

Ashington Town Council
DRAFT Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at
6:00pm on Tuesday 14 June 2022, in The Council Chamber, Town Hall

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Lynne Grimshaw (Chair), Victor Bridges, Louis Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Matthew Cuthbert, Lawrence Henderson, Jim Lang, Liam Lavery, Pauline Thompson, John Tully, Bob Walkinshaw.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Eden – Clerk/RFO, Stephen Humphrey – ATC Assets and Facilities Manager, Sharon Parmley – ATC Administration Officer (minute taking)

FGS 22/199 ELECTION OF CHAIR.

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ELECT** Cllr Lynne Grimshaw as Chair of the Finance and General Services Committee of Ashington Town Council, in accordance with Standing Orders.

FGS 22/200 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR.

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ELECT** Cllr John Tully as Vice-Chair of the Finance and General Services Committee of Ashington Town Council, in accordance with Standing Orders.

FGS 22/201 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Eleanor Armstrong, Caroline Ball, Michelle Brannigan, Vicky Brown, Mark Purvis and Sophie Robinson.

FGS 22/202 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.

Cllrs. Louis Brown, Jim Lang and Victor Bridges declared an interest in agenda items 17. NORTH SEATON COLLIERY ATTOTMENT SITE and agenda item 18. HIRT EAST END ALLOTMENT SITE.

Cllr. Liam Lavery declared an interest in agenda item 10. ANNUAL GRANT AID AWARDS, b) Funding Awards, in respect of Ashington Cricket Club.

Cllr. Bob Walkinshaw declared an interest in agenda item 10. ANNUAL GRANT AID AWARDS, b) Funding Awards, in respect of the YMCA.

FGS 22/203 DISPENSATIONS.

There were no requests for dispensations.

FGS 22/204 PUBLIC PARTICPATION.

There were no members of the public.

FGS 22/205 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING.

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th May 2022 as a true record, with the correction below.

It was **AGREED** to **correct the minute** FGS22/183 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST to include Cllr Brannigan declaring an interest in item 11. c) Security and Safety.

FGS 22/206 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES.

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

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Training

Following contact with the National Association of Councillors, they are unable to offer training on 'Effective Meetings and Decision Making,' however this was covered in the previous training delivered. This subject is covered in most 'Chair' training.

NALC has recently offered training on Finance, the details of which has been shared with members via email.

Training is being sourced on the following as a priority. An outside provider would best deliver the first two topics. Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding in respect of the Council, will be checked following adoption of the Safeguarding Policy.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 Data Protection
 Safeguarding

Christmas Lights

Costed proposals have been received from Gala Lights. Options and ideas will be explored further to allow a decision to be taken at the Finance and General Services Committee in July. Anyone with any specific ideas about Christmas Lights displays is encouraged to share these with the office.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The AGAR is complete and will be brought to Full Council at the end of the month. The Full Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 28th June to ensure submission deadlines and the period for the exercise of public rights are adhered to.

Members are reminded they are welcome to question the Clerk on any matter relating to the Finance and Governance of the Council, so they feel assured to answer that they have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements, as well as maintaining an adequate system of internal control, risk management and insurance.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The Council agreed funding for twelve groups to put on events or projects to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Unfortunately, one event did not go ahead, but we are sharing the stories of those that did. Sharon is liaising with the groups that were supported for further updates so these can be shared on our website and Facebook Page. Northumberland County Council separately asked for information about events, which we have shared.

We did receive one phone call and one email to express disappointment that the Council did not decorate Station Road with banners or bunting to mark the occasion. We have responded to advise that the Council pledged £8,000 support to Community Groups.

NWL Inspections of Allotment Sites

The Water Regulations team at Northumbrian Water are carrying out a planned programme of plumbing inspections at all Allotment Sites on 16th June. The inspections are required to ensure plumbing systems are installed in a way that does not pose risk to health or wastewater. As our

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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.

