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Appendix 1

Billingham Town Council

Achievements since inception in May 2007

- Elected 15 councillors to represent 5 wards
- Secured office space
- Appointed an Executive Officer
- Set up an office with relevant practices and procedures in place
- Development production of a community calendar
- Produced 5 newsletters to residents after which we progressed onto Billingham Community Newspaper.
- Installed 8 entrance signs "Welcome to Billingham" to give our town identity
- We have sited 29 flower tubs around Billingham and 8 planters at the base of the entrance signs "Welcome to Billingham" in partnership with Shaw Trust
- Delivered 5 very successful Christmas events in John Whitehead Park
- Employed an Office Co-ordinator, Temporary Events/PR Co-ordinator and Business Administration Apprentice
- **Communities Fund:** we have been an integral partner in the delivery of an employment programme funded by Know How North East up to 2010 we employed a Community Development Officer to assist in bringing this service to Billingham
- Community Newspaper: we have been instrumental in assisting in the setting up of the well-received Billingham Community Newspaper
- **Dog/Litter bins:** we have placed 6 litter bins and 18 dog fouling bins throughout Billingham
- **Community Orchard:** we have registered an interest to Stockton Borough Council in developing the peninsula area of Osbourne Park into a community orchard
- **Enforcement:** we sponsor extra hours of enforcement provision with two dedicated Officers who patrol Billingham on Friday and Saturday evenings from 7pm – 10pm
- **Website:** set up and upgraded (continued work in progress)
- Launched a "Keep Billingham Tidy Campaign"
- **Pride of Billingham Awards:** launched at AGM in 2010
- **Coat of Arms:** Lydia Bailey, student at St. Michaels Secondary School, Billingham designed our coat of arms in October 2011 which was then made into a Chairman and Vice Chairman's pendant.
- Supporting local community groups, events, charities and organisations with donations who carry out projects that benefit the community
- Traffic calming schemes working with Community Engineers to look at providing traffic calming schemes via area transport strategy group at Stockton Borough Council
- Supporting/assisting with the proposed new developments for John Whitehead Park Bowls Club.
- Assisting the Bowls Club at the Forum to find an alternative location for the club
- Established a Youth Council (2013)
- Developing and delivery of a Summer, Halloween and our 6th Christmas event in 2013 – now onto our 8th.
- Supporting the development of a designated site for skateboarding/BMX in John Whitehead Park – Executive Officer Chairs the Sport in the Park Steering Committee
- Instrumental in bringing training facilities to local town/parish Councils in the region
- Consulted with businesses and Stockton Borough Council to ensure that any community benefit funds generated from new ventures must be kept within Billingham for the people of Billingham to directly from
- Executive Officer has qualified and gained a Certificate in Local Council Administration (one of the first in Tees Valley)
- Executive Officer has qualified in the "General Power of Competence" which allows the Town Council to have more power in assisting the community with projects/developments.
- Working in partnership with the Community & Voluntary sectors to preserve/protect and retain community assets such as community centres and libraries

