

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 13 September 2016, at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Avril Chisholm (Chair)	Victor Bridges
Marjorie Chambers	Glyn Davies
Stephen Fenwick	Lawrence Henderson
Liam Lavery	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

C16/640 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Les Alderson, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Keith Chambers, Maggie Lang, Kris Lavery, Mark Purvis, Wyn Stewart, Pauline Thompson and Bob Walkinshaw.

C16/641 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest from Members present.

C16/642 3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair informed members that she had attended the following events since the last meeting:-

- Northumberland Miners' Picnic (11th June)
- British Armed Forces Day Memorial Service (19th June)
- Battle of the Somme Centenary Memorial Service (1st July)
- Ashington Fayre Day (26th June)
- Ashington High School Achievement Awards (12th July)
- Northern Learning Trust Event (11th August)
- Woodhorn Disaster Memorial Service (13th August)

The Chair added that she had also attended the inaugural presentation of the Hugh Cairns Trophy at the Bothal Combined Schools and had also visited an Ashington-based organisation working with excluded children (Get U Started).

C16/643 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on 7 June 2016 were agreed and signed as a true record.

C16/644 5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

C16/628 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Provision in Northumberland: The Town Clerk reminded members that this matter had been deferred until a future meeting pending conclusion of the works to the main street. Members were informed that discussions, likely to be held in December 2016, would need to take account of the look and shape of the improved town centre as well as views from other partners regarding CCTV provision (i.e. the Police, ARCH and NCC).

C16/645 6. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported that the next meeting of the Ashington Stakeholders Group was arranged for 15th September.

Proposed Rail Link (Ashington-Blyth-Tyne): The Leader stated that Network Rail had completed GRIP 1 (the first stage of the Governance for Railway Investment Projects), which defined the need for a new terminal. Members were advised that GRIP 2, identification of the likely investment required, was due to be completed during the following week, with GRIP 3, the outline of options available and selection of preferred option, being scheduled for completion in October 2016.

The Leader reported that Northumberland County Council had confirmed the sale of Wansbeck Riverside Park to a local private buyer was progressing, although the buyer's identity had not yet been released for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

7. MEMBER REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Update reports from members formally representing the Town Council on outside bodies were given as follows:-

- **ARCH – Stakeholder Group for Town Centre Regeneration:** Cllr. S. Fenwick reported that he would be attending meetings of the Stakeholder Group in September and October and would report back to the next meeting of the Council.
- **Hirst Park – Heritage Lottery Bid:** Cllr. M Chambers reported that at the last meeting of the Working Group, the Town Council had been thanked for the excellent organisation of the World Cup Anniversary Event held in July, which had been an overwhelming success. The event had provided evidence that the Park was an ideal setting for successful future community events.

Cllr. Chambers added that the project budget was being scrutinised and that the Lead Project Officer (Mike Jeffrey, NCC Green Spaces Manager) would be contacting the Town Clerk regarding future maintenance costs.

The Town Clerk stated that, as Lead Officer of the Partnership working on the Heritage Lottery Funding Bid, Mike Jeffrey would be invited to the next meeting of the Environment & Amenities Committee (20 September 2016). At that time, he would present the projected revenue costs linked to the future maintenance of Hirst Park and ask the Town Council to consider a request for funding.

Cllr. Chambers reported that, as part of the evidence to support the HLF bid, a count of visitors to the park had taken place on 14 August and a further count would be carried out on 22 September. Members were informed that the Ashington Alcan Bowls Club had now relocated to Hirst Park and that additional football training and football development was taking place.

The Town Clerk stated that the renovation work on the former park-keeper's house had now started.

(ii) Members were asked to appoint representatives to the following groups:-

- **Ashington Market Partnership**
- **Neighbourhood Services Partnership**

Resolved:		
That:-		
Representation on the Ashington Market Partnership and Neighbourhood Services Partnership be agreed as follows: -		
Group	Representative	Reserve
Ashington Market Partnership	Leader of the Council	Deputy Leader
	Chair of Planning & Regeneration	Vice Chair of Planning & Regeneration
Neighbourhood Services Partnership	Deputy Leader of the Council	Lead of the Council
	Chair of Environment & Amenities	Vice Chair of Environment & Amenities

The Leader of the Council reported that he had attended the first meeting of the Ashington Market Partnership that afternoon along with the Town Clerk. Membership had consisted of representation from Ashington Town Council, Northumberland County Council (elected members and officers) and Ashington Town Team.

