

Minutes of the Harworth and Bircotes Town Council meeting held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7.15pm at the Town Hall, Scrooby Road, Bircotes, DN11 8JP.

**Present:** Cllr Evans (Chair), Cllr Jones, Cllr Smith, Cllr Schuller, Cllr Horrocks, Cllr James, Cllr Flynn, Cllr A Harrison, Cllr S Harrison and Cllr Whitehead

**Others:** Mrs W Davies (Officer), Mrs K Tarburton (Community Development and Funding Manager) and members of the public

**17717 To receive and consider any apologies and reasons for absence**

Cllr James proposed to approve the apologies and reason from Cllr Wratten and Cllr Sidwell; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**17718 To receive Declaration of Interest on any item on the agenda**

Declaration of Interests received from Cllr Evans for planning application 25/00071/COU and Cllr Horrocks for the review of allotment fees.

**17719 To suspend the meeting to hold a public session and receive reports from Police, District & County Councillors**

The Chair suspended the meeting to allow members of the public to speak.

- Permission was given for a resident to put a banner, lights & bunting for one day 23<sup>rd</sup> March on the memorial garden as a way to raise awareness of Down Syndrome
- Confirmation was given to the Harworth Brass Band that the collection and returning dates for the trailer during the concert weekends was agreed. The band will also be attending the Town Council's Christmas event
- A question was asked regarding the funding for the North Border School; this would come under the County and District Councils. A question was also asked about the open space area re planning application 25/00045/RES – Cllr Schuller will pass on information

**17720 To receive the Chair's report**

**The destroyed C.C.T.V. pole/camera.** Planning permission has been granted for a replacement pole. We now wait for County/Highways.

**The Miners Memorial.** The repair work has been completed, and the memorial is looking good again!

**Westmorland House.** Your three ward councillors met with the Head of Housing and gained the following information:

- a. Housing is waiting for the installation of electric/gas metres. A delay involved discussion with Western Power, who wanted to increase the supply of electricity at a cost of £100k...this has now been resolved.
- b. Residents in Conway Gardens are being consulted about a temporary move to Westmorland House, to allow their current accommodation to be refurbished (estimated to take 1 year, once started). Should there be any empty flats during this time, residents will be able to bid for them.

**Community Centres.** This was raised at the same meeting. We were told that, due to a problem with another parish, each community centre has to be assessed for future use

dependent on need, in each community. One option is transfer to a parish/town council – the Head of Housing thinks this will not be a problem for Harworth & Bircotes. When will this happen? No date can be given. Currently, the two staff in Estates are doing the community centre assessments, plus working on Right-to-Buy applications, plus in-depth assessments of industrial sites owned by Bassetlaw District Council.

### **Council Houses: Changes to Tenants Right-to-Buy**

The Right to Buy scheme was designed to allow council tenants to buy their council homes at a discount. Approximately two million homes have been sold in this way over the last 30 years. The scheme has proved to be attractive because of the generous discounts, based on:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| a. Length of tenancy | the discount will be less if the landlord |
| b. Type of property  | has spent money on maintaining your       |
| c. Value of property | home                                      |

Growing government concern about the reduction of council properties available/length of waiting lists for housing led to a new, reduced maximum discount starting from November 21<sup>st</sup> 2024: the maximum discounts have been substantially reduced to £16,000 in East Midlands area, or 70% of the value of your property, whichever is the lower.

Bassetlaw District Council Housing subsequently received a flood of Right-to-Buy applications prior to the November deadline, hence the increased workload for Estates.

### **The English Devolution White Paper: Reorganisation of Local Authorities**

All Districts in Nottinghamshire are collaboratively discussing options – there is little support for one super-sized unity, and a preference for two unitary organisations. The question then arises – which districts will merge to achieve this?

