

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday, 27th January 2015, at the Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Maggie Lang (Chair)
Keith Chambers
Avril Chisholm
Stephen Fenwick
Kris Lavery
Pauline Thompson

Louis Brown
Marjorie Chambers
Glyn Davies
Lawrence Henderson
Mark Purvis

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Sue Coulthard – Snr. Admin Officer
Members of the Public – 0

OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

C15/522 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Les Alderson, Victor Bridges, Vicky Brown, Liam Lavery, Ely Turnbull, Wyn Stewart and Bob Walkinshaw.

C15/523 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests.

C15/524 3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reported that she had attended the Ashington Remembrance Sunday Memorial Service, a Remembrance Day event at Bothal School and also Holocaust Memorial event at the Northumberland CoE Academy.

The Chair added that she had recently met representatives from Woodhorn Ladies Football Club for a press release photograph the club was issuing in recognition of the Town Council grant and sponsorship they had received.

C15/525 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

The minutes from the meeting held on 4 November 2014 were agreed as a true record.

C15/526 5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

Open Session : Members thanked the Town Clerk for sending an appropriate letter of support to the Leader of Northumberland County Council in recognition of the commitment to given to the long-term regeneration plans for Ashington.

C14/499 Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (Outline Planning Application): The Town Clerk reported that, it was his understanding that a decision regarding this outline planning application would be forthcoming in March 2015.

C14/515 Leaders' Report (Wansbeck Valley Food Bank): The Town Clerk reported that he had received a letter from Wansbeck Valley Food Bank inviting members of the Town Council to their Annual General Meeting on Monday, 16th February 2015, at 7:00pm in the Holy Sepulchre Church. Members were informed that the guest speaker at the meeting would be Cllr. Louis Brown.

C15/527 6. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported that much of the recent Committee and Council work had focused around the 2015/16 budget process for 2015/16. The Leader thanked members the work carried out and the recommendations made to full council for consideration and discussion.

C15/528 7. BUDGET & PRECEPT 2015/16

The Town Clerk presented the Final Budget and Precept report and highlighted the final changes that had been requested following

discussions at the Finance & General purposes Committee held on 20 January 2015. Members were informed that been agreed to include financial support for several events being held in the town as part of the development of an “annual calendar of events” and that the small grants and donations budget would reduce accordingly (Finance & General Purposes Committee Minute Nos. F&GP14/500 and F&GP14/502 refer).

The Leader of the Council commended the 2015/16 budget to the Town Council and formally presented the full recommendations for consideration and support. The Leader informed members that, if so agreed, the 2015/16 budget would see an increase in the Council Tax level of 1.94% and an annual Band D increase of £1.87.

Resolved:

That:-

- (i) The 2015/16 budgeted gross expenditure of £725,090 be agreed,**
- (ii) Ashington Town Council’s Precept requirement from Northumberland County Council in respect of the Financial Year Ending 31 March 2016, be agreed at £650,090; and that**
- (iii) The planned use of £75,000 of the General Reserves of the Council, in support of the 2015/16 gross expenditure, be agreed as follows:**
 - Ashington Memorial Garden £40,000**
 - Bus Shelter Renewals £20,000**
 - Play Areas – Renewal and Replacement £15,000**

C15/529 8. UPDATE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Verbal reports were received from Committee Chairs for information only:-

Finance & General Purposes Committee (Cllr. S Fenwick): The Chair reported that at the meeting held on 20 January 2015 several applications for small grants had been considered.

Environment & Amenities Committee (Cllr. K Chambers): The Chair reported that a meeting of the Ashington Neighbourhood Partnership had been held on 27 January 2015 and that discussions had covered those concerns raised by members attending the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 20th January. The Chair confirmed that NCC Officers had produced a schedule of the programme of works for the last three months and had agreed to provide information on a monthly basis.

The Town Clerk reported that, during discussions regarding the current vacancy on the Ashington Neighbourhood Services Team at the Partnership Board meeting, NCC Officers had stated that fly tipping was becoming a major issue in the town, specifically from private landlord properties. In order to tackle this issue, NCC had suggested that one option for the Partnership was to consider the recruitment of an Enforcement Officer onto the Ashington Neighbourhood Services Team.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Town Clerk suggested that the NCC Neighbourhood Services Management Team be invited to a special meeting of the Town Council to outline their proposals as well as other options. The Town Clerk strongly reminded members the decision would always remain with Ashington Town Councillors as to how their resource contribution was used but it was important that any decisions taken were fully informed and reflected the full appraisal of all available options.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk be asked to invite the NCC Neighbourhood Services Management Team to a special meeting of the Environment & Amenities Committee, to which all council members would be invited. The purpose of the meeting would be to hear a presentation on the options available with regard to the filling of the current vacancy on the Ashington Neighbourhood Services Team.

Planning & Regeneration Committee (Cllr. M Purvis): The Chair reported that two main items had been on the agenda of the meeting held on 16th December. These were:-

Planning Application No. 14/0371/OUT : This application referred to the proposed development of up to 240 new dwellings on land behind Freeman Way, North Seaton and that a presentation from the landowner's agents had been made at an earlier meeting when members had raised concerns regarding the entrance/exit to the proposed development. The Chair stated that on 16 December

2014, the landowner's agents had given a further presentation explaining how the traffic flow on Newbiggin Road would be managed at the proposed entrance/exit to the new development.

Community Transport Pilot Scheme (Former A2 Bus Service service - The Chair explained that following the December 2014 meeting of the Committee, a meeting had been held with WATBUS to obtain information about community transport schemes in general as well as the potential operation of a pilot scheme to address needs identified by the survey results. Members were informed that matter would be discussed further at the committee meeting arranged for 10 February 2015, to which all Town Councillors and NCC Ashington Councillors would be invited.

C15/530 9. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- (i) ***Potland Burn Liaison Group:*** Cllr. L Brown informed members that changes were currently being proposed for the management of the community benefit fund further to the recent change of ownership and management of UK Coal. Members were informed that the position regarding the future arrangements for the S106 agreement should hopefully be known by March/April 2015.

C15/531 10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for Tuesday, 3rd March 2015, at 7:00pm, in the Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.