Updates following the Annual Meeting of the Council

The Council website was updated with the details of new positions, including photographs of the newly elected Civic Head, Cllr Bob Walkinshaw, and Deputy Civic Head, Cllr Victor Bridges. Outgoing Civic Head, Cllr Pauline Thompson was pictured handing over to Cllr Walkinshaw and the editorial included an outgoing statement from Cllr Thompson.

[The start of a new Council year for Ashington Town Council](#)

All new policies have been updated on the Council's website, further information about roles will be included under 'The Council' soon.

[Ashington Town Council - Council Policies](#)

Northumberland Miners' Picnic at Woodhorn Colliery (11th June)

Work has been going on behind the scenes for the above, and at the time of the meeting, the event will have been held.

The Council has supported with funding of £10,000 as well as organising the Miners' Memorial Service and collaborating with those involved in this important part of the day. Special thanks to Rev. Michael Hedley for leading the service alongside Ian Lavery MP, the Brass Marras, and to those who lay wreaths.

Ashington Armed Forces Day & Falklands Commemoration (12th June)

Work has been going on behind the scenes for the above, and at the time of the meeting, the event will have been held.

With thanks to Stephen and Sharon for liaison and support of the Ashington Branch of the Royal British Legion and Churches Together, and Rev Chris Grocock for leading the service. Also, Mark Air and Ryan Appleby for their work in the memorial garden, and to those in attendance on the day and laying wreaths; Deputy Lord Lieutenant Bryony Gibson, Ian Lavery MP, Cllr Bob Walkinshaw, County Cllr Jim Lang and Phil Rainger (RBL).

Environmental Enhancements

All planters, hanging baskets and tubs are in place for the summer season and part of an intensive watering schedule. Station Road is on the agenda.

Photocopier Contract

At the time of writing the current photocopier is scheduled to be replaced this week with a new copier, under lease with NCS Limited. The lease hire cost represents an annual saving of £1,216. Additionally in regards printing and copying this brings a cost per copy saving of 1.5p (colour) and 0.2p (mono), with the additional feature of utility colour (low colour), additional annual saving expected to be more than £300.

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Core Services Meeting

NCC Officers, Paul Jones, Greg Gavin, Stephen Wardle, and the NEAT Senior Team will be presenting to Council on Core Services in Ashington on **Tuesday 21st June, at 6pm in the Council Chamber.**

NCC ATC Partnership Meeting

A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 21st June at 2:00pm. The Clerk is currently seeking confirmation of the date/time as an Extraordinary Meeting has been called at Northumberland County Council. It is unknown whether this will require the attendance of officers scheduled to attend the NCC Meeting. Additionally County Cllrs Lynne Grimshaw and Caroline Ball may also be expected to attend and are members of the Partnership Board.

The Clerk sought guidance from members whether the date/time of the meeting should be changed, as in addition to the County Council meeting, there was a Town Council Liaison meeting with Allotment Associations. The Assets and Facilities Manager apologised for the clash, in this regard.

It was agreed that the Partnership Meeting should go ahead as planned.

Grant Funding

It has come to our attention that many local community groups are not aware of the funding available from external sources, or that they can sign up to receive the ebulletin from Northumberland County Council, or of where to go to for advice and support. The Council's website will soon be updated with this information, so that groups can click on links for information and sources of support.

FGS 22/207 BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2021/22.**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 informed members that there would be a thorough interim review of the budget in September where monies can be reallocated if necessary.

The Clerk also highlighted one example; further funds could be moved from Play Areas following the successful bid for the Alexandra Road Play Area project from The Ashington Leisure Partnership.

The Clerk clarified that the Allotment Budget had been increased with money from Earmarked Reserves to cover capital works on taps, and that this would need to be extended following NWL inspections.

Several members agreed the need for an Allotments Officer to work in partnership with the Associations to manage the allotment sites.

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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 10th May 2022.

FGS 22/208 ANNUAL GRANT AID AWARDS.

