

## FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING** of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ferryhill, on **WEDNESDAY, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020** at **7.00p.m.**

**PRESENT:**            *Councillor:* J Makepeace (Chair)

**Councillors:**      C Atkinson, P Atkinson, G Barker, K Campbell, J Cansella,  
K Conroy, D Farry, K Graham, J Lindsay, N Jones, Z Roddam,  
M Seymour, M Walton, C Woods

**Officials:**        D. Shingleton, Acting Town Clerk  
K. Younghusband, Events & Projects Officer  
S. Hewitson, Committees & Civic Administrator

**163.19-20**    **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors L Smith and R Smith.

**164.19-20**    **MEMBERS DISPENSATION**

There were no members' dispensations in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

**165.19-20**    **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor C Atkinson, P Atkinson & C Woods declared an interest in item 9 on the agenda relating to the Banner Group.

**166.19-20**    **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no public questions in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

**167.19-20**    **MINUTES**

- a)        To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Councillor J Cansella queried minute number 152.19-20, there was no indication as to why the decision was made, could something be added to the minutes to show that concerns were based around the fact that the next lowest quote was in excess of £40,000 more than our budget.

Mr D Shingleton told members this minute had been prepared in light of it being discussed in the private part of the meeting and not to include too much detail but didn't see a problem with the reason being added.

Councillor J Cansella moved the minutes as a true and accurate record subject to this amendment.

Members agreed.

Councillor K Conroy abstained from this vote as she was not present at this meeting.

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020 be agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to minute 152.19-20 being amended to include, after the word “and” in the first line, the words “in the light of the next lowest quote being in excess of £40,000 more than our budget....”

**168.19-20**    **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- a)     To receive as a correct record the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Councillor K Conroy queried why it had taken 4 months to bring these minutes to Council. Councillor J Cansella advised the minutes needed to be approved by Policy & Resources Committee first and as there were no items for the agenda in January the meeting hadn't been held until March.

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 be received.

**169.19-20**    **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND INCOME**

Members considered the monthly Statement of Accounts & Income.

Councillor J Cansella queried the payment made to Anglian Water asking what period this water fee covered. Mr D Shingleton said possibly 3 months but he would check and get back to her.

Councillor K Graham enquired if the clothing was for outside staff and how often they are provided with this. Mr Shingleton confirmed it was and it was provided once a year.

Councillor J Makepeace queried a previous decision by Council to provide members with 3 months notice when lease on vehicles are due. Mr Shingleton advised he has copies of the leases and these will be brought to Council when due.

**RESOLVED**

That the Statement of Accounts & Income be accepted.

**170.19-20**    **ALLOTMENT RENTS**

Members considered a report from the Acting Town Clerk.

The Acting Town Clerk advised members that the Allotments Sub Committee had agreed the rents for allotment sites for 2020/21. He also mentioned that confirmation had not yet been received that the transfer of Davy Street & Brunel Street Allotment Sites had been completed.

Councillor K Conroy suggested that the rents be left as they are and discuss renewal at the new Allotments Sub Committee meeting. Councillor J Makepeace

advised that the Council are required to give tenants one years notice of any increase to rents therefore a decision was needed.

Members were unsure at this time for the proposed rents for the different types of allotments/garages at the Brunel Street site.

**Moved by** Councillor D Farry to agree the rents proposed in the report and make any adjustments next month.

**RESOLVED**

That the proposed rents be agreed and the rents for Brunel Street Allotment Site be discussed next month.

**171.19-20 BANNER GROUP AND DURHAM MINERS GALA**

Members considered a report from the Acting Town Clerk

**Moved by** Councillor K Conroy, **Seconded by** Councillor M Walton that Ferryhill Town Council withdraw the motion put forward at the September 2019 meeting with regards to the parades in Ferryhill which feature the Durham Miners Banners. Ferryhill Town Council continues to support the Friday and Saturday parades by providing road closures and traffic management control which will be reviewed every 15 years. The Ferryhill Banner Group will continue to make all arrangements with the parades and seek funding to meet the expense of transport and the engagement of Ferryhill Town Band.

Councillor D Farry said he supported the motion but would like to move an amendment, that Ferryhill Town Council also provide one bus for residents to make sure they have the ability to attend the Miners Gala.

Councillor K Conroy didn't accept the amendment to her motion and would like Members to vote on her proposal.

All Members agreed to the proposal.

**RESOLVED**

That Ferryhill Town Council withdraw the motion put forward at the September 2019 meeting with regards to the parades in Ferryhill which feature the Durham Miners Banners. Ferryhill Town Council continues to support the Friday and Saturday parades by providing road closures and traffic management control which will be reviewed every 15 years. The Ferryhill Banner Group will continue to make all arrangements with the parades and seek funding to meet the expense of transport and the engagement of Ferryhill Town Band.

**172.19-20 CORRESPONDENCE**

- a) DCC (Head of Community Protection) – Response to letter of 11 December 2019

The Clerk advised Members he was happy with the reply. Councillor K Conroy asked if Dean Bank was the only area covered by the walkabouts. Councillor J Makepeace advised that Ferryhill Station used to be included in the walkabouts, however, this was taken over by the Community Action Team.

