

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm
on Tuesday 18th July 2023
at Ashington Town Hall, Council Chamber, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Mark Purvis (Chair), Cllrs Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Glyn Davies, Eleanor Armstrong, Pauline Thompson, John Tully, and Matthew Cuthbert

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Eden – Executive Officer/RFO and Gary Holmes – Administration Assistant.

FC23/035 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Welcome by Cllr Mark Purvis.

FC23/036 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Bob Walkinshaw, Caroline Bell, Michelle Brannigan, Marjorie Chambers, Lawrence Henderson, Pauline Thompson, Mark Purvis, Lynne Grimshaw.

FC23/037 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

FC23/038 DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensations.

FC23/039 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was one member of the public present, and the following questions were received:

1. *Does the Council consider that its current composition provides the best possible representation of the electorate of Ashington? Particularly in terms of age, gender, health, employment status and political affiliation.*
2. *What steps is the council taking to encourage greater participation in elections to it? Thinking of how many of the current Town Cllrs were elected unopposed.*
3. *Does the council consider that the attendance and active participation of members is what the electorate deserve?*
4. *While it is undoubtedly reasonable to make allowance for temporary inability for elected members to attend meetings does the council believe that there maybe circumstances where having the ability to bring “new blood” into the council would be better than always granting exemption from attending meetings and being removed by virtue of non-attendance?*
5. *Members who are unlikely to return to an active role on the Council would be able to resign creating a casual vacancy that could be filled by by-election or co-option. This could be used as an opportunity to widen the membership and demonstrate the council was seeking to be as open and democratic as possible.*
6. *Does the Council consider it should be more pro-active regarding the developments in the town and should take a lead in the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Ashington? I understand the Council is considering a Strategic Plan, surely leading on what local people want in terms of future development of the town should be a key part of this. It is a sad fact that people are more likely to get involved in campaigns against, what they consider undesirable developments, (like the Banks’ housing proposal West of Wansbeck Road), than in participating in planning a new attractive and sustainable future with appropriate infrastructure.*

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Development should not be lead by commercial property developers.

A democratically elected council should be able to guide future development of their area with active participation of its population.

The Chair proposed, and **it was AGREED**, that a full written response to the questions posed would be send by the Council's Executive Officer, on behalf of the Council.

Cllr John Tully, Leader of Ashington Town Council, expressed that he welcomed resident engagement and that he hoped engagement could be extended beyond opinion on those elected to the actual work of the Council in pursuit of the priorities identified.

The resident left the meeting.

FC23/040 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and SIGN the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th June 2023.

FC23/041 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a written report from Sergeant Paul Davis, that was tabled at the meeting.

FC23/042 REPORT FROM THE CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON (CLLR VICTOR BRIDGES)

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a verbal report from the Civic Head of Ashington.

Civic Head Councillor Victor Bridges gave his report as follows:

- Thursday 1st June 2023: Presented Newbiggin Brass Band with a grant cheque.
- Tuesday 6th June 2023: Presented Sea Cadets with a grant cheque.
- Saturday 10th June 2023: Attended the Miner's Picnic Event
- Thursday 15th June 2023: Presented Ashington Veterans and Elders with a grant cheque.
- Thursday 22nd June 2023: Presented Reiverdale Scouts with a grant cheque.
- Thursday 22nd June 2023: Presented Wansbeck Foodbank with a grant cheque.
- Friday 23rd June 2023: Presented Talking Marras with a grant cheque.
- Friday 23rd June 2023: Presented Real Deal Plus with a grant cheque.
- Friday 23rd June 2023: Presented Ashington Rugby Club with a grant cheque.
- Tuesday 27th June 2023: Presented Cycle 4 Everyone with a grant cheque.
- Wednesday 28th June 2023: Attended Dukes Community Event.
- Saturday 1st July 2023: Attended the opening of Ashington Camera Club Photography Exhibition.
- Sunday 2nd July 2023: Attended Ashington Fair Day.
- Wednesday 5th July 2023: Presented Mortal Fools with a grant cheque.
- Saturday 15th July 2023: Attended the Reiverdale Scouts 10-year celebration tea.

Cllr Bridges left the meeting at 18:12.

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FC23/043 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (CLLR JOHN TULLY)

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a verbal report from the Leader of the Town Council.

Councillor Tully had a two-hour meeting with NALC which included reference to Councillor Allowances, however this will need to be added to a future agenda to discuss further.

A strategic plan is being put together by the Council and will be agreed upon if going forward.

A meeting is set up for the 27th July to discuss partnership negotiations with Northumberland County Council.

FC 23/044 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2023 – for information only. *These minutes will be presented for agreement as a true record at the next meeting of the Climate Change and Environment Committee.*

FC23/045 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 26th September 2023, 6pm, Ashington Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

The meeting ended at 18:25pm