

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 3 October 2017, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Matthew Cuthbert (Chair) Marjorie Chambers
Nicola Chambers Avril Chisholm
Brian Gallacher Stephen Fenwick
Lynne Grimshaw Jim Lang
Kris Lavery Liam Lavery
Ken Parry Pauline Thompson
Bob Walkinshaw

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer (minutes)
Members of the Public - 0

FGP 17/742 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors, Victor Bridges, Lawrence Henderson, Mark Purvis, Ely Turnbull and Tom Wilson

FGS 17/743 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllrs M. Chambers and Cllr N. Chambers disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item number 10. Allotment Sites – Proposed Capital Works Programme 2017 (Appendix 2) and Cllr L. Lavery in agenda item 5. Request for funding support from Ashington Rugby Cricket Club.

FGS 17/744 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 August 2017, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGS 17/745 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

FGS 17/746 5. REQUEST FOR FUNDING SUPPORT FROM ASHINGTON RUGBY CRICKET CLUB

The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Milburn to the meeting. Mr Milburn gave a detailed presentation to members in support of the application for financial assistance for the Cricket Club.

Mr Milburn clarified that the Cricket Club was a completely separate organisation from the Rugby Club although they shared the facilities and had worked closely with the Rugby Club over the years.

Members were informed that the Club has three teams, with 43 male playing members and 6 female members volunteering. Mr Milburn outlined the annual running costs as:

Ground rent/maintenance	£2,600 per year
Machinery	£504
Insurance	£600
Umpires	£840
Cricket Balls	£800

Members were further informed that the Club had no paid membership fees and relied on a 'pay as you play' scheme as well as match fees. The club relied heavily on the support of a longstanding sponsor, K Plastics; other funds being raised by holding race nights, raffles and lotteries.

Mr Milburn stated that if the Club was successful in acquiring Town Council funding then the money they would likely be used to acquire essential machinery needed to help with drainage for the ground.

Mr Milburn left the meeting at 6.20pm

Resolved:

That:

- (i) A sponsorship grant of £2,000 per annum be awarded to Ashington Rugby Cricket Club for each of the financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19; and that**
- (ii) The Club be requested to promote the sponsorship of the Town Council by general website publicity and the provision of appropriate signage display for match games.**

FGS 17/747 6. ANNUAL FUNDING SUPPORT TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2017/18 – NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BANK

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Lauren Langton, Chief Executive of Northumberland Community Bank to members.

Ms Langton thanked the Town Council for their support in previous years and for the opportunity to give a detailed presentation in support of an application for financial assistance. Ms Langton outlined that since South East Northumberland Credit Union and Tynedale Credit Union merged in April 2017 to become Northumberland Community Bank and had been since that time working to develop the business plan for a sustainable banking organisation.

Members were informed that a new board was now in place and that the new organisation was in the first phase of a 3 year business plan.

Plans for the future included:

- Raising the profile of the Community Bank with better promotion
- Improving online facilities/services
- Improve data collection/statistics
- Growing their client base of savers
- Provide affordable small loans for those most in need
- Providing work experience for volunteers
- Provide employment opportunities to local people
- Provide the service within NCC info points

A detailed question and answer session took place with a number of questions regarding future sustainability and pursuance of funding from a number of sources. The Chair thanked Ms.Langton for the detailed presentation and on behalf of the town council, welcomed the fact that the organisation was working towards a self-funding and sustainable future.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The Town Council agree in principle to the continued financial support of the Northumberland Community Bank; and that.**
- (ii) The level of any financial support for 2017/18 be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee pending receipt of further details regarding the business plan and pursuance of other external funding.**

**FGS 17/748 7. ANNUAL FUNDING SUPPORT TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS
2017/18 – NORTHUMBERLAND YMCA**

The Chair reported that Town Council members attended the Northumberland YMCA on Tuesday 19 September 2017 for the purpose of a site visit and formal presentation of the work and future plans. Members reported that they had been impressed by the facilities and in particular the IT suite and recording studio. The Chair reported that a number of targeted project funding schemes had been submitted and that previous Town Council funding had been used to support the employment of a dedicated youth worker.

Cllr Bob Walkinshaw explained that he had been involved with the YMCA for many years and that they had always struggled with core funding. Cllr Walkinshaw reported that the YMCA was now in a more stable position and suggested the continued funding would not be so much as a hand out now, but rather a hand up.

