

MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING OF STANLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held at Stanley Civic Hall, Front Street, Stanley on Tuesday 21st March 2017 at 6.30pm

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

*Chairman

OFFICERS: Alan Shaw (Town Clerk)
 Nicola James (PA to the Town Clerk)
 James Harper (Community Development Manager)

ABSENT: Cllrs C McKee & L Marshall

IN ATTENDANCE: 3 members of the public

334 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllrs D McMahon & R Ferris were accepted by Council.

335 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J Charlton declared an interest as a Durham County Councillor.

336 PROCEDURAL AND APPROPRIATE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Clerk requested that Members did not speak until they have been recognised by the chair, and to stand when speaking.

The Clerk noted that no one was recording the meeting but advised those present that the meeting was being filmed and streamed to Facebook.

The Chairman stated that Cllr Clegg did not need to stand due to his leg injury.

337 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

338 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr A Clegg, seconded by Cllr B Nixon and **RESOLVED** that the Council approve the Full Council minutes of 21st February 2017 as a correct record.

339 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 7th March 2017 and the minutes of the Finance & GP Committee held on 8th March 2017 be **RECEIVED** by Council.

340 RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**(a) PERSONNEL**

This was dealt with under item 13 (*Minute #346*): **Town Clerk Appraisal Objectives**

(b) FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES

Before the recommendations were discussed, Cllr D Marshall queried comments made at the Finance & GP by Cllr Nicholson on 8th March in relation to misappropriated funds. He asked if she could clarify where the funds were and who spent them.

Cllr Nicholson responded that at the end of the last Council, auditors gave full assurance of the accounts, however a few days later it was found that there had been misappropriated funds.

Cllr D Walker stated that the Chair was referring to £80,000 that had 'disappeared' which was part of the investigation into the then Town Clerk. Cllr D Marshall stated that he was concerned that he had not seen any reports detailing this missing £80,000.

Cllr B Nixon stated that this £80,000 in question had been put into another account and the accusation of misappropriating funds was false.

The Town Clerk stated for the record that the Council's accounts had been signed off by both internal and external auditors in each financial year and no money had been misappropriated.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the following **RECOMMENDATIONS** from the Finance & GP Committee:

- (i) No grants should be awarded from underspend on revenue budgets in future years,
- (ii) An underspend of at least £13,000 needs to be achieved on revenue budgets in the coming year or the level of the General Reserve will reduce,
- (iii) The Town Council renew the contract for Gordon Fletcher as Internal Auditor for a further three years.

341 RECOMMENDATIONS OF WORKING GROUPS**(a) Fireworks Festival**

This item was removed following motion at Full Council 18.04.17.

(b) Environmental Services

This was dealt with after item 12 (*Minute #345*): **Exclusion of Press and Public.**

The Town Clerk read an email to Members which he had received from Groundwork NE prior to the meeting.

Cllr R Harrison declared a non-pecuniary interest in Groundwork NE as his daughter is an employee of the organisation.

Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr D Marshall, seconded by Cllr B Nixon and **RESOLVED** that Council accept the report from the working group that notice should be given to cease the Groundworks Service after the matters raised by GNE had been resolved. It was further **RESOLVED** that further decisions about the allocation of the budget should be deferred until that time.

342 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & BANK RECONCILIATION**

It was proposed by Cllr D Mills, seconded by Cllr R Harrison and **RESOLVED** that Council **APPROVE** the payment of accounts for February 2017 and **NOTE** the bank reconciliation.

343 **REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

The Town Clerk took Council through updates to the risk register from the previous year and highlighted areas for consideration by members.

It was proposed by Cllr D Mills, seconded by Cllr D Marshall and **RESOLVED** that an extra item under 'Members' be inserted to reflect online conduct.

It was the proposed by Cllr D Mills, seconded by Cllr D Tully and **RESOLVED** that the risk register be approved with the 'online conduct' addition and that Council supports the principle of ensuring that effective risk management takes place within Stanley Town Council.

344 **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

The Town Clerk explained the reasoning behind the proposed committee structure and schedule of meetings.

It was proposed by Cllr D Marshall, seconded by Cllr A Clegg and **RESOLVED** that the structure and schedule be accepted and put to the Annual General Meeting for adoption.

345 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC***

*Recording of proceedings was stopped at this point.

Council **RESOLVED** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the

meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Justification for excluding the public and press from consideration of the following item: The consideration of staffing matters needs to be held in closed session to preserve the privacy of staff.

346 **TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL OBJECTIVES**

Cllr D Tully and D Mills thanked the Town Clerk for his hard work in 2016/17.
Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations of the Personnel Committee.

347 **DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 18th April 2017, 6:30pm, Civic Hall, Front Street, Stanley.