

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 24 April 2018, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS:

Matthew Cuthbert (Chair)	Eleanor Armstrong
Victor Bridges	Marjorie Chambers
Avril Chisholm	Stephen Fenwick
Brian Gallacher	Lynne Grimshaw
Lawrence Henderson	Jim Lang
Mark Purvis	Pauline Thompson
Bob Walkinshaw	Tom Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Projects & Funding Officer
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer (minutes)
Members of the Public - 1

FGS 18/818 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors, Nicola Chambers, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery and Ken Parry.

FGS 18/819 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Brian Gallacher disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 12, Planning Application 18/00779/FUL.

FGS 18/820 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27 March 2018, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGS 18/821 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

FGS 18/815 ALLOTMENTS WORKING GROUP

Cllr. M. Chambers reported that Woodhorn Road Allotment Association had appointed a new Chair, Mr Paul Lavery, after the sad passing of Mr Alan White.

Cllr. L. Grimshaw informed members that quotations had been received for the remaining allotment sites which require renewal of their water supply. The Allotments Working Group will consider the quotations in developing the capital work programme for 2018/19.

FGS 18/822 5. APPLICATION FOR FUNDING SUPPORT

(i) CITIZEN'S ADVICE NORTHUMBERLAND

The Chair introduced Abi Conway, Chief Executive of Citizen's Advice Northumberland. Ms Conway was invited to give a presentation.

Ms Conway informed members that she commenced her role in the organisation at the end of 2017 and that the organisation had undergone a full restructure due to demands on the service, as well as county wide mergers led by Northumberland County Council (NCC).

Ms Conway presented a report with key statistics covering the period 2017/18. Issues causing most concern related to Personal Independence Payments and Employment Support Allowance with debt related issues relating to Council Tax arrears, the use of credit and store cards and unsecured personal loans.

Ms Conway informed members that the figures in the report related to Ashington clients only. The drop-in service is open two days a week with the rest of the week taken up with appointments. The service was run by volunteers supported by specialist qualified advisors. Ms Conway informed members that NCC continued to provide funding, however, the amount has not increased for a period of time.

Ms Conway offered to provide members with regular updates on the service, irrespective of any funding decision, and reiterated that any funding from the Town Council would only be used to support service delivery in Ashington. Ms Conway explained that the organisation was adopting a 'dovetail approach' in working with other service providers, such as the Wansbeck Valley Foodbank, to reduce any duplication in the town.

(ii) REAL DEAL PLUS LTD

Cllr. Grimshaw proposed that the decision to agree funding should be dependent on more information being provided.

The Town Clerk advised members to nominate a representative to visit Real Deal Plus and report back to the Committee. The nominated representative could then visit the organisation on a quarterly basis to present information and updates to council members.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) Funding support for Citizen's Advice Northumberland be deferred pending receipt and review of the organisations submitted Financial Accounts,**
- (ii) The appointment of a nominated Town Council representative be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, scheduled for 8 May 2018,**
- (iii) Members agreed in principle to fund Citizen's Advice Northumberland for one year, the amount to be determined subject to (i) and (ii) above.**

That:

- (iv) Funding support for Real Deal Plus Ltd be deferred pending a review and consideration of the organisations submitted Financial Accounts,**
- (v) The appointment of a nominated Town Council representative be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, scheduled for 8 May 2018,**
- (vi) Members agreed in principle to fund Real Deal Plus for one year pending the completion of (iv) and (v) above.**

FGS 18/823 6. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

BUTOKOKAN JUDO CLUB

The Butokokan Judo Club is based at YMCA Northumberland and run judo activities twice a week in Ashington. The group has grown in numbers in recent years and now has over 40 children regularly benefitting from activities.

The requested funding would support the costs of training for two new coaches as well as revalidating existing coaches to meet the demand for activities and would be carried out under British Judo Association guidance.

Resolved:

That the Butokokan Judo Club be awarded a grant of £1,000.

