

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 20 September 2016, at Ashington Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

## **PRESENT:**

Councillors: Marjorie Chambers (Vice-Chair) Victor Bridges  
Louis Brown Vicky Brown  
Stephen Fenwick Lawrence Henderson  
Kris Lavery Mark Purvis  
Bob Walkinshaw

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Sue Coulthard – Snr. Admin. Officer  
Members of the Public – 2 (County Councillors L Grimshaw and B Gallacher)

### **E&A16/316 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Nominations were formally invited for the position of Chair of the Environment & Amenities Committee.

#### **Resolved:**

**That Cllr. Marjorie Chambers be duly elected as Chair of the Environment and Amenities Committee.**

### **E&A16/317 2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Nominations were formally invited for the position of Vice-Chair of the Environment & Amenities Committee.

#### **Resolved:**

**That Cllr. Keith Chambers be duly elected as Vice Chair of the Environment and Amenities Committee.**

### **E&A16.318 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Keith Chambers, Avril Chisholm, Glyn Davies, Liam Lavery, Pauline Thompson and Ely Turnbull.

### **E&A16/319 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllrs. Victor Bridges, Louis Brown and Marjorie Chambers made disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests in relation to any discussions regarding allotments.

### **E&A16/320 5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

### **E&A16/321 6. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2016.

### **E&A16/322 7. HIRST PARK RESTORATION – HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID.**

The Chair invited Mr Mike Jeffrey, the County Council's Countryside and Green Spaces Manager, to give a presentation regarding the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund due to be submitted by end February 2017. Mr Jeffrey stated that the Hirst Park had been created over 100 years ago and had always been in past years an asset and amenity that the town was rightly proud of. Members were informed however, in recent years it had been recognised that because of a lack of resources, both capital and revenue, the Park was "jaded" and in need of significant investment.

Mr Jeffrey explained that it was the County Council's intention to submit a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), working with a number of key partner organisations, including Ashington Town Council as a key recognised principal partner. Members were informed that in order to attract funding from HLF, the project

business plan would need to fully demonstrate that this was a partnership project with a sustainable financial future and that the partners involved were in a position to jointly maintain the Park for the foreseeable future.

Members were informed and also accepted that in reality and without undermining the value of other partner involvement, the financial commitment to long-term maintenance would inevitably rest with both the County Council and the Town Council as the local government bodies and at this stage only principal partners. Mr Jeffery reported that, if successful, the first stage of re-development would be the major capital work programme with the revenue contribution commencing in late 2018/19. Members were informed however that the bid submission required a full business plan that was both robust and deliverable indicating the expected costs and all partner financial contributions.

A schedule outlining and detailing the current and projected future management and maintenance costs was circulated for information and discussion. Members were informed that the current 2016/17 costs of approximately £64,000 per annum for the running of the Park would be expected to increase to £127,000 as a result of additional permanently located staff and maintenance implications of new equipment and facilities.

The Town Council were requested to consider a future commitment to meet 50% of the additional costs with effect from late 2018/19 a currently estimated sum of £31,500 per annum. Members thanked Mr. Jeffrey for his presentation and confirmed the Council's full support for and commitment to the project. On behalf of the Committee the Chair outlined that it had always been expected that the Town Council would be required to financially support the park in future years. While recognising that the contribution requested was dependent on the success of the bid, members agreed that a firm in principle commitment be made at this stage and that required funding would be identified and discussed as part of the Council's 2018-20 budget deliberations.

For clarification Mr Jeffrey informed members that, subject to further discussion with the HLF there was a possibility that the Town Council support would in early years need to be re-classified and proposed as an initial contribution to Capital Funding in 2018/19.

Members stated that assurances would be sort that all revenue sums committed would be fully targeted at direct work in Hirst Park

and that member representation on any ongoing Working Group would be expected. Mr Jeffrey thanked members for the unanimous support and commitment to the project and undertook to keep the Working Group representatives informed of the bid progress.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- (i) The Town Council confirm full support for the Hirst Park Heritage Lottery Fund Bid,**
- (ii) The Town Council recognise and accept the required role as a long-term management and financial partner,**
- (iii) Subject to the success of the funding bid, the Town Council agree to contribute an ongoing annual financial Amount towards the additional revenue cost; and that**
- (iv) Subject to the success of the funding bid, the amount required in 2018/19 be agreed at a provisional £31,500.**

## **E&A16/323 8. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PARTNERSHIP**

The Town Clerk referred members to the information circulated outlining the current position of the Neighbourhood Services Partnership (NSP) adding that the role and emphasis of the NSP had changed to recognise the employer role and responsibility of Northumberland County Council (NCC) elected members.

The Town Clerk stated that at the inaugural meeting of the newly established Board, it had been agreed that meetings would be held every two months. Members were reminded that it had also been agreed that members of the NCC Neighbourhood Services Management team would accompany town council and NCC ward councillors on "walkabouts" in each of their wards to highlight concerns and log job requests. It was agreed that all ward walkabouts would be undertaken before the next Board meeting in November.

NCC.Cllr. Gallacher reminded members that all ward job reports and requests or suggestions for a winter planned work programme should be reported NSP Board.

**E&A16/324 9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no other urgent business.

**E&A16/325 10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, 15 November 2016, at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ashington.

The meeting ended at 6.50pm.