



Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting of Chilton Town Council
Held at Hutton House, Durham Road, Chilton, Co. Durham on
Tuesday 11th February 2020 at 6.00pm

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Elizabeth Bruce (Chair); Councillor Alan Bruce; Councillor Julie Cairns; Councillor Stephanie Jackson; Councillor Peter Davies, Councillor Michael Young; Councillor Victor Collinson; Councillor Lenny Potts; Councillor Lily Dixon; Councillor Stuart Sutherland.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk; David Banks & Annette (Northern Counties Allotment Association); Kevin Tracey (Allotment Tenant)

OM11/02/20/19 APOLOGIES

Councillor David Allanson; Councillor Joe Parker

OM11/02/20/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Alan Bruce and Elizabeth Bruce declared an interests as Councillor Alan Bruce has an allotment.

OM11/02/20/21 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

None received

OM11/02/20/22 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 14th JANUARY 2020

IT was AGREED that, subject to the amendment that Councillor Michael Young be added to the list of Members in attendance at the meeting that the circulated draft minutes be confirmed as a true and correct record of the Ordinary Council Meeting Held on 14th January 2020.

OM11/02/20/21 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON 15th JANUARY 2020

IT was AGREED that the circulated draft minutes be confirmed as a true and correct record of the Finance Meeting held on 15th January 2020.

OM11/02/20/22 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 28th JANUARY 2020

IT was AGREED that the circulated draft minutes be confirmed as a true and correct record of the Special Meeting held on 28th January 2020

OM11/02/20/23 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENT COMMITTEES HELD ON 21st NOVEMBER 2019 and 16TH JANUARY 2020

IT was AGREED that subject to the amendment that Councillor Lily Dixon be added to the list of Members in attendance at the Allotments Committee meeting held on 16th January 2020 that both sets of the circulated Allotment Committee minutes that were circulated for the Allotment Committees held on 21st November 2019 and 16TH January 2020 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the meetings.

OM11/02/20/24 PRESENTATION FROM DAVID BANKS OF THE NORTHERN COUNTIES ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION – ALLOTMENT SITE MEASURING.

David Banks presented his report to members, explaining to them the background and ethos of the Northern Counties Allotment Association, the brief he had given by the Town Council to measure plots because as a result “plot creep” over the years allotments were of varying sizes, making the current rent charge of £25 per plot unfair on those who had smaller than average plots against those who had larger than average plots. David explained that an average plot was 10 poles or 250 square metres. David explained his methodology and the rationale for a tariff based charging regime based on size in bands. David went on to say that it would be wise to adopt a formal allotment strategy, with a regular inspection regime on a rotational basis. Following questions from the Town Clerk, Members and Mr Kevin Tracey during the public participation part of the meeting David Banks confirmed that there would be more “winners” than “losers” if a size based equitable rent charging regime was brought in for a standard size plot ; 76 tenants would pay less; 107 tenants would pay the same and 37 tenants would pay more, he explained that on the West Chilton site there were some very large plots that equated to 9 or 10 plots and that the most expensive garden would be £173 per year. Mr Kevin Tracey raised concerns about water being wasted on the allotments and indicated that tenants wanted to see the revenue generated from allotment rents reinvested back into allotments.

David Banks remarked that many Council’s did not supply water on their allotments and that Chilton tenants were lucky to have this facility, as many allotment authorities expected their tenants to catch their water supply.

David Banks confirmed that if Members wished to introduce the new charging regime, notice of the changes would need to be given to all allotment tenants before 31st March 2020 so that the new rents would fall due from 1st April 2021. He suggested an amnesty/consultation event whereby tenants were able to drop in and discuss their individual plot measurements.

It was AGREED to Thank Mr David Banks for his work and presentation and defer making a decision on this issue at this stage, to allow Members to further consider this matter.

OM11/02/20/25 Mayors Report

The Mayor updated the meeting on a couple of Civic engagements that she had attended in January and advised the meeting that she was delighted to report that her Valentines Charity Evening that was taking place in the Catholic Club on Friday 14th February was sold out.

It was AGREED to receive and note the Mayors Report.

OM11/02/20/26 Town Clerks report on actions from last meeting

It was AGREED to receive and note the following report from the Town Clerk

“Since taking up post on January 6th 2020 as well as servicing the Council’s 3 Standing Committees and two Cemetery Working Groups; and the Miners Welfare Trustees meeting and separate Management Board meeting. I have attended a Gala Committee Meeting; VE Day Celebration Meeting and the PACT meeting.

