

**Ashington Town Council**  
**DRAFT Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at**  
**6:00pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022, in The Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Lynne Grimshaw (Chair), Caroline Ball, Michelle Brannigan, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Glyn Davies, Matthew Cuthbert, Jim Lang, Mark Purvis, Sophie Robinson, and Pauline Thompson.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah Eden – Clerk/RFO, Stephen Humphrey – ATC Assets and Facilities Manager.

Prior to commencing the meeting, the Chair asked for members agreement to defer items 9, 10 and 11 of the agenda. This was unanimously **AGREED**.

**FGS 22/218 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Eleanor Armstrong, Victor Bridges, Lawrence Henderson, Liam Lavery, John Tully, and Bob Walkinshaw.

**FGS 22/219 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllrs. Caroline Ball, Pauline Thompson and Sophie Robinson declared an interest in item 22. SMALL GRANTS – JULY 2022 in relation to Ashington RVS Social Centre.

Cllr Michelle Brannigan and Pauline Thompson declared an interest in item 22. SMALL GRANTS – JULY 2022 in relation to Ashington Litter Picking Group.

**FGS 22/220 DISPENSATIONS**

Cllr Sophie Robinson requested dispensation to answer any questions arising from item 22. SMALL GRANTS JULY 2022 - Ashington RVS Social Care.

**FGS 22/221 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no items of public participation.

**FGS 22/222 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 as a true record.

**FGS 22/223 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the following reports, which were sent out in advance of the meeting.

***Internal Auditor***

Susan Saunders has confirmed appointment as Internal Auditor for 2022/23 with an engagement letter. Fees are £25/hour, and this will be capped at the previously paid £460.

***NWL Inspections of Allotment Sites***

The Water Regulations team at Northumbrian Water conducted their inspections on behalf of DEFRA on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022. As our water supplier, Northumbrian Water has a duty to enforce the [Water Supply \(Water Fittings\) Regulations 1999](#). These cover contamination, waste, misuse, undue consumption, and erroneous measurement.

***High Market & Wansbeck Allotments***

Conform to the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

***North Seaton Colliery Allotments***

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Conform to the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

**Hirst East End Allotments**

Contravention of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Nine standpipes require corrective work to install acceptable weatherproof insulation to protect from heat & frost. This can be done in-house. Re-inspection 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

**Nursery Park Allotments**

Contravention of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Four standpipes require attention to firmly secure the standpipe and install a double check valve, drain cock & stop tap on the standpipe, also install acceptable weatherproof insulation down to 750mm deep - Standpipe also requires boxed in. Re-inspection 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

**Green Lane Allotments**

Contravention of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Ten standpipes require attention to firmly secure the standpipe and install a double check valve, drain cock & stop tap on the standpipe, also install acceptable weatherproof insulation down to 750mm deep - Standpipe also requires boxed in. Re-inspection 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

**Seaton Hirst Allotments**

Contravention of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Eight standpipes require attention to firmly secure the standpipe and install a double check valve, drain cock & stop tap on the standpipe, also install acceptable weatherproof insulation down to 750mm deep - Standpipe also requires boxed in. Re-inspection 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

**Woodhorn Allotments**

Contravention of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Twenty-Six standpipes require attention to firmly secure the standpipe and install a double check valve, drain cock & stop tap on the standpipe, also install acceptable weatherproof insulation down to 750mm deep - Standpipe also requires boxed in. Re-inspection 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

In summary, 48 standpipes require substantial work.

***NCC ATC Partnership Meeting***

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

***Hirst Co-ordination Group***

The Clerk attended an online meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, at the invite of Vanessa Easton (NCC Northumberland Communities Together). The aim of the group is to bring together those working in the Hirst and aligning to the Ashington Town Plan. To working in partnership with residents to improve the area, to strive for better outcomes for residents, children, young people, babies, and their families in Hirst area. By working collaboratively with organisations and residents to build on the strengths and assets in the area and to identify what issues communities need support with and look at potential developments of new initiatives.

The group was previously established but this is the first meeting that any ATC Officer has been invited to. The meeting took stock of its aims and the value of meetings in the future, as there appeared some duplication with other meetings. It was agreed it would be revisited how often the group meets.

