

Council

Minutes of Proceedings

At the **Ordinary Meeting of the District Council of Ryedale** held in the **Council Chamber, Ryedale House, Malton** on **Thursday 19 May 2011**

Present

Councillors S Arnold (In the Chair)
 P J Andrews
 J R Bailey
 Mrs L M Burr MBE
 J S Clark
 Mrs L Cowling
 D E Cussons
 Mrs J Frank
 J Fraser
 Mrs C Goodrick
 G E Hawkins
 J Hicks
 E Hope
 Mrs A D Hopkinson
 L Ives
 K A Knaggs
 Mrs L V Knaggs
 B Maud
 J R Raper
 L Richardson
 Mrs J Sanderson
 Mrs E L Shields
 C R Wainwright
 P Walker
 S Ward
 J Windress
 T B Woodward

In Attendance

Mrs L Carter, Miss J Waggott and A Winship

Reverend D Emison

Minutes

14 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Acomb, Mrs Denniss and Legard.

15 **Staff Celebration Awards Presentation**

The Member Champion for Staff Issues, Councillor Mrs Burr, presented the following Staff Celebration Awards:

- Excellence in Leadership – Beckie Bennett, Streetscene Manager
- Outstanding Achievement by a Team – Northgate Implementation Team consisting of Angela Jones, Debbie Armitage, Sherri Williams, Marcus Lee, Alan McCarten and Mick Phythian
- Excellence in Customer Service – (Joint Winners) – ICT Support Team and Helpdesk consisting of: Tim Sedman, Paul Taylor and Anne Bullock
Malton Tourist Information Centre Team consisting of: Julie Blanchard, Chris Barnard, Patrick Swindell and Julie Flinton
- Community Focus – Sandi Clark, Crime and Disorder Officer
- Innovation and Improvement – Louise Lunn, Business Liaison Manager
- Service Transformation – Debbie Armitage, Senior Benefits Officer.

Following the above presentations, Councillor Knaggs presented Barbara Jones, retiring palantypist, with a gift. Barbara had provided palantype support for the last 13 years.

16 **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

17 **Minutes**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 10 March 2011 were presented.

Resolved

That the minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 10 March 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18 **Urgent Business**

There were no items which the Chairman considered should be dealt with at the meeting as a matter of urgency by virtue of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

19 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

20 Announcements

The Chairman reminded Members that mandatory training was to take place for all Members on the following two subjects, Licensing training on Wednesday 25 May at 6.30 pm and Planning training on Wednesday 1 June at 6.30 pm at Ryedale House. The Chairman reported that in the event that Members did not have this training they would not be able to sit, or be a substitute, on the respective Committees.

21 To Receive any Questions submitted by Members Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10.2 (Questions on Notice at Full Council)

The Chairman reported that two questions had been received from Councillor Clark. The Chairman invited Councillor Clark to put his first question.

Question 1

To the Chair of Policy & Resources:

I wish to know how many employment cases have been taken by RDC employees to employment tribunal. Of these could you please supply the following numbers?

- a. How many cases were won at tribunal over the last 3 years?
- b. How many cases were lost at tribunal over the last 3 years?
- c. How many cases were settled before going to tribunal over the last 3 years?
- d. How many cases were withdrawn by the employee over the last 3 years?
- e. What was the total financial cost to RDC in each of the last three financial years?

The Chairman of Council suggested that as the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee was not present at the meeting, Councillor Clark receive a written response. Alternatively a verbal response by the Chairman of the Committee could be given at the next meeting of Council.

The Chairman of Council invited Councillor Clark to put his second question.

Question 2

To the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny:

On the basis that, over the next four years, policies are likely to be similar to those over the last four years, what does the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny believe should have had more scrutiny over the last four years? Does he/she intend to pursue these issues over the next year?

Councillor Wainwright, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee responded:

"Councillor Clark will know full well being a member of that committee what the scrutiny committee has been doing over the past 4 years. They have been examining the Community Safety Plan. They have been examining the Safer Ryedale Action Plan which deals with domestic violence, safer roads, alcohol harm reduction and community priorities. There are also the scrutiny reviews ongoing, on healthy weight and post offices and I'm sure that the officers will help us to continue those investigations over the next year."

Councillor Clark then asked a supplementary question:

"You've come back with an answer of not a single thing that you think should be questioned. That isn't a good start for you as chair?"

Cllr Wainwright responded:

"Yes, I shall look forward to the first meeting when I assume that you will be on the committee and the committee will then decide along with my advice as to what we shall be investigating over the next year and four years."

22 **To Receive a Statement from the Leader of the Council and to Receive Questions and Give Answers on that Statement**

Councillor Knaggs, Leader of the Council, submitted the following statement:

The local political landscape has changed with the election of 20 Conservatives to the 30 seats on Ryedale District Council. This involved the departure of 11 hard-working councillors with significant records of public service and I pay tribute to them all.

It is the first time in the council's history that any group has majority control. Does this mean revolution or does it mean the same old council in the same old way? Neither. In an uncertain world we need to provide more certainty as to what will happen in our community, and more certainty for council staff about their future. I aim to start the process of evolution with clarity of focus about what matters most.

The big issues are

1. *Ryedale needs better paying, better quality jobs. This means we need more and well-located employment land and a Local Economic Partnership for North Yorkshire that gets results.*
2. *Ryedale needs a range of homes particularly for younger people. This means we must push forward the Local Development Framework and resist attempts to delay it further.*
3. *Ryedale needs its countryside. That is what a huge majority cite as the best thing about Ryedale. That countryside is a farmed landscape, which means we need greater attention to the farming community and its supply chain including the future of the livestock market, drainage and a host of rural issues.*
4. *Ryedale needs prudent management of the council's money. We have £700,000 in savings to find this year. We must rebalance the capital programme even further towards the encouragement of enterprise and provision of basic infrastructure. That provision will be based on realism about what we can and can't do which has at times been lacking.*

We start with good news. Thanks to our proactive approach to the "Slow the Flow" project, we have received £127,500 from the Environment Agency to fund flood resilience measures for 30 homes at Kirby Mills, a valuable contribution to the target of reducing uncertainty in an uncertain world.

The cycle of committee meetings begins with the Commissioning Board which will consider important matters relating to housing grants and to the capital programme.

Some might expect me to seek to introduce a cabinet or executive model of governance. I've thought about it. But I believe that, unless mere obstructionism and delay for its own sake is allowed to squeeze out reasoned debate, the benefits of having most members play an active part in decision-making plus the greater openness of the committee system outweigh the disadvantages of slower decision-making. In any case we can act swiftly when we need to. For councillors themselves I have one ambition. In 4 years time I hope that the public will no longer be presented with and shocked by deliberate time-wasting, procedural wrangling, and an evident lack of respect for other members that we've seen over the last 8 years at full council meetings.

Councillor Mrs Cowling referred to 'Slowing the Flow' and reported that it was understood that it might be some time before the North Yorkshire County Council would be making a decision. Councillor Mrs Cowling requested that Councillor Knaggs pursue the matter with the County Council.

23 **Any Other Items That the Chairman Decides To Be Urgent.**

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.15 pm.