I have also had the following meetings with key stakeholders

Derek Shingleton (CTC Accountant);

Gordon Fletcher (CTC Internal Auditor);

Andrew Potts(DCC – IT support)

Tracy Emery (Durham Community Action);

Barrie Alderson (Strategic Leisure Services DCC); Craig Farrage (County Durham Fire and Rescue Service- Fire Safety Officer); Brian Hope (CDS Fire alarm provider); Scott Ellwood;(CTC Landscape Contractor); Dr Richard Earl (TGMS Cemetery Development); Philip Coles (Savills Agents for Lord and Lady Eldon)

I have also attended a Cemetery Site Visit and had a tour of all of the Council’s Assets.

BANK MANDATES

Since the last meeting of the Council I have convened a Special Meeting of the Council to resolve issues around the bank mandate situation and those members not on the current bank mandate who are to be added need to make urgent arrangements to come into the office to sign the forms with their relevant ID documents. I have made arrangements to have these countersigned as a true and correct copy of the original. The best form of ID is a passport and a driving licence if you do not have a driving licence then a recent utility bill/council tax bill will suffice but there must be one photo ID.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

I have met already with Scott briefly to advise him of the decisions made by the Council and The Miners Welfare Board and discuss our new requirements with regard to additional works and reporting arrangements he is working on the documentation required for the stress testing of lighting columns and aware of the urgency. A meeting has been scheduled with him for February 17th and in line with

the delegated authority I have emailed the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and Chair and Vice Chair of finance.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Many of the Corporate Governance issues are addressed elsewhere on this agenda as separate items, the key issues are in relation to the health and safety matters in relation to Hutton House and the Freedom of Information and transparency code requirements. I have drafted a safeguarding policy for members to consider and I am working on Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for approval at next weeks Council meeting along with the suite of previously identified policies that are legal requirements. Members need to address the HR issues in relation to resources needed to deal with separating the two legal entities completely in relation to the Realtas software and this is addressed elsewhere on the agenda.

MINERS WELFARE CHARITY ISSUES

Charlie Wayman Fields:

I have written to Savills requesting a copy of their contractors specification for the drainage scheme so that this can be assessed against FA standards. Their response suggests that they need access first to design a scheme, full details will be considered by the Trustees and Management Board.

Hempsons:

I have spoken to Hempsons and I am aware of the issues that require addressing around the land transaction I am working with our professional advisers at the time so that we are in a position to satisfy the Charity Commission requirements.

Tennis Club:

I have a meeting with the tennis club at 5pm on 11th February.

Croquet Club:

The office manager is arranging a meeting with myself, turfcare and the croquet club.

CEMETERY WORKING GROUP

I have had a response from Savills regarding the additional land requested and as this is confidential I will report on it following the exclusion of the press and public.

The Cemetery Working Group have requested that I circulate proposed new cemetery terms and conditions based on those in place at Great Aycliffe I have sought the necessary consent from Great Aycliffe and copies will be despatched to all Members for consideration. As a Council we need to have in place the appropriate procedure for assigning exclusive rights of burial.

I will also dispatch the current guidance on Memorial Testing, and I have committed to writing a report on this matter as there are financial implications I will present it to finance committee.

On the issue of trees not only in the cemetery, but elsewhere in our ownership I have asked CDALC to email our neighbours to find out which authorities would be prepared to share their tree management plans and details of which arborists are used locally. The usual approach being the “three D approach” trees will not be felled unless they are dead, diseased or dangerous.

OM11/02/20/27 County Councillors Report

It was AGREED to receive and note the previously circulated report from County Councillor Christine Potts

OM11/02/20/28 Road Closure & SAG Applications

Following discussion of the following Road Closures, **it was AGREED** that the Town Clerk would apply for Road Closure Orders and where appropriate Safety Advisory Group input in connection with the following events:-

Chilton Gala- 20th June 2020

Durham Miners Gala 11th July 2020

Remembrance Sunday 8th November 2020

Firework Display 7th November 2020

Christmas Light Switch on 27th November 2020

VE DAY celebrations on Friday 8th May 2020.

It was also AGREED and noted that any events that were not Town Council Events would require their own event insurance.

OM11/02/20/29 Calendar of Meetings

It was AGREED to receive and note the previously circulated calendar of meetings and events and that the Office Manager share its contents via outlook with Members.

OM11/02/20/30 Establishing Town Council Priorities – Corporate Plan and Annual Report Preparation and distribution.

The Town Clerk reported verbally on her proposals to get the Town Council to agree their Corporate Priorities and the prepare and distribution of the Council's Annual Report in time for the Annual Meeting of Electors on May 4th 2020.

It was AGREED

1. That the Town Clerk should present her suggestions to the Members in relation to her perceived Corporate Priorities for the Council and
2. That the Annual Report should be prepared and agreed by the Council for distribution with the Chapter in readiness for the Annual Meeting of Electors and
3. That the Town Clerk ascertain those properties in Chilton who do not receive the Chapter so that arrangements can be put in place to have the Council's Annual Report delivered to these properties by volunteers.

