

**Ashington Town Council**

**AGREED Meeting of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 5:00pm  
on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022, in The Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Cllrs Lynne Grimshaw (Chair), Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Michelle Brannigan, Marjorie Chambers, Glyn Davies, Jim Lang, Mark Purvis, Pauline Thompson, John Tully and Bob Walkinshaw.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah Eden – Clerk/RFO, Stephen Humphrey – ATC Assets and Facilities Manager, Sharon Parmley – Administration (Minute taking)

**FGS 22/241 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Eleanor Armstrong, Victor Bridges, Matthew Cuthbert, Lawrence Henderson, Liam Lavery and Sophie Robinson.

**FGS 22/242 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Louis Brown declared an interest in agenda items 11. North Seaton Colliery Allotment Site, 16. Remembrance Parade and Service and 20. Allotment Clearance and Improvement Work.

Cllr Marjorie declared an interest in agenda item 16. Remembrance Parade and Service

**FGS 22/243 DISPENSATIONS**

There were no requests for Dispensations.

**FGS 22/244 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no items for public participation.

**FGS 22/245 MINUTES OF FGS MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 as a true record.

It was **AGREED to AMEND** page 5 of the previous minutes, FGS 22/226 SMALL GRANTS. To read “It was agreed to include in guidelines for future small grant and annual grant applications that schools, and religious bodies will not be funded.”

**FGS 22/246 MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY FGS MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST 2022**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022 as a true record.

**FGS 22/247 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the following report sent out in advance of the meeting.

***Allotment Liaison Meetings***

A further meeting is arranged with Allotment Associations to discuss the information sourced so far in regards Management Agreements, Tenancy Agreements and Allotment Rules.

***NCC ATC Partnership Meeting***

A reminder that the next quarterly partnership meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September**. Prior to the meeting at 11:30am in the Council Chamber, members of Ashington

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Town Council and Northumberland County Council Neighbourhood Services will enjoy an informal breakfast teambuilding event at the YMCA. All Cllrs and staff are welcome.

***Christmas Lighting – New Contract***

All columns have now been tested, and the work required is included in the budget review, for agreement. As this is a legal, health and safety requirement, the work must be carried out. Parts have been ordered, following consultation with the Chair, and we are liaising with NCC Lighting for the required permissions.

***CCTV***

All newly agreed CCTV is now operational.

Officers met with the Neighbourhood Policing Team and NCC Officer Lindsay Green in advance of the Tender Opportunity for Station Road. A preferred supplier option is considered most appropriate, with a decision scheduled for the October FGS Meeting.

***Public Access Defibrillators***

Work has progressed well. All County Cllrs responded to support investment in two defibrillators each. Officers are plotting suggested locations onto maps to allow a better-informed decision that gives greater coverage, and ensures they are spaced out. The Council has registered with The Circuit and have written to North East Ambulance Service with plans. Paperwork has been prepared that will assist proposed guardians of the equipment. We cannot place an order until we have the required building owner permission and confirmation of a named guardian. Once all 12 locations and guardians are confirmed, the order will be placed and installs carried out without delay.

***Schools Initiative - Sustainable Planting***

The Station Road Sustainable Planting Press Release was very well received across our media, as well as featuring in NCC Climate Newsletter, Northumberland Gazette and the Clerk and Councils Direct.

***Northumberland Miners' Picnic***

Officers attended a meeting with Rowan Brown to discuss the event held in this year. A further meeting is being scheduled with John Dunn. Following this a review of the event and future considerations will be brought before the Council.

***Jack Charlton Statue/Ashington's Football Heritage***

The Planning Application for the Jack Charlton Statue and Ashington Footballing Heritage is live, with an end date of 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

The Licence with Northumberland County Council is included on the agenda, as is the agreement of a budget for the unveiling event. All plans are proceeding well.

It is hoped that by the time of the meeting, Northumberland FA will have confirmed their agreement to allow several teams to play in a football festival during black-out weekend. Ashington Town FC are very keen to arrange this, they arranged a similar event in July last year. This would be a legacy event.

