

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday, 5 May 2015, at the Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

## PRESENT:

### **Councillors:**

Maggie Lang (Chair)	Les Alderson
Victor Bridges	Louis Brown
Vicky Brown	Keith Chambers
Marjorie Chambers	Avril Chisholm
Glyn Davies	Stephen Fenwick
Lawrence Henderson	Mark Purvis
Wyn Stewart	Pauline Thompson
Ely Turnbull	

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Sue Coulthard – Snr. Admin Officer  
Members of the Public – 2

## OPEN SESSION

The Town Clerk stated that he had received an email from a member of the public, submitting written questions regarding the role of the Town Council in exerting influence on Northumberland County Council in relation to any future plans for Hirst Park, Wansbeck Riverside Park and the existing Ashington Leisure Centre site.

The Town Clerk summarised the position regarding these matters as follows:-

- (i) **Hirst Park** : Northumberland County Council had submitted a capital resources bid to fund out capital works to refurbish and reinstate the park-keeper's house at Hirst Park. In response to a request from the County Council for a financial contribution, the Town Council had agreed contribute £10,000 towards the capital works from the saving made on the Neighbourhood Services Agreement.
- (ii) **Wansbeck Riverside Park** : The Town Clerk reported that it was understood that, further to advertisement and full appraisal of all bids, ARCH on behalf of Northumberland County Council (NCC) was in advanced discussion with a preferred developer regarding the future of both the caravan site and the remainder of the Riverside Park.
- (iii) **Existing Ashington Leisure Centre Site** : Members were reminded that in welcoming investment in the new facility, the Town Council had stressed

the need for a proper “exit strategy” from the current site that avoided the site simply being mothballed. There was recognition from members that the current site was a mixed ownership between both NCC and the Ashington Leisure Partnership and that discussions had taken place regarding future plans for the site including the Institute Building. It was agreed that attempts be made to establish the current position regarding the future of the site.

The Chair closed the Open Session at this point and took the opportunity of addressing Full Council stating that the year she had spent serving as Chair of the Town Council and Mayor of Ashington had been both a privilege and an honour.

The Chair added that during the year in Office, she had met a great number of wonderful people who either lived or worked in Ashington at a range of events and had not heard one negative comment about the work carried out by the Town Council. The Chair stated that she was pleased that her Civic Year had seen the refurbishment and reopening of Ashington Town Hall and that Ashington Town Council was now where it truly belonged in the heart of the town.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Town Council Officers for the assistance they had given her during the Civic Year to ensure that she was able to carry out her numerous and varied duties as Chair of the Council and Town Mayor.

#### **C15/544 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Cllr. Lang thanked members for their support during her own term of office as Chair and particularly thanked Cllr. Turnbull for carrying out the role of Vice-Chair.

One nomination for the position of Chair to the Town Council was received and duly seconded, for Cllr. E Turnbull.

**Resolved:**

**That Cllr. E Turnbull be duly elected as Chair of Ashington Town Council for the Civic Year 2015/16.**

Cllr. Turnbull, as the newly elected Chair, signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the prescribed form and assumed the Chair.

**C15/545 2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

One nomination for the position of Vice-Chair was received, and duly seconded, for Cllr. A Chisholm.

**Resolved:**

**That Cllr. A Chisholm be duly elected as Vice-Chair of Ashington Town Council for the Civic Year 2015/16.**

**C15/546 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Liam Lavery, Kris Lavery and Bob Walkinshaw.

**C15/547 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest from Members present.

**C15/548 5. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Resolved:**

**That Cllr. S Fenwick be duly elected as Leader of Ashington Town Council.**

Cllr. Fenwick thanked members for electing him as Leader of the Town Council and thanked the former leader, Cllr. Louis Brown, for the excellent work he had undertaken during what had been a difficult time, particularly in relation to the setting up of the Ashington Neighbourhood Services Agreement and Partnership Board.

**C14/549 6. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Resolved:**

**That Cllr. M Purvis be duly elected as Deputy Leader of Ashington Town Council.**

**C15/550 7. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes from the meeting held on 3 March 2015 were agreed as a true record.

**C15/551 8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

***C15/544 14/515 Closed Agenda Item – AE Phoenix Football Club (Request for Financial Support):*** Cllr. Davies asked whether this matter had been satisfactorily resolved. The Town Clerk stated that he had responded to the club as agreed at the meeting – a copy of the letter had been circulated to members.

**C15/552 9. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

The Town Clerk circulated a document outlining recommendations for a change within the Council's Committee structure. Members were reminded that at the last Annual Meeting, it had been agreed to increase the size of the committees and to include ex-officio members in any decision-making.

The Town Clerk informed members that initial discussions had taken place with the former Leader and more recently, with the new Leader regarding the current committee structure and meeting schedule. Members were informed that these discussions had resulted in suggestions being made to appoint all members of the Council to the membership of all committees and to reduce the number of "special" meetings held.

The recommendation was for the Finance & General Purposes Committee to continue meeting on a monthly basis, for the Environment & Amenities Committee to continue meeting bi-monthly, but for the Planning & Regeneration Committee to meet on an "as and when required" required basis.

The Town Clerk stated that the only remaining formal Sub-Committee was the Personnel Sub-Committee and that membership should be agreed. That Sub-Committee would properly report back to Finance & General Purposes Committee.