It was suggested that the Broom area be included as parts of this area need some level of intensity. Councillor P Atkinson said he knows where the problem areas are and would look into this.

### **RESOLVED**

That the letter be received and the comments of Members be noted.

#### b) Citizens Advice County Durham - Request for Financial Assistance

The Acting Town Clerk advised members that a letter had been received asking for an increase in the usual donation of £3,000 to £3,431 and made members aware that the usual process is to consider such requests in May and November at the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting.

Councillor D Farry stated it was nice to know in advance that CAB require an increase but moved that they be asked to submit an application form and this request be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in May, **Seconded** by Councillor J Cansella.

Councillor J Lindsay asked that this application be given due consideration by the Policy & Resources Committee as more people will be requiring advice during the current situation.

### **RESOLVED**

That Citizens Advice County Durham be asked to submit an application form and this request be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in May.

## **173.19-20 REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

Members considered a report from the Acting Town Clerk

Mr Shingleton advised Members that the Corporate Governance Committee met recently and agreed to accept that the Council have adequate systems of internal control in place.

Councillor Conroy asked that her thanks be passed on to Internal Auditor, Mr Gordon Fletcher and moved to accept the recommendations and it be added in that the Town Clerk should have access to all information.

### **RESOLVED**

That Members;

- a) note the contents of the report in terms of the review of internal audit and internal control;
- b) support the principle of ensuring that effective risk management takes place in the Council
- c) considered the risk register and agreed it should be added that the Town Clerk has access to everything.

## **174.19-20 CORONAVIRUS**

Members considered a report from the Acting Town Clerk.

The Acting Town Clerk advised that with the current situation some local Councils had made the decision to close offices & buildings and members were asked to make a decision on what Ferryhill Town Council should do. In addition to the report circulated previously, the Clerk provided members with a list of recommendations and asked that Members agree the following:

1. Ferryhill Town Council is committed to doing what it can in these extraordinary circumstances to protect the health and well-being of its staff, members and the wider public.
2. The office is closed from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 inclusive, after which the situation will be reviewed. Appropriate notices will be placed on the Town Hall doors, noticeboards and on the website.
3. Staff are asked to work from home as far as possible (this should not be a difficult issue).
4. All Council buildings be closed, including Mainsforth Cricket and Bowls Pavilions, Dean Bank Sports Facility, Dean Bank Bowls Pavilion, King George Playing Field football pavilion and public toilets. Further consideration be given to the practical implications relating to the Cemetery.
5. The Friday market is suspended until further notice.
6. All Council meetings scheduled for April 2020 are cancelled.
7. The planned Easter Egg Run scheduled for Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and the Spring Fun Fair scheduled for Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020 are cancelled.
8. The Town Clerk is given delegated authority to make decisions to ensure that the Council is able to continue functioning in appropriate areas. To achieve this, the following motion is proposed:  
"Ferryhill Town Council empowers the Town Clerk to do anything practical and necessary to ensure the continuous business of the Council, and to deal with mandatory undertakings in order to prevent the Council from incurring liability during the period that the delegation is applicable. Such delegation to be in place until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, when it will be further

reviewed. Any decisions be made in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and a representative of the Labour Group”.

Councillor J Lindsay asked that item 4 to include all organised sports. Members agreed.

Councillor J Cansella suggested that any situations requiring an urgent decision the Clerk consult with the Chair only.

Members agreed that the Easter eggs purchased for the Easter Egg Hunt be kept until a later date when hopefully an event can be held, possibly June.

**Moved by** Councillor D Farry, **Seconded by** Councillor K Conroy to accept the motion

Councillor K Conroy nominated Councillor P Atkinson from the Labour Party to be involved in decision making during this period.

### **RESOLVED**

That the above recommendations be agreed and the Council close offices and buildings as from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 inclusive.

#### **175.19-20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Members were requested to move the following motion:

“That in accordance with the provision of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the public and press for the remaining items on the Agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to public interest.”

### **RESOLVED**

That the press and public be excluded from the next section of the meeting. All members of the public left the meeting.

#### **176.19-20 RECOVERY OF OUTSTANDING DEBT**

Members considered a report from the Acting Town Clerk.

**Moved by** Councillor D Farry, **Seconded by** Councillor N Jones to recover the money and the new Town Clerk be asked to look at the way Seasonal Gardeners are paid.

All members agreed except Councillor J Cansella who abstained.

### **RESOLVED**

That further steps be taken to recover the outstanding amount and the new Town Clerk look at the way Seasonal Gardeners are paid.

#### **177.19-20 DEAN BANK BUNGALOW REGENERATION**

Members considered a report from the Acting Town Clerk providing an update on the situation and discussed the matter in great detail.

It was noted that the Clerk was meeting with the Council's External Auditors on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to discuss the situation with a view to obtaining an indication of their views in advance of the formal audit at a later date. Discussions would include a view on whether the Council may have breached Standing Orders. Any significant matters be brought back to a Council meeting at an early date.

**RESOLVED**

That, once the Clerk has had the meeting with the Council's External Auditors, any significant issues be reported back to Council as soon as possible.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.35pm.

**CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD**

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....