



Ashington Town Council
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ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 8 November 2016, at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Avril Chisholm (Chair)	Victor Bridges
Louis Brown	Vicky Brown
Marjorie Chambers	Glyn Davies
Stephen Fenwick	Lawrence Henderson
Kris Lavery	Liam Lavery
Mark Purvis	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 – 3

Following the recent sad passing of former Cllr. Keith Chambers, the Chair asked those present to observe a one minute silence in his memory.

C16/652 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Bob Walkinshaw.

C16/653 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest from Members present.

C16/654 3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- Northumberland County Council : Chair's Charity Event (16 September)
- Cygnus Support Group (13 October)

The Chair stated that she had been unable to attend the following events because of health problems and that the Vice Chair had attended on her behalf:-

- Licensing of New Parish Priest at Holy Sepulchre (19 September)
- Gardens Competition Awards Presentation (20th September)
- Ashington Library Summer Reading Challenge (22 September)

C16/656 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on 13 September 2016 were agreed and duly signed as a true record.

C16/657 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 January/February 2017, would need to take account of the look and shape of the improved town centre as well as incorporate views from other partners regarding CCTV provision (i.e. the Police, ARCH and Northumberland County Council).

C16/645 Leader's Report – Wansbeck Riverside Park: Northumberland County Councillor Lynne. Grimshaw confirmed that the sale to a local buyer was progressing and that conditions of sale were still to be fully agreed. The Town Clerk added that he understood there were related issues to be addressed, including the purchase of additional land and the final sale price.

C16/649 Northumberland County Council Consultation – Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the Control of Dogs: In response to a comment regarding the amount of general litter including dog fouling and dead leaves in the Hirst Ward, the Town Clerk stated that a report would be made to the Neighbourhood

Services Partnership Board requesting the area to be cleaned and thereafter patrolled regularly by Northumberland County Council (NCC) Enforcement Officers.

C16/658 6. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported that, due to family health circumstances, he had been unable to attend several meetings. The Leader informed members he had attended the 150th Anniversary Working Group where the Town Clerk had presented a full report and presentation inviting Community Groups and Organisations to consider how they would wish to celebrate the anniversary.

C16/659 7. TOWN COUNCIL CO-OPTIONS

The Town Clerk informed Members of the procedure followed in considering applications for co-option to the Town Council.

Haydon Ward: The Town Clerk reported that in the Haydon Ward, one formal application had been received from Matthew Cuthbert.

The Town Clerk stated that Mr Cuthbert was present at the meeting and had been invited to make a presentation to Full Council giving reasons why he wished to be co-opted. The Town Clerk invited Mr Cuthbert to address the meeting at this point. Mr Cuthbert gave a short presentation outlining the reasons why he wished to become a member of the Town Council.

The Chair asked for a formal vote in support of Mr Cuthbert's co-option. It was unanimously agreed that Mr Matthew Cuthbert be co-opted as a member of Ashington Town Council be co-opted as a member of Ashington Town Council representing the Haydon Ward.

Mr Cuthbert duly signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Seaton Ward: The Town Clerk stated that he had received letters of application for co-option as member for the Seaton Ward from Nichola Chambers and Karen Rowell. Members were informed that that both letters had been forwarded to the Chair of the Council and the Leader of the Council, in accordance with the correct procedure.

The letter received from Karen Rowell was read out by the Town Clerk in support of the application.

The Town Clerk stated that Nichola Chambers was present at the meeting and invited her to make a presentation giving reasons why she wished to be co-opted. Ms Chambers gave a short presentation outlining the reasons why she wished to become a member of the Town Council.

The Chair asked for a formal vote. It was unanimously agreed that Ms Nichol Chambers be co-opted as a member of Ashington Town Council representing the Seaton Ward.

Ms.Chambers duly signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) Matthew Cuthbert be duly co-opted as a Town Council Member for the Haydon Ward; and that**
- (ii) Nicola Chambers be duly elected as a Town Council Member for the Seaton Ward.**

C16/660 8. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2015/2016

The Town Clerk reported that the Auditor's Report on the 2015/16 Accounting Statements and Annual Governance return had now been received.

Members were informed that, on the basis of the External Auditors review, the information in the annual return was in accordance with proper practices and no matters had come to attention giving cause for concern that the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

Resolved:

That External Auditors' report on the Final Accounts for 2015/16 be formally received and accepted.

C16/661 9. 2017/2018 DRAFT BUDGET

The Town Clerk presented a full report on the budget preparation plans for 2017/18. Members were reminded that up until 2016/17,

with the full growth and development of the Town Council, the draft budget and options, Council Tax projections and emerging projects and initiatives had been discussed at monthly Finance and General Purposes Committee, with the final budget and precept being approved by Full Council as legally required.

Members were informed that key and significant financial items such as Localisation of Council Tax, Neighbourhood Service Proposals, Bus Shelter Programmes, Annual Grants Support were often last-minute items which had led to short notice, additional committee meetings and on occasions limited time was available for a full debate of all available options.

Members agreed that while the 2015/16 restructuring of committees to include all council members undoubtedly helped with programming of work and Council approval, there was still much background work to be done in drafting fully priced budget information and options for informed consideration and discussion by elected members. Members were reminded in determining a draft budget for 2016/17 the Council set up a smaller Budget Working Group to look at all financial options and prepare a draft for Full Council consideration. This group undertook the preparatory work, considered any growth or one-off areas of work and presented detail to fellow members at formal Committee Meetings and Full Council.

Members recognised that the establishment of the Budget Working Group was very beneficial and smoothed the budget process for all members in properly discussing and appraising all relevant material matters and planned projects. The Town Clerk requested that the Council again consider the establishment of a similar Working Group in discussing the 2017/18 budget.

The Town Clerk informed members that the establishment of a Budget Working Group did not preclude any other members of the Council from raising matters that they wished to be discussed during the budget preparation process. He added that issues which may well arise during discussions included a second residents' survey and the 150th Anniversary celebrations.

Resolved:

That:-

- (i) A small Budget Working Group be established to prepare a 2017/18 draft budget, with appraised**

options, for the consideration of Full Council; and that

(ii) The membership of the Working Group consist of a maximum of six members as follows:

Leader of the Council
Deputy Leader of the Council
Chair of the Council
Chair or Vice-Chair of Finance & General Purposes
Committee
Chair or Vice-Chair of Environment & Amenities
Committee
Chair or Vice-Chair of Planning & Regeneration
Committee

C16/662 10. MEMBER REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) *Arch Stakeholder Group (Cllrs S Fenwick and M Chambers)*: Cllr. Chambers stated that at a recent meeting of the Stakeholder Group it had been announced a completion date of 20 November for the improvement works in the town centre.

The leader reported that the contract for the work on the new County Hall was expected to be commissioned at the end of November.

C16/663 11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no other items of urgent business.

C16/664 12. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The date and time of next meeting would be agreed to fit with the 2017/18 Budget Timetable.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.