- **Allotments:** working closely with residents and Stockton Borough Council and the allotment association in Billingham to identify viable land that will cater for the needs of 100 potential allotment holders
- **Billingham Train Station:** continue to lobby for improved accessibility to the station
- **Looking to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Billingham:** preparations have commenced to develop a neighbourhood plan and we are looking to develop a Stakeholder Group which will be made up of all groups working collectively within Billingham who carry out fantastic work for our community
- **Achieved Quality Town Council Status** (only second Council in Cleveland to achieve this status)
- Sponsors of Billingham International Folklore Festival & Billingham Carnival and Garden Show
- Assisting Billingham Foodbank with the setting up of the new site in Billingham Town Centre and assisting with funding applications (which have been successful targeting industry in Billingham)
- Assisting St Cuthbert's Church with renovations to the Church Hall looking at potential funding streams and project managing on their behalf. – **Achieved this in 2014**
- Sustainability of cafe opening in spring 2014 in line with the skate park development.
- **Entered into a management agreement with Stockton Borough Council in assisting managing services in John Whitehead Park** such as; new skate park facilities, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), outdoor exercise equipment and tennis courts.
- Successful in obtaining funding to renovate the rooms adjacent to the cafe to form a youth hub to accompany the multi-wheeled sports area (£ 27,000)
- Working in partnership with Stockton Borough Council we recently installed a suite of outdoor exercise equipment in John Whitehead Park. We run a series of free training sessions and events that will help local residents to learn how to get the most out of this equipment (Billingham Town Council applied for the funding and were awarded £ 16,000 from PCT and £ 500 from Grants 4 Health)
- Assisting residents with the Billingham Time Capsule project
- Representation at Northern Area Partnership Board, Parish Liaison Forum, Safer Billingham Partnership, Billingham Environmental Link Programme, Billingham Legacy Foundation, A19 Noise Action Group, Northern Area Transport Strategy Group and attendance at resident association meetings
- Working with Stockton Borough Council we will be moving into the new service centre in Billingham Town Centre in 2014. This will enable us to be more visible and more available for public to access our office.
- Day to day assistance to residents with queries – sign posting to appropriate services.
- Assisting residents with transport needs and issues (Isolated areas such as Port Clarence and Cowpen Bewley)
- Providing the Management for John Whitehead Park (Tennis Courts, Skate park, Cafe, Youth Hub, Outdoor Exercise Equipment)
- Open the cafe, skate park and Youth Hub in John Whitehead Park
- Develop management of services for the Cafe and Youth Hub
- **Events:** Easter, Summer Halloween and Traditional Christmas Event
- **Sporting Strategy:** bringing sports together in Billingham
- Looking to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Billingham
- Tree planting scheme in Billingham
- Development of new website
- Support the Youth Council to develop their Beautiful Billingham Campaign
- **Events:** Easter, Summer, Halloween, Traditional Christmas event and Carol Service.

What's to come in 2014/15 – lots more to come including a community garden!

The list above is not exhaustive of what the council has delivered and achieved over the past 8 years it give you an outline of how we aim and have succeeded in being a community focused council.

2014/15 has seen the development of the projects in John Whitehead Park expand in to a very successful cohesive service encapsulating the essence of community spirit and participation.

We are excited about 2016 as we have attracted external funding for the next phase of our developments, and have built up further partnerships for linked up working and delivery.

Appendix 2



BILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Summary of Precept	2014/15
	£
Management & Support costs	89,131
Running costs	22,900
Recreation & Leisure (events)	10,000
Environmental Projects	20,500
Community Projects (incl. John Whitehead Park)	29,431
Grants	3,000
Election Costs	0
Other	8,760
Total Cost	183,722
Less : Local Council Tax Support Grant	-23,509
Precept	160,213

For further information please contact Billingham Town Council on 01642 551171

2015/16

£

92,622

25,350

14,700

3,000

55,525

2,000

13,000

9,060

215,257

-23,509

191,748

Trainer, Judith

From: Kevin Pitt <kevin@belp-enterprise.co.uk>
Sent: 28 October 2015 12:28
To: Bond, David
Cc: Smith, Kelly; Featherstone, Laurayne; Trainer, Judith
Subject: Community Governance Review NLF response
Attachments: Feedback for the Community Governance Review.pdf; NHW response.docx

As the Chair of the Northern Locality Forum please see below and attached the views of the Forum.

Representatives from the Northern Locality Forum who are not Public Sector representatives or are delivering contracts for the public sector were tasked to consult with their representative groups on the Community Governance Review. Feedback had to be agreed by their nominated group in advance and put in writing (see attached). This was then presented at a special meeting on the 22nd October 2015.

There were mixed responses from the eight eligible representatives at the meeting:

- 2 groups noted to keep the Town Council;
- 1 noted to abolish the Town Council;
- 4 noted that they were neutral on the issue; and
- 1 representative had not had consult with their nominated group

Following the meeting another neutral response from a representative group was also submitted electronically.

Please accept this statement and the attached feedback as the view of the Northern Locality Forum.

Kevin Pitt



New Life Family Centre

A SureStart Children's Centre



Low Grange Avenue, Billingham, TS23 3EQ
Tel: **Admin** 01642 370880, **Day Care Nursery** 01642 647244, **After School Care** 01642 647009
e-mail: nlfamilycentre@btconnect.com
www.nlc-teesside.com
"A project of New Life Church, Teesside"

20th October 2015

Dear Chair

I am the manager of New Life Day Care and the above centre has been working in partnership with BTC for several years on various projects that bring benefit to the local community, our partnership has enabled us to give quality service to our town.

We are currently working with them on a project both here at New Life and at John Whitehead Park, we have four young people from America who have raised their own support/ sponsorship to stay here for a year. The young people are working in the park promoting sports and interacting with teenagers who use the park facilities, we have also had groups of American's here at different time over the last 2 years doing camp of champions in the park that has reached both primary and senior age groups. This year a 300 strong choir from America also performed a concert in the park.

