

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 4 October 2016, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

## PRESENT:

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

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Members of the Public - 0

## FGP 16/637 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Victor Bridges, Keith Chambers, Lawrence Henderson, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Pauline Thompson and Bob Walkinshaw.

## FGP 16/638 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interest.

## FGP 16/639 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

## FGP 16/640 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

**FGP 16/620 Ashington Memorial Garden:** The Town Clerk reported that he had received an email from the Capital Project Management Team at Northumberland County Council regarding the impending demolition of the Ashington Library building, adjacent to the Memorial Garden. Members were advised that there had been a further delay in the start date for the demolition work and that it was now hoped to start work on site on Monday, 10 October 2016.

Members were advised that the County Council had however given a

reassurance that the site would be cleared, the temporary fencing removed and any damage made good before the Remembrance Sunday Memorial Service.

**FOP 16/635 Any Other Urgent Business :** The Town Clerk reminded members that the current state of three areas of the town had been highlighted as being of concern; i.e. Wansbeck Riverside Park Caravan Site , former Coulson Park School and Darnley Road playing field.

The Town Clerk reported that Northumberland County Council had confirmed that discussions were currently taking place with a local business interest regarding Wansbeck Riverside Park Caravan Site. Members were hopeful that the County Council would be successful in these latest negotiations as it was considered that the present site was now an “eyesore” and in need of major improvement works.

Members noted that small improvement works had been carried out to the hedging and surrounding areas of the former Coulson Park School site and that grass had been cut on the Darnley Road playing field.

## **FGP16/641 5. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Requests for financial support were received from the following organisations:

- (i) 7<sup>th</sup> Ashington (St Andrew’s) Brownie Unit
- (ii) Ashington Pantomime Group
- (iii) Ashington Colliery Band
- (iv) Contact Mental Health Support

### **Resolved:**

#### **That:-**

- (i) A grant of £384 be made to 7<sup>th</sup> Ashington Brownie Unit,**
- (ii) A grant of £200 be made to Ashington Pantomime Group,**
- (iii) A grant of £500 be made to Ashington Colliery Band and that the Band be considered for regular annual funding during the Budget Preparation process for 2017/2018; and that**
- (iv) The Town Clerk invite a representative from Contact Mental Health to make a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee in support of the request for funding.**

## FGP 16/642 6. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, during the financial period 22 July to 29 September 2016.

### **Resolved:**

**That the Schedule of Payments for the period 22 July to 29 September 2016 be formally agreed and approved.**

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

## FGP 16/643 7. BUDGET REPORT

The Town Clerk presented a Budget Report for the period 1 April to 30 September 2016 for members' consideration. The Town Clerk drew members' attention to the following issues:-

- (i) **Casual Vacancies:** The Town Clerk reminded members that three casual vacancies had recently arisen on the Town Council. Members were informed that, in the event that by-elections were called, the majority of the related costs were provided for within the 2016/2017 budget.

In response to a question regarding the possibility of elections being called, the Town Clerk reported that Northumberland County Council (NCC) would confirm whether or not a by-election had been called further to the closing date of 5 October 2016, as all matters were now handled by NCC.

The Town Clerk explained that if an election were to be properly called, the Elections Office would announce a closing date for candidate nominations and that if only one person stood for election, that individual would be duly elected unopposed. Although unconfirmed, the Town Clerk believed it was likely that an election would be called in one of the three wards affected.

Members were informed that, in any wards where elections were not called, then the Council would be in a position to properly consider co-options although it was not compulsory to do so. The Town Clerk advised that should the Council wish to co-opt then any individual wishing to be considered for co-option must set out fully in writing the reasons why they wished to become a member of the Council. Any applications would be duly considered by Full Council.

- (ii) **Fayre Day:** The Town Clerk reminded members that the budget for Fayre Day had been decreased by £2,500 from previous years. The Town Clerk reported however that, although there was an overspend of £229 on the current year's budget, this had been as a result of the change of location which had meant that extra costs were incurred for the hire of portable toilets and market stalls.
- (iii) **Christmas Light Switch-On:** The Town Clerk reported that it was unlikely that a Switch-On event would be held this year as it was unclear whether or not the major regeneration improvement works would be completed in the town centre.

**FGP 16/644 8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

- (i) **Neighbourhood Services Partnership – Ward Walkabouts:**  
The Town Clerk reported that he had confirmed the arrangements for the individual "Ward Walkabout" inspections with all appropriate Town and County Councillors. Members were reminded that the agreed dates were as follows:-

Haydon and Bothal Wards	6 <sup>th</sup> October
College and Seaton Wards	18 <sup>th</sup> October
Hirst Ward	31 <sup>st</sup> October
Central Ward	7 <sup>th</sup> November

**FGP 16/645 9. 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, 25 October 2016, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ashington.

**The meeting ended at 7.00pm.**