

**Ashington Town Council**

**AGREED Meeting of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm  
on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022, in The Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Cllrs Lynne Grimshaw (Chair), Eleanor Armstrong, Caroline Ball, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Michelle Brannigan, Marjorie Chambers, Glyn Davies, Liam Lavery, Lawrence Henderson, Jim Lang, Mark Purvis, Sophie Robinson, 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 22/261 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Victor Bridges and Matthew Cuthbert.

**FGS 22/262 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Louis Brown declared an interest in agenda item 12. NORTH SEATON COLLIERY ALLOTMENT SITE.

Cllr Michelle Brannigan declared an interest in agenda item 11. SMALL GRANT FUNDING in respect of Ashington Elders and Veterans.

**FGS 22/263 DISPENSATIONS**

There were no requests for dispensations.

**FGS 22/264 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a letter from Breamish Court residents, thanking Ashington Town Council for their kind donation of £250 from the Queen's Jubilee Fund. The money was used to hold a street party for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee for residents.

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a letter of condolence from the City Council of Remscheid, in respect of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. It was **FURTHER AGREED** that the Clerk respond to the letter on behalf of Ashington Town Council, Twinned Town with Remscheid.

**FGS 22/265 MINUTES OF FGS MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 as a true record.

**FGS 22/266 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a verbal report from the Clerk, which was tabled.

***Allotment Liaison Meetings***

A meeting with Allotment Associations is scheduled for next Wednesday. Stephen and I have some feedback from the legal advisor at The National Allotment Society to work into the tenancy agreements and rules, in advance of the meeting.

***Public Access Defibrillators***

Of those locations proposed by County Cllrs we have positive responses from the following: Sea Cadets, Wansbeck River Caravan Park, North Seaton Spar Shop, Ashington Spiritualist Church, Asda, and Hatch Meadow Sheltered Housing. Other suggested locations have been contacted and we are waiting for a response. Once buildings owners have signed the

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agreement and custodians have been named and are aware of their responsibilities, the equipment will be ordered.

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

The Planning Application for the Jack Charlton Statue and Ashington's Footballing Heritage was approved, work is underway and event planning is also progressing.

Although a public event, most of those who have been invited have responded positively. It is expected that guests of the Council and the Family will have the first opportunity to take a close look at the work, following the unveiling, after which the barriers will be removed. Ashington WI and Northumberland College will provide refreshments unveiling guests, and Full Circle Food for those who stay on for the Football Festival.

***Climate Change***

You have your agenda for the meeting next week. NCC Waste Management will be in attendance. Unfortunately, the officer who was due to present about Potland Burn had an accident, so this has been postponed to the Climate Change & Environment Committee Meeting in January.

***Selective Licencing of Landlords and Empty Homes***

A response has been received, with a further response due on the empty homes in Ashington by the end of the week. This will be brought to the Full Council meeting in November so the Council can agree a response.

***New Seats***

New seats have been ordered.

***Budget Movement***

Have been made as per agreements at the last meeting.

***Hirst Park***

The second meeting of the Hirst Park Liaison group was held last week. Cllr Pauline Thompson chaired the meeting. Those actions agreed at the meeting were:

- ✓ The next meeting would include a budget summary in respect of those areas in addition to maintenance.
- ✓ Park Development Officers to send weekly summary of what is going on in the park to Sharon and schedule the action days as previously agreed.
- ✓ Neil to investigate to professionalism of the Friends of Hirst Park FB page as an appropriate means of communication.
- ✓ Engage with outreach youth workers to encourage proper use of the park.

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***Banks Development at Wansbeck Road, Ashington***

There remains no formal planning application or formal pre-planning application. We have been advised that an e-petition has been received NCC. However, as the petition relates to a prospective planning application the relevant planning committee (Local Area Council or Strategic Planning committee) will consider it when they consider the applications in question. Most notably the petition itself is only classified as one written representation, therefore those signing need to engage with the planning process if an application is forthcoming.

The Clerk can confirm that Bothal Ward Cllrs have requested an Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Council to consider this proposed planning application, should one be received. The meeting would be held at an alternative venue to accommodate more people.

**FGS 22/267 YMCA**

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a verbal report from Rob Cox on items actioned since the previous meeting.

***The Impact***

The funding provided by Ashington Town Council has meant that we are able to continue to deliver 4 drop-in youth sessions per week.

Since April 2022, the youth team has had 1011 engagements with 229 unique young people. Around 84% of our engagements were with young people who live in Ashington, and 98% were with young people in the 12-16 range. This does not include those of which we engage with on outreach as we are unable to collect accurate data for this.

In addition to benefiting from having regular contact with youth workers, the young people have been able to access other diversionary activities in the area with our staff team guiding and supporting them into appropriate provisions. There has been vital revision support and access to the internet and relevant devices, healthy relationship advice groups (VAWG), sexual health advice, substance misuse and mental health guidance.

***What's Gone Well***

Having open access youth sessions 4 nights per week has given youth staff the opportunity to establish solid professional relationships with young people. Our detached work has resulted in your people who would previously been vulnerable to unhealthy relationships and/exploitation are now engaging. This has opened the door to lots of conversations and work which has allowed the team to identify the growing need for thorough education on Neurodivergent understanding. The large proportion of the young people we engage with are diagnosed with ADHD yet have no understanding of what it means.

***What We Want to Improve***

We are currently looking for funding, staff, and volunteers to enable us to open the Youth Training Kitchen.

Most of our young people attend our sessions hungry; they are very food orientated and keen to learn how to cook themselves.

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***Balance***

Case study examples were given to demonstrate the establishment of the healthy relationships group 'Balance.'

