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# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 17 July 2018, at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

## PRESENT:

**Councillors:**

Mark Purvis (Chair)	Eleanor Armstrong
Marjorie Chambers	Nicola Chambers
Avril Chisholm	Matthew Cuthbert
Stephen Fenwick	Brian Gallacher
Lynne Grimshaw	Lawrence Henderson
Jim Lang	Liam Lavery
Pauline Thompson	Bob Walkinshaw
Tom Wilson	

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Members of the Public – 6

### **C18/780 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Victor Bridges, Kris Lavery and Ken Parry.

### **C18/781 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.**

There were no disclosures of interest from members present.

### **C18/782 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS.**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 June 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

### **C18/783 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 19 June 2018.

## **C18/784 5. CIVIC HEADS REPORT.**

The Civic Head, Cllr. M. Chambers, reported that she had attended the following events;

- **Thursday 10 May** - Woodhorn Museum to welcome a visiting party from the Remscheid area in Germany.
- **Friday 11 May** - YMCA Northumberland fundraising evening.
- **Saturday 12 May** – Trinity Church fundraising coffee morning for Christian Aid.
- **Saturday 12 May** – Concert by Ashington Male Voice Choir.
- **Friday 25 May** – Ground-breaking Ceremony at the new Gleeson Homes housing development on the site of the former Leisure Centre.
- **Friday 25 May** – Woodhorn Museum for the opening event of the Pitmen Painters Unseen Exhibition.
- **Saturday 26 May** – Fallen Fusiliers fundraising event held at the Block & Tackle Public House.
- **Wednesday 6 June** – Mayors & Civic Heads fundraising evening for the Royal British Legion held at Kirkley Hall.
- **Saturday 9 June** – Northumberland Miners’ Picnic at Woodhorn Museum.
- **Saturday 23 June** – Open Day at Ashington Sea Cadets.
- **Thursday 28 June** – Launch of book celebrating the Hirst area of Ashington at YMCA Northumberland.
- **Friday 29 June** – Turbulent Times Exhibition, organised by the WEA, held at the Ashington Life Centre.
- **Friday 29 June** – The Alligator Klub held at Ashington Masonic Hall.
- **Thursday 5 July** – Litter pick in the Hirst area organised by 7th Ashington Brownie Group.
- **Saturday 7 July** – The Ashington Show held at YMCA Northumberland.
- **Monday 9 July** – Cheque presentation to the Butokokan Judo Club.

## **C18/785 6. LEADERS REPORT**

The Leader, Cllr. S. Fenwick, reported that he had recently attended a Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) meeting on Saturday 23 June.

The Leader also informed members that the next meeting of the Arch Stakeholder Group was scheduled for 19 July, at which time he expected to receive an update on the work currently underway to attract interest in a cinema development on the Portland Park site

further to the recent issue of a sales brochure and prospectus by Arch to national cinema operators.

## **C18/786 7. TOWN WIDE “LIFE IN ASHINGTON” SURVEY 2018**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Lisa Grabham, of Elljay Research Ltd, the organisation appointed to undertake the “2018 *Life in Ashington*” town-wide survey.

Ms Grabham gave a detailed and comprehensive presentation on the initial findings of the town-wide survey, highlighting the following key points to members:

- Almost 3,000 surveys returned from the 13,000 households, in Ashington, equating to a return rate of over 22% with 300 returns completed on-line. This was an increase of 500 on the 2012 survey.
- The returns were from across Ashington with every neighbourhood in the town participating.
- 67% of respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their local neighbourhood with 11% “very dissatisfied”.
- The three outstanding neighbourhood priorities identified were; improvements to roads & pavements, cleaning the streets of litter and dog fouling.
- 84% of residents felt safe during the day and 37% felt safe after dark. This was a 3% rise in each area since the 2012 survey.
- Positive words to describe Ashington included; community, people, potential, history and friendly. Less positive words included; litter, dog-fouling, run-down and unemployment.
- 60% of respondents said they were proud to live in Ashington with 67% feeling they belonged and planned to stay in the town.
- 33% of residents believed the town has improved since the 2012 survey whilst 40% believed the town has deteriorated. The deterioration is based on the lack of investment in the town centre, decision not to relocate the County Council headquarters and limited shopping facilities. Anti-social behaviour, litter and fly-tipping were also factors.
- 61% of residents do not feel informed about news and developments and 75% did not feel their views and opinions are heard.
- The three most popular aspirations for the development of Portland Park were; “more shops & wider range of goods” (77%), “greater choices of places to eat & drink” (60%) and “development of a cinema/theatre” (56%).
- There is a real challenge to engage with businesses in the town with only 40 respondents from 220 businesses visited.

- Visitors on the whole had positive opinions of the town but litter and dog fouling were issues of concern.

Ms Grabham informed members that a survey of children from the town will take place in September after the school holiday period.

Members thanked Ms Grabham for her comprehensive and excellent presentation and the information provided.

The Town Clerk informed members that once the resident's survey was fully complete a town-wide Newsletter would be developed so that residents would be fully informed of all of the findings. The Town Clerk informed members that, given the level of interest in the survey, it was likely that the findings would be published on the Town Council website with the newsletter to follow in September.

**C18/787 8. WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 – REVIEW OF DEFINITIVE MAP & STATEMENT OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ALLEGED PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY: MILBURN ROAD, ASHINGTON**

Cllr. T. Wilson requested the support of Town Council in considering an application for a Modification Order to amend the Definitive Map and Statement to add a footpath as a public right of way on Milburn Road leading to the rear of Sycamore Street (adjacent to the current Gala Bingo Premises).

The Town Clerk informed members that any successful application would require evidence from as many people as possible stating that they had used the path freely, openly and without landowner permission for over twenty years. Members were further informed that it was necessary for the both ends of the footpath to commence and finish at a public place, either an existing public path or public highway.

Cllr. Wilson informed members that he had obtained copies of the required forms, would seek to encourage residents to provide the required evidence and subject to completed forms being returned, would report back to the Town Council in due course for submission of the formal application.

**C18/788 9. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

There were no formal reports to be presented from outside bodies.

The Town Clerk requested that members who were appointed representatives to outside bodies seek to acquire all outstanding relevant operational information and financial reports at the earliest

date in order to enable the Finance & General Services Committee to consider 2018/19 funding support at the meeting scheduled for 31 July 2018.

**C18/789 7. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 4 September 2018, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX, commencing at 7.00pm.

**The meeting closed at 8.20pm.**