After a short discussion, it was agreed that the recommendations be accepted and agreed.

**Resolved:**

That:

- (i) The Town Council formally adopt the revised Committee and Sub-Committee structure,
- (ii) The new Schedule of Delegations be agreed under Section 1 of the Local Government Act 1972, for the discharge of the Town Council's functions by the Committees and Sub-Committees; and that
- (iii) Membership of the main Committees and Sub-Committees be agreed as follows:-

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Environment &amp; Amenities</b> (Bi-Monthly)	<b>All Members</b>
<b>Finance &amp; General Purposes (Incl. Small Grants &amp; Donations Sub-Committee)</b> (Monthly)	<b>All Members</b>
<b>Planning &amp; Regeneration</b> (As and When Required)	<b>All Members</b>
<b>Sub-Committee/ Working Group</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Personnel Sub-Committee</b>	<b>Leader Deputy Leader Chair of the Council Leader of the Opposition</b>

**C15/553 10. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Town Clerk submitted a list of current outside bodies and asked that consideration be given to member interest, and relevant and appropriate representation from Ashington Town Council.

The Town Clerk particularly drew members’ attention to Town Council representation on Ashington Town Team. Members were reminded that these meetings were becoming increasingly important as a result of the proposed redevelopment of the areas in and around the town centre.

It was agreed that the matter of representation on Ashington Town Team be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of Full Council.

<b>Resolved:</b>		
<b>That:</b>		
(i) Ashington Town Council representation on outside bodies be agreed as follows:-		
<b>Outside Body</b>	<b>Representative/s</b>	<b>Substitute/s</b>
North/Id Assoc. of Local Councils (NALC) County Committee (Meets Quarterly)	<u>1 Representative</u> Leader of the Council	Deputy Leader
Local Multi-Agency Partnership Panel (LMAPS) (Meets Bi-Monthly)	Louis Brown Pauline Thompson  • (Plus Town Clerk)	N/A
Potland Burn Opencast – Liaison Committee (Meets Quarterly)	Louis Brown Vicky Brown  • (Plus Town Clerk)	N/A
Ashington Community Development Trust	Maggie Lang	N/A

<b>Ashington Town Team</b>	<b>TO BE CONSIDERED AND AGREED AT NEXT MEETING</b>	
<b>Ashington Neighbourhood Service Board (Meets Bi-Monthly)</b>	<b>Chairs of Environment and Planning Committees Leader of the Council</b>  • <b>(Plus Town Clerk)</b>	<b>Vice-Chairs of Environment / Planning Deputy Leader of the Council</b>

**(ii) The Town Clerk be requested to formally notify outside bodies of Ashington Town Council representation as outlined above.**

**(iii) Town Council representatives be required to submit a written report to Full Council after attending any meetings of outside bodies.**

**C15/554 11. DRAFT FINAL ACCOUNTS 2014/15**

The Town Clerk presented the Draft Final Accounts for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2015 for consideration and informed members that the full accounts would be submitted together with the Annual Governance return at the next meeting.

The Town Clerk informed members that the estimated Reserves Balance as at 31 March 2015 was £273,167. Further to discussion and consideration of the planned spend it was agreed that a proportion of the reserves balance be earmarked for the delivery of two capital projects:-

***Ashington Memorial Garden***

A maximum amount of £79,360 to be used towards the total overall project costs of £154,000. Members were reminded that a number of funding bids were still to be determined and that should further applications for external funding be successful, the required Town Council funding would reduce accordingly.

***Planned Use of Reserves (Bus Shelter Provision)***

An amount of £30,000 bus shelter provision be earmarked for the further provision of bus shelters at identified sites.

The Town Clerk stated that in the event of the planned use of reserves being taken up, together with the existing provisions, the General Reserves Balance would reduce to £143,807.

**Resolved:**

**That the planned use of reserves during the financial year 2015/2016 be agreed as:-**

<b>(i) Memorial Garden Project</b>	<b>£ 79,360</b>
<b>(ii) Bus Shelter Provision</b>	<b>£ 30,000</b>
<b>(iii) Elections Provision</b>	<b>£ 10,000</b>
<b>(iv) Christmas Features</b>	<b>£ 10,000</b>
<b>(v) General Provision</b>	<b>£143,807</b>

**C15/555 12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

**Visit to Remscheid (August 2015) :** The Town Clerk asked for confirmation of the names of those taking part in the visit to Remscheid to attend the formal signing of the new Town twinning Charter. It was confirmed that Cllr. E Turnbull and Mrs E Turnbull, Cllrs L Brown, V Brown, A Chisholm, P Thompson were taking part. It was also expected that there would be officer attendance for the duration of the visit.

Members were reminded that with the exception of the Mayor, all Council members would be entirely self-funding the travel and accommodation and there would be no public subsidy for the visit

Cllr. L Brown asked whether Officers involved in the visit to Remscheid were expected to self-funding their costs, bearing in mind that they would be expected to attend as part of their day-to-day duties.

Officers left the room while the matter was discussed in a closed session.

**Resolved:**

**That the Town Council fund 50% of the travel and accommodation costs involved for Town Council Officers to take part in the visit to Remscheid.**



**C15/556 13. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for Tuesday, 7 July 2015, at 7:00pm, in the Council Chamber. The Town Clerk reminded members that this would be the Annual Meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.