***What else are we up to***

- We are working with Northumberland Communities Together and creating a partnership with Wansbeck Valley Food Bank to create a warm space, where not only people in the community can use daily to stay warm, but also creating an additional space in the town where people can access much needed food parcels.
- Creating stronger partnerships, which in turn are leading to more provision and services for young people in the town.
- Key partner for the delivery of the Safer Streets programme in Northumberland
- Halfway through a post covid strategy, where we are improving our services for young people, how we monitor and evaluate the impact of our work and strengthen good governance in the charity.
- Hosting and being part of key networks, which are communities of organisations, wanting to better serve the needs of young people.
- Currently on our workers is up for a National Award for Young Worker of the Year. Results on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, so watch this space.
- Working with the Police and Crime Commissioners Office, the Violence Reduction Unit, and key partners to create VR resources for helping young people make better and safer decisions when out on the streets, especially at night.

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The Chair thanked Rob for the report and councillors also expressed thanks to Rob and his team for providing an excellent and much needed service.

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

**FGS 22/268 NORTHUMBERLAND CITIZENS ADVICE**

**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 the 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment of annual funding.

**FGS 22/269 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) Accounts Paid***

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a schedule of accounts paid since the September Finance and General Services meeting.

**It was FURTHER AGREED** to endorse those accounts paid according to the Council's Financial Regulations.

***c) Expected underspend to support Warm Hub Funding***

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It was **AGREED** to move £6,750 allocated to Councillor Expenses to a Funding pot available to support the creation and running of Warm Hubs in Ashington.

An amendment to veer additional unspent budget from Member Training to boost the allocation of £6,750 for Warm Hubs in Ashington, was proposed but not seconded.

**FGS 22/270 SMALL GRANT FUNDING – OCTOBER 2022**

**a) Ashington Pantomime Group**

It was **AGREED** to award Ashington Pantomime Group £500 to support the cost of costumes and scenery for the annual pantomime.

**b) Ashington Veterans and Elders Institute**

It was **AGREED** to award Ashington Veterans and Elders Institute £500 to support costs for tools for volunteers making wooden garden ornaments to sell for local charities.

**c) T.E.A.M Residents Association**

It was **AGREED** to award T.E.A.M Residents £500 to support costs for food, games and room hire for a children's Halloween Party.

**d) Ashington Camera Club**

It was **AGREED** to award Ashington Camera Club £500 to support the cost of judges for print and digital competitions, guest speakers on a range of photography subjects for club nights, and club trips via minibus so members have a chance to visit different photography locations.

**e) Cycling for Everyone**

The application for funding to pay for administrative support for the Hirst Park Cycling Hub was not supported.

**FGS 22/271 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 relates to an individual.

***Cllr Louis Brown left the meeting.***

**FGS 22/272 NORTH SEATON COLLIERY ALLOTMENT SITE**

**a) Buildings**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a verbal update and report from the Assets and Facilities Manager.

In relation to existing buildings, which have been in position for several years, the Assets and Facilities Manager recommended these not be the subject of further discussion.

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Following confirmation of building sizes of those semi-constructed buildings and information relating to the rules in operation on all other allotment sites, **it was AGREED** that the plot holder be given retrospective permission for a building no more than 15 square metres in area and no more than 2.5 metres in height. This relates to those partially constructed buildings, rather than historical.

The Assets and Facilities Manager acknowledged that the area of the buildings had not previously been raised with the plot holder but that this was the size contained in the rules, and that would be carried forward into new rules.

**b) Security**

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** correspondence from neighbours to the allotment site, who access the plot with the plot holder's permission to use the dressage circle.

**It was FURTHER AGREED** to ensure site security that the external gate to the plot from the field (also allowing access to the allotment site) must only be accessible when the plot holder is on-site.

**Cllr Louis Brown returned to the meeting.**

**FGS 22/273 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 22/274 ENVIRONMENTAL WORK**

**It was AGREED** to defer the item to the Climate Change and Environment Committee.

The Clerk advised that the agenda for the Climate Change and Environment Committee had been issued, therefore any consideration at the next meeting would have to be moved for inclusion as an urgent item. **This was AGREED.**

**FGS 22/275 REPLACEMENT BUS SHELTERS****a) Quotation for Bus Shelter outside Sports Direct**

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

The Assets and Facilities Manager confirmed that in line with Financial Regulations an attempt was made to source three quotes, but only the company shown responded.

**It was AGREED** to place an order with GW Shelter Solutions for a replacement bus shelter outside Sports Direct on Woodhorn Road, at a cost of **£5,445.25**.

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**b) Officer Delegation**

**It was AGREED** to delegate to the Assets and Facilities Manager, in consultation with Ward Councillors, those bus shelters to be replaced in the agreed style, according to their lifespan, within the available budget and with funding received via County Councillor small schemes where possible.

**Cllr Michelle Brannigan left the meeting****FGS 22/276 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

Following approval of the Chair, an urgent item was brought forward. **It was AGREED** to suspend standing orders to receive the following motion without notice in line with "9b - No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least seven clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice, or the day of the meeting."

**FGS 22/277 FUNDING TO SUPPORT TRAVEL COSTS TO ASHINGTON AFC**

Cllr Caroline Ball proposed:

This council notes the success of Ashington AFC in reaching the 4th qualifying round of the FA Cup and that they remain one of only three clubs in the country from the 9th tier of the English football pyramid to remain in the competition; their upcoming tie at King's Lynn in Norfolk is the longest of the competition thus far at an almost 500 mile round trip; the council notes that the cost of petrol and diesel remains extremely high and resolves to support Ashington AFC by providing £1,500 towards the cost of travel for the team.

**It was AGREED** to Support Ashington AFC by providing £1,500 towards to cost of travel for the team.

**FGS 22/278 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 6:00pm, Council Chamber.