

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 20 January 2015, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

## PRESENT:

Councillors: Stephen Fenwick (Chair)	Les Alderson
Victor Bridges	Vicky Brown (Vice Chair)
Keith Chambers	Avril Chisholm
Glyn Davies	Lawrence Henderson
Kris Lavery	Liam Lavery
Wyn Stewart	Ely Turnbull
Mark Purvis (Ex Officio)	Louis Brown (Ex Officio)

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Sue Coulthard – Snr. Admin. Officer  
Cllr. Marjorie Chambers – Non-Committee Member  
Cllr. Pauline Thompson – Non-Committee Member  
Members of the Public - 1

As the Chair of the Committee had confirmed a late arrival, the Vice-Chair opened the meeting and took agenda items until the Chair arrived at 6.20pm.

## FGP 15/496 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSCENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Maggie Lang and Bob Walkinshaw.

## FGP 15/497 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests, however it was agreed that any disclosures would be made during the meeting for individual items.

## FGP 15/498 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2014, were agreed and signed as a true record.

#### **FGP 15/499 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**14/466 Budget Report 2013/14 (Re Ashington Neighbourhood Partnership Agreement):** Cllr K Chambers (Chair of the Neighbourhood Partnership Board) reported that the Partnership arrangements appeared to now be operating more effectively. It was reported that improvements were now particularly visible in the North Seaton area (identified as Zone 4 within the Agreement), where significant footpath edging work had been undertaken. Cllr Chambers informed members that next meeting of the Partnership Board was arranged for Tuesday, 27 January 2015 and added that, to his knowledge, no adverse comments had been made regarding the work carried out to date.

Cllr. P Thompson stated that, in her view, there were limited visible environmental improvements in the Hirst Ward to date although it was recognised that the real results would be seen when the full planned environmental work was undertaken in coming months.

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Environment & Amenities Committee would be meeting to assess the neighbourhood services work, and subject to satisfaction and agreement, to formally approve the release of the final 2014/15.

**14/492 Annual Subsidies to Infrastructure Organisations 2015/16:** The Town Clerk stated that this item would be covered during the discussions relating to the Draft Budget for 2015/16.

#### **FGP 15/500 5. SMALL GRANTS AND DONATIONS**

Applications from the following organisations were considered by the Committee:-

- Wansbeck Music Festival
- Ashington Junior Football Tournament
- Wansbeck Disability Forum
- Real Deal Plus
- Carers Northumberland
- Ashington Jazz Club

*(6.20pm Cllr. S Fenwick arrived and took the Chair for the remainder of the Committee meeting)*

Each of the applications was considered in detail and following a lengthy discussion, the following resolutions were made:-

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- (i) The Wansbeck Music Festival be included in the Town Council's annual calendar of community events and that an annual award of £350 be made to the Festival organisers, subject to the event continuing to be held in Ashington,**
- (ii) The Ashington Juniors Football Tournament be included in the Town Council's annual calendar of community events and that an annual award of £1,000 be made subject to the event continuation,**
- (iii) The applications from the Wansbeck Disability Forum and Real Deal Plus be deferred, further to the arrangement of a site visit to Ashington Life Centre in order to meet both applicant's and to discuss the detail of the applications,**
- (iv) The application from Carers Northumberland be not agreed; and that**
- (v) A grant of £400 be made to Ashington Jazz Club to cover the cost of a forthcoming event to celebrate the Club's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary,**

**FGP15/501 6. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments, made in accordance with Council and Committee resolutions, for the period 21 November 2014 – 16 January 2015.

**Resolved:**

**That the full schedule of payments for the period 21 November 2014 to 14 January 2015, be agreed as set out below:**

M.Slaughter (Email Line Rental / Town Twinning Exchange Gifts)	132.63
Northumbrian Water (Allotments - Sixth Avenue)	510.88
L.Alderson (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
L.Brown (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
V.Brown (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
K.Chambers (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00

M.Chambers (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
A.Chisholm (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
S.Fenwick (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
M.Lang (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
K.Lavery (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
L.Lavery (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
M.Purvis (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
W.Stewart (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
P.Thompson (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
E.Turnbull (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
B.Walkinshaw (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	300.00
V.Bridges (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	100.00
G.Davies (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	100.00
L.Henderson (Printing & Stationery Expenses)	100.00
NMP Live Limited Client Account (Christmas Lights Switch-On - Recharge to Ashington Town Team)	-2,500.00
Cookswell Garage Ltd (Repairs to Van - Recharge to NCC)	-390.00
S.M.Coulthard (Various Expenses - Postages/Lights Switch-On)	128.75
Northumberland County Council (25% Pymnt - Neighbourhood Services / Floral Displays)	69,514.24
North Seaton Colliery Allotments Association (Agreed Contribution to Site Capital Works)	-500.00
Newbiggin by-the-Sea Town Council (Agreed Contribution to Town Twinning Events)	-500.00
Elveden Farms Ltd (Christmas Tree/Haulage/Installation & Repair)	1,322.40
W.L.Straughan & Son Ltd (Skip Hire - Nursery Park)	216.00
Woodhorn Enterprises Ltd (Room Hire & Conference Fees "Community Feedback Day")	694.20
Lawson & Thompson (Professional Fees - Lease of Memorial Garden)	644.00
The Poppy Appeal (Wreaths - Remembrance Day Services)	320.00
Citroen Contract Monitoring (Leasing Costs- Neighbourhood Services Van)	305.42
Phillips Design Ltd (Christmas Switch-On Banners & Posters)	566.40
Friends of Ashington Community Woodland (Small Grant)	200.00
Northumberland County Council (Pay Costs - December 2014)	9,807.98
Northumberland County Council (Fuel Costs/Neighbourhood Services Van)	65.30
Northumberland County Council (Room Booking Fees - Town Hall "after hours")	285.00
Northumbrian Water (Allotments - Nursery Park)	115.31
Viking Payments (Printing & Stationery)	335.90
Viking Payments (Printing & Stationery)	131.32
Viking Payments (Printing & Stationery)	132.83
Viking Payments (Printing & Stationery)	32.56
Viking Payments (Coat Stand - Town Hall Offices)	53.99
Viking Payments (Coat Stand - Town Hall Offices)	55.76
Viking Payments - Credit Note (Coat Stand - Town Hall Offices)	-55.76
CNC Property Fund Management Ltd (Site Rental - 6th Ave Allot - 3rd Qtr Rent)	600.00
Trade UK (B&Q - Neighbourhood Services Materials)	210.94
Trade UK (Screwfix - Neighbourhood Services Materials)	155.36
Trade UK - Credit Note (Screwfix - Neighbourhood Services Materials)	-2.54