OM11/02/20/31 HR Committee to reaffirm the membership of the HR Committee and Appeals Committee and agree terms of reference. [In accordance with minute extract 10.0/19]

It was AGREED to reaffirm minute 10.0/19 namely that Cllrs E. Bruce, S. Jackson, P. Davies, M. Young and D. Allanson (with Councillor Stuart Sutherland replacing former Councillor J Houlihan) forming the Human Resources Committee and Cllrs L.Dixon; J Cairns;L.Potts; A Bruce; J. Parker and V. Collinson forming the Appeals Committee.

OM11/02/20/32 Chilton and Windlestone Show

Councillor Julie Cairns advised that if this was something that Members wished to support and consider that she would be happy to put forward a more detailed proposal for Members to consider at a future meeting.

It was AGREED to support in principle the idea of holding a Chilton and Windlestone Show, to include arts and crafts as well as horticultural produce, similar to that run by Bishop Middleham, and that Councillor Julie Cairns would work up a proposal for consideration at a future meeting.

OM11/02/20/33 Chilton in Bloom / Northumbria In Bloom

Following discussion on these matters it was AGREED that the Town Council should run their own Chilton in Bloom Competition alongside their Northumbrian Bloom entry and that the Town Clerk place an advert in the Chapter inviting individuals and groups who are interested in being involved to come forward.

OM11/02/20/34 Millwood

Councillor Peter Davies expressed concern at what he perceived as the “decimation” of Millwood, following the recent tree felling works.

It was AGREED to note the report of County Councillor Potts on this issue and acknowledge that the landowner had undertaken the works with all the appropriate Forestry Commission licences, **it was also AGREED** to note that the County Councillor Rights of Way Officers were working with the landowner to ensure that all Rights of Way were maintained and reinstated.

OM11/02/20/35 Freedom of Information Requests & Approval of Model Publication Scheme

Members gave consideration to the previously circulated FOI requests received and the previously circulated Model Publication Scheme noting the Town Clerk’s remarks that in order to enable FOI requests to be dealt with efficiently and effectively it would be more advantageous to have as much information as possible uploaded onto the Town Council’s website.

It was AGREED

1. To note the situation regarding the recent FOI requests received, acknowledging that all of the information requested could be found.

2. To authorise the Town Clerk to respond to the FOI requests as best she could and
3. To agree and publish the Model Publication Scheme

OM11/02/20/36 Website Development.

The Town Clerk raised concerns that the current website was not adequate in that it did not meet the Council's needs in terms of the Freedom of Information Act and the Local Authority Transparency Code. Following discussion on this matter, members requested further clarification on this matter as they were of the view that the website was fit for purpose and that the issue that required addressing was the time required to upload all required information on to the existing website.

It was AGREED that the Town Clerk would prepare a report for members to consider the detail of what further information was required to be uploaded to meet the Council's legal obligations setting out the resource implications in terms of officer time, of effecting these requirements.

OM11/02/20/37 Safeguarding Policy

Following consideration of the previously circulated Safeguarding Policy **it was AGREED** that subject to the replacement of the phrase "*Never Ever*" with the words "*Under no Circumstances*" within the Policy that the Safeguarding Policy would be adopted by the Town Council.

OM11/02/20/38 S106 Monies

Following discussions around the potential use of s106 Monies within the Parish and the issues around the Community Infrastructure Levy, and Neighbourhood Plans. **It was AGREED** that the Town Clerk arrange a meeting with Steven Reid and Barrie Alderson of DCC to discuss the available s106 monies within the Parish and that County Councillor Christine Potts also be invited to attend.

OM11/02/20/39 Flag Purchase

Members gave consideration to the quotation received to purchase a new double sided Town Crest flag **It was AGREED** to proceed with the purchase of a flag to replace the old one at a cost of £202.44p.

OM11/02/20/40 Grounds Maintenance Services

Annual Playground Inspections The Town Clerk reported that these had been undertaken and that of the 5 Playgrounds we manage one had been classified as low risk and four as a Moderate risk. **It was AGREED** to note the position.

Playground Inspection Arrangements The Town Clerk reported that as the inspection of Play Equipment fell within the Grounds Maintenance Contractors duties it was unnecessary to pay the County Council the £1500 per annum to undertake this work **It was AGREED** to end the arrangements with DCC for Playground Inspections from 1st April 2020 and that the Grounds Maintenance Contractor be supplied with the existing DCC template/checklist to undertake his inspections as DCC were happy with this arrangement.

