

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 25 February 2020, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Lynne Grimshaw (Chair) Eleanor Armstrong
Marjorie Chambers Nicola Chambers
Matthew Cuthbert Stephen Fenwick
Brian Gallacher Jim Lang
Ken Parry Mark Purvis
Pauline Thompson Tom Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Project Officer
Members of the Public - 0

FGS 20/012 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Victor Bridges, Avril Chisholm, Lawrence Henderson, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery and Bob Walkinshaw.

FGS 20/013 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.

Cllr Thompson declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda, Music and Arts working group – Alligator Klub FGS 20/017.

Cllr Chambers declared an interest in item 7, Proposed Allotment improvement programme 2019/20 FGS 20/018

FGS 20/014 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26 November 2019, were agreed and signed as a true record.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 January 2020, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGS 20/015 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.

Minutes from Tuesday 26 November 2019.

FGS 19/001 5. APPLICATION FOR FUNDING SUPPORT 2019/20.

The Town Clerk informed members that he had received thank you letters from the Ashington Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) Social Care and Ashington Holy Sepulchre Church for the funding they had received from Ashington Town Council.

FGS 19/004 8. FLORAL DISPLAYS AND PRESENTATIONS.

The Town Clerk briefly updated Councillors on the progress of the work to the flower beds on Station Road.

Members were informed that the flower beds have almost been cleared, and all of them should be completed by the end of next week. All bulbs and shrubs which had been removed and were re-usable had been planted in other suitable locations, including the Memorial Garden and the Miners Wheel Entrance Feature. Members were advised that there would be a full report from the Horticultural Officer at the next Full Council meeting, including the presentation of 3 alternative designs for the Station Road beds.

FGS 20/016 5. COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTING SCHEME – ASHINGTON CRICKET CLUB.

The Town Clerk reminded members that, further to resolution FGS 19/958 “*Centenary of the Peace*”, Ashington Town Council had worked with Cricket Club officials to develop a significant tree planting scheme at the Club’s ground on Langwell Crescent. The scheme would see planting of a mix of 75 semi-mature trees around the cricket pitch. The project supported the recently adopted a motion for the Town Council to play a positive role in addressing climate change, with a focus on tree planting schemes, as well as general environmental improvement works.

Members were reminded that Ashington Town Council staff had worked closely with the Cricket Club to look to access funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) “Pocket Parks Scheme”. With Town Council support, a funding bid for the project in the sum of £13,908 was submitted in December 2019, by Ashington Cricket Club.

Ashington Cricket Club were notified, on 12 February 2020, that the application was unsuccessful with some 373 applications having been made nationally. The scheme only funded 18% of the applications received.

While expressing their disappointment at the outcome, members noted that MHCLG had recognised the merit of the scheme and had encouraged the Cricket Club and partners to continue to develop the project and seek support from any other available local funding source. Members agreed that the scheme had much to commend it both in terms of recognising the Memorial aspect of the project, as well as enhancing the town centre landscape and biodiversity and making a positive contribution to carbon capture. Members were also mindful of the forthcoming Victory in Europe Day 75th Celebration and agreed that the project should be a priority. The Town Clerk reported that there was scope within the general financial reserves of the Council to complete the project at an early opportunity should members wish to look at that option.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The identified tree planting scheme at Ashington Cricket Club be approved, progressed and completed during 2019/20 with a maximum contribution of £16,000 from the Town Council's General Reserve Balance**
- (ii) Contact be made with Northumberland County Council regarding the provision of trees from the £265,000 funding recently acquired through the Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge Fund; and that**
- (iii) Any other identified local funding options be investigated for contributions to the overall scheme cost.**

FGS 20/017 6. MUSIC & ARTS WORKING GROUP – ALLICATOR KLUB.

The Town Clerk outlined the programme for the 4-day event and informed members that the Alligator Klub with full support, advice and assistance of Town Council staff, had been successful in attracting external funding from the Big Lottery Fund. Members agreed to the request of £1,000 to support the event.

Resolved:

That the Alligator Klub be awarded £1,000 grant assistance towards the planned inclusive event scheduled to take place over the 4 to 7 June 2020.

FGS 20/018 7. PROPOSED ALLOTMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2019/20.

The Funding & Project Officer informed members of the proposed 2019/20 capital improvement work for Wansbeck Road Allotment Site and formally requested financial support from the Allotments Fund to enable completion of the work at the earliest opportunity.

Members were informed that the Town Council had worked with the Wansbeck Road Allotment Association (WRAA) to bring about significant improvements to the site in recent years including the installation of a new water supply, new entrance gates and external fencing. It was reported that further final work was now needed to bring the site up to an acceptable standard, including improvements to

the central track/roadway with associated works and replacing a section of dilapidated fencing on the site boundary.

Members were informed that the Town Council had worked closely with the WRAA to access external funding for the project and to date WRAA had secured £4,500 towards the project from local trust and foundations (The Barbour Foundation, The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust, The Sir James Knott Trust, The William Leech Charity and RW Mann Charity). WRAA had also made a commitment of £1,500 to the scheme from their own funds. Members were advised that to fully complete the funding package for the project a sum of £2,176 would be required from the Town Council's Allotment Fund to allow the full project to proceed.

Resolved:	
That;	
(i)	Finance & General Services Committee formally notes the report and acknowledges the success of Wansbeck Road Allotment Association in successfully accessing external scheme funding; and that
(ii)	The Town Council agree a contribution of £2,176 from the Council's Allotments Fund to in order complete the required capital work.

FGS 20/019 8. PROPOSED ENTRANCE FEATURE SIGNAGE.

The Funding & Project Officer presented the final design for the proposed new entrance feature signage.

Members approved the final draft and agreed to delegate to the Working Group the final placement and how the signs were to be mounted.

Resolved:	
That;	
(i)	The Town Clerk seek any permissions that may be needed to erect new signs,
(ii)	The Working group along with the Horticultural Officer determine appropriate planting around the signs, and that
(iii)	The Working group decide plinth mount for the sign and the preferred locations on the B1334 and A196.

FGS 20/020 9. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS.

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income for the financial 16 November 2019 – 18 February 2020.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the financial period 16 November 2019 to 18 February 2020 be formally agreed and approved.

FGS 20/021 10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.

There was no other urgent business.

FGS 20/022 11. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Tuesday 31 March 2020, at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

The Meeting ended at 8:15pm.