FGS 18/824 7. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, for the financial period 22 March – 19 April 2018.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the financial period 22 March to 19 April 2018 be formally agreed and approved.

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

FGS 18/825 8. ASHINGTON MEMORIAL GARDEN-LIGHTING OF WAR MEMORIAL.

The Town Clerk updated members on the investigative work carried out to assess the possibility of lighting the War Memorial Statue. A quote was presented from Northumberland County Council in relation to the proposed works to install an additional lighting column close to the Ashington Memorial Garden to enable a LED floodlight to illuminate the War Memorial.

The Town Clerk reported that the cost would be looked into as the current work included taking the electricity supply across the highway; if there was an option of a nearer supply then it was expected that the cost would be reduced accordingly.

Cllr. Wilson informed members that he would meet the cost of the proposed works from his Northumberland County Council Members Allowance.

Resolved:

That the proposed work be agreed at the maximum cost of £5,498.91 + VAT.

FGS 18/826 9. HIGHWAYS INTERACTIVE SPEED SIGNS

The Town Clerk requested that the existing six interactive speed signs in the town be fitted with solar power panels. Members were informed that the work would prolong battery life and reduce maintenance costs and time.

Members were informed that a further two interactive speed signs, with solar panels, had been purchased by Cllr. Gallacher and Cllr. Grimshaw, through their Northumberland County Council Members

Allowance, and have been installed on Blackthorn Way and Wansbeck Road.

Resolved:

That six solar packs be acquired for the current interactive speed signs at an agreed cost of £4,344 + VAT.

FGS 18/827 10. BUS SHELTERS

The Town Clerk updated members on the proposed bus shelter works programme:

- Replacement of the “Adshell” bus shelter, on Booths Road, and new bus shelter at Briardene (Remscheid Way area). Work would also include full disabled access.
- Removal of redundant bus shelters at Fairfield Drive and Station Road West.

Resolved:

That the proposed work was agreed:

- (i) To replace the “Adshell” bus shelter at Booths Road and install a new bus shelter at Briardene at a total cost of £8,334 + VAT plus the related ground works and highways costs.**
- (ii) To remove redundant bus shelters at Fairfield Drive and Station Road West at a cost of £1,750 + VAT**

FGS 18/828 11. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PARTNERSHIP 2018/19

Cllr Brian Gallacher reported on the following items;

- Partnership Meeting – Cllr Gallacher reiterated that all Councillors were welcome to attend the Partnership Meetings.
- Meetings had taken place with Blyth and Cramlington Councils to discuss their Partnership arrangements
- The Motion put forward to NCC in March reducing the money paid for enhanced services has met with some disappointment
- An offer to meet with the NCC accountant has been taken up, and was to be arranged.
- Cllr Gallacher explained that he had met with Bernicia and discussed grass cutting and fly tipping.

- Meetings have taken place regarding litter. Litter schedules are not suitable, more attention is needed at Parks and on School routes.

FGS 18/829 12. PLANNING APPLICATION 18/00779/FUL – Application for 143 no. dwellings incorporating new site access and internal access road, provision of SUDS, open space and landscaping. Land South West of Portland Terrace, Ellington Road, Ashington.

The Town Clerk informed members that a meeting with representatives of Ascent Homes had taken place and had been attended by a number of Town Council elected members.

Cllr. Grimshaw reiterated the real concerns Ashington Town Council had regarding the implications on the current highway system, especially once the new housing was established with a potential of 340 additional vehicles. Cllr. Grimshaw reminded members of the current concerns regarding the A197/A1068 junction and reported that a meeting was to be arranged with the NCC Highways Officer to fully discuss the highways issues in relation to both this application and the Local Transport Plan.

Resolved:

That the Town Council's formal response to the Planning Application 18/00779/FUL be submitted further to the meeting with the Highways Officer and confirmation of the Northumberland County Council highways assessment of the application impact on traffic management.

FGS 18/830 13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no other items of urgent business.

FGS 18/831 14. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Tuesday 29 May 2018, at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington NE63 8RX.

The Meeting ended at 8.35pm