

MORPETH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 20th January 2021 at 6:30pm Via Zoom

Present:

Councillors:

D Bawn - Mayor
N Bawn
N Best
A Byard
J Gebhard
R Hogg
J Parreira
R Wearmouth (arriving at 6:59pm)

Clerks:

Mrs T Bell - Town Clerk
Miss K Carter - Democratic Services Assistant

Absent Councillors:

Councillor L Cassie - Personal
Councillor A Tebbutt - Personal
Councillor J Tebbutt - Personal
Councillor D Herne - No Apologies Received
Councillor K Holmes - No Apologies Received
Councillor R Thompson - No Apologies Received
Councillor J Wearmouth - No Apologies Received

1 member of the public was also in attendance.

Open Session

There were no members of the public present who wished to ask a question on this occasion.

150/20 Committee Chairman's Announcements

- Usual rules about recordings apply
- Usual rules regarding the use of mobile phones apply

151/19 Mayoral Announcements

- All mayoral activities have been suspended due to the new government restrictions.
- There will be a Valentines Day themed fundraiser in February 2021 on Facebook to raise money for the Mayor's chosen charity.

152/20 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman received no declarations of interest on this occasion.

153/20 Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on Wednesday 25th November 2020

The minutes of the above meeting were approved as a true record.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) That the Minutes of 25th November 2020, a copy of which had been previously circulated to each Member, be approved, and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

154/20 Matters Arising from Full Council held on Wednesday 25th November 2020

There were no matters arising on this occasion.

155/20 Items Referred from Other Committees and Working Groups

Finance & General Purposes

i. Budget 2021/22

Cllr D Bawn, Chairman of the F&GP Committee, presented the 2021/22 Budget for consideration.

Cllr Byard queried why there is no budget under the Carlisle Park toilets heading.

The Clerk advised that all of the toilet budgets had been consolidated under one heading.

Cllr D Bawn read out the following resolutions:

- a) To Approve the Draft Budget for 2021/22 as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, see appendix B, and to
- b) Formulate a Resolution to levy a Precept to Northumberland County Council, for the Financial Year 2021/22.

A vote was taken: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Draft Budget 2020/21 and the medium term financial plan be adopted by Full Council.

(ii) That a Precept be levied on NCC representing a 2% increase.

156/20 Boundary Review Update

Members were provided for information with an update regarding the above review.

Cllr D Bawn informed members that this had been discussed at the Northumberland County Council (NCC) Full Council meeting on the 6th January 2021.

He reported that proposals of the review of the Hebron boundary had been approved, Mitford boundary had not been approved, and Hepscott boundary had been partially approved. The South Fields estate will remain in Hepscott parish.

He advised members that there had been some confusion at the meeting as the boundary changes would not be implemented until 2025.

Cllr Hogg enquired if Cllr Sanderson had objected to the boundary review.

Cllr D Bawn advised that Cllr Sanderson had objected to the review of the Hepscott boundary.

Cllr Best enquired whether officers had made any recommendations.

Cllr D Bawn advised that the recommendations had been included in the report. He also reported that as a result of the parish boundary review County Councillors had wanted to recommend a review of the county boundary.

Cllr Best also queried if the local elections were postponed would this affect the implementation of the boundary review.

The Clerk informed members that she had queried the 2025 implementation date as NCC had reassured her that the review would be administered in 2021. She advised that she had received a letter from Kelly Angus, Deputy Chief Executive, which offered no clarification as to why the review had been pushed back to 2025, even though all deadlines had been met by the Town Council so that the review could be implemented before the elections in 2021. The Clerk has emailed to ask for clarification why this is the case.

She also advised that the letter that she had received had implied that NCC had no obligation to inform the Town Council of any changes. Moving forward, NCC will set up a working group so that in future if there is another parish boundary review, participants can be kept informed.

Cllr Hogg suggested that there had been an irregularity during the process. The purpose of the review had been lost. As this is a legal process Cllr Hogg suggested that we challenge NCC's approach.

Cllr Best also suggested that this issue should be pursued as there was a lack of justification for officer recommendations.

The Clerk advised that she had enquired about the submissions that NCC had received but had not been given a response.

Cllr Gebhard suggested that a representative of the Town Council should have been invited to speak at the meeting to provide clarification.

The Clerk advised that she had been informed that the Town Council was not allowed to speak at the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) To include the letter received from NCC at the next Finance and General Purposes meeting on the 3rd February 2021.
- (iii) The Clerk to draft a formal letter to NCC to raise the above issues and ask for clarification of the recommendations and circulate to the Councillors present for comments.

157/20 Representatives on Outside Bodies

Members were provided for information with the Outside Organisation reports.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

158/20 Strategic County Councillor Updates

Members were provided for information with the County Councillor updates.

Cllr D Bawn informed members that a flood alert had been received for Morpeth and the flood defences had been implemented and worked effectively to deter a flood.

He also advised members that the Telford Bridge roundabout will be repainted within the next couple of weeks. The Mafeking roundabout is also undergoing resurfacing works.

The Clerk advised that works on the new leisure centre will commence on the 7th February 2021.

Cllr Byard asked for an update on the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and if resurfacing works on First Avenue in Stobhill had been included.

Cllr D Bawn advised that it had not been published yet as NCC's budget had not been approved yet.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) Cllr D Bawn to check if First Avenue had been included in the LTP.

159/20 Local Council Issues

Cllr Hogg enquired when NCC will inform members of the public if the local elections will be postponed.

Cllr D Bawn advised that notice of election will be posted on the 29th March 2021. Legally elections will be called after this date.

The Clerk advised that a letter will be posted this week to encourage members of the public to apply for a postal vote.

Cllr R Wearmouth provided the following updates:

- Works at the new leisure centre are progressing and should beginning week commencing the 8th February 2021.
- The works on car park at the old Goosehill school site are progressing.
- Works on the Curly Kews will begin shortly, the railings will be repaired, and an anti-slip coating will be added to the road to prevent future accidents.
- Footpaths in Kirkhill are undergoing some repairs. This includes Postern Crescent, Crawhill Crescent and Woodhill Drive.

Cllr Byard enquired if there had been any update on the roundabout at the NHS Health Centre.

Cllr R Wearmouth advised that there is no update as of yet, but himself, the Clerk and County Councillors are chasing the developers for a response.

Cllr Hogg enquired about the new estate at Lancaster Park.

Cllr R Wearmouth advised that there had been no update, but that the developers had included traffic lights rather than a roundabout at the junction of the new estate.

Cllr D Bawn advised that a meeting had taken place with the developers to discuss installing a roundabout instead of traffic lights, unfortunately they are not interested.

Cllr Hogg advised that the South Field estate will be undergoing works on the two estate entrances and the two bus stops will also be finished. These works will be completed within four weeks.

RESOLVED

(i) Information duly noted.

Cllr R Wearmouth arrived at 6:59pm.

The meeting concluded at 7:05pm with Councillors A Byard, D Bawn, N Bawn, N Best, J Gebhard, R Hogg, J Parreira, and R Wearmouth.