The Leader confirmed that the Partnership had been set up at the request of the County Council in order to get the market back onto the main shopping area following the completion of the improvement works; this meant that the life of the Partnership itself was likely to be time bound.

The Leader reminded members that there were a number of issues to be considered including the new highway, parking arrangements,

litter problems/street cleansing both during and at the end of each market day. Members were reminded that, as with the Neighbourhood Services Partnership, Northumberland County Council was responsible for the delivery of those services covered by discussions within the Market Partnership.

C16/647 8. COUNCILLOR NON-ATTENDANCE/PERSISTENT ABSENCE – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 S85(1)

The Leader of the Council reported that three elected members were now in contravention of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 as they had not attended any Council meeting within a six-month period.

The Town Clerk informed Members that, with regard to Councillor Non-Attendance/Persistent Absence, the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 s85 stated that:-

“If a member fails throughout six consecutive months to attend any meetings of the council or its committees or sub-committees of which he/she is a member, or of a joint-committee, joint board or other body to which any of the council’s powers have been transferred or delegated, he/she ceases automatically to be a member of the council unless he/she has a “statutory excuse” (broadly speaking, military service during war or an emergency) or his/her failure is due to a reason approved by the council before the end of the period or he/she attended as representative of the council at a meeting of any body of persons.....the period begins with the last meeting attended”.

The Town Clerk reported that he had written individually to the three elected Members, Cllr.Wyn Stewart, Cllr.Maggie Lang and Cllr.Les Alderson on 27 July, and had sent two further reminders regarding their situation under the provisions of the Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 and informing them of the specific action required to be taken.

The Town Clerk reported that one of the members concerned, Cllr.Les Alderson, had subsequently responded in writing, tendering his resignation as a Town Councillor citing work related issues for the non-attendance. Members were informed that no contact had been received from either Cllr.Lang or Cllr.Stewart. The Chair and the Leader of the Council confirmed that they had also received no contact specifying the reason for non-attendance.

Resolved:

That:-

In strict accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 s85 regarding Councillor Non-Attendance and persistent absence;

- (i) The resignation of Cllr. Les Alderson as a member of the Town Council be accepted with immediate effect,**
- (ii) Cllr. Maggie Lang and Cllr. Wyn Stewart cease to be members of the Town Council with immediate effect;**
- (iii) Casual Vacancies be duly declared for one council member in each of the Bothal, Haydon and Seaton Wards.**

C16/648

**9. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT –
ASHINGTON MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Internal Auditor had been asked to carry out an audit report on the Ashington Memorial Garden Project and had now concluded that work. The full content of the Internal Auditor's Report dated 20 August 2016 was read out.

The Town Clerk stated that there were no matters of concern to raise regarding the financial aspects of the project and as a result the model used would be employed in the future on all major externally funded projects. Members noted that the Internal Auditor had pointed out that, although a member of the Town Council had been appointed to the project Working Group, that individual had been unable to attend the majority of the meetings. The Auditor felt that the Working Group would have benefitted from the Town Councillor's presence and suggested that in future, if a nominated councillor was unable to attend, then a deputy should be appointed.

After a short discussion, it was agreed that, in future, a Town Council representative and a deputy would be nominated for similar project working groups.

C16/649 10. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION – PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) FOR THE CONTROL OF DOGS

The Town Clerk read out a letter received from Northumberland County Council dated 24 August 2016, regarding a consultation exercise which was being undertaken regarding NCC's proposal to make a Public Spaces Protection Order for the Control of Dogs.

The letter explained that the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 required all councils to replace any existing dog control orders with a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) before 20th October 2017.

NCC currently had four Dog Control Orders in operation:-

- (i) The Fouling of Land by Dogs (County of Northumberland) Order 2011*
- (ii) The Dogs Exclusion (County of Northumberland) Order 2011*
- (iii) The Dogs on Leads (County of Northumberland) Order 2011; and*
- (iv) The Dogs on Leads by Direction (County of Northumberland) Order 2011*

The County Council proposed to replace the four existing Dog Control Orders with ***The Northumberland County Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order***, which would come into force on or before 1 December 2016.

Following a short discussion, it was agreed that the Town Council fully supported Northumberland County Council's proposal as outlined above.

C16/650 11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Staff Recruitment (Senior Administrative Officer): The Town Clerk reported that over 40 applications had been received for the post of Senior Administrative Officer. Members were informed that the Personnel Sub-Committee had completed the short-listing process and that five candidates had been selected for interview.

C16/651 12. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for Tuesday, 8 November 2016, at 7pm, in the Council Chamber.

The meeting ended at 8.35pm.