Council to share with residents.