

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 29 May 2018, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Matthew Cuthbert (Chair) Eleanor Armstrong
Victor Bridges Marjorie Chambers
Avril Chisholm Brian Gallacher
Lynne Grimshaw Ken Parry
Pauline Thompson 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 - 0

FGS 18/832 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Cllr. Cuthbert thanked members for their support during his term of office as Chair. Cllr. Cuthbert invited nominations for the position of Chair of the Finance and General Services Committee.

Resolved:

That Cllr. Lynne Grimshaw be duly elected as Chair of Finance and General Services Committee for the Civic Year 2018/19.

FGS 18/833 2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Cllr Grimshaw took the Chair and invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chair.

Resolved:

That Cllr. Avril Chisholm be duly elected as Vice-Chair of Finance and General Services Committee for the Civic Year 2018/19.

FGS 18/834 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors, Nicola Chambers, Stephen Fenwick, Lawrence Henderson, Jim Lang, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Mark Purvis and Bob Walkinshaw.

FGS 18/835 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllrs Marjorie Chambers and Victor Bridges disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 13, Allotments and Cllr Pauline Thompson disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 8, Annual Funding Support 2018/19.

FGS 18/836 5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24 April 2018, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGS 18/837 6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- **FGS 18/823 APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT- BUTOKOKAN JUDO CLUB**

Cllr. M. Cuthbert requested a press release and photograph opportunity to present the £1,000 cheque, awarded to the Butokokoan Judo Club. Members requested that wherever possible, maximum publicity be given to recognise the funding support provided by the Town Council.

- **FGS 18/826 HIGHWAYS INTERACTIVE SPEED SIGNS**

The Town Clerk thanked confirmed that solar power panels had now been installed on the interactive speed, reducing the need for replacement of batteries at regular intervals.

- **FGS 18/829 PLANNING APPLICATION 18/00779/FUL – LAND SOUTH WEST OF PORTLAND TERRACE**

The Chair informed members that together with the Town Clerk she had met with a senior Highways Officer to discuss the Issues relevant to the application and to set out the Town Council concerns. The Chair reported that the meeting had been very informative and reported that the applicant had been asked to carry out further traffic monitoring and modelling.

Members were informed that the likelihood was that the application timeline would be extended and that the Town Council would formally respond in due course and when in possession of all relevant data.

FGS 18/838 7. APPLICATION FOR FUNDING SUPPORT

7TH ASHINGTON (ST. ANDREWS) BROWNIE UNIT

The Unit Leader had requested the sum of £304 to support the costs of 16 Brownies to attend a pack holiday which will include outdoor activities, games and crafts. The event will take place from the 13 to 15 July at Pasture House near Prudhoe.

Resolved:

That a donation of £304 be made to 7th Ashington (St. Andrews Brownie Unit).

FGS 18/839 8. ANNUAL FUNDING SUPPORT 2018/19.

Cllr Grimshaw reported that representatives had now been appointed for all organisations receiving annual funding and requested that members so appointed arrange organisations as soon as possible and report back to the next meeting.

The Town Clerk stated that a consistent approach was applied to all of the organisations receiving annual funding and stressed the need to develop an on-going relationship with funded organisations based on regular reporting to Council. The Chair stated that any organisation not wishing to engage with, or provide information to the Town Council on request would not be considered eligible for funding support.

Resolved:

That;

- (i) The matter be deferred to the meeting scheduled for 26 June 2018,**
- (ii) Contact be made with organisations currently receiving financial support from the Town Council by way of annual subsidy; and that**
- (iii) Reports received by be presented to a future meeting of Finance and General Services Committee.**

FGS 18/840 9. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, for the financial period 20 April – 23 May 2018.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the financial period 20 April to 23 May 2018 be formally agreed and approved.

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

FGS 18/841 10. ASHINGTON MARKET – OPERATIONAL MATTERS

The Town Clerk presented a letter from Northumberland County Council, referring to management issues identified by a recently undertaken review. Areas addressed centred around the arrangements for loading and end-of-day unloading of market stall by the market traders and the use of car parking bays.

