

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 31 March, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Vicky Brown (Vice-Chair)	Keith Chambers
	Avril Chisholm	Glyn Davies
	Stephen Fenwick (Chair)	Lawrence Henderson
	Mark Purvis (Ex Officio)	Louis Brown (Ex Officio)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Cllr. Marjorie Chambers – Non-Committee Member
Cllr. Pauline Thompson – Non-Committee Member
Members of the Public - 0

On behalf of the Council, the Chair of the Committee took the opportunity to pay tribute to Northumberland County Councillor Jimmy Sawyer who had sadly passed away on Monday, 23 March 2015. Following Cllr. Fenwick's address, members observed a one minute silence in memory of Cllr. Sawyer.

FGP 15/517 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSCENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Les Alderson, Victor Bridges, Maggie Lang, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery and Wyn Stewart.

FGP 15/518 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests. Members were reminded that any disclosures could also be made during the meeting should matters arise during discussion or debate.

FGP 15/519 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2015, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGP 15/520 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

FGP 15/510 Budget Report 2014/15 (Re Ashington Neighbourhood Partnership Agreement): Cllr. K Chambers reported that he had met with Amanda Cryer (Neighbourhood Services Manager), on 23rd March 2015, to discuss the financial position regarding the Neighbourhood Services Partnership. Members were informed that the financial outturn for the 2014/15 financial year was still to be finalised.

FGP15/514 Ashington Memorial Garden Project: The Town Clerk reported that the Working Group had submitted a number of separate funding applications to local funders in order to address the financial shortfall following the unsuccessful bid to the SITA Trust. Members were informed that decisions on the applications were expected before the end of June.

The Town Clerk reported that he had formally approached Ashington's Northumberland County Councillors requesting support from their Members Local Schemes Allowance. Members were informed that, to date, an aggregate sum of £20,000 had been committed from the County Councillors which was excellent news and a sign of the local commitment to the scheme from the elected members.

The Town Clerk gave a general update on the project and reported that a meeting was to take place with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) on 14th April 2015 to confirm the procedures for drawing down the monies and agreeing start dates on the project. Members were informed that the school work was continuing and that the Town Council had facilitated a trip to Otterburn Military Range on the 25 March for 95 schoolchildren to see the former WWI training trenches, receive an informative presentation on WWI and also attend a Q&A session with Coldstream Guard veterans.

FGP15/515: A brief discussion took place on the recent visit to the new Ashington Leisure & Community Centre on Monday 9 March 2015. Members requested a further site visit as the work developed.

FGP 15/521 5. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Chair invited Mr Paul Mordue (Skillsforce North East) to give a presentation in support of their formal request for financial support.

Mr Mordue explained that Skillsforce was a registered charity supported by the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes, which used

the skills of predominantly ex-service personnel to do extra-curricular work with schools, including working with children who had behavioural issues. Activities included rock climbing, camping, sailing and other outward-bound activities, aimed to give children confidence and in some cases 'to put them on the straight and narrow'.

Mr Mordue explained that the organisation had been working closely with Bothal Middle School and had developed a 'Remembrance Project' that complemented Ashington Town Council's work with the school to develop an information board for the Ashington Memorial Garden project. The project had worked with Year 8 pupils with a focus on Sgt. Hugh Cairns who as a former pupil of the school and had been awarded the highest military honour of the Victoria Cross in the last days of WWI.

As part of the project, a trip to France and Belgium had been organised to visit significant WWI sites from 28 to 30 April 2015. It was anticipated 20 children would go on the visit supported by 7 teaching & Skillsforce staff. The trip would incorporate a visit to the grave of Hugh Cairns and the laying of a wreath. The guide for the visit would be Brigadier Johnny Walker who had a wealth of knowledge on military history.

Mr Mordue requested that Ashington Town Council consider making a contribution to the trip. In response to questions Mr Mordue confirmed that any financial support would go to cover the overall cost of the trip for the 20 schoolchildren.

The Chair thanked Mr Mordue for his presentation and he left the meeting.

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

- Holy Sepulchre Over 50's Club
- Woodhorn Lane Over 40's Football Club
- Parkhead & Wansbeck Powersports
- Friends of Bothal & Wansbeck Schools
- Skillsforce North East / Bothal Middle School

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

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The application from the Holy Sepulchre Over 50's Club**

be not agreed;

(ii) The application from Woodhorn Lane Over 40's Football Club be not agreed;

(iii) A grant of £500 be made to Parkhead & Wansbeck Powersports to support the costs of hosting the British Special Olympics Powerlifting Championship in Ashington on Saturday, 22 August 2015;

(iv) A grant of £250 be made to Friends of Bothal & Wansbeck Schools to support the cost of activities for children at a Summer Fair to take place at Bothal Middle School on Saturday 4 July 2015; and that

(v) A grant of £500 to be made to Skillsforce North East/ Bothal Middle School to support the visit of 20 children to WWI sites of interest during April 2015. The grant would be subject to the completion of work in relation to the Ashington Memorial Garden project and to receiving a presentation following the visit.

FGP15/522 6. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments, made in accordance with Council and Committee resolutions, for the period 18 February 2015 – 27 March 2015.