As you can imagine, the ramifications/concerns are wide and complicated. A proposal has to be with Government by 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

### **Bassetlaw Design Code Consultation**

Bassetlaw District Council is currently consulting the community and interested parties on the first stage of the new Bassetlaw Design Code, designed to help set design quality standards for new buildings and spaces; it will be an important tool for everyone delivering new developments across Bassetlaw and managed by a Design Code Panel. The Design Code will provide more information about the design policies in the Bassetlaw Local Plan, and once adopted, will be used in deciding planning applications.

A key part of the consultation is feedback from local communities, about what makes a place special and what works well and not so well, in terms of the design of buildings, streets and spaces. Many areas in the district are covered by Neighbourhood Plans which have their own design codes. These will stay – the new district Design Code will provide a framework to guide locally specific neighbourhood plan design codes in the future.

The findings from this consultation will feed into the draft Design Code which will be available for consultation in Summer 2025.

There are four key themes to note:

1. Connections
2. Built form
3. Nature

#### 4. Activity

Harworth & Bircotes is classed as a Main Town, along with Retford and Worksop; it is also seen as an area of business and industrial activity.

All documents can be viewed on the digital portal [my.engaged.space/bassetlawdesigncode](https://my.engaged.space/bassetlawdesigncode), at the Council offices in Worksop, Retford and Harworth & Bircotes, and libraries in the district during normal opening hours. Alternatively, freephone 0800 170 1223 for a copy of the consultation material. **The consultation will run for 6 weeks and closes at 5pm on 28th March 2025**

#### **17721 To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Cllr Flynn proposed to approve the minutes of the meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> January as a true record; this was seconded by Cllr James and resolved by the Council. The Chair duly signed the minutes.

#### **17722 To receive the cemetery Health & Safety reports**

- Cllr S Harrison reported that he has not been able to do his inspection until tomorrow; he will report back to the Officer if there are any issues
- Cllr Jones reported that the new cemetery is looking very well, and no issues raised
- The Officer reported that the dog fouling signs have been received and now ready for installation in each cemetery
- The fabricator has carried out repairs to the damaged gates in readiness for the electrician to fit the motors, at that point he will make some guards to protect the gates. The fabricator offered to install a temporary CCTV camera until something more permanent is installed

#### **17723 To consider planning applications as listed and any planning correspondence**

**Application:** 20/01182/FUL

**Proposal:** Erect one dwelling

**Location:** Garden of 1 Essex Road, Bircotes

**Consideration:** No objections

**Application:** 25/00071/COU

**Proposal:** Change of use of existing garage into a Hair salon and utility room

**Location:** 57 Baulk Lane, Harworth

**Consideration:** No objections but comments made regarding addition parking on Baulk (Cllr Evans did not take part in the consideration of this application)

**Application:** 25/00045/RES

**Proposal:** Reserved matters for the landscaping of Blyth Road gateway and country park footpath including discharge conditions 6 (future management) 18 (landscape management) 19 (landscape treatment) 21 (CEMP report) 25 (Ecology report) on P.A 18/01210/OUT)

**Location:** Land south of Scrooby Road, and north of Snape Lane, Harworth

**Consideration:** Additional information required

**Application:** 25/00121/HSE

**Proposal:** First floor rear extension

**Location:** 5 Norfolk Drive, Bircotes

**Consideration:** No objections

**Application:** 25/00131/VOC  
**Proposal:** Vary condition one of P.A 21/01377/RES  
**Location:** Land of Scrooby Road, Bircotes  
**Consideration:** Additional information required

Nottinghamshire County Council's Blyth Road, Harworth (40 mph speed limit) Order 2025 (1317)  
 Plus, the 40mph

**Consideration: To support the 40-mph speed limit.**

Cllr Jones proposed to approve the above considerations; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**17724 To receive the Town Hall and Information Centre's fire risk assessment**

The Officer reported that the Information Centre's fire independent risk assessment was carried out with no actions required. The Town Hall – only one action was to remove a powder extinguisher left at the hall as these are not in general use.

Cllr S Harrison proposed to accept the fire risk assessments and to remove the extinguisher as recommended; this was seconded by Cllr Whitehead and resolved by the Council.