Northern Print Solutions (Schools - Reindeer Antlers - Christmas Lights Switch-On Event)	771.60
Showsec International Ltd (Christmas Light Switch-On - Stewarding Costs)	1,118.40
Trinity Mirror Publishing Ltd ( Christmas Light Switch-On Event - Publicity "Chronicle/Journal")	300.00
John Nixon Ltd (Christmas Light Switch-On Event - Hire of Crowd Barriers)	166.80
John Nixon Ltd (Christmas Light Switch-On Event - Hire of Crowd Barriers)	133.20
Northumberland County Council (Fuel Costs/Neighbourhood Services Van)	74.89
MJ Print & Sport Ltd (Re: Small Grant/Donation - Ashington Ladies FC)	450.00
Morrisons Glazing Services (Bus Shelter Windows - Replacement)	161.20
M.Slaughter - Expenses Reimbursed ( Email - Business Service/Printing & Stationery)	71.60
	<b>90,636.56</b>
Heritage Lottery Fund (Memorial Garden Project - 1st Instalment)	-12,000.00
HM Revenues and Customs (VAT Repayment 2013/14)	-21,540.65
	<b>-33,540.65</b>

## FGP 15/502 7. DRAFT BUDGET 2015/16

The Town Clerk presented two detailed documents to the Committee – the Budget Outturn Statement for the Financial Period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, and the Draft Budget for the Financial Period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

The Town Clerk drew members' attention to several items within the Budget Outturn Statement as follows:-

- **Office Costs:** An amount of £7,500 used from Reserves to cover the cost of purchasing office furniture and equipment following the refurbishment of the Town Hall.
- **Election Expenses:** Provisions of £2,500 and £5,250 to cover election expenses and casual vacancies.
- **Community Engagement:** An amount of £5,000 had been included under the heading of Community Engagement. The Town Clerk reminded members that this was an amount initially earmarked for the funding of operations of the Ashington Community Forum. The Town Clerk informed members that the Forum was currently discussing and considering its future role and suggested that members should make every effort to attend the next meeting of the Ashington Forum in order to contribute to that debate as well as establish whether funds were required or being used in accordance with earlier approved conditions.

In relation to the grants, donations and subsidies budget, Cllr. L Brown proposed that amounts of £6,000 be included in the budget for the town's recognised infrastructure organisations (i.e. Wansbeck Centre for Voluntary Service, Citizens Advice Bureau, Northumberland YMCA, South East Northumberland Credit Union, Wansbeck Valley Food Bank and Ashington Community Development Trust). Members felt that, given the wide-ranging projects and values, more information was needed from the Development Trust regarding their future delivery plans and activities before any award was made.

In addition to the above, Cllr. K.Chambers proposed that awards of £3,000 be included for each of the major recognised sporting organisations (Ashington Community Football Club; Ashington Cricket Club and Ashington Rugby Club).

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- (i) Members be encouraged to attend the next meeting of the Ashington Forum and report back to Full Council on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015, to inform decisions regarding future funding,**
- (ii) Funding of £6,000 be included in the 2015/16 budget for the Wansbeck Centre for Voluntary Service, Citizens Advice Bureau, Northumberland YMCA; South East Northumberland Credit Union; Wansbeck Valley Food Bank and Ashington Community Development Trust,**
- (iii) A visit to Ashington Community Development Trust be arranged to enable members to ascertain what the Trust's future delivery plans were in order to inform decisions regarding future funding.**

**FGP 15/5038. MUSIC & ARTS EVENTS 2015/16**

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Committee had taken a decision in 2014 year to support a number of individual music and arts events over a number of months in 2015, rather than host a single "Music & Arts Festival".

Members were informed that Ashington Folk Club had secured a contract with Martin Simpson, an acclaimed musician who had performed at the 2013 Festival, to return to Ashington in March 2015. The Town Clerk suggested that this event be supported and delivered by the Town Council as the host organisation working with the Folk Club to maximise publicity and ticket revenue.

Members were informed that there were a number of advantages in this approach, not least of which was the council's ability to recover any applicable valued added tax, as well as enhancing the opportunities for the council to attract future artists of similar national standing.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- (i) The Town Council act as host organisation for the Martin Simpson event scheduled for 7 March 2015,**
- (ii) The full organisational and publicity arrangements be delegated to the Town Clerk to work together with Ashington Folk Club in jointly promoting the event; and that**
- (iii) Any net subsidy required for the event be met from the Town Council's 2014/15 Music & Arts Festival budget.**

**FGP 15/504 9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no other items of urgent business.

**FGP 15/505 10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.