Resolved:

That an annual subsidy of £5,000 per year be awarded to Northumberland Federation of YMCA's for the two-year period 2017/18 and 2018/19.

FGS 17/749 8. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Funding and Project Officer outlined in detail an application for financial support the Friends of Bothal Primary School toward the costs associated with a forthcoming Firework Display evening.

Resolved:

That a donation of £1,458 be awarded to the Friends of Bothal Primary School.

FGS 17/750 9. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS.

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, for the financial period 28 July to 18 September 2017.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the period 28 July to 18 September 2017 be formally agreed and approved.

The full schedule of payments is attached to the minutes as schedule 1.

FGS 17/751 10. ALLOTMENT SITES – PROPOSED CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME 2017.

The Funding and Project Officer presented a detailed report outlining the proposed capital work programme for 2017/18. The Town Clerk updated members on the priority given to securing external funding whenever and wherever possible and informed members that large schemes were dependent on external support given the Town Council's available resources.

The Town Clerk reported that the previous Council had resolved to look at a 5-year capital improvement programme after which it was expected that current level of budget provision could be reduced. Members were informed that a small number of schemes remained to address water supply issues on the larger sites.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The capital scheme for Woodhorn Road Allotment & Small Holding Site be approved at a maximum net cost to the Town Council of £3,000; and that**
- (ii) An Allotments Working Group be established to look at the future capital schemes and both operational and financial management of the Allotment Sites.**

FGS 17/752 11. ENVIRONMENTAL & AMENITIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Leader of the Council requested that, rather than consider requests as a "standing agenda item" it be agreed to set up a working group to develop schemes for consideration.

Resolved:

That an Environmental and Amenities Working Group be formed to consider the development of a programme of improvement and enhancement schemes.

FGS 17/753 12. COUNCIL LEADER'S REPORT

Cllr Fenwick reported to members on several matters which had taken place since the new Council had been formed in May. Matters highlighted included:

- **Review of Neighbourhood Service Partnership**, real progress made on the service delivery arrangements and organisation.

Cllr Fenwick reiterated that members needed to ensure that the standards didn't drop and that a full planned programme of work was carried out over the Autumn/Winter months. He urged ward members to collectively bring forward "planned" work schemes for inclusion in the programme. Work commenced on the drafting and consideration of a future Neighbourhood Services Agreement (current 5- year arrangements scheduled to conclude with Financial Year in 2018/19).

- **Environmental Enhancements**, More use of local contractors for enhancements, i.e. weed-killing contract this year, also going to be looking at the full options for floral displays/entrance features.
- **Town Centre CCTV Provision**, permissions acquired, equipment on order and work due to be completed in the near future. To be revenue financed by lease agreement with Reay Security Ltd.
- **Planned Litter Bin Programme**, continued ongoing litter bin scheme. Working with NCC to ensure all new ground-mounted bins are emptied on a regular cycle.
- **Interactive speed signs**, full installation of 6 interactive speed signs – to be rotated within wards for maximum impact and effectiveness. Funded with capital contributions from NCC Divisional Councillors.
- **Mining Wheel Entrance Feature**, recently completed and unveiled – excellent and appropriate feature well received by members of the public.
- **Bus Shelter Provision**, recent installation of a further 2 new Bus Shelters (Woodhorn Road and Manley View)
- **Play Area Refurbishment Work and Maintenance**, work undertaken by Town Council completed, refreshed and re-painted the Alexandra Road Play Area and also re-painted NCC Play Area at Riverside Park. Future work will include consultation and consideration of a new Play Area to replace the loss of the well used former "Institute Play Area".
- **College Shops Improvements**, as part of the general improvement work to non Town Council assets, the Neighbourhood Services Officer carried out requested full re-painting work to the general communal area, walls & fencing/hand-rails. The bollards on Milburn Road have also recently been re-painted.

Cllr Fenwick personally thanked Elected Members for their positive input, support and ideas and the staff for bringing the schemes to fruition on behalf of the Town Council.

FGS 17/754 13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

FGS 17/755 14. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The date, time and venue for the next meeting was agreed for Tuesday 31 October 2017, at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington.

The Meeting ended at 8.30pm