

**ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**AGREED Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm**  
**on Tuesday 25 January 2022**  
**at North Seaton Community Centre, Manley View, Ashington**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Mark Purvis (Chair), Caroline Ball, Michelle Brannigan, Victor Bridges, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Avril Chisholm, Matthew Cuthbert, Lynne Grimshaw, Lawrence Henderson, Jim Lang, Liam Lavery, Sophie Robinson, Pauline Thompson, John Tully.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE**

Sarah Eden – Town Clerk & RFO  
Stephen Humphrey – Assets and Facilities Manager  
Sharon Parmley – Administration Officer (minute taking)  
Mike Slaughter – Project Support Officer

**C22/980 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Eleanor Armstrong and Bob Walkinshaw.

**C22/981 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest in items for agenda discussion.

**C22/982 DISPENSATIONS**

There were no dispensations received or to consider.

**C22/983 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

**C22/984 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE and SIGN** the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 as a true record.

**C22/985 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.**

The Leader presented the following report.

We are almost at the end of January, but as it is my first report of the New Year, I would just like to welcome everyone to the first Full Council meeting of the year and hope everyone had a good Christmas. Hopefully, we can all look forward to a productive 2022 as we are emerging out of Covid-restrictions.

I would also like to formally welcome Sarah Eden to her first Full Council meeting. Sarah became our new Town Clerk and RFO on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and has hit the ground running.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of January I attended an online meeting of the Town & Parish Council Liaison Working Group. I have highlighted several items on the agenda that I think will interest members.

- We received an update from Paul Jones, Service Director for Local Services at Northumberland County Council (NCC). He spoke about the authorities' response to Storm Arwen and how the clean-up operation had impacted on local services delivery. A considerable number of fallen trees had required the use of heavy plant

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and machinery together with specialist contractors usually engaged in Forestry harvesting.

- NCC had to postpone collection arrangements for their 'free tree scheme' which aims to makeover 15,000 trees available to residents, schools, and community groups as part of their Climate Change action plan as staff were redeployed to Storm recovery works. However, he assured us that alternative collection arrangements would be made and publicized.
- A Kerbside glass collection pilot scheme that NCC has been running the past 12-months involved the collection of glass from 4,000 households in Alnwick, Morpeth, Bedlington & Hexham. The scheme has been highly successful yielding over 72kg per household per year which would have placed in the top quartile nationally. However, these results may have been skewed due to the increase in home working and restrictions on the hospitality sector due to covid restriction – as estimated glass recycling activity in Northumberland increased by 22% over the trial period.

The estimated annual cost of delivering a monthly glass collection service to most households in the county is £1.25m per year with a £4.2m capital cost requirement for new vehicles and bins. Therefore, NCC has decided to extend the pilot scheme through to March 2023 (with an additional eight hundred households added) to provide greater confidence in the data used for long term service planning and investment.

It is envisaged that the Government will publish and consider the outcomes of the National resources and Waste strategy consultation exercise by the end of 2022 including confirmation of new burdens funding that will be made available for local authorities and implementation deadlines. Operating the trial until March 2023 will therefore enable the trial to be aligned with the point at which we anticipate Government funding being made available to support the countywide roll-out of glass collections, hopefully from as early as 2023/24.

- On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January I chaired an open zoom meeting for all councillors to discuss a report compiled by the Town Clerk to outline how Ashington Town Council (ATC) can better address concerns about service delivery and value for money moving forward. A good and wide-ranging discussion was had amongst those that were able to attend. The recommendations in the report were that:
  1. Reports via the office should be identified as Enhanced Services or Fly-Tipping (Rapid Response). This would require members support to report 'other issues' that relate to Core Services via the NCC system or the appropriate County Councillor. Separating the service, we pay an enhancement for from other services delivered will aid monitoring service delivery. Additionally, not contributing to workers being redeployed from planned schedules will support service delivery according to the contract.
  2. Using day-specific zoning maps, develop a system to monitor reports received against cleansing completed/scheduled.

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3. Introduce spot-checks of areas.
4. Research other Partnership Agreements and Enhancements being utilised elsewhere.
5. Reintroduce Quarterly Meetings with agenda and minutes that are presented to Finance & General Services (F&GS) Committee.
6. Schedule the next Partnership Meeting for March, in line with the end of the financial year, but no later than 25th so a report can be brought to the April F&GS Committee. This will allow time for new reporting and monitoring to be in. Subsequent meetings can be scheduled for June, September, and December.

Finally, I would like to highlight that ATC's new website is now fully up and running. It is much improved in terms of appearance, layout, and accessibility.

**Cllr. Matthew Cuthbert,**  
**Leader of Ashington Town Council.**

**C22/986 FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT RISK ASSESSMENT**

**It was AGREED** to receive the report and to note the additional controls being recommended.

**C22/987 BUDGET AND ANNUAL PRECEPT 2022/23**

**a) Draft Budget 2022/23**

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the draft Annual Budget for the 2022/23 Financial Year being recommended by the Finance and General Services Committee.

**b) Town Council's Expenditure Budget 2022/23**

**It was AGREED to APPROVE** a budget of £1,089,400.

Members discussed that underspend had been redirected throughout the year, due to COVID altering plans, and the Council was now able to better plan for spending in the coming financial year.

The budget presented commitments to assets, climate change and grant aid funding.

**c) Use of Reserves**

**It was AGREED to formally APPROVE** £264,500 use of reserves from 2021/22, to off-set the precept demand for 2022/23.

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**d) General Reserves and Contingency**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the Clerk's note on 'Reserves and Contingency'.  
 It was **AGREED** to set aside a General Reserves and Contingency allocation of £250,000.

**e) Earmarked Reserves**

It was **AGREED** to set aside the notional provision of £107,200 to Earmarked Reserves to accumulate funds towards longer term asset management and replacement.

**f) 2022/23 Precept Demand**

It was **AGREED to APPROVE** a Precept Demand of £824,941, to be submitted to Northumberland County Council, and note the resulting Band D (equivalent) Precept payment, of £106.94 (based on tax base information provided by NCC).

Members were mindful when agreeing expenditure, that a zero percent increase in the precept was important.

All Members agreed that in the current climate, it was right not to make any increase to the precept paid by residents and were pleased that the agreed budget had achieved this.

**C22/988 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The next Full Council meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 7:00pm, at North Seaton Community Centre, Manley View, Ashington.

The Chair noted that the office would seek feedback from Northumbria Police as to the suitability of a PACT meeting to be held in advance.

**C22/989 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Town Council agreed the following resolution:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, permitted under Part I (1) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) as the matter is confidential and relates to employment matters

Stephen Humphrey and Sharon Parmley left the meeting, 7:30pm.

**C22/990 CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT MATTER**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the report and note the content.

Members **AGREED** formative action based on the information available.

**The meeting ended at 8:00pm.**

**Chair's signature**.....

**Date** .....