

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting, held at 6:00pm
on Tuesday 28 June 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
Stephen Humphrey – Assets and Facilities Manager
Sharon Parmley – Administration (minute taking)
Inspector Wayne Daniels 1112 – Neighbourhood Policing
Sargent Kath Smith 8142 – Neighbourhood Policing
Members of the Public - 2

C22/1034 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Welcome by Cllr Mark Purvis.

C22/1035 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Eleanor Armstrong, Liam Lavery and Lawrence Henderson.

C22/1036 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

C22/1037 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations to consider.

C22/1038 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

By invitation from the Chair a member of the public asked if the CCTV on Station Road was working and how often it was monitored?

Inspector Wayne Daniels 1112, Community Policing informed the member of the public that unfortunately the footage from the CCTV cameras on Station Road was not monitored on a regular basis, and only referred to when an incident had occurred.

The resident had reported an incident on Station Road which occurred on Sunday 26th June. Scrambler motorbikes and a quad bike were reported speeding on the one-way section of the main street. The response from the police was that they did not have the time to look at the CCTV footage.

Inspector Daniels admitted it was not an ideal response, but incidents being reported through the 101 system were up by 50% and are now subject to a graded system, one being the most urgent, to five some what less urgent and booked in with a follow-up visit or call.

Inspector Daniels informed the resident that motorbike incidents are now a national problem, made more difficult to address because many of the bikes have no licence plates and police are not able to give chase.

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Constable Kath Smith 8142 reassured the resident that the CCTV was working and had in fact retrieved positive ID from the system regarding a shoplifting incident at Herron's on Station Road.

The member of the public also referred to incidents that had been reported regarding Hirst Park.

Inspector Daniels informed the resident that as part of investigations into incidents at Hirst Park, the CCTV would have been checked, however, some CCTV footage remains unclear when trying to identify the perpetrators.

One member of the public leaves the meeting at 6:15pm.

The Chair informed members of letters of thanks for Annual Funding grants from Being Woman, Full Circle Food Project and Citizens Advice.

C22/1039 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and SIGN the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Tuesday 17th May 2022 as a true record.

C22/1040 OVERALL TEAM PRIORITIES UPDATE

It was AGREED to RECEIVE an update on the overall team priorities sent out in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk informed members that transfer of play areas was in the process of being looked at with a view to either agreeing land transfer or lease agreements.

C22/1041 REPORT FROM THE CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a verbal report from the Civic Head of Ashington, Cllr Bob Walkinshaw.

21st May 2022 – Ashington Male Voice Choir's Annual Concert. Excellent event at the Holy Sepulchre Church, well attended and a good selection of songs. Good social event for the town.

5th June 2022 – Ashington Division Girl Guides, Queen Platinum Jubilee Fun Day at Bothal Primary Upper School. Another excellent well attended event including displays and wild animals. This event was partially funded from Ashington Town Council's Jubilee Fund.

11th June 2022 – Northumberland Miners Picnic. A moving memorial service where wreaths were laid in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the mines. Followed by a day of music and fun activities for all the family.

12th June 2022 – Armed Services Day & Falklands 40th Commemorative Service. Well attended service followed by a buffet lunch at Ashington Cricket Club.

14th June 2022 – Hirst Park Growing Zone Bike Hub Launch. An excellent team of volunteers offering bike repairs and recycling old bicycles.

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C22/1042 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a verbal report from the Leader of the Council, Cllr Matthew Cuthbert.

I would like to give the Council an update on my activities as leader since my last report and to make note of some of the events and developments that have taken place since then.

Firstly, I would like to mention that monies to the groups that were successful in applying for Grant Aid funding have started to go out (in the case of the smaller awards the full amounts and in the cases of the larger awards – first instalments). I would like to thank all Councillors and Officers for helping work through that process. I think we can all be proud of the scale and range of the funding to local organisations both to long-standing applicants and several brand-new ones. A press release highlighting these awards and providing links to the Groups receiving them was released on our website and Facebook page on the 17th of June.

It is very satisfying after the restrictions of the last two years to report on several Community Events. It was very heart-warming at the last Finance & General Services Committee meeting to receive the letters of thanks from all the local resident's groups who successfully applied and received funding from the Council's Platinum Jubilee Fund to hold a variety of events to celebrate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II becoming the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, commemorating 70 years of service to the nation. I am also, pleased to report that there was a good turnout for the Miner's Picnic at Woodhorn on Saturday 11th June and a well-attended service on Sunday 12th June at the Memorial Garden to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict as well as recalling those who currently serve in the Armed Forces.

Last week, on Tuesday 21st of June I chaired a Neighbourhood Services Partnership board meeting. We received an updated budget report and had updates and discussions on performance of services. I will be looking to update all members soon on these matters and to draw up some priorities for the partnership board as we enter the penultimate year of the current Agreement.

