

**MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING OF STANLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held at **Stanley Civic Hall**, Front Street, Stanley on **Tuesday 22nd September 2015 at 6.30pm**

**PRESENT:** J Nicholson\*                      C Bell                      A Clegg                      G Graham                      C Thompson  
                     W Nixon                      T Davinson                      D McMahon                      D Tully                      L Elliott  
                     D Marshall                      L Marshall                      D Walker                      J Charlton                      B Nair  
                     M Wilkinson

\*Chairman

**OFFICER:** Alan Shaw (Town Clerk)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 4 members of the Public

**ABSENT:** Cllr C McKee

**281 APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Cllrs R Ferris, R Harrison and D Mills were accepted by Council.

**282 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Charlton declared an interest as a member of Durham County Council. Cllr Bell declared an interest as Chair of Stanley Traders' Association.

**283 PROCEDURAL AND APPROPRIATE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chair wished Cllr McMahon a Happy Birthday. She also congratulated Tanfield Village on their recent Gold Award in Northumbria in Bloom. The Chair reminded Members and the members of the public present at the meeting to turn their mobile phones off or set them to silent. The Chair noted that 2 persons present were taking audio recordings the meeting.

**284 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions from members of the public in attendance. No written questions were submitted prior to the meeting.

**285 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES**

It was proposed by Cllr A Clegg, seconded by Cllr W Nixon and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 25th August 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**286 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

It was proposed by Cllr W Nixon, seconded by Cllr A Clegg and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of Committee Meetings held in July 2015 be **RECEIVED** by Council.

**287 RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Council considered the recommendations from the Personnel Committee in relation to the draft appraisal policy.

It was proposed by Cllr L Marshall, seconded by Cllr T Davinson and **RESOLVED** that the Council adopt the draft policy, subject to the following changes:

- (a) The Chair, Vice-Chair and Personnel Committee Chair should appraise the Town Clerk.
- (b) The Civic Hall Manager should be appraised by the Town Clerk.

**288 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK**

Members **NOTED** the report from the Town Clerk on Current activities and matters of interest to the Council.

**289 PACT HOUSE**

PS Dave Clarke from South Moor Police Station gave a presentation to members in relation to the proposal to seek to take over the lease of the former Lloyds Bank building in Front Street and the potential users of the building.

*Following the presentation, Cllr D Marshall declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Royal British Legion.*

It was proposed by Cllr A Clegg, seconded by Cllr B Nair and **RESOLVED** that the Town Council would set aside £7,000 to secure the lease of the building for a 4 year period. It was further **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be delegated authority to progress this matter.

**290 COUNCIL IT (OFFICERS)**

It was proposed by Cllr D McMahon seconded by Cllr D Walker that the Town Clerk be granted authority to update the Town Council's IT infrastructure and a budget of £4,500 be set aside to achieve this.

**291 REFUGEES**

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Cllr L Marshall, seconded by Cllr RB Nair and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the Town Council should indicate it's willingness to participate in and offer support to any initiative in County Durham to support Syrian refugees.

**292 CONSTITUTION - PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Cllr R Harrison, seconded by Cllr B Nixon and **RESOLVED** that the Council will reconstitute the Planning Committee as "Council in Committee". This would mean that all members of Council are also members of the Planning Committee.

**293 CIVIC HALL - FEES, CHARGES, CHARITY RATES**

Members gave consideration to the matters raised in relation to planned events at the Civic Hall. The following **RESOLUTIONS** were made:

**(i) Wes Fagan**

The applicant will be granted a one off reduction in fees of £694 for the booking and £25 per hour for additional hours. This is to reflect the fact that incorrect prices were quoted. Future bookings will be subject to the standard fees.

**(ii) Oxhill Youth Club**

There will be no change to the fees charged to Oxhill Youth Club for this year's performances. The fees can be reviewed as a whole during next year's budget setting process.

**(iii) Homegroup**

The request for free room accommodation within the Civic Hall is declined. The Civic Hall is primarily an entertainment, training and seminar venue and it's role should be focused on this type of activity. Homegroup should be signposted towards other possible providers.

**(iv) Discounts**

The current schedule of fees be amended to incorporate an across the board discount of 10% for Stanley residents and businesses and 20% for Charities. Users of the Hall who have already been granted a specific discount will not receive a further discount in addition to that already granted.

**294 REQUEST FOR GRANT FUNDING - FIREWORKS**

It was proposed by Cllr D Marshall, seconded by Cllr A Clegg and **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item is the Local Government Act 1972, s.145
- (ii) The Council will award grant funding of £10,000 to Stanley Events Ltd towards the provision of a free firework festival in Stanley.

**295 ANNUAL RETURN**

It was proposed by Cllr D Marshall, seconded by Cllr A Clegg and **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item is the Local Government Finance Act 1992, & The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended)
- (ii) Council **ACCEPTS** the report of the External Auditor and **NOTES** the recommendations therein.

**296 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC**

Cllr D McMahon requested an explanation of the reasons why it was proposed to exclude the public from the following item of business on the Agenda.

The Town Clerk advised Cllr McMahon that dependent on the decision of Council, there were legal ramifications for the Town Council and it would be detrimental to the public interest to consider these matters in public session.

It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council excludes the press and public on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

**297 STANLEY FRONT STREET HIGHWAY WORKS**

Members **CONSIDERED** the report of the Town Clerk. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be noted as the Local Government Act 1972, s.137.
- (ii) The Town Council will pay over £100,000 from its earmarked reserve towards the highways improvements immediately;
- (iii) A further contribution of £100,000 will be payable to Durham County Council in the next Financial Year (subject to confirmation by Council after the AGM);
- (iv) The remaining £25,000 will be held back subject to assurances by the County Council that remedial action will be taken in relation to the visual defects in the works in Front Street.