Liz Robinson (Public Health) updated the group on the Northumberland standard place-based tool which is currently being used as part of the 12 inequality events being held across Northumberland (members may be attending the Ashington event on 8<sup>th</sup> July at North Seaton Community Centre). This event will also introduce the place-based tool.

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Those in attendance were asked if they would be happy to be trained to facilitate discussions with groups and/or individually with residents, using the place-based tool. It was discussed that Heart of the Hirst Summer Fair would be a good opportunity. Northumberland Communities Together are identifying groups in the Hirst who would be able to support this information seeking activity.

Those in attendance gave updates on the work they were doing in the Hirst. The next meeting is scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

### ***SUEZ Briefing***

Some members were able to attend the briefing on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July. If you could not attend, a recording of the briefing is available and has been emailed out.

### ***Schools Initiative - Sustainable Planting***

A photograph opportunity with the schools who have designed signage for Station Road beds was planned for Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July, unfortunately this had to be postponed due to the weather, but it has been re-scheduled for Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July.

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

A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July to finalise all plans, prior to submitting to planning.

Northumberland FA are excited to be involved the football festival element of the unveiling with juniors and possibly walking football. October is the run up the 2024 World Cup and offers a further fantastic opportunity to inspire through football. It is hoped this could be a legacy event which Northumberland FA could support Ashington Junior FC to coordinate if they were keen. Recent press coverage on the project was positive, and Cllr Lavery did an excellent interview on BBC Radio Newcastle.

### ***ATC Neighbourhood Services***

Watering has proven a lengthy task in view of recent weather. Luckily with two NSO's, Ryan has been completing the watering, while Mark continues with maintenance issues. There were several bus shelter windows broken which require replacement, as well as ongoing repairs and refurbishment on seats and shelters. New bins are being installed and the 2<sup>nd</sup> delivery will be received in the coming weeks.

### ***Climate Change Grant***

Sharon was successful in an application to the NCC Climate Action grant panel for £943.68 towards the supply of litter pickers, as part of the 'Clean Green Ashington' strategy. We will continue to promote the equipment for use by groups in and around Ashington.

### ***Jackie Milburn Statue***

NCC is seeking to contact Ashington Town Council regarding the reinstall of the statue outside the leisure centre. In communication with the NCC officer involved, the Clerk has advised the information required to allow the Council to come to a decision on this, and subsequent liability in regards any responsibility for the statue once installed.

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Reference has been made to a previous decision that Ashington Town Council would take responsibility for the statue, but there is no reference to this on any agenda, or in meeting minutes.

We await a draft proposal from NCC Strategic Estates, which will be brought to a meeting to consider, along with independent legal advice.

**FGS 22/224 BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2022/23**

**a) Updated Budget Report**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the updated Budget Report for 2022/23, sent out in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk updated on those items added as notes and indicated that a full half-year review would be included at the September FGS meeting.

**b) Accounts Paid and to be Paid**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the schedule of accounts and to endorse those accounts paid via delegated authority, and approve those accounts to be paid, since 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The Clerk referenced payments to Ashington Colliery Band (£250), Ashington and District Male Voice Choir £250, and Ashington Celebratory Bowls Competition (£400) which required approval as small-scale subsidies and sponsorship paid in previous years.

**FGS 22/225 ASHINGTON CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

**a) Christmas Lights Scheme 2022 – Column Motifs**

It was **AGREED** that the preferred Christmas Lights Scheme for 2022 would include the Collier design column motifs.

**b) Christmas Lights Scheme 2022 – Trees**

It was **AGREED** to order drop lights and garland glitter lights the Christmas Lights Scheme for 2022.

**c) Christmas Lights – Contract Details**

It was **AGREED** to receive the cost options for purchase and lease of the chosen lights. It was **AGREED** to opt for a lease agreement over three-years, offering the Council flexibility and limited maintenance costs.

