

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council, held at 6:00pm
on Tuesday 17 May 2022
at Ashington Town Hall, Council Chamber, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Mark Purvis (Chair), Caroline Ball, Michelle Brannigan, Victor Bridges, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Matthew Cuthbert, Lynne Grimshaw, Lawrence Henderson, Liam Lavery, Pauline Thompson, Bob Walkinshaw.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Eden – Town Clerk & RFO

Sharon Parmley – Senior Finance & Administration Officer (minute taking)

C22/1012 ELECTION OF BUSINESS CHAIR

Cllr Mark Purvis was proposed and seconded as the Business Chair for Ashington Town Council.

Pursuant to section 15 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, and in the absence of any further nominations, **it was AGREED** to elect Cllr Mark Purvis as the Chair of Ashington Town Council.

C22/1013 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

by Cllr Mark Purvis duly signed the declaration of acceptance of office, which was then signed by the Clerk.

Cllr. Purvis thanked members and staff for their work and support during his term of office as Business Chair and hoped for a fruitful year ahead after such unprecedented times.

C22/1014 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Eleanor Armstrong, Sophie Robinson and Jim Lang.

C22/1015 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllr. Brannigan declared an interest in Agenda item 22. ASHINGTON MEMORIAL GARDEN.

Cllrs. Lynne Grimshaw, Jim Lang, Mark Purvis and Caroline Ball declared an interest in Agenda item 21. ASHINGTON LEVEL CROSSING SURVEY.

C22/1016 DISPENSATIONS

Cllr. Brannigan asked that a dispensation be given in relation to Agenda item 22. ASHINGTON MEMORIAL GARDEN, to answer any queries that may arise regarding the project.

Cllr. Ball asked that a dispensation be given in relation to Agenda item 21. ASHINGTON LEVEL CROSSING SURVEY, to answer any queries that may arise regarding the survey.

It was AGREED to APPROVE a dispensation that Cllr Brannigan remain present for the item, to answer questions.

It was AGREED to APPROVE a dispensation that Cllr Ball remain present for the item, to answer questions.

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C22/1017 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** and **SIGN** the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29th March 2022 as a true record.

C22/1018 ELECTION OF BUSINESS VICE-CHAIR

Cllr Purvis invited nominations for Business Vice-Chair. Cllr Marjorie Chambers **was proposed and seconded as Business Vice-Chair for Ashington Town Council.**

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr Marjorie Chambers as Business Vice-Chair.

C22/1019 ELECTION OF CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON

Cllr Purvis invited nominations for the Civic Head. **Cllr Bob Walkinshaw** was proposed and seconded as the Civic Head for Ashington Town Council.

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr Bob Walkinshaw as Civic Head of Ashington.

C22/1020 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON

Cllr Purvis invited nominations for Deputy Civic Head. Cllr Victor Bridges was proposed and seconded as the Deputy Civic Head for Ashington Town Council.

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr Victor Bridges as Deputy Civic Head of Ashington.

C22/1021 ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Purvis invited nominations for Leader of the Council. Cllr Matthew Cuthbert was proposed and seconded as the Leader for Ashington Town Council.

It was **AGREED** to elect Cllr Matthew Cuthbert as Leader of the Council.

C22/1022 ELECTION OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Purvis invited nominations for Deputy Leader of the Council. Cllr Lawrence Henderson was proposed and seconded as the Deputy Leader for Ashington Town Council.

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr Lawrence Henderson as Deputy Leader of the Council.

C22/1023 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Pursuant to section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, **it was AGREED** to appoint Sarah Eden as the Responsible Financial Officer.

C22/1024 STANDING ORDERS

It was **AGREED** to adopt Standing Orders in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 42, including all recommendations of the Clerk annotated and sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was **AGREED** that Standing Orders should include that decisions on dispensations should be approved by the meeting.

It was **AGREED** to include the agreement that planning applications should be received by the Council in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation on Planning Matters.

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It was **AGREED** to add officer positions in law and members positions for clarity to Standing Orders.

