

MORPETH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 24th March 2021 at 6:30pm Via Zoom

Present:

Councillors:	D Bawn	- Mayor
	N Bawn	
	N Best	
	A Byard	
	J Gebhard	
	R Hogg	
	A Tebbutt	
	J Tebbutt	
	R Wearmouth	

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

Absent Councillors:	Councillor L Cassie	- No Apologies Received
	Councillor D Herne	- No Apologies Received
	Councillor K Holmes	- No Apologies Received
	Councillor J Parreira	- No Apologies Received
	Councillor R Thompson	- No Apologies Received
	Councillor J Wearmouth	- No Apologies Received

Open Session

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

209/20 Committee Chairman's Announcements

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

210/20 Mayoral Announcements

- All mayoral activities have been suspended due to the new government restrictions.
- The Mayor is in the process of organising more online fundraisers. There may also be outdoor fundraising events in May 2021, government guidelines permitting.
- The Mayor offered his heartfelt thanks to those councillors who will not be standing in the next elections on the 6th May 2021. These include Cllrs N Best, N Bawn, J Gebhard, L Cassie, A Tebbutt and J Tebbutt. During their term these councillors were

involved in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, the Conservation Area, flood defence strategy and many other successful projects in Morpeth.

211/20 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman received no declarations of interest on this occasion.

212/20 Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on Wednesday 20th January 2021

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

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) That the Minutes of 20th January 2021, a copy of which had been previously circulated to each Member, be approved, and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

213/20 Matters Arising from Full Council held on Wednesday 20th January 2021

There were no matters arising on this occasion.

214/20 Items Referred from Other Committees and Working Groups

Finance and General Purposes

i. Final Accounts – Year End Procedures

Members were asked to approve the following documents as adopted by the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

(a) Internal Audit Policy and Risk Assessments

A vote was taken: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

(b) Annual Treasury Management Policy – 2022/23

A vote was taken: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the Internal Audit Policy and Risk Assessment.
- (ii) To approve the Annual Treasury Management Policy – 2022/23.

Planning and Transport

i. Morpeth Conservation Area Boundary Review

Members were asked to approve the Conservation Area Boundary Review.

Cllr Best advised members that the final draft of the review includes Howard Road and the police station site, however, Auburn Terrace has been removed from the document. If the review is approved it will need to be approved and adopted by Northumberland County Council (NCC) Full Council.

A vote was taken: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the Morpeth Conservation Area Boundary Review and refer it to NCC for adoption.

215/20 Boundary Review Update

Members were provided for information with a letter received from the NCC Deputy Chief Executive.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

216/20 Northumberland County Council (NCC) Covid Grant/Business Rate Relief

Cllr Hogg advised members that she had been contacted by Play Co. who are not able to access a grant due to the impact of COVID-19 as they had not yet opened their business. They are concerned that they may be required to pay business rates while still closed for business.

Cllr Hogg enquired if the Town Council could support this new business to seek financial relief from NCC or apply for a discretionary payment.

Cllr D Bawn advised that he has emailed the Revenues and Benefits Team at NCC but has not yet received a reply.

Cllr R Wearmouth agreed that the Town Council should support Play Co., however, he advised that NCC have policies to follow regarding relief funds due to COVID-19, and that in order for Play Co. to be granted relief they would need to fall within these policies.

Cllr Best enquired if NCC would be able to postpone bills until they are able to make an income.

Cllr R Wearmouth advised that the best course of action would be for Play Co. to get in touch with NCC to agree upon a payment plan in order to make repayment more manageable.

Cllr D Bawn informed members that he would chase Revenues and Benefits and suggested that if the response received is not positive that the Town Council write to NCC to support Play Co.

Cllr Gebhard suggested that as Play Co. are not intending to make a profit and they provide facilities for children with special needs they may be able to seek a grant from organisations other than NCC to help with costs.

Cllr Hogg suggested that if NCC are unable to provide any relief from business rates payments that the Town Council assist Play Co. in seeking help elsewhere.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) Cllr D Bawn to chase NCC Revenues and Benefits for a response.
- (iii) That the Town Council will assist the business where possible.

217/20 Representatives on Outside Bodies

Members were provided for information with the Outside Organisation reports.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

218/20 Strategic County Councillor Updates

Members were provided for information with the County Councillor updates.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

219/20 Local Council Issues

There were no issues on this occasion.

RESOLVED

(i) Information duly noted.

Members unanimously agreed that the following resolution be passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting to discuss the following item in closed session:

“That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the disclosure of the following items on the agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of schedule 12A in the 1972 Act as indicated below:

Issues concerning: Staffing

There was no other business to discuss and the meeting concluded at 7:12pm with Councillors D Bawn, N Bawn, N Best, A Byard, J Gebhard, R Hogg, A Tebbutt, J Tebbutt and R Wearmouth present.