	Collier Design + Drop Lights (14 trees) + 20m lighting on Christmas Tree*	14 trees dressed (stay in)	3D star for Christmas Tree
Hire - yr 1	£22,726	£7,652	£179
Hire - yr 2	£20,484	£2,712	£169
Hire - yr 3	£20,172	£2,712	£169
Total Hire Cost over 3 years	<b>£63,382</b>	<b>£13,076</b>	<b>£517</b>

\*includes install, dismantle, test and store of existing kids' motif lights also.

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**FGS 22/226 SMALL GRANTS – JULY 2022**

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** a summary of the small grant applications received between 6<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July.

It was **AGREED** to make the following awards:

**Ashington RVS Social Care - £400**

The funding will be used to take clients, who are elderly, and with mobility issues to the Newbiggin Maritime Centre. The grant will be used for a buffet lunch and transport.

**Friends of Ashington Community Woods - £500**

The funding will be used to upgrade the volunteer's equipment. A focus is clearing and tidying the woodland after Storm Arwen.

**Cambois Rowing Club - £482**

The funding will be used to purchase 9 pairs of neaves adjustable rowing shoes for the club's boats benefiting junior and senior members.

**Ashington Community Litter Project - £500**

The funding will be used to purchase litter picking equipment for the 295 members. The Town Clerk highlighted that as the group was not constituted the Town Council would purchase the equipment direct for the group.

It was **AGREED** not to make an award to NCEAT (James Knott CoE Primary School & Thomas Bewick Primary School) of £1,300; it was **further agreed** to include in guidelines for future small grant and annual grant applications that schools, and churches will not be funded. This also will allow the office to respond to speculative applications with a definitive policy of the Council.

**FGS 22/227 ELECTRIC CAR**

It was **AGREED** to replace the Council's Citroen Dispatch 1000 L1h1 Hdi diesel van with an E-dispatch 50kwh Enterprise Pro, from Allington's of Ashington, as per the agreement offered on 12 months deposit, over 4 years.

**E-dispatch 50kwh Enterprise Pro**

Deposit	Deposit (£)	Monthly Payment	Total Cost over term (4 years)
12 months	£ 4,828.56	£ 402.38	£ 24,142.80

**FGS 22/228 ASHINGTON STATION ROAD CCTV PROVISION**

It was **AGREED** to commence procurement of alternative CCTV provision in the Town Centre, and to write to the current supplier with the required three-months' notice under current contract terms.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Clerk advised that a preferred supplier procurement could be taken forward which would give the Council the opportunity to engage with the current supplier and any others. Additionally, advice on system requirements could be explored with the policing team.

**FGS 22/229 ASHINGTON GARDENS COMPETITION**

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the update and to approve the details of judging and the awards presentation.

**FGS 22/230 COMMUNITY DEFIBRILLATORS**

**It was AGREED** to commence a project to explore the purchase and install up to twelve defibrillators in the town, with the requested support of County Cllrs Capital Small Schemes Funding, and the agreement of local organisations as custodians.

**FGS 22/231 2023-24 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRAMME CONSULTATION**

***a) Request for Priorities and Guidance***

**It was AGREED** to receive a letter requesting the Council's top three highways and transport priority issues for this area.

***b) Record of requests contained in Directory Database***

**It was AGREED** to receive and note the public requests in the database.

***c) Highways and Transport Priority issues***

**It was AGREED** to respond to Northumberland County Council Highways with the following three priority issues, for considered inclusion in the Local Transport Plan Programme 2023-24:

1. **Pedestrian Safety is an issue on Newbiggin Road**, from The Elephant and over the roundabout adjacent to the churchyard. Presently, a worn-down zebra crossing is used unsafely due to the speed and volume of traffic. Safety could be improved if the zebra crossing were replaced with a pelican or puffin crossing.
2. **The surface condition of Burnside Road is unacceptable** and requires resurfacing.
3. **Vehicles frequently traveling at excessive speeds on North Seaton Road**, in particular from The Comrades Club to the Mortimer Club.

**FGS 22/232 Newbiggin Neighbourhood Plan**

**It was AGREED** to receive a consultation letter to the Newbiggin Neighbourhood Plan. **It was AGREED** to delegate to the Clerk, in consultation with Cllrs, to respond with any written representations following the drop-in event on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, and before 5pm on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022

**DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022, 6:00pm, Council Chamber.