Our working relationship with BTC has highlighted to us that BTC have the best interests of our local community at the fore, and therefore we would have no hesitancy in giving them our full support to remain in office to do the job that they are doing so well in the interests of the people of Billingham.

Yours Faithfully

Michele Smith



New Life Church, Teesside is an incorporated company limited by guarantee and registered in England and a registered charity.
Registered Charity Number 1147241 – Registered Company Number 07920190
Registered Office at: Low Grange Avenue, Billingham, TS23 3DP
In Fellowship with Assemblies of God in Great Britain

Smith, Kelly

From: Colin <colin.pollard2@ntlworld.com>
Sent: 26 October 2015 12:56
To: Smith, Kelly
Subject: Fw: my presentation to the locality forum

As promised. Colin

From: Colin
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2015 5:25 PM
To: laurayne.featherstone@stockton.co.uk
Subject: my presentation to the locality forum

As promised on our phone conversation earlier today.

Billingham Town Council believes unanimously that there is no case whatever for it to be abolished.

The basis on which a group of residents is seeking the abolition of BTC is contained within the petition. It states: ".....its excessive administration costs are a financial burden on the people of Billingham in our view. It provides nothing of value or benefit to the community. We feel that it does not engage with or speak for those it is meant to serve, and only promotes for its own self interest."

The second and third sentences are frankly sheer fantasy, as any reading of our article in the latest edition of the Community Newspaper or our newsletters shows.

So, now to the first sentence. What financial burden? The current cost of our precept to Billingham residents ranges between 28p to 47p per household per week (between properties Band A to Band E)

If you look at the wider picture you should note the following: there are currently 31 out of just under 9,000 town/parish councils in England with populations of between 30,000 and 40,000 (Billingham has just over 35,000) Incidentally, we are about the 30th largest town council in England.

Our precept charge, including a government grant of about £24,000, amounts to roughly £215,000, but the average precept of the other 31 comes in at over £750,000. In terms of a Band D property (usually taken as the average) our residents pay £22, whereas the average of the other 31 is a shade under £69.

Our precept charge has risen over the years since we set our own precept for the financial year 2008/9.

Then the charge for a Band B property, for example, amounted to 12p per week. It now stands at 33p per week, i.e. an average increase over those 7 years of 3p per week.

I repeat: what financial burden?

Councillor Colin Pollard representing Billingham Town Council.



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www.avast.com

Billingham Voice

A virtual meeting of the Billingham Voice was held. A total of twelve representatives of the Billingham Voice replied.

The replies were as follows:

2 to keep the Town Council
10 to abolish the Town Council

Jim Scollen

**Ref - Stockton Borough Council Request to The Northern Locality Forum
Member Organisations on their view of Billingham Town Council (BTC)**

The Billingham Legacy Foundation Ltd is a not for profit Limited by Guarantee organisation that works on a pure voluntary basis for the benefit of people in the area.

It has a Board of Governance that is made up of with representatives from the area which includes a place for an elected member of BTC. Directors of the Billingham Legacy Foundation also have places on this board.

An elected member of Stockton Borough Council also has a seat on the Governance Board and regularly attends meetings and participates in the BLF Governance process and, when requested will make decisions on grant application requests made to the Foundation.

Apart from the Governance Board representation there has been no partnership involvement / links or engagement with BTC over the past two years. We acknowledge that BTC did make a single payment into the BLF endowment trust fund, a contribution that has not subsequently been maintained as part of BTC's annual giving.

The BLF are neutral with regards to the question of should BTC remain in existence.

Billingham Town Council

I carried out a limited Face to Face simple survey of 18 businesses situated in Mill Lane, Station Road and the town centre. I selected small to medium businesses where I was most likely to speak to a manager or owner. I explained that I was carrying out a survey regarding the future of the Town Council following a petition presented to Stockton Borough Council to abolish it. I made it clear that I was not seeking views as residents but specifically as business owners/managers. I asked 3 simple questions:

Do you know we have a Town Council?

15 said yes and 3 said no. In percentage terms 83% said yes 17% said no.

Of those who answered yes 6 said they only became aware of the existence of the town council following the recent controversy.

Has having a Town Council had any effect on your business?

18 said no. In percentage terms 100% said no effect

What is your opinion of the future of the Town Council? Retain / abolish / no opinion?

