

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 26 July 2016, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Vicky Brown (Chair)	Victor Bridges
	Louis Brown	Marjorie Chambers
	Avril Chisholm	Glyn Davies
	Lawrence Henderson	Kris Lavery
	Liam Lavery	Mark Purvis
	Ely Turnbull	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Members of the Public - 1

FGP 16/627 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Les Alderson, Keith Chambers, Stephen Fenwick, Maggie Lang, Wyn Stewart, Pauline Thompson and Bob Walkinshaw.

FGP 16/628 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interest.

FGP 16/629 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2016, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGP 16/630 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

FGP 16/620 Ashington Memorial Garden: The Town Clerk informed members that the planned demolition of the old Ashington Library building had been delayed and would not commence on 1 August as originally envisaged. Members were assured that contact would be made with the Northumberland County Council (NCC) Project Officer

and contractors when appointed, to ensure the Memorial Garden would be safeguarded from any possible damage during the demolition process.

FGP16/631 5. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Applications for financial support were received from the following organisations:

- (i) ***Eliot Smith Company (ESC)***: The Chair welcomed Mr Eliot Smith to the meeting. Mr Smith was the founder and Artistic Director of the ESC, which was a touring, contemporary dance company. ESC was creating a new work called ‘*Pitman*’, based on the Ashington Group of Pitmen Painters.

Mr Smith stated that the project would work with Woodhorn Museum, BAIT and Ashington school children, culminating in performances of “Pitman” at Newbiggin Maritime Centre, Newcastle Dance City, and the Laing Art Gallery. An outdoor performance in Ashington was also in the planning, dependent on completion of construction work to Station Road.

Mr Smith informed members that the estimated cost of the production was £20,000. Members were informed that a grant of £14,800 had been secured from the Arts Council, £1,000 from Northumberland Arts Development and £100 from the Ashington based business Northern Jewellers.

ESC requested the Town Council consider funding of £1,000 towards the cost of the project, confirming that, if financial support was provided, full recognition would be given on advertising material, the performance programme and website. Mr Smith stated that, given the nature of the project it had the potential to receive extensive media coverage. Mr Smith confirmed that he continued to actively seek sponsorship from businesses in Northumberland to meet the full cost of the project.

Mr Smith thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to present the proposals and left the meeting.

Following a short discussion, members commended Mr Smith on his endeavours in actively seeking funding and also his achievements in receiving recognition for his artistic work in contemporary dance.

(ii) **Community Action Northumberland:** The application from Community Action Northumberland was presented in detail by the Town Clerk.

Resolved:

That the following grant awards be made:

(i) Eliot Smith Company	£1,000.00
(ii) Community Action Northumberland	£100.00

FGP 16/632 6. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, during the financial period 24 June to 21 July 2016.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the period 24 June to 21 July 2016 be formally agreed and approved.

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

FGP 16/633 7. ASHINGTON 150TH CELEBRATION EVENTS

Following the inaugural meeting of the Ashington 150th Events Working Group held on 12 July 2016, the Town Clerk presented a summary of the proposed celebration events in 2017. Members were reminded that the Group consisted of the Chair of the Council, Leader and Deputy Leader and the Chairs of the three Council Committees.

The Town Clerk reported that work was underway with Ashington Town Team for 150th branding and logo for use on publicity and promotional materials.

Members were informed that a number of events and proposals had been openly considered including:

- An Ashington Calendar
- High profile summer music event
- Themed Town Centre Markets

Members were supportive of the proposals and the Town Clerk was requested to further develop plans and obtain necessary quotations for consideration after the summer recess.

The Town Clerk informed members that it was likely that a wider Working Group would emerge to take forward ideas and proposals and that he envisaged a Group made up of the Town Council, Town Team and Community Organisations could and should be developed.

FGP 16/634 8. STAFF RECRUITMENT: POST OF SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The Town Clerk presented a report regarding the recruitment of the post of Senior Administrative Officer.

The Town Clerk explained that current post holder, Sue Coulthard, had given notice of her intention to retire in December 2016. A proposed timeline for the recruitment of a new post-holder was outlined with the aim of having the new worker in post to work with the existing post holder, for a period of time, to ensure the smooth transition and transfer of duties.

The Town Clerk informed members that the current position was on a part-time basis of 3 days per week. Members were advised however that the workload and range of duties of the Town Council had grown significantly in the last three years. The Town Clerk's view was that this necessitated the post becoming a full-time position.

Following a discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the Town Clerk's report and recommendations be accepted and approved.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The report and suggested timetable for recruitment be agreed,**
- (ii) The process be managed, overseen and delegated to the Personnel Sub-Committee (membership consisting of Chair of the Council, Leader & Deputy Leader, Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee); and that**
- (iii) The preferred candidate for appointment be reported to the next meeting of Finance & General Purposes Committee for agreement and approval.**

FGP 16/635 9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr. L. Brown identified three sites in the town where the physical appearance and condition were giving cause for concern, namely; Wansbeck Riverside Park Caravan Site, the former Coulson Park Primary School site and Darnley Road playing field. The Town Clerk informed members that the issues had been raised with Northumberland County Council for information, advice and direct work. Members were informed that some remedial work to the Coulson Park site was planned to take place in the near future and that it was understood that the planned sale of the Riverside Caravan Park was progressing with a locally based organisation.

FGP 16/636 10. 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, 27 September 2016, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ashington.

The meeting ended at 7.25pm.