



Ashington Town Council
Town Hall, 65 Station Road
Ashington, Northumberland
NE63 8RU

2nd September 2024

To All members of the Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **FINANCE & GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING**, in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 65 STATION ROAD, NE63 8RU**, on **Tuesday 10th September 2024 at 6:00pm**.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below, along with associated papers. If you have any questions about any of the items on the agenda, please contact the office.

The meeting is open to the press and public. As per the agenda and our standing orders, any resident wishing to speak should contact us prior to the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Eden".

Sarah Eden
Executive Office/RFO

AGENDA

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

Members are also reminded that they need to regularly review their declarations of interest forms and ensure they remain up to date.

4. DISPENSATIONS

To receive and consider any dispensations.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair to receive any items put forward by members of the public and to put questions to or draw relevant matters to the attention of the Council. This is for a period of 15 minutes overall and is limited to 3 minutes per person.

Tel: (01670) 624521

E-mail: sarah.eden@ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/ashingtontowncouncil>

<https://www.instagram.com/ashingtontc/>

Please email/telephone the Clerk with questions on items on the agenda no later than 5.00pm on Monday 9th September 2024.

6. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

To receive and sign as a true record, the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th July 2024 (enc)ⁱ Please note draft minutes have been circulated and were previously available online.

7. CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES

To receive an update on items actioned since the previous meeting (enc)ⁱⁱ

8. BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2024/25

a) Updated Budget Report

To receive updated budget report and address any questions to the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) (enc)ⁱⁱⁱ

b) Accounts Paid and to be Paid (including Bank Reconciliation)

To receive a schedule of accounts paid and to be paid; to endorse those accounts paid and agree those to be paid, since 1st July 2024 (to follow)^{iv}

9. ANNUAL GRANTS 2024/25

a) Feedback from Annual Grant Applicants

To receive feedback letters from two Annual Grant Applicants (enc)^v, (enc)^{vi}

b) Enhancing Grant Allocation – Analysis of Feedback and Recommendations for Improvement

To receive report from Executive Officer/RFO and address any questions on the proposed actions and key recommendations (enc)^{vii}

c) Response and Agreed Actions

To approve responses to applicants and agree commitment to implementing improvements to our annual grant allocation process.

10. 2025-26 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRAMME CONSULTATION

a) Request for Priorities and Guidance

To receive a letter requesting the Council's top three highways and transport priority issues for this area (guidance notes included) (enc)^{viii}

b) Last year's priorities and feedback

To receive a note of the priorities agreed by Ashington Town Council last year, and the feedback received from Northumberland County Council on these priorities, acknowledging that one of the three priorities identified has been included in the programme (enc)^{ix}

c) Record of NCC requests contained in Directory Database

To receive and note the requests submitted by residents to NCC Highways throughout the year, which have been sorted into wards, alongside concerns raised directly with our Council (enc)^x

d) Highways and Transport Priority issues

To agree the top three priority issues to send to Northumberland County Council Highways, by 27th September 2024, for considered inclusion in the Local Transport Plan Programme 2025-26.

Tel: (01670) 624521

E-mail: sarah.eden@ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/ashingtontowncouncil>

<https://www.instagram.com/ashingtontc/>

11. ALLOTMENT RENT INCREASE

a) Report on Proposed Allotment Rent Increase for Directly Managed Sites

To receive a report that addresses the need to increase rents on the allotment sites now directly managed by the Council: Hirst East End, Woodhorn Road, and North Seaton Colliery, taking into account the need for increased revenue, the impact on allotment holders, and the long-term sustainability of our allotment service (enc)^{xi}

b) Recommended Rent Increase

To consider and approve an increase of allotment rents from £31 to £35 per plot per year for directly managed sites at Hirst East End, Woodhorn Road, and North Seaton Colliery, to be implemented from the next renewal date.

c) Long-Term Strategy

To consider and approve a five-year plan for rent increases on these directly managed sites, set at a maximum increase of £5 each year to provide long-term stability and transparency.

d) Nursery Park Allotment Site

To consider and approve those rents at Nursery Park Allotment site (also directly managed by the Council) are maintained at £65/year, to align directly managed sites.

d) Rents for Self-Managed Sites

To consider and approve that 'ground rent' paid by self-managed allotment sites is maintained at £10 per plot per year, to ensure self-management is financially beneficial for associations, and to encourage continued independence.

e) Alternative Proposal for Allotment Rent

That the Council determines an appropriate alternative rental sum for directly managed sites, and for ground rent on self-managed sites, taking into account the need for increased revenue, the impact on allotment holders, and the long-term sustainability of our allotment service.

12. PLANTERS AND HANGING BASKETS

To receive a report that recommends the Council does not renew the contract to supply and install seasonal hanging baskets on Station Road, and Barrier Planters on Station Bridge, taking into account sustainability, resourcing, and future street scene changes, and agree any action (enc)^{xii}

13. TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL CONFERENCE

To agree two members who wish to attend the Town and Parish Council Autumn Conference that will take place on Thursday 3rd October 2024 at County Hall, from 5pm until 8pm (enc)^{xiii}

14. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15th October, 6:00pm, Council Chamber.

Tel: (01670) 624521

E-mail: sarah.eden@ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/ashingtontowncouncil>

<https://www.instagram.com/ashingtontc/>

ENCLOSURES

- i Draft Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee, 9th July 2024
- ii Clerk and Officer Update, September 2024 (to follow)
- iii Updated Budget Report 2024/25
- iv Schedule of Accounts paid/to be paid
- v Letter Received (YMCA)
- vi Letter Received (Full Circle Food)
- vii Enhancing Grant Allocation – Analysis of Feedback and Recommendations for Improvement
- viii LTP - Request for Priority issues/Guidance
- ix LTP Priorities agreed last year, with feedback from NCC
- x NCC Database of Requests
- xi Allotment Rent Report
- xii Planters and Hanging Baskets Report
- xiii Details of Town & Parish Council Conference

Tel: (01670) 624521

E-mail: sarah.eden@ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/ashingtontowncouncil>

<https://www.instagram.com/ashingtontc/>