

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 23 February 2016, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Vicky Brown (Chair)	Louis Brown
	Marjorie Chambers	Avril Chisholm
	Glyn Davies	Stephen Fenwick
	Kris Lavery	Liam Lavery
	Mark Purvis	Pauline Thompson
	Ely Turnbull	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Sue Coulthard – Snr. Admin. Officer

FGP 16/578 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Les Alderson, Victor Bridges, Keith Chambers, Lawrence Henderson, Maggie Lang, Wyn Stewart, and Bob Walkinshaw.

FGP 16/579 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllrs M Chambers and L Brown disclosed personal and prejudicial interests should any discussion take place regarding allotments issues. Members were reminded that any disclosures could also be made during the meeting should matters arise during discussion or debate.

FGP 16/580 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2016, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGP 16/581 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

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FGP 16/582 5. APPLICATION FOR SERVICE FUNDING 2016/17
- NORTHUMBERLAND YMCA

Rob Cox and Graeme Wright attended the meeting and outlined the current and planned work programme of the organisation for 2016/17. Members were informed that a number of capital funding applications for works and improvements to the building had been successful and led to noticeable improvements in the main hall and the opening of the state-of-the-art music studio for the Y-Music Project.

Members were informed that current work was now underway to improve the main lounge area. Mr Cox advised members however that revenue funding support was always a challenge and that the organisation had recently been hugely disappointed to be informed that the major revenue application to Children in Need for the Y-Music Project had been unsuccessful. In response to a question from the Chair, Mr Cox confirmed that the likelihood was that, without alternative funding, the music project would cease in operation until such time as an alternative funder could be identified and a new funding application could be made. Members were informed that the new studio would therefore be closed and unavailable for hire without the supervision of the funded employee.

Mr Cox took the opportunity to thank the Town Council for its continued support over recent years and also for the helpful advice and assistance they had always received from the Town Council staff. Members were informed that the organisation had been working positively towards becoming financially self-sufficient within the next two years although this business plan had now been severely detrimented by the loss of the revenue funding for the music project, a critical part of the overall business.

Members were complimentary of the work undertaken by the organisation and the clear and recognisable improvements that had been made over recent years. Mr Cox thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to attend and report on the current work of the organisation and requested that the Council would again look favourably at continued funding support for 2016/17.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) An immediate grant award of £5,000 be made to Northumberland YMCA to enable continuation of the “Y-Music Project” while alternative funding options are pursued,**

(ii) That a contribution of £6,000 be made in 2016/17 towards the overall work of the organisation; and that

(iii) Northumberland YMCA be asked to consider extending a formal invitation to a Council member to become an “observer” and attendee at their future Board meetings.

FGP16/583 6. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Applications for financial support were received from the following organisations:

- Ashington Community Cinema
- Friends of Ashington Community Woods
- Northumberland Lightning American Football
- Ashington Male Voice Choir

The applications were presented in detail by the Funding and Projects Officer for the consideration of the Committee members. The Town Clerk outlined the reasons why the Ashington Community Cinema would now be operating their trial period from the Northumberland YMCA Building and not the “Central Arcade Building” (Former Co-Op) as had originally been intended.

Members were also informed that the request from Ashington Male Voice Choir was towards the Centenary Celebration Event that was being planned for May 2016. Members were reminded that the Town Council was also a corporate supporter of the Choir and had agreed a budget contribution of £100 for 2016/17 for that purpose.

Resolved:

That the following grant awards be made:

- (i) Ashington Community Cinema - £906.00**
- (ii) Friends of Ashington Community Woods - £784**
- (iii) Northumberland Lightning American Football - £660.00**
- (iv) Ashington Male Voice Choir - £500**

FGP 16/584 7. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS.

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments, made in the period 22 January to 18 February 2016.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the period 22 January to 18 February 2016 be formally agreed and approved.

The full schedule of payments is attached to the minutes as schedule 1.

FGP 16/585 8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.

The Town Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Community Action Northumberland notifying the Town Council of the forthcoming retirement of Mr David Francis in March 2016. Members were informed that Mr Francis had been the Chief Officer for some 30 years and had assisted in the establishment and development of the new Ashington Town Council in 2009, in his role as the Chief Officer of Northumberland Association of Local Councils. Members were asked whether they wished to recognise Mr Francis' service with a contribution towards a retirement gift. It was agreed in principal that a contribution to a retirement gift of £50 be made. The Town Clerk undertook to check the legal position regarding payment to individuals under such circumstances.

FGP 16/586 11. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee was arranged for 6:00pm on Tuesday, 29 March 2016, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ashington.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.