The three options outlined by Northumberland County Council to address the issues were discussed by members. The options outlined were:

1. Reserve the car parking bays for traders vans for 90 mins from 3:00pm on Tuesday (market day) afternoon,
2. Introduce a temporary road closure of the road for 90 mins from 3:00pm on Tuesday (market day) afternoon,
3. Relocate the market to John Street car park,

The Town Clerk reported that the preferred option of NCC Officers was option 2, a temporary road closure order.

Members discussed the issue at length; the following points were raised as a result of discussions;

- The altercations mentioned between members of the public and market traders were not just a problem at the end of the day,
- All of the concerns were raised by the Town Council over a year ago when the road was reopened and NCC stated that the market had nothing to do with the Town Council,
- Cllr Thompson stated that a lot of work had gone into the design of the street and having parking bays, especially for the disabled, used by burger vans etc was not acceptable,
- Cllr Cuthbert reiterated that it was a low speed environment and the market simply required better and stronger management,
- Cllr Grimshaw stressed that shops were suffering as a result of people not being able to park.
- Cllr Gallacher felt that the concerns of the Market Traders were given preference without any notice taken of the public and Town Council members,

- A road closure should not be an option as it simply reinforced the abuse of the bays by traders happening at present with the permission of NCC,
- Cllr Chambers had noticed that the traders were walking over the flower beds when setting up, and many of them are selling poor quality, low priced items. In her opinion this was due to poor market management.

Resolved:

That;

- (i) Northumberland County Council be informed in the strongest possible terms of the Town Council's objection to the proposals, and that**
- (ii) Northumberland County Council be asked to carry out a full review of the market and operating rules including the requirement for enforcement of parking violations.**

FGS 18/842 11. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

The Town Clerk presented a revised Data Protection and Retention Policy, amended to comply with the current new regulations.

Resolved:

That Ashington Town Council formally adopt Data Protection and Retention Policy.

FGS 18/843 12. ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT – COVERT CAMERAS

Cllr Gallacher requested that the Town Council look to purchase 2 covert cameras at a cost of £2,070 + VAT to assist in the environmental enforcement work in the town. Members were informed that the cameras were already proving a success in other areas and would enhance the already valuable work the Enforcement Officers are carrying out.

Cllr Wilson proposed that he would purchase the cameras from his NCC Small Schemes and improvement budget.

Members also agreed to the request of the Town Clerk that arrangements be made to transfer the CCTV screen to Ashington Police Station for the 24/7 use of the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Resolved:

That;

- (i) The Town Council agree to acquire two covert cameras be purchased for the sum of £2070 + VAT**
- (ii) The funding be met by Cllr Tom Wilson form the Members Small Schemes and Improvement budget,**
- (iii)The cameras be managed and insured by Northumberland County Council; and that**
- (iv)The CCTV screen for the Town Centre provision be transferred to Ashington Police Station with incidental costs and aerial provision to be met by the Town Council.**

FGS 18/844 13. ALLOTMENTS.

The Town Clerk gave a detailed report on the capital programme proposals for 2018/19 and outlined the priority work. Members were reminded that the budget discussion for 2018/19 had fully considered and agreed the use of brought forward balances specifically to tackle water issues.

The Council also considered the 2018/19 rental levels of the allotments at Nursery Park.

Resolved:

That;

- (i) The rental levels for Nursery Park Allotment be agreed for 2018/19 at £65 per plot with a 25% reduction for senior citizens to £48.75 per plot,**
- (i) Water Supply and related works at Wansbeck Road Allotment Site be agreed at the cost of £32,080 and that,**
- (ii) Renewal of Water Supply and related works at High Market Allotment Site at an agreed £7,300 + VAT**

FGS 18/845 14. CONSULTATION ON STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING REQUEST.

The Town Clerk presented a consultation on Street Naming and Numbering at the Northumberland Development Site.

Resolved:

That the Town Council agree the request of a new proposed street name Hampshire Close, Ashington, situated on the former “Northumberland Close” development site.

FGS 18/846 15. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

FGS 18/847 16. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Tuesday 26 June 2018, at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington NE63 8RX.

The Meeting ended at 8.05pm