
MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING OF STANLEY TOWN COUNCIL
Held at **Stanley Civic Hall on Tuesday 28th September 2021 at 6.30pm**

PRESENT: C Bell G Binney H Clark A Clegg
K Coulson L Ferry A Hanson A Jones
J McMahon O Milburn* J Nicholson J Stephenson
M Thompson D Tully

*Chairman

OFFICERS: Alan Tubman (Deputy Town Clerk)
James Harper (Environmental Services Team Leader)

94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members **ACCEPTED** apologies for absence from Cllr C Hampson, Cllr J Kane, Cllr C Marshall and Cllr S McMahon.

Cllr D Fall was **ABSENT**.

95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

96 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor requested all members and officer stand and observe a minutes silence in respect of Kevin Howe, who had sadly recently passed away. Kevin had been a Town Councillor, CEO of SHAID, worked as a youth worker, with the Citizens Advice Bureau and PACT House, he had been a massive champion of Stanley and its community, and will be greatly missed.

The Town Mayor also arranged for a copy of the member code of conduct to be circulated, and asked that all members conducted themselves in a polite, respectful and civilized manner. A new code of conduct had been developed by Durham County Council, and this will be adapted for Stanley Town Council and reviewed by the Governance Group for acceptance and adoption in the near future.

The Deputy Town Clerk, apologized to members in respect of the breakdown in communications around the unveiling of the Louisa Morrison Disaster installation within Annfield Plain Park on 23rd August.

97 LEADERS STATEMENT

Good evening everyone I am delighted to be giving my first Leaders report here tonight ast Full Council , it has been a very full and hectic few weeks which I have spent working with our fantastic staff to try to address the issues raised by a loss of 74 hours of staff time to the establishment. Firstly I would like to put on record my thanks to our staff who have worked tirelessly to keep our doors open, to honour our event commitments , often working long unsocial hours to do so and then trying to do their day jobs, I can't commend them enough. Thank you. We have worked to pull some solutions together to try to tackle these issues in the short and medium term and I wont say more on that as we

have a report on the agenda to go through where we are and what is needed to continue.

Over the next few months we have some time sensitive work to be undertaken, the Medium Term Plan and the budget that sits under it the Medium Term Financial Plan, the recruitment of a new Town Clerk to name a few. These are the things are that our office staff need to be able to focus on. So as members I would urge you all to think how we can support our staff to be able to do their jobs effectively with the least amount of stress given the current situation. I would like to ask all members to think about the need to send queries in to the office by email or telephone unless it is absolutely urgent.

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at the support that can be expected from our staff going forward and what new processes we can put into place to help them get through this difficult time when there is no capacity in the establishment, some examples are as follows :

- we will be producing a members query form loosely based upon the current FOI process
- we will be signposting members to information already in the public domain minutes agendas financial reports
- there will be no large scale analysis for members undertaken unless this is for F&G, sub groups or Full Council
- all queries which come outside of the meeting framework eg after a meeting - will be answered at the following meeting so that there is clarity and transparency for all members
- members are encouraged to use the meetings more effectively for any queries they may have by being engaged in the meeting and I would encourage debate about issues to take place in the meeting where again there is transparency for the electorate and other members.

Thanks everyone

Finally following on from that point and from the Mayors points raised I would like to mention the conduct and culture that we seem to be experiencing at STC particularly after meetings. We have all come through a really difficult time in this pandemic and it has effected people in many different ways with some of our colleagues experiencing mental health problems. I would make the point no matter what our political persuasions are - we are all human beings with thoughts, emotions and frailties and I would ask everyone here to try to draw a line under any issues they may have had with each other in the past and treat each other with mutual respect and kindness.

Thanks very much everyone

98 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present and one question had been received in advance of the meeting.

99 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Cllr C Bell pointed out an error in the minutes, which will be corrected, subsequently it was proposed by Cllr A Clegg, and seconded by Cllr C Bell that the minutes of the:

Council Meeting on 27th July 2021

Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 10th August 2021, and

Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 13th September 2021 were **APPROVED** as a true record.

100 RECEIPT OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr A Clegg, and seconded by Cllr G Binney that the Council **RECEIVE** the minutes from Finance and General Purposes Committee Tuesday 13th July 2021

101 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & BANK RECONCILIATION

It was proposed by Cllr A Clegg and Cllr A Jones that Council **APPROVE** the payment of accounts and **NOTE** the bank reconciliation for June and July 2021.

102 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The resignation of Cllr Mary Wilkinson was **NOTED** by the Council. The Town Mayor, thanked Mary for her contribution to the Council over many years.

103 CIVIC HALL

It was proposed by Cllr J Stephenson, and seconded by Cllr A Clegg, that the Council;

NOTE the information regarding the Town Clerk Recruitment,
APPROVE the payment of Peter Burns accrued hours,
APPROVE the payment of additional hours to the Environmental Caretakers,
APPROVE the engagement of agency staff to ensure the operation of the Civic Hall

Members requested the current TOIL policy be reviewed by the Governance Group.

104 EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Members **NOTED** the report regarding the external audit.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Council that the Internal Audit which had been planned for October 2021 was now been rearranged for November 2021 to allow the Finance Officer greater amount of time to carry out preparation for the budget.

105 SUMMER EVENTS and CIVIC HALL

Council **NOTED** the report.

Members requested information, for a future meeting regarding Creo communications role in the promotion of events and Town Council business.

106 MEMORIALS AND RECOGNITION

It was proposed by Cllr L Ferry and seconded by Cllr A Jones that members and officers work together to develop the idea and criteria for recognition further and resubmit to Council at a later date.

107 ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE

Council **NOTED** the report.

108 EVENTS WORKING GROUP

Council **NOTED** the report.

109 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 26th October 6.30 pm Stanley Civic Hall.