

**ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**DRAFT Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee,**  
**held at 5:00pm on Tuesday 23rd May 2023**  
**at Ashington Town Hall, 65 Station Road**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Cllrs. Lynne Grimshaw (Chair), Caroline Ball, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Matthew Cuthbert, Mark Purvis, Michelle Brannigan, Pauline Thompson.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE**

Sarah Eden – Town Clerk & RFO, Stephen Humphrey, Assets and Facilities Manager, Sharon Parmley – Communications and Engagement Officer, Gary Holmes – Administration Assistant.

**FGS23/001 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR**

Cllr Lynne Grimshaw welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**FGS23/002 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

It was **AGREED** to receive nominations for the Chair of the Finance & General Services Committee. It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr Lynne Grimshaw as Chair.

**FGS23/003 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

It was **AGREED** to receive nominations for the Vice Chair of the Finance & General Services Committee. It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr Matthew Cuthbert as Vice Chair.

**FGS23/004 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Bob Walkinshaw, Glyn Davies, and John Tully.

**FGS23/005 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Michelle Brannigan declared an interest in **FGS23/374 SMALL GRANTS FUNDING** regarding funding for Ashington Veterans and Elders, as she is their auditor.

**FGS23/006 DISPENSATIONS**

No dispensations requested.

**FGS23/007 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no items for consideration from members of the public and there were no members of the public present at the meeting.

**FGS23/008 MINUTES OF THE COMBINED FULL COUNCIL AND FINANCE AND GENERAL SERVICES MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023.**

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** and sign as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th April 2023.

**FGS23/009 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES**

The Clerk confirmed that all actions agreed at the previous FGS meeting had been completed. This included:

1. Confirmation of the new phone system scheduled to be installed on 25<sup>th</sup> May.
2. Environmental works on Laburnum Terrace ordered and completed.
3. A press release on the new play areas at Epsom Drive and Aintree Court.
4. Our new Administration Assistant in post, and recruitment closed.
5. Both small and annual grants publicised, with small grants on the agenda this evening, and annual grants being received, and presentations scheduled for Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May.
6. New litter bins ordered.

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7. All annual meeting administration and updates have been completed, and an Annual Report has been published online and is available in paper copy if anyone would like to take any.

**Cllr Marjorie Chambers entered at 17:07.**

**FGS23/010 BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2023/24**

**a) Updated Budget Report**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** an updated budget report for 2023/2024.

**b) Accounts Paid and to be Paid (including Bank Reconciliation)**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a schedule of accounts paid and to be paid and to endorse those accounts paid and agree those to be paid, since 18th April 2023.

**FGS23/011 BASIC PARISH ALLOWANCE AND EXPENSES**

It was **AGREED** to write to Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) to request they inquire if other Northumberland Town and Parish Councils are interested in seeking the establishment of a Parish Remuneration Panel. This would be requested in accordance with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, whereby Northumberland County Council is the responsible authority, and seek to instruct an independent remuneration panel to make a report and recommendations in respect of a basic Parish Allowance and Expenses.

Cllr Michelle Brannigan asked that the minute reflect she voted against the motion.

**FGS23/012 HIRST PARK LIAISON MEETING**

It was **AGREED** to receive the report of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The Clerk updated that a follow-up meeting had not been held yet, but that there would be a further update as soon as available. The Clerk reminded the meeting that the Council do not contribute to this role, but to the maintenance of the park, however, liaison meetings had discussed the potential loss of the development work so a follow-up would be provided.

**FGS23/013 ENHANCED NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PARTNERSHIP MEETING**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the updates below.

**a) Report of Meeting**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the report of the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2023.

**b) Financial Update**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** that the held underspend from 2021/22 of £7,792, has been partially spent because of the 2022/23 overspend of £4,204.

The final invoice and budget will be brought to the Partnership Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June. The Clerk advised that due to Ray Wealleans not being available to give a full financial report, the

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overspend in 2022/23 was overlooked, but the work proposed for the Hirst, which was delegated to the Clerk to agree, is still expected to be delivered within the money available.

**c) Update on Outstanding Actions**

This item was not heard.

**FGS23/014 SMALL GRANTS FUNDING – MAY 2023**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a summary of the small grant applications received between 19<sup>th</sup> of April – 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2023.

It was **AGREED to AWARD** the Ashington Veterans and Elders Institute £500.

It was **AGREED to AWARD** the Newbiggin Colliery Band £500.

It was **AGREED to AWARD** the Ashington Sea Cadets £500.

**FGS23/015 EVENTS**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the list of further event proposals for Summer 2023.

**a) Ashington Camera Club Photography Exhibition**

It was **AGREED** to support Ashington Camera Club with a Photography Exhibition on 1st July at Wansbeck Square.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to allocate £250 from the Events, Community, and Engagement budget to pay for room hire, and that the Communications and Engagement Officer helps to facilitate the event.

**b) Family Fun Day in the Partnership with NCC Get Onside**

It was **AGREED** to work in partnership with NCC Get Onside team to deliver a family fun day at Hirst Welfare Centre, on 12th August, to include a walking football tournament, family attractions, and community groups.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to allocate £3,000 from the Events, Community, and Engagement budget, and to delegate spending to the Communications and Engagement Officer, in consultation with the Events Group.

**c) Summer Activities on Station Road**

It was **AGREED** to book weekly activities/attractions for each Saturday of the summer holidays, to take place on Station Road.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to allocate £2,000 from the Events, Community and Engagement budget, and delegate spending to the Communications and Engagement Officer, in consultation with the Events Group.

**d) Pride Picnic in the Park**

It was **AGREED** to work in partnership with NCC Hirst Park Community Engagement Team to deliver a Pride Picnic in Hirst Park, in September, with stalls and attractions that raise awareness, offer support, and promote inclusivity.

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It was **FURTHER AGREED** to allocate £1,000 from the Events, Community and Engagement budget, and to delegate spending to the Communications and Engagement Officer, in consultation with the Events Group.

### **FGS23/016 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS**

#### ***a) College Ward Improvements***

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the note of works instigated by County Cllr Mark Purvis.

#### ***b) College Shops***

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a proposal from College Ward Cllrs Mark Purvis, Vicki Brown, and Liam Lavery for works from the £5,000 Environmental Enhancement budget heading, and to seek costs for the following work:

- To repaint the rendered wall and metal fencing at college shops.
- To replace the deceased silver birch tree, and repair tree guards.
- To purchase and plant a mix of evergreen shrubs, with associated soil and bark chippings. (Please note an ongoing maintenance plan will need to be costed and agreed)

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to delegate to the Assets & Facilities Manager that an order be placed following receipt of a suitably priced quotation, within the budget available.

### **FGS23/017 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 6:00pm, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

**Meeting ended at 17:44**