3 said retain it. 8 said abolish it. 7 said they had no opinion on this.

In percentage terms 17% said retain. 44% said abolish it. 39% had no opinion.

I realise that this is just a small sample but given time restraints ^{it} ~~it~~ was the best that I could do,

Gil Smith

Old Billingham Residents Association

As a residents group, we are very disappointed that Billingham Town Council has not engaged with the residents group since its inception.

We consider that the existence of the Town Council is a matter for the residents of Billingham to vote on and as an organisation we are neutral on the matter.

Val Scollen

Chairperson

V. Scollen



Thursday 22nd October 2015

**Ref - Stockton Borough Council Request to The Northern Locality Forum
Member Organisations on their view of Billingham Town Council (BTC)**

The Billingham Environmental Link Programme Ltd (BELP) is a not for profit Limited by Guarantee organisation that works for the benefit of people in the area.

It has a Board of Governance that is made up of a number of representatives from the area including the Directors of the BELP.

An elected member of BTC has a seat on the Governance Board who regularly attends meetings and participates in the BELP Governance process.

Apart from the Governance Board representation there has been no partnership involvement / links or engagement with BTC over the past three years.

The BELP are neutral with regards to the question of should BTC remain in existence.



Kevin Pitt
Strategic Manager
BELP

In response to the purpose of this meeting and on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch in Billingham and Wolviston we would advise that NHW aims are to promote good citizenship and greater public participation in the reduction of crime so that effective liaison between the police and the public can be maintained, helping to publicise the efficiency of the police in the Stockton on Tees District. NHW Associations are non political and non-sectarian. We trust that this brief is sufficient for you requirements. Yours faithfully, F.Gook, Chair of Billingham & Wolviston area NHW Association.

STAKEHOLDER OPINION ON BILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Stockton Borough Council (SBC) is currently undertaking a Governance Review of Billingham Town Council (BTC) and stakeholders have been asked for an opinion. As one of the local SBC Councillor for Billingham West Ward I support the continued existence of BTC and would be disappointed to see it wound up.

BTC is a recently created Parish Council and has taken a slightly longer period of time, than I might like, to fully understand its role, its operation and how it conducts its business. It has been dogged from the beginning by a small number of very vocal detractors who have expertly used social media to publish a constant stream of biased opinion, conjecture and personal attacks on BTC Members and staff. In particular I have found the many personal attacks on the Town Clerk on social media to be distasteful and unwarranted.

BTC has made a number of well-publicised mistakes in its very early years, but following guidance these have now been eliminated. This does not mean that BTC does not, like every other public body, have its faults and I believe that with further guidance from SBC it could become better at serving the people of Billingham.

BTC has done an excellent job in the John Whitehead Park, making it a central focus for the people of Billingham, introducing the café and other facilities. The production of themed days throughout the year has also been very successful. The work of the Youth Council is to be specially commended in gaining funding to clean up an eyesore and dumping ground at Harrington's Pond.

Cllr Chris Clough
Billingham West

Waggott, Margaret

From: Atkinson, Helen (Councillor)
Sent: 31 October 2015 15:25
To: Waggott, Margaret
Subject: Governance review

As you know I am an elected councillor for SBC and BTC. I have been on Billingham town council from the start in 2007.

In that time I believe that we have made a difference to Billingham for the residents and Billingham itself. Such a lot would be wasted if the town council was abolished

Regards

Councillor Helen Atkinson
BTC and SBC West Ward
m: 07826 903135
Helen.atkinson2@stockton.gov.uk

Waggott, Margaret

From: KEVIN BOWLER <kevin.bowler2@btinternet.com>
Sent: 04 October 2015 20:35
To: Waggott, Margaret
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review - Billingham Town Council
Attachments: 1 Community Governance Review of Billingham Town Council Representation from the Association of Billingham residents.docx; 2 Timing Community Governance Review of Billingham Town Council Representation from the Association of Billingham residents.docx

Dear Mrs Waggott,

Please find attached 2 documents relating to the BTC Governance review. The first relates to the Governance review itself and the second relates to the proposed timing of the results of the Governance review by SBC.

Regards,
Kevin Bowler.

On Thursday, 24 September 2015, 15:35, "Waggott, Margaret" <Margaret.Waggott@stockton.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Mr Bowler

Please find attached letter in respect to the above.