**17725 To consider payments as listed and the financial reports for 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

The Officer previously circulated payments for approval, bank reconciliations and bank statements, budget, variances, reserves and ear marked reserves for the Councillors to view. Cllr Flynn and Cllr James confirmed the bank statements balances against the financial documents and signed the documents.

Cllr James proposed to approve the payments and financial reports as above; this was seconded by Cllr A Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17726 To receive to Interim report of the Internal Audit for 2024-25**

Cllr Flynn proposed to accept the interim Internal Audit report for 2024-25; this was seconded by Cllr A Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17727 To consider increasing the fidelity guarantee**

Cllr Jones proposed to increase the fidelity guarantee insurance to £1 million; this was seconded by Cllr James and resolved by the Council.

**17728 To consider the quotations for work required on the allotment trees**

The Officer obtained three quotations for the tree and hedge work required on the allotments; Cllr Whitehead proposed to accept the quotation from TVH Tree Care; this was seconded by Cllr James and resolved by the Council.

**17729 To consider extension of the of electric supply in the old cemetery to the garage for CCTV**

Cllr Flynn proposed to extend the electric supply into the garage to enable installation of CCTV camera; this was seconded by Cllr A Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17730 To consider appointing a tree surveyor to monitor the Town Council trees**

The Officer requested that the Council considers having an arborist on contract, 3 years as an example, to carry out health checks on the trees sited on the Town Council's land. This would cover the cemeteries, Miners Memorial Garden, Village Green and the tree at the front of the car park.

After discussion, Cllr S Harrison proposed to appoint an arborist to carry out checks on the Council's trees; this was seconded by Cllr A Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17731 To review the Health & Safety General Policy Statement**

Cllr Flynn proposed to approve the Health & Safety Policy Statement; this was seconded by Cllr S Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17732 To consider contribution toward the Health & Wellbeing event**

After consideration, Cllr Horrocks proposed to contribute £1,000 toward the Health & Wellbeing event as working in partnership with the organisers; this was seconded by Cllr Schuller and resolved by the Council

**17733 To review fees**

K Tarburton went through the current fees for the Hire of the Town Hall, Allotments and Cemeteries. After discussions it was decided not to increase fees this year and to give 12 months' notice of any increase of fees in 2026-27. A November deadline this year was suggested to propose the increase of fees ready for the budget figures.

Cllr James proposed an increase of fees in 2026-27 as above; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**17734 To consider the Terms of Reference for the HR Committee and to receive their recommendations for the new and replaced vacancies**

Cllr S Harrison proposed to approve the HR Committee's Term of Reference; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

At this point under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1860 the member of public were asked to leave to enable discussion regarding staff.

The Chair recommended applicants approved by the HR Committee for the posts of the new Caretaker and part time Deputy Clerk.

Cllr Flynn proposed to approve the new Caretaker and Deputy Clerk; this was seconded by Cllr S Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17735 To receive items for information**

- At this point, the Chair reported that Cllr Teresa has now resigned from the Town Council
- The Officer reported on the comparison of the electric and gas costs which Unity Aid are dealing with on our behalf

**17736 Time and date of the next scheduled Town Council meeting**

The next Town Council meeting will be held at 7.15pm on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at the Town Hall, Scrooby Road, Bircotes, DN11 8JP

**Bank reconciliation as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**Bank Statement Balances:

31.12.2024	Natwest Current	£228,589.32	
31.12.2024	Natwest Deposit	£133,091.72	
31.12.2024	Unity Trust Current	£188,721.55	
31.12.2024	Unity Trust Deposit	£107,425.21	
			£657,827.80
	Less unrepresented payment		£000,000.00
	Plus receipts not on bank statements		<u>£000,000.00</u>
			£657,827.80

Closing cash book balances:

Natwest Current	£228,589.32	
Natwest Deposit	£133,091.72	
Unity Trust Current	£188,721.55	
Unity Trust Deposit	<u>£107,425.21</u>	
		<u>£657,827.80</u>

Represented by:

General Reserves	£407,836.22	
Earmarked Reserves	<u>£249,991.58</u>	
		<u>£657,827.80</u>