

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

Held at Stanley Masonic Hall, Front Street, Stanley on Tuesday 20th December 2016 at 6.30pm

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

\*Chairman

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 6 members of the public

**236                      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Cllrs C McKee, B Nair, A Clegg and R Ferris were accepted by Council.

**237                      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr C Bell declared a non-pecuniary interest as Chairman of Stanley Trader’s Association.  
 Cllr J Charlton declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Durham County Council.

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

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

The Clerk advised that Cllr W Nixon & one member of the public present were recording the meeting.

Cllr W Nixon made a statement to members. He stated that he was not opposed to the meeting being recorded but that he objected to it being “democracy in disguise” as he believes the person recording the meeting will stand for the Labour party at the next election. He questioned why meetings were “only filmed when there was a motion put forward by a Labour member to be considered” and stated that he felt this was calculated to show the Council in a “bad light”. He further stated that “the last meeting that was recorded failed to show a County Councillor threatening STC Councillors as it was “cut before being posted online”.

**239                      PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no written questions from the public submitted before the meeting.

John Ullathorne updated members on the progress of CURSI. CURSI is in the middle of a Drink Driving awareness campaign, currently at North Durham Academy. He also advised that the Mini Police Scheme had been taken country wide.

240 **CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES**

It was proposed by Cllr D Mills, seconded by Cllr R Harrison and **RESOLVED** that the Council approve the Full Council minutes of 15th November 2016 as a correct record.

241 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 6th December 2016 be **RECEIVED** by Council.

242 **RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**(a) Personnel**

**(i) Staffing** - It was proposed by Cllr D Walker, seconded by Cllr D McMahon and **RESOLVED** that Council approve to reduce the overall level of budget allocated to staffing in 2017/18 Budget to £341,875. A more detailed review of the required staffing establishment should be carried out by Committee once the programme for the next year has been discussed and finalised.

**(b) Finance and General Purposes**

It was proposed by Cllr R Harrison, seconded by Cllr C Bell and **RESOLVED** that Council approve the following recommendations:

**(i) VAT on ticket sales** - The current Civic Hall fees should now be advertised as exclusive of VAT and VAT should be added in the circumstances where it is payable. The booking form should be amended to allow community groups to declare that their profits will be put back into the community group so they can obtain exemption from VAT for future bookings.

**(ii) Budget** - The changes to the draft budget put forward by the Finance Committee were as follows:

- Council to reduce the Moria Con budget to £5,000
- Christmas Decorations budget be reduced to the actual figure which should be around £18,000
- Chairmans Expenses budget be renamed as Chairmans Fund
- Any budget surplus from reducing budgets elsewhere should be added to the Full Council Grants budget
- As a balanced budget is achievable, there should be no increase in the Parish precept for 2017/18

243 **CDALC PROPOSAL**

It was proposed by Cllr D McMahon, seconded by Cllr R Harrison and **RESOLVED** that STC will adopt the following statement to make it clear that STC will not tolerate

any form of prejudice and to reassure all members of our community that they are valued.

"We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, gender prejudice, xenophobia, homophobia, religious intolerance and hate crimes have no place in our community. Stanley Town Council condemns all such intolerance and hate crimes unequivocally."

244

**MEMBER'S MOTIONS**

**(i) Motion from Cllr R Harrison**

*"The Council have for some time expressed a wish to have the Kitchen next to the Bamburgh Suite and the dumb waiter refurbished and the Toilets made suitable for public use and brought up to standard.*

*The motion is, therefore that "The Clerk be instructed to forthwith obtain three estimates for each of the above and report back to the January Meeting so that the members can select the suitable estimates at which point the Clerk will be instructed that the works be carried out with the minimum delay."*

The motion was seconded by Cllr M Wilkinson. Following a vote, the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

**(ii) Motion from Cllr D McMahon**

*"STC should remove the ability to hold secret / paper ballots from its standing orders so as to be open and transparent to the public and all votes should be by a show of hands so that Councillors are accountable for their decisions"*

Cllr R Harrison proposed an amendment to the motion from Cllr D McMahon by adding the words: 'except where there is good reason for requesting a secret ballot, which must be notified to the Town Clerk in advance of the meeting'.

Cllr D Marshall requested that the vote to be a named vote.

The vote on this motion was as follows:

**For:** Cllrs R Harrison, L Marshall, M Wilkinson, J Charlton, C Thompson, D Tully, D Mills, T Davinson, D Marshall, G Graham, D McMahon.

**Against:** Cllrs L Elliott, W Nixon.

**Abstentions:** Cllrs C Bell, D Walker.

The Chairman did not cast an original vote.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the motion was carried and the Standing Orders are to be amended accordingly.

245

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

It was proposed by Cllr C Bell, seconded by Cllr D McMahon and **RESOLVED** that Council **APPROVE** the interim Safeguarding Policy.

246 **ASSET TRANSFER**

**(i) Annfield Plain Community Room**

It was proposed by Cllr C Bell, seconded by Cllr D Mills and **RESOLVED** that the business case drafted by the Town Clerk be accepted and submitted to Durham County Council to progress the asset transfer of the Old Man's Hut in Annfield Plain.

**(ii) Council Offices, Front Street**

It was proposed by Cllr D McMahon, seconded by Cllr R Harrison and **RESOLVED** that the Council should submit the supporting statement / business case to Durham County Council to progress this matter further.

247 **BUDGET SETTING - FINAL DRAFT**

**Amendments to the circulated Draft Budget**

The Town Clerk advised that there was £5000 in the draft budget circulated for the Horticultural Show, however it had previously been agreed to remove this, so this would be deleted.

The Town Clerk further advised that there should have been a £5000 budget added to the Chairmans Fund code which had been missed from the draft budget circulated.

The Town Clerk advised that the £18,000 budget for Christmas Decorations needs to increase by £5000 to include the cost of erecting and dismantling the main Christmas Tree.

It was proposed by Cllr D Walker, seconded by Cllr C Bell and **RESOLVED** that once the said amendments have been made, the budget be **APPROVED** and that the precept will not be increased in 2017/18.

248 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

\*Members recording the proceedings 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: To consider professional legal advice.*

249 **ASSET TRANSFER**

After a discussion, the Council gave direction to the Town Clerk in respect of the Financial Implications of the decision to bid for the Stanley Council Offices.

*The details of this discussion have been redacted from these minutes as they are commercially sensitive.*

250            **STAFFING REPORT**

The Town Council considered the report from the Town Clerk and it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i)        The interim structure for the Civic Hall be implemented, and that:
- (ii)       The Town Clerk be directed to review and prepare Job Descriptions for consideration by the Personnel Committee as soon as is reasonably practicable; and;
- (iii)      The Town Clerk be authorised to begin consulting on the new structure with staff and trade unions.

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

Tuesday 24th January 2017, 6:30pm, Civic Hall, Front Street, Stanley.