OM11/02/20/41 Cemetery Matters

Report of The Cemetery Working Party

Councillor Young presented a report on behalf of the Cemetery Working Party, advising that the toilets had been secured but need to be properly boarded up and that the building had been made secure. He advised the Town Clerk was to present a report to a future meeting on the suggested arrangements for Memorial Inspections based on the current guidance, that the Consultancy work on the proposed Cemetery extension was underway and that positive news had been received in relation to the proposed Cemetery Extension. Councillor Young further advised that a benchmarking review was being undertaken in relation to Cemetery fees and charges in order to inform next years budget. Councillor Young also advised that a sensitive issue had arisen that would require resolution and addressing by the Council but that it was not in the public interest to discuss this matter during the public part of the meeting, so the matter would have to be deferred.

It was AGREED to receive and note the report of the Cemetery Working Group.

Request For A Plaque on a Seat within the Cemetery

Members gave consideration from a resident to have a Memorial plaque placed on one of the Town Council's existing seats within the Cemetery. **It was AGREED** that it would be inappropriate to grant the request at this stage as the Town Council has no policy in relation to Memorial seats within the cemetery, accordingly **it was further AGREED** that the matter be deferred until the Town Council had agreed a policy on Memorial Seats within the Cemetery and that in the meantime the resident be advised of the process for purchasing a plaque in the Garden of Remembrance.

OM11/02/20/41 Planning Applications –

Members gave due consideration to one planning application (ref DM 00274/FPA relating to 10 Aldwyn Close) **It was AGREED** to support the application

OM11/02/20/42 Bank Reconciliation

It was AGREED to receive and note the previously circulated bank reconciliation

OM11/02/20/43 Chilton Miners Welfare Recreation Board

Councillor Julie Cairns, advised the meeting that as she had not yet received the minutes from the last Management Board meeting that she had no report to make other than that the meeting had taken place with members of the Tennis and Croquet Club present.

It was AGREED to note the position.

OM11/02/20/44 Chilton Champions Citizens Awards

Prior to considering this item that was not on the previously circulated and published agenda, the Mayor agreed to exercise her statutory discretion to consider it for reasons of special urgency in order to expedite Council business as a commitment to run the competition had already been given.

Discussions ensued around the Chilton Champions Citizens Award Scheme and nomination process and **it was AGREED**

1. That the Council would launch a Junior Chilton Champion Award and a Chilton Champion Award to recognise and honour an outstanding Junior Chilton Champion (under 18 years old) and an outstanding Chilton Champion.
2. That the Chilton Champions 2020 be launched through an Article in The Chapter.
3. That the Town Clerk present a report setting out proposals for the awards, nomination process and prizes to the Finance Meeting.

OM 11/02/20/45 Exclusion of Press and Public.

In accordance with Paragraph 1(2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 **it was AGREED** that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

OM 11/02/20/46 Establishment

Following consideration of the verbal report of the Town Clerk in relation to the issues that need to be urgently addressed by the Town Council and the resource implications **it was AGREED** that the Town Clerk and the Office Manager work fulltime hours on a month by month basis reporting monthly to members on progress on Council priorities. **It was further AGREED** that the Office Manager be given the option of carrying over her outstanding annual holiday entitlement or receiving payment in lieu of her holiday entitlement.

OM11/02/2047 Fire Alarm

The Town Clerk updated Members on the Fire Alarm situation following advice from the Safety Officer after his visit to both Hutton House and The Miners Welfare Community Building. **It was AGREED** to note the advice of the Fire Safety Officer his advice.

OM11/02/2047 Fire Safety Risk Assessments

The Town Clerk updated Members regarding the advice of the Fire Safety Officer regarding the independent production of Fire Safety Risk Assessments **It was AGREED** that three quotations should be sought from appropriately qualified fire safety risk assessors.

OM 11/02/20/48 Electrical Testing

The Town Clerk updated Members with regard to the findings of the Council's Electrical Contractor, noting the previously circulated photographs **It was AGREED** that the recommendations of the electrical contractor, supported by the Fire Safety Officer and the Town Clerk be endorsed and that the Town Clerk be granted delegated authority to do all that was necessary in the interests of health and safety.

OM 11/02/20/49 Christmas lighting

The Town Clerk updated Members in relation to the new star decoration and in view of the situation **It was AGREED** that a new compatible star be purchased and that the unused Star be sold.

OM11/02/20/50 VE 75 Day Celebrations

Following consideration of the matters raised by the Town Clerk **It was AGREED** that the VE Day Memorial book be circulated at appropriate community locations and that appropriately coloured items as described in the Town Clerks report be purchased for use in connection with Chilton's VE 75 Day celebrations.

OM11/02/20/51 Telephone Contract – answering machine

Following consideration of the matters raised by the Town Clerk **it was agreed** that the Town Clerk should invite our supplier in to the office and report back to members on this matter.

OM11/02/20/52 Grounds Maintenance Contract Update

It was AGREED to note that a meeting had been convened with the Contractor and the appropriate Members of the Council for 17th February 2020 at 11am.

DRAFT