Kind regards

Susan Clouston

PA to Director of Law and Democracy and to
Head of Democratic Services, Trading Standards & Licensing

Direct Line: **01642 527061**

Email: susan.clouston@stockton.gov.uk

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Community Governance Review of Billingham Town Council Representation from the Association of Billingham residents

The Association of Billingham Residents makes the following representation in respect of the Community Governance Review of Billingham Town Council

Response to Item 16 - Community Governance Review of the Stockton Council Cabinet Meeting Thursday, 10th September, 2015 Section 6: *"Where a review is considering abolishing a parish, the review would need to consider what arrangements would be in place to engage with the communities in those areas once the parish was abolished."*

1. The actual level of engagement of Billingham Town Council (BTC) with communities in the parish currently amounts to little for various reasons that follow. Should BTC be abolished little action if any would therefore be required on the part of Stockton Council to maintain the minimal level of current community engagement.
2. We draw your attention to the fact that both Norton and Stockton are unparished. We are not aware of any perceived issues of community engagement in those localities that are attributable to the lack of a town or parish councils.
3. The services provided by a parish council may to some extent be regarded as forms of community engagement. BTC do not stipulate what services they specifically provide other than by inference on their document entitled "Achievements since inception in May 2007"
4. If the document above is examined, many of the listed items can be regarded as activities that the majority of Town/Parish Councils would simply need to undertake by default as part of their normal duties.
5. Numerous items on the "Achievements since inception in May 2007" list amount to ambiguous interactions with third parties with no meaningful benefit or outcome quoted.
6. The "Achievements" also include requests to third parties to provide items or services where no attempt was made to determine if these were wanted by the parish residents.
7. Most of the initiatives on the "Achievements" list are also those where no evidence of being wanted by residents or measures of success has been provided.
8. Since BTC provide no actual direct services themselves to Billingham residents, the current engagement with the community effectively amounts to:
 - Paying external organizations to host activities in the John Whitehead park "hub".
 - Operating a loss making café in John Whitehead park that is little used by residents
 - Distributing limited and often out of date information on a website, facebook page twitter and occasional newsletters.
9. The activities that take place in the hub building are available in youth clubs, community centres, nurseries, further education complexes, Surestart centres etc throughout other locations in Billingham.
10. Evidence to support the fact that the Town Council do not engage with the Community to any significant extent was provided by an article broadcast by BBC Tees Radio in June 2015 and later in September 2015.

11. The current chair of BTC was asked what the Town Council did and his ambiguous replies were “We now have a partnership with Stockton Council where we look after certain things which they would look after”, and “Oh, there’s a host of services, erm but mainly we are trying, or our ethos... is to erm is actually to engage with the public”.

12. People in Billingham Town Centre were asked by the Radio Station if they knew what Billingham Town Council did.

13. Occurrences of the public’s words and phrases in replies given in the June 2015 broadcast are shown below and demonstrate that there is a lack of awareness and misconceptions over what BTC does :

“No”	8
“Not really”	6
“Not a lot”	3
I have no idea	2
“Nothing”	1
“Not much”	1
“No idea”	1
“I haven’t got a clue what they do	1
“Err, yeah they look after the town”	1
“Isn’t it the planning of what shops are going to come?”	1
“Sort of yeah?”	1
“Yeah, clean the roads and keep everything clean and tidy”	1
“It’s supposed to consider welfare of residents, I think our council is good at that”	1
“The town council does everything”	1
“Well they do all sorts don’t theymake sure streets are cleaned ..look after residents”	1

14. BTC have paid third parties to stage a number of themed entertainment events in John Whitehead park and Billingham Town Centre, but have never consulted with residents to find out what content in the events that the public would like to see.

15. BTC held a “drop in” session in Billingham Town Centre for residents to put forward ideas for inclusion in a “Town Plan” but nobody has ever seen a published copy of it.

Further in respect of section 6: *“Also of relevance in this context, would be the initial support for the creation of the parish council, and the support for its continuation e.g. in the form of turnout at subsequent elections”*

16. Elections for Town and district Councils take place on the same day and electors are issued with ballot papers for candidates seeking to serve on both councils. This has the clear effect of facilitating turnout up to similar levels to that for district council elections.

17. Conclusions from previous election turnouts therefore can’t be determined in isolation as the Town Council elections have never taken place in isolation apart from By Elections.

18. Turnouts in the two By elections held to date were:

Billingham North Thursday 12 December 2013	8.8%
Billingham West Thursday 14 July 2011	21.5%

19 There has never been a contested election for town council candidates in Billingham South ward. In 2011, contested elections for the town council only took place in three of the five Billingham wards.