Finally, I would just like to mention two announcements that have been made in the past couple of days. Firstly, another milestone has been reached with regards to the reopening of the Northumberland Line with the publication of the decision by the Secretary of State for Transport to make a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) to authorise the closure of level crossings, the acquisition and use of land, and certain works at key points along the route. Secondly, we have the news today that a multi-million-pound bid is being submitted to Government for transformational improvements to Ashington town centre.

A bid for over £16m will be made next month to the Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) - a £4.8 billion scheme for eligible local authorities to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life, including regenerating town centres and high streets.

Northumberland County Council and its development company Advance Northumberland, along with the North of Tyne Combined Authority would also provide additional match funding, meaning that a successful bid would deliver improvements in the town centre of well over £20m.

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The work is being done in collaboration with the Ashington Town Board which is made up of business, public sector, and community leaders. The public have also been involved in shaping the plans.

The ambitious bid for Ashington focuses on two areas – Wansbeck Square and Portland Park. Much more detail can be found about these two developments on the Council's Facebook page or website posts.

C22/1043 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a verbal report from the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Inspector Daniels reported that 530 crimes had occurred in Ashington over the past 8-week period. Statistics reveal that in general overall crime is down, only seeing a slight increase in theft, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. Inspector Daniels also reported that the demand at this present time for policing was on the rise.

Inspector Daniels also reported a new Summer Violence Initiative, which will see hot spot area being monitored in Ashington, Bedlington and Blyth.

Inspector Daniels reported increased incidents in Ashington Community Woods, including fires and anti-social behaviour. A meeting took place with Volunteers and the Fire Service on Monday 13th June 2022. The Fire Service are particularly concerned around dry wood within the Community Woodlands and are currently working with youths as part of their Extinguish Intervention Programme. Partnership working with Police, Ashington Town Council, Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, will see a CCTV camera installed for over the summer months to help address the problems.

A plan is being put together to look into the night time economy in Ashington to combat violent crimes taking place in the town centre. Increased patrols will be planned for weekends when pubs and clubs are at their busiest.

The Chair thanked Inspector Daniels and Sargent Smith for their report.

C22/1044 INTERNAL AUDIT

- a) **It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the Annual Internal Audit Report for year ending March 2022, carried out by Peter Basnett, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, part 2 (5), sent out in advance of the meeting.
- b) **It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the Audit Checklist, carried out by Peter Basnett, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, part 2 (5), sent out in advance of the meeting.
- c) **It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the Assessment of Internal Controls, carried out by Peter Basnett, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, part 2 (5), (no action required as there are no matters for attention) sent out in advance of the meeting.

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C22/1045 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) YEAR ENDING MARCH 2022

- a) It was AGREED to RECEIVE and RESPOND** to the Annual Governance Statement, Section 1, and agree signature by the Chair and the Clerk

The Chair read out each statement and asked members to agree. The Chair and the Clerk signed and dated the agreed statement.

- b) It was AGREED to RECEIVE and APPROVE** the Clerk's Report on restated figures for year ending March 2021, sent out in advance of the meeting.

- c) It was AGREED to APPROVE** the Accounting Statements, Section 2, for the year ending March 2022.

The Chair signed and dated the declaration following receipt and approval.

- d) It was AGREED to APPROVE** the submission of the AGAR for year ending March 2022, and publication on the Town Council website, as required.

C22/1046 NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

It was AGREED to APPROVE the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights of inspection as 30th June 2022 – 12th August 2022.

C22/1047 INTERNAL AUDIT 2022/23

- a) It was AGREED to RECEIVE** Best Practice Guidance for Internal Audit.

- b) It was AGREED to APPOINT** Mrs Susan Saunders as the Internal Auditor for 2022/23 in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, part 2 (1).

C22/1048 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and consider and the terms of reference of the Climate Change and Environment Committee, sent out in advance of the meeting

It was Further AGREED that the first meeting of the Committee would be scheduled for the third week in July 2022.

C22/1049 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- a) Data Protection Policy**

It was AGREED to ADOPT the Data Protection Policy sent out in advance of the meeting, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

- b) Model Publication Scheme**

It was AGREED to ADOPT the Model Publication Scheme, sent out in advance of the meeting, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2020.

- c) Safeguarding Policy**

It was AGREED to ADOPT the Safeguarding Policy, sent out in advance of the meeting.

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C22/1050 ASHINGTON COMMUNITY WOODS – CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SECURITY

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a proposal from the Council's current provider of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in Paddock Wood, People's Park and Alexandra Road Play areas, sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was FURTHER AGREED to enter a short-term contract to supply, install and monitor CCTV at Ashington Community Woods, for four months from July.

C22/1051 PEOPLES CAR PAR – CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SECURITY

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a proposal from the Council's current provider of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in Paddock Wood, People's Park and Alexandra Road play area, sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was FURTHER AGREED to enter a contract to supply, install and monitor CCTV in the car park of Peoples Park, to the end of the financial year (9 months).

C22/1052 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 27th September 2022, 6pm, Ashington Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

The meeting ended at 7:10PM.