Resolved:

That the full schedule of payments for the period 15 January 2015 to 17 February 2015, be agreed as set out below:

Northumberland County Council (Pay Costs - February 2015)	10,470.97
Northumberland County Council (Town Hall Rental - Balance of Agreed Rent 31 March 2015)	790.99
Citroen Contract Monitoring (Leasing Costs- Neighbourhood Services Van)	305.42
Simpsonian Music Ltd (Artist Fee - Event 7 March 2015)	960.00
Northumbrian Water (Allotments - Sixth Avenue)	201.39
Northumbrian Water (Allotments - Nursery Park)	41.92
The Information Commissioner (Data Protection Registration 2015/16)	35.00
The Society of Local Council Clerks (Membership 2015)	260.00
Azure Charitable Enterprises (Newsletter Artwork & Printing)	1,378.72

ThruYorDoor (Delivery of ATC Newsletter)	845.00
Vogel Associates (Professional Fees - Site Inspection & Feasibility Work - Station Road)	600.00
Northumberland County Council (Fuel Costs/Neighbourhood Services Van)	48.87
Lawson & Thompson (Professional Fees - Lease of Town Hall Office Accommodation)	220.00
CNC Property Fund Management Ltd (Site Rental - 6th Avenue Allotments - 4th Qtr Rent)	600.00
Viking Payments (Printing & Stationery)	143.53
Wansbeck Disability Forum (Small Grant/Donation)	750.00
Real Deal Plus (Small Grant/Donation)	995.00
Broxap Ltd (Litter Bins)	3,363.60
Morrisons Glazing Services (Bus Shelter Windows - Replacement)	138.00
BT Payment Services Ltd (Refund - Extra ATC Office Line cancelled)	-44.16
Martin Simpson Music Event - (Ticket Sales LESS: Contract Rider/Catering)	-710.00
Citroen Contract Monitoring (Leasing Costs- Neighbourhood Services Van)	305.42
Trade UK (B&Q - Neighbourhood Services Materials)	57.50
Trade UK (Screwfix - Neighbourhood Services Materials)	113.09
Trade UK (Screwfix - Neighbourhood Services Materials)	1.84
Trade UK - CREDIT NOTE (Screwfix - Neighbourhood Services Materials)	-2.54
Viking Payments (Furniture and Equipment)	393.53
Northumberland County Council (Pay Costs - March 2015)	10,029.49
Northumberland County Council (Telephone Calls - Recharge)	300.96
Northumberland County Council (Room Booking Fees - Town Hall "after hours")	60.00
Northumberland County Council (Room Booking Fees - Town Hall "after hours")	120.00
Northumberland County Council (Room Booking Fees - Town Hall "after hours")	180.00
Morrisons Glazing Services (Bus Shelter Windows - Replacement)	155.64
M.Slaughter - Expenses Reimbursed (Email - Business Service/Events Costs)	356.12
D.J.Sadler (Historian Services & Presentation - War Memorial Project, School's Work)	100.00
Owen Pugh Contracts Ltd (Demolition of Bus Shelters - North Seaton)	2,209.78
Northumberland Federation of YMCA's (PA & Sound Engineer - Martin Simpson Event 7 March)	150.00
	35,925.08
INCOME RECEIPTS	
Wansbeck Road Allotment Association - 2014-15 Management Fees	390.00

FGP 15/523 7. TOWN TWINNING – DEVELOPMENT OF A FORMAL CHARTER

The Town Clerk reported that together with the Funding & Projects Officer, had met with two representatives of the City Council of Remscheid on 27 March 2015, regarding the development of the formal town twinning charter between Ashington, Newbiggin by the Sea and Remscheid. Members were informed that it had been proposed by Remscheid that the charter be formally signed by all parties in Remscheid on the 16 August 2015 as part of a Community Festival and Event.

The Town Clerk reported that a request had been made to Remscheid to have the draft text translated into German to allow the development of three charters by local renowned calligrapher Tom Fleming. Sven Wiertz, of the City Council of Remscheid, had also requested and provided text for the development of an additional document charting the history of the town twinning agreement dating back to 1952.

The Town Clerk informed members that significant work needed to take place to produce the new Charter, including the provision of artwork, agreement and sharing of costs, before any firm dates could be definitely agreed. Members were also informed that, at this point, no formal invitation had yet been received from Remscheid.

The Town Clerk reported that he was confident that the work, which was being managed, organised and co-ordinated entirely by Ashington Town Council, could be concluded in time for a formal visit to Remscheid although the timescales would likely be very tight.

Members were informed that, subject to the completion of the charter work, it was expected that an invitation to the Town Council for a delegation to visit Remscheid in August 2015 would be forthcoming. The Town Clerk requested that all members consider whether or not they would be willing and able to visit Remscheid in mid August (14-18 August) and to let him know by 30 April 2015 at the very latest.

Members were reminded that, with the exception of the Mayor and any required staff, the trip would have to be entirely self-funded in terms of personal travel and accommodation costs.

FGP 15/524 9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business.

FGP 15/525 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, 28 April 2015 at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.