

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 27 July 2021, at YMCA Northumberland, North View, Ashington.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS:

Lynne Grimshaw (Chair)	Caroline Ball
Michelle Brannigan	Victor Bridges
Louis Brown	Vicky Brown
Marjorie Chambers	Avril Chisholm
Matthew Cuthbert	Lawrence Henderson
Jim Lang	Liam Lavery
Mark Purvis	Sophie Robinson
Pauline Thompson	John Tully
Bob Walkinshaw	

IN ATTENDANCE: Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey- Assets & Facilities Manager
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer (minutes)
Members of the Public - 0

FGS 21/090 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Eleanor Armstrong.

FGS 21/091 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.

Cllr. M Brannigan declared an interest in agenda item 5 Applications for Funding Support.

FGS 21/092 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13 July 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGS 21/093 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

FGS 21/094 5. APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING SUPPORT.

Ashington Veterans and Elders Institute

The Assets & Facilities manager presented an application from the Institute, requesting the sum of £750 to develop a covered area in the Institute's community garden to enable community-based activities to take place.

In developing and improving the facilities at the Institute, the organisation had been successful in accessing significant grant monies. As part of the works an outdoor space has been developed enabling 20 volunteers to develop a fundraising project to create decorative wooden flowers which has to date raised over £6,000 for local good causes including the NHS and the Royal British Legion. The request for funding would improve and enhance this space and enable more to take part.

The total cost of the project is £869, including the purchase of tools and equipment. The committee believe that the development of the outdoor space will bring health and well-being benefits to many residents.

Resolved

That, Ashington Veterans & Elders Institute be awarded the sum of £750 to develop a covered area outside in the Institutes community garden.

FGS 21/095 6. FUNDING SUPPORT TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS.

The Town Clerk presented a detailed report “Annual Funding Support To Outside Organisations 2021/22” and informed members that the report was for discussion to set out an approach for the annual subsidy funding for outside bodies. The report provided recommendations for the provision of funding support and the establishment of criteria and conditions moving forward.

Members were informed that the council had provided annual subsidy funding to agreed outside bodies, based within Ashington, since 2011/12. Members were reminded that, for a number of years the aggregate annual funding sum for organisations working in the town had exceeded £40,000.

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Council had in recent years set funding priorities for certain organisations in the town with sizeable funding sums in both 2019 & 2020 to; Citizen’s Advice Northumberland, Northumberland Community Bank and Wansbeck Valley Food Bank.

The Chair reported that the Council was facing a number of competing challenges for limited funding and it was therefore being proposed that before determining any funding and at what level, key questions should be addressed namely:

- What is the basis of priority for funding distribution?
- Should there be priorities established for clarity of all parties?
- Should there now be agreed criteria and specific conditions for funding?
- What is the role of the council appointed representative?
- How will value for money be measured?

- Should, subject to agreed conditions, funding be for a defined period i.e. 2 years?

Further to discussion, the recommendations in the report were agreed and accepted. Cllr. M Cuthbert, Leader of the Town Council, requested that all representatives to outside bodies did their best to ensure quarterly reports were made available to all members of the Town Council.

Resolved

That annual subsidy funding awards be made to the following for the financial year 2021/22.

(i)	Citizens Advice Northumberland	£12,000.00
(ii)	Wansbeck Valley Food Bank	£12,000.00
(iii)	Northumberland Community Bank	£ 8,000.00
(iv)	Northumberland Federation of YMCA's	£ 4,000.00
(v)	Real Deal Plus	£ 4,000.00
(vi)	"Being Woman"	£ 2,000.00

FGS 21/096 7. INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IN THE NORTHEAST REGION.

Cllr. Liam Lavery presented a motion to the Council in support of the initial proposals for parliamentary constituency boundaries in the North East region.

The full motion was agreed, and the Town Clerk was tasked to respond to the Boundary Commission, stating Ashington Town Council's support of the proposals.

Resolved

That:

Ashington Town Council:

- (i) Notes the initial proposals for Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the North East region (published June 2021) made by the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) as part of its review into Parliamentary Constituencies in England,**
- (ii) Notes that unlike previous initial reviews, the town is not split and the entire Local Council area is included within a new proposed constituency of "Blyth and Ashington",**
- (iii) Notes the BCE view that the proposed constituency of Blyth and Ashington "maintains the coastal ties between the towns".**

- (iv) Notes that the BCE uses local government ward boundaries as its building blocks of constituencies,
- (v) Notes that the local government ward of Seaton and Newbiggin West, which crosses the parish boundary between Ashington and the town of Newbiggin by-the-Sea, results in that town also being included in the Blyth and Ashington proposed constituency, and
- (vi) Believes that a new constituency including Blyth and Ashington makes sense on the basis that it reflects existing and longstanding cultural ties in the Southeast corner of Northumberland and the similar issues facing the towns and parishes that would be included in the proposed constituency.

FGS 21/097 8.DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

The next Finance and General Services Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 28 September 2021 at 6:00pm, venue to be agreed.

The meeting ended at 7:00pm.