It was **AGREED** to remove reference to Financial Management and Accounting in favour of a separate Financial Regulations Policy.

It was **AGREED** to reference line management control of the Clerk to be shared between the Chair of the Council, Chair of the Personnel Committee and Leader of the Council.

C22/1025 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It was **AGREED** to adopt Financial Regulations in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as recommended by the Clerk/RFO which were sent out in advance of the meeting.

C22/1026 STANDING COMMITTEES

a) Finance and General Services Committee (FGS)

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** and **AGREE** the Terms of Reference of the Finance and General Services Committee, sent out in advance of the meeting.

b) Personnel Committee

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** and **AGREE** the Terms of Reference of the Personnel Committee sent out in advance of the meeting.

c) Climate Change and Environment Sub-Committee

i. Members

It was proposed and seconded that all Council Members would be part of the Climate Change Committee, and that the Committee should be amended to a standing committee of Full Council to represent the priority given to climate change at Ashington Town Council.

ii. Terms of Reference

The Clerk advised that as a Standing Committee of Full Council, only Full Council could agree the terms of reference of the Climate Change Committee, and that this would need to be agreed prior to anything else. It was noted that Draft Terms of Reference would be brought for agreement and that the first meeting of the Climate Change Committee would elect a Chair.

C22/1027 NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

It was **AGREED** that the members of the board would include, Cllr Matthew Cuthbert, Cllr Lynne Grimshaw, Cllr Vicky Brown, Cllr Pauline Thompson, Cllr Marjorie Chambers, Cllr Louis Brown and Cllr Caroline Ball.

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C22/1028 FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT RISK ASSESSMENT**a) Financial and Management Risk Assessment**

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and APPROVE the newly drafted Financial and Risk Assessment sent out in advance of the meeting, written in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

b) Authorised Signatories

It was AGREED continue with Cllr Matthew Cuthbert, Cllr Lynne Grimshaw, Cllr Mark Purvis and Cllr Pauline Thompson as cheque signatories and to progress all Cllrs to online access as soon as possible.

It was AGREED that a 5th signatory would be fortuitous, again with online access.

C22/1029 INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

It was AGREED to RECEIVE confirmation of the arrangements for insurance sent out in advance of the meeting.

C22/1030 THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETANCE

In accordance with the Parish Council (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 (SI 2012/965), the Council **confirmed eligibility** to adopt the 'General Power of Competence.

Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Criteria Met
At least two thirds of the members have been elected	All members have been elected, no co-opted Cllrs.
The Clerk is suitably qualified	Sarah Eden as a Certificate in Local Council Administration and is Fellow of the Society of Local Council Clerks.
The Council is eligible and has resolved to adopt the GPC	As per this meeting.

It was AGREED to ADOPT the General Power of Competence, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

C22/1031 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**a) Code of Conduct**

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, 28 (12), it was AGREED to adopt a newly drafted Code of Conduct for Ashington Town Council, sent out in advance of the meeting.

b) Complaints Procedure

It was AGREED to adopt the Complaints Procedure for Ashington Town Council, previously adopted in 2018, and sent out in advance of the meeting.

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c) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, it was **AGREED** to adopt a newly drafted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for Ashington Town Council, sent out in advance of the meeting.

d) Press and Media Policy

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, it was **AGREED** to adopt a newly drafted Press and Media Policy for Ashington Town Council, sent out in advance of the meeting.

e) Social Media and Email Policy

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and other applicable laws, it was **AGREED** to adopt a newly drafted Social Media and Email Policy for Ashington Town Council, sent out in advance of the meeting.

C22/1032 ASHINGTON LEVEL CROSSING SURVEY

It was **AGREED** to respond to the Ashington Level Crossing Survey that Ashington Town Council strongly support the preferred action of removing the crossing.

C22/1033 ASHINGTON MEMORIAL GARDEN

It was **AGREED** to respond positively to the request from Ashington Women's Institute to decorate the garden in blue and yellow to show the message of support for Ukraine.

The meeting ended at 6:45pm.