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a summary of Annual Grant Aid requests for the current financial year sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was further **AGREED** to award community groups and organisations who had applied the following grants.

i	Ashington Cricket Club	£3,000
ii	Ashington Hirst Running Club	£1,000
iii	Ashington Joint Welfare Rugby Club – Application withdrawn	
iv	Ashington Rugby Cricket Club	£2,000
v	Ashington Swimming Club	No award
vi	Being Woman	£5,000
vii	Citizens Advice Northumberland	£10,000
viii	Cycling4Everyone Limited (Events)	No award
ix	Cycling4Everyone Limited (Staffing)	No award
x	Escape Family Support	£6,000
xi	Full Food Circle	£5,000
xii	Koast Radio	No award
xiii	Northumberland Community Bank	£5,250
xiv	Northumberland CVA (Employability Support)	No award
xv	Northumberland CVA (Group Development)	No award
xvi	Real Deal Plus	£5,000
xvii	Wansbeck Valley Foodbank	£13,000
xviii	YMCA Northumberland	£10,000

FGS 22/209 STATION ROAD PLANTING.

a) Designs and Plant Supply

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the planting Designs and Maintenance Plans for Station Road from Garden Narratives sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was further **AGREED** to accept the designs, and to source the plants directly, using funds from the Environmental Enhancements Budget (circa £18,000)

b) Planting and Labour

It was **AGREED** to utilise the Council's workforce, plus an additional casual worker, to plant up the beds alongside Garden Narratives (circa four days)

c) School Participation in Sustainable Planting Signage

It was **AGREED** to present each school who participated in the 'Work in Progress' sign design competition with £500 for Sustainable Projects.

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FGS 22/210 ELECTRIC CHARGING POINT.

a) Quotation

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** and approve the quotation to install an electric charging point at Green Lane, to progress the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions.

b) License to Alter

It was **AGREED** request that Advance Northumberland prepare a draft 'License to Alter' in respect of installing an electric charging point on their premises at Green Lane, at a cost of £150.

It was **Further AGREED** to delegate that the Clerk verifies the terms and signs the License on behalf of the Council.

FGS 22/211 JACK CHARLTON STATUE AND CHARLTON BROTHERS PROJECT.

a) Onsite Meeting

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a report of the meeting held on 24th May (including update), which outlines the convergence of the projects and details the parties involved, sent out in advance of the meeting.

b) Exclusion of Press and Public

The **Town Council AGREED** to pass the following resolution:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items (c) and (d), 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 'Contract for the supply of services'

c) Jack Charlton Statue – Foundations

It was **AGREED** to pay for the advice of structural engineer, Jasper Kerr, to determine the required foundation for the Jack Charlton Statue, at a cost of £800, for which the work will be professionally indemnified

d) Landscape Architecture on Charlton Brothers Project

It was **AGREED** to fully engage Nick Wright, PlaceOnEarth Landscape Design for design, consultation and construction liaison for the projects, at a cost of £3020, with additional fees should further work be required.

e) Budget for Charlton Brothers Project

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** an updated financial summary sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to commit a further £30,000 from Ashington Town Council to cover the shortfall of additional works.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** that further funding be sought from external sources.

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FGS 22/212 HIRST PARK – PARTNERSHIP WORKING**a) Report of Meeting**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the report of the meeting held on Wednesday 25th May 2022, sent out in advance of this meeting.

b) Action Days at Hirst Park

It was **AGREED** that the Council should support Action Days in Hirst Park, following receipt of a calendar from the NCC Development Officers.

FGS 22/213 DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Tuesday 12th July 2022, 6.00pm Council Chamber.

FGS 22/214 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Town Council 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 confidential.

FGS 22/215 NORTH SEATON COLLIERY ALLOTMENT SITE.

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

It was **FURTHER AGREED** that the Assets and Facilities Manager respond with the agreed responses from the meeting.

FGS 22/216 HIRST EAST END ALLOTMENT SITE.

This item was removed from the agenda.

The meeting ended 8:15pm.