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***Great Big Green Week***

Plans have progressed well. NCC agreed that all stalls would be at zero cost, which allowed the budget to be used on climate conscious giveaways. Plans for the event have been shared across our media and will be shared again up to the date of the event. Those Cllrs who wish to be on the Council's stall should contact Sharon with their availability and we can hopefully arrange a timetable.

***NCC Climate Change Team***

NCC has responded positively to the Council's request for the Climate Change Team to attend a meeting to address concerns about plastic recycling; they will attend in October. The Clerk has been separately seeking updates about Carbon Literacy Training, and the possibility of training being cascaded to Town & Parish Councils, and Town Councillors. This is now being followed up with the Carbon Literacy Trust.

***Tree Planting***

Site meetings have taken place for the next project of tree planting recommended by the Climate Change Working Group (now the Climate Change Committee). Costs will be brought to the October Climate Change Committee for consideration and approval.

***Tree Planting Target and Website Illustration***

We have worked with Widescope on a potential system to demonstrate tree planting. As agreed, this will be brought with more information to the October Climate Change Committee.

***EV Van***

The van has been ordered; we will keep members informed of the expected delivery date.

***Potland Burn (Former Surface Mine Site)***

David Feige CEcol MIEEM, NCC Environment and Design Team Manager & County Ecologist has been in touch to offer the Council the opportunity to hear a presentation on the development and most specifically off-site habitat creation.

Certain aspects of the Environmental Act 2021 are not mandatory until Autumn 2023, but the site at Potland Burn is considered ideal for development as a site where habitat creation and management can be undertaken. Britishvolt will be funding Northumberland County Council to undertake habitat creation there to satisfy biodiversity net gain obligations. Other developers will do so over time as this becomes mandatory for most types of development.

David is available to present to the Climate Change Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> October, which is considered the most appropriate forum.

The Clerk further updated Councillors on the following items;

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**CCTV Provision Tender**

The tender for the CCTV provision has been removed from the website. The Clerk felt more information was needed to provide a more detailed specification of the CCTV provision going forward.

With this delay in mind the Clerk has negotiated a month-on-month contract with the current CCTV provider for Station Road.

**Defibrillator Project Update**

Still in the process of pulling together locations and permissions and seeking an electrician for fitting.

All County Councillors are taking part in the project and are supporting the Town Council.

**Unveiling Event**

The date of the unveiling is Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2022, 10am at Hirst Park. The event will include a Junior Football Festival being organised by Ashington Town FC.

**The Great Big Green Week**

The day was a huge success. As well as Ashington Town Council, there was also the NCC Climate Change Team, who will be attending the next Climate Change meeting in October. Groundwork NE & Cumbria promoting the Green Doctor initiative, Citizens Advice Northumberland, booking smart metres and Wansbeck Climate Action Team giving away free produce and low budget recipes.

The Clerk also thanked councillors who attended for their help at the event.

**FGS 22/248 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**It was AGREED to PASS** the following resolution.

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, permitted under Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Exempt Information) (England) Order 2006) Act as the matter is commercially sensitive.

Cllr Louis Brown left the meeting.

**FGS 22/249 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

**It was AGREED** to receive a verbal speech from an individual in relation to the Council's decision on minute reference FGS June 22/215 and give additional information relating to their allotment plot at North Seaton Colliery allotment site.

**FGS 22/250 NORTH SEATON COLLIERY ALLOTMENT SITE****a) Advice Received**

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** information and guidance in relation to the smallholding at North Seaton Colliery allotment site, sent out in advance of the meeting.

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***b) Suspension of Standing Orders***

It was **AGREED** to **DEFER** any decisions regarding the action to be taken until further information is provided.

***c) Proposed Action***

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would receive any further questions from members regarding the case and seek further information to better determine a decision.

*PUBLIC SESSION RESUMES*

**FGS 22/251 WANSBECK VALLEY FOODBANK**

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** an update on work this year to date, sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to release 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment of annual funding.

**FGS 22/252 NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BANK**

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** an update on work this year to date, sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to release 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment of annual funding.

Several members felt the trial for extra opening hours had not been given enough time and would like to see it extended with a view to advertising the hours more widely to inform the community of their availability.

**FGS 22/253 BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2022/23**

***a) Updated Budget Report***

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the updated budget report sent out in advance of the meeting.