20 In 2015 there were no contested elections for the town council at all, and BTC had to co opt a Councillor for Billingham North ward, as only two candidates nominated themselves.

Finally *"In addition Council will need to be mindful that abolition may attract challenge by way of a judicial review"*.

21. The only Judicial review we are aware of on a Community Governance Review was initiated by Offerton Park Parish Council over their abolition order from Stockport MBC.

22. Although the order to abolish Offerton Park Parish Council was waived by the High Court via a judicial review, Stockport MBC went to the Court of Appeal (C1/2011/2875) and had the High Court judicial review overturned. Offerton Park Parish Council was abolished.

Other Issues regarding Billingham Town Council that justify consideration

Some of the precept has been spent on items that are wholly inappropriate such as flowers for the clerk, Christmas meals for the staff and members and presents for the members. When ABR brought this to the attention of the public, they were accused of telling lies and making scurrilous remarks by BTC. However, the clerk eventually admitted to the money being spent as indicated in the Northern Echo and on BBC Tees.

Billingham Town Council members have deliberately appeared in public places and attempted to disrupt and prevent people signing the petition calling for this governance review.

Financial scrutiny and control by BTC members is weak and ineffective. They have regularly approved the purchase of equipment and services that are far too expensive and over specified for the purpose required. Purchasing requests are simply approved. There is no evidence that the Clerk is asked to justify or make a case for purchase of equipment or services.

The Town Council website is poorly designed and poorly maintained. It reflects badly on the professionalism and competence of the Clerk, and on the members for either being unaware of, or allowing the website to be in such a bad state.

The Town Council continue to display the Quality status logo on their website and stationery, but NALC (National Association of Local Councils) rescinded the certification in January 2015 and advised Local Councils to consider applying for certification in a replacement scheme.

Expectations of Billingham Town Council

In 2003, Billingham Town Council steering committee circulated a leaflet (1) to every home in Billingham promoting the case for a Billingham Town Council which came into existence in 2007. One of the key messages was that the Town Council would be a low cost operation, not an expensive bureaucracy with the only employee being a clerk. The leaflet was authored by a current BTC councillor. The actual words were:

"A Town Council is a low-budget operation, maintaining a small office and employing only a clerk to carry out its administration. All other activities would be carried out by elected members, or by local volunteers. Its Town Councillors will not receive any expenses or allowances, and all overheads, paperwork and bureaucracy would be kept to a minimum".

Have the expectations promoted for a Billingham Town Council (BTC) been met? What has actually happened?

After eight years in existence, BTC has eight members of staff. Meetings that the electorate would expect the BTC councillors or local volunteers to attend have been attended by the clerk instead.

Rather than being a "low budget operation" BTC have more than doubled their precept from £80,000 in 2007 to nearly £213,000 in 2015. And over 80% of the precept is spent on administration, e.g. Salaries, Pensions, IT, Office hire, utility bills, insurance, stationary etc.

We have found that many people are unaware of what BTC do, thus questioning the sincerity of the notion that "people should know what the Town Council is doing and will make sure it communicates". Newsletters have been few and infrequent. The website is not kept up to date and lacks much financial information. Agenda and minutes of three EGM's and several "working parties" have never been published.

Community Governance Review of Billingham Town Council Representation from the Association of Billingham residents

The Association of Billingham Residents makes the following additional representation in respect of the Community Governance Review of Billingham Town Council

1. We call on Stockton Borough Council to make every effort possible to reach a decision before April 2016 on the fate of Billingham Town Council so that Council tax bills for 2016-17 can be set in February 2016 and collected as normal.
2. Should an order to abolish the Town Council be produced, we feel that Billingham Town Council's residual financial assets should be used to reimburse Stockton Council for the cost of the community governance review.
3. If abolition is confirmed, we believe that Billingham residents would support a one off precept charge to fund or part fund the cost of the community governance review if Billingham Town Councils residual financial assets were insufficient to pay for it.
4. We suggest that Stockton Borough Council instruct Billingham Town Council to avoid taking on any new projects or commissioning further third party work if their existing assets cannot cover the cost, until the outcome of the Community Governance review is known.
5. If Stockton Borough Council fail to reach a decision before April 2016 on abolition, we advise that monthly direct debit payments for Council tax bills should not include a Billingham Parish monthly charge element until or unless the continued existence of Billingham Town Council is confirmed.