

Ashington Town Council
DRAFT Minutes of the Climate Change & Environment Committee Meeting held at
6:00pm on Wednesday 3rd August 2022, in The Council Chamber, Town Hall

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Cllrs Caroline Ball, Michelle Brannigan, Marjorie Chambers, Glyn Davies, Jim Lang, John Tully, Sophie Robinson, Pauline Thompson, and Bob Walkinshaw.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Eden – Clerk/RFO, Stephen Humphrey – ATC Assets and Facilities Manager, Sharon Parmley – Administration (minute taking)
Lorraine Sweeney – Groundworks Northeast & Cumbria – North of Tyne

CCE 22/001 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Cllr Sophie Robinson was proposed and seconded as Chair of the Climate Change and Environment Committee.

CCE 22/002 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Cllr Pauline Thompson was proposed and seconded as the Vice Chair of the Climate Change and Environment Committee.

CCE 22/003 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Eleanor Armstrong, Victor Bridges, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Matthew Cuthbert, Lynne Grimshaw, Lawrence Henderson, Liam Lavery and Mark Purvis.

CCE 22/004 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

CCE 22/005 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

CCE 22/006 GROUNDWORK NORTHEAST & CUMBRIA – NORTH OF TYNE

The Chair invited Loraine Sweeney to speak on behalf of Groundwork Northeast and Cumbria.

Lorraine thanked the Town Council for being given the opportunity to attend the first Climate Change and Environment Committee.

Lorraine also congratulated Councillors on setting up the Committee and stated that she was looking forward to the projects and initiatives to be set up in the coming months. Lorraine said,

“We are passionate about creating a future where every neighbourhood is vibrant and green, every community is strong and able to shape its own destiny, and no-one is held back by their background or circumstances.

We believe that working with local communities to build their resilience is vital in facing up to the challenges of a globalised economy and a changing climate. We know that the negative effects of climate change and environmental breakdown impact first and worst on those who have the least power in society, and who contribute least to the cause of the crisis. A ‘just transition’ to an inclusive, net-zero economy must tackle, rather than entrench, this inequality and provide a springboard for better work and healthier, happier lives in the places that need it most. This means creating green jobs that build wealth in local communities, changing behaviour to reduce wasted food, energy, and water, providing biodiverse, accessible green spaces,

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supporting businesses to be more responsible and empowering communities to lead activities that improve their quality of life and promote health and wellbeing.”

Projects facilitated by Groundworks Northeast, include:

- Managing environmental improvements to boost biodiversity in Pegswood Community Park
- Establishing a floating eco system on the Tyne and wild oysters being grown in Blyth as part of our rivers and estuaries work
- Running a highly successful green skills kickstart programme in Pegswood where young people learned valuable skills and gained qualifications, funded by the Northeast Learning and Enterprise Partnership
- A volunteering programming, Natural Neighbourhoods, across a range of venues which included planting wildflower meadows, building a sustainable bird hide community feature and much more
- We have strong partnerships with Ashington Community Woods and Pegswood Community Woods
- Our Northern Directions team, funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority, is providing employment and skills advice to young people who are not in education, training, or employment.
- Our Green Doctors Project provides free one to one support to residents who can refer themselves or referrals can come from other organisations, to help to reduce the cost of energy bills and to help with practical energy efficiency measures including installation with home visits.
- Rare wildflower planting has been carried out in Pegswood Community Park and Northumberlandia, as well as other upland areas in Northumberland.
- Recycling Projects in schools in North Tyneside included engaging young people in why recycling is important and how to effectively recycle. We have organised planting sessions using recycled materials and peat free compost. The children showed a real passion for the environment and were keen to learn how they could contribute to tackling climate change.

Following several questions from Cllrs, Loraine confirmed interest in having a stall for the Great Big Green Week, if the Town Council proceed with plans to organise this, and to working with other groups in the town.

Loraine responded positively to being asked to provide a menu of initiatives/activities that the Town Council could choose from.

The Chair thanked Loraine for her presentation.

CCE 22/007 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no new items from members of the public. A previously received item for consideration was included on the agenda (Minute Ref: CCE 22/008, below).

CCE 22/008 RECYCLING OF PLASTIC

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a letter in respect of Northumberland County Council's arrangements for the recycling of plastic, previously received by a member of the public and agreed to be added to the Climate Change Committee agenda.

It was PROPOSED that Northumberland County Council Officers responsible for coordinating the recycling of plastic be invited to attend the next meeting to explain the process of how plastic waste in Northumberland is recycled.

It was FURTHER PROPOSED that Northumberland County Council should be questioned on the roll out of glass recycling and consider extending the current trial to include Ashington.

It was FURTHER PROPOSED that the Clerk on behalf of Ashington Town Council Climate Change Committee would request that Northumberland County Council consider taking the lead on an LA7 Climate Change Summit to work with other Local Authorities to address Climate Change and share best practice.

Cllr Brannigan informed members that Climate Action Northumberland will be doing a talk on recycling. Anyone interested to contact Cllr Brannigan for details.

CCE 22/009 TREES AT PADDOCK WOOD

It was AGREED to replace the trees that had been damaged at Paddock Wood earlier in the year.

The Assets and Facilities Manager informed members that the replacement trees would be semi mature and cost approximately £250 each. The NCC Tree Officer would be contacted prior to the order to check which trees will be most suitable.

It was also AGREED to replace a tree in the environs of Alexandra Road Play Area, at the same time, subject to landowner permission.

CCE 22/010 GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK: 24TH SEPTEMBER – 2ND OCTOBER

a) Big Green Week Action

It was AGREED to take an active part in the Great Big Green Week by hosting stalls at Ashington market on Tuesday 24th September. Stalls will highlight green projects carried out by Ashington Town Council, along with information on Climate Change and give away free wildflower seeds. **It was further AGREED to** invite NCC Climate Change Team, Northumberland CAB, and Groundwork NE, as per the proposal.

b) Budget

It was AGREED, in accordance with Financial Regulation 3e) to delegate spending approval (limited to £2,000) to the Clerk, as befitting to progress the project.

CCE 22/011 TREE PLANTING TARGETS, ENGAGEMENT AND MONITORING

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Michelle Brannigan and seconded by Cllr Marjorie Chambers to set a tree planting target and engage with residents, businesses, schools, and community groups to encourage planting. And to develop a system to record and monitor the trees being planted in Ashington, and to showcase and celebrate planting achievements.

Cllr John Tully proposed an amendment, to first seek further information about how this could be taken forward to be brought back to the next meeting.

The amendment was seconded, and Members voted in favour of the amendment.

The Clerk clarified that working with Widescope, the Council's website support, a presentation of how best the proposal can be taken forward will be brought to next Climate Change and Environment Committee in October.

CCE 22/012 CLIMATE ACTION FUND BID THROUGH THE BIG LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Michelle Brannigan to set up a small working group to specifically develop a bid for the Climate Action Fund through the Big Lottery Community Fund. Information supporting the proposal was sent out in advance of the meeting.

The MOTION was not supported.

CCE 22/013 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 17th October 2022, 6:00pm, Council Chamber.