***b) RFO Notes on Balances and Recommended Movement***

It was **AGREED** to retain underspend for expected pay award including seasonal over time estimate.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to move into staff expenses (£1,000) from office costs to budget to year end.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to move £25,000 from Town-Wide Survey to Ashington's Footballing Heritage project

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to move £1,500 from Town Seats to Tools and equipment in view that seat repairs are carried out by the Neighbourhood Services Officer

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to move £2,000 from Town Seats to Christmas Lights Displays in view of additional costs associated with lighting columns

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The RFO advised members of those budget headings where they were expected to be underspend – Environmental Enhancements and Play Areas and encouraged members to discuss and bring forward projects.

**c) Accounts Paid**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a schedule of accounts paid since the July FGS meeting and to endorse those accounts paid according to the Council's Financial Regulations, sent out in advance of the meeting. It was **Further AGREED** to endorse those payments tabled at the meeting.

**d) Christmas Lighting Infrastructure**

It was **AGREED** to move £2,000 from Seats budget to Christmas Lights Display to provide capital for essential work to bring lamp columns to industry standard for lighting features.

**FGS 22/254 JACK CHARLTON STATUE AND ASHINGTON'S FOOTBALLING HERITAGE**

**a) Licence**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a draft licence to access and use part of Northumberland County Council owned land at Hirst Park in Ashington, for installation of the Jack Charlton statue and Ashington's Footballing Heritage Information panels, with associated signage and landscaping.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** that the Clerk signs the agreement on behalf of the Council.

**b) Unveiling Event**

It was **AGREED** to allocate a budget of £2,500 for the event, with spending delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the working group, to be moved from the Town Survey budget.

**FGS 22/255 REMEMBRANCE PARADE AND SERVICE**

**a) Supporting Ashington Branch of the Royal British Legion**

It was **AGREED** to support Ashington Branch of the Royal British Legion to hold a parade and service on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**b) Budget and Delegation**

It was **AGREED** to allocate a budget of £1,000 in support of Remembrance with spending delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair.

**FGS 22/256 CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH-ON**

**a) Plans in Progress**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a progress report of the plans for the Christmas Light Switch-On, being held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

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***b) Budget and Delegation***

It was **AGREED** to allocate a budget of £2,000 in support of the Christmas Light Switch-on with spending delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair.

**FGS 22/257 PUBLIC SEATING**

***a) Requests for Public Seats***

It was **AGREED** to proceed with the order of two public seats requested on the B1334 path/cycleway, and one seat in People's Park.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to seek landowner permission to install the two seats.

***b) Seat Provider/Order***

It was **AGREED** to place the order for the Colwyn Seat, with handles making the seat more accessible for those with mobility issues.

**FGS 22/258 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **AGREED to PASS** the following resolution.

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, permitted under Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Exempt Information) (England) Order 2006) Act as the matter is commercially sensitive.

**FGS 22/259 ALLOTMENT CLEARANCE AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the report of the works required at three allotment sites sent out in advance of the meeting.

***Clearance at Ashington High Market Allotment Site - 35***

Contractor A - £1,850

Contractor B - £3,400

Contractor C - £3,900

It was **AGREED** to award the contract to Contractor A, **Northumbria Recycling** at a cost of £1,850.

***Clearance at Wansbeck Road Allotment Site – Old Hut to Parking and Additional Allotment Plot***

Contractor A - £2,400

Contractor B - £2,580

Contractor C - £3,600

It was **AGREED** to award the contract to Contractor A, **JSH Property Maintenance** at a cost of £2,400.

***Clearance at Woodhorn Road Allotment Site - 436***

Contractor A - £5,800

Contractor B - £5,860

Contractor C - £9,500

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It was **AGREED** to award the contract to Contractor A, **JSH Property Maintenance** at a cost of £5,800.

***Clearance at Woodhorn Road Allotment Site – 50 & 63***

Contractor A - £1,560

Contractor B - £1,800

Contractor C - £4,000

It was **AGREED** to award the contract to Contractor A, **Northumbria Recycling** at a cost of £1,560.

**FGS 22/260 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 11<sup>TH</sup> October 2022, 6:00pm, Council Chamber.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

AGREED