

**ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council,**  
**held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May**  
**at Ashington Town Hall, Council Chamber, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Cllrs. Marjorie Chambers (Deputy Chair), Lynne Grimshaw, Matthew Cuthbert, Michelle Brannigan, Victor Bridges, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Jim Lang, Pauline Thompson, John Tully, Sophie Robinson, Glyn Davies (arrived 6:05pm)

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE**

Sarah Eden – Town Clerk & RFO, Gary Holmes – Administration Assistant

**FC23/001 ELECTION OF BUSINESS CHAIR**

Pursuant to section 15 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, **it was AGREED** to receive nominations for Chair of Ashington Town Council.

**It was AGREED** to appoint Mark Purvis as Business Chair.

Cllr Marjorie Chambers remained in the Chair, in the absence of elected Cllr Mark Purvis.

**FC23/002 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Clerk advised that Cllr Mark Purvis would sign the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972, s83 (4), in the office.

**FC23/003 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mark Purvis, Liam Lavery, Lawrence Henderson, Bob Walkinshaw and Caroline Ball.

**FC23/004 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interests.

**FC23/005 DISPENSATIONS**

There were no requests for dispensations.

**FC23/006 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

**It was AGREED** to note that the minutes of the last Full Council meeting were a Combined Meeting (21st March 2023) with the Finance and General Services Committee and were presented and agreed as a true record on 18th April 2023.

**FC23/007 ELECTION OF BUSINESS VICE-CHAIR**

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

**FC23/008 ELECTION OF CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON**

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

**FC23/009 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON**

**It was AGREED** to appoint Cllr Vicky Brown as Deputy Civic Head of Ashington.

**FC23/010 ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**It was AGREED** to elect Cllr John Tully as Leader of the Council.

**FC23/011 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**It was AGREED** to appoint Cllr Louis Brown as Deputy Leader of the Council.

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**FC23/012 APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a formal update of the appointment, and welcome the Council's new officer, Gary Holmes.

**FC23/012 CLERK/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.

**FC23/013 STANDING ORDERS**

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 42, it was **AGREED** to adopt Standing Orders, sent out in advance of the meeting. The Clerk advised that there were no changes, expect to include Financial Regulations in the orders, as well as these being formatted separately.

**FC23/014 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

It was **AGREED** to adopt Financial Regulations in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which were sent out in advance of the meeting. The Clerk noted that these remained unchanged from the previous year.

**FC23/015 STANDING COMMITTEES**

**a) Finance and General Services Committee (FGS)**

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

**c) Climate Change and Environment Committee**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE and APPROVE** the Terms of Reference of the Climate Change and Environment Committee sent out in advance of the meeting.

**FC23/016 NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

It was **AGREED** that those members of the board would include Cllr John Tully, Matthew Cuthbert and Glyn Davies.

**FC23/017 ASSETS REGISTER**

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI2015/234), it was **AGREED** to receive and note the updated document.

**FC23/018 INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI2015/234), it was **AGREED to RECEIVE** and note the document.

**FC23/019 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**a) Code of Conduct**

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, 28 (12), it was **AGREED** to adopt the Code of Conduct for Ashington Town Council (previously adopted May 2022).

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**b) Complaints Procedure**

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Complaints Procedure of the Council (previously adopted May 2022).

**c) Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, it was **AGREED** to adopt the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (previously adopted May 2022).

**d) Press and Media Policy**

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and communications protocol, it was **AGREED** to adopt a Press and Media Policy (previously adopted May 2022).

**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 Social Media and Email Policy (previously adopted May 2022).

**f) Data Protection Policy**

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, it was **AGREED** to adopt a Data Protection Policy (previously adopted June 2022).

**g) Model Publication Scheme**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2020, it was **AGREED** to adopt the Model Publication Scheme (previously adopted June 2022).

**h) Safeguarding Policy**

It was **AGREED** to adopt a Safeguarding Policy (previously adopted June 2022).

**FC23/020 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**a) Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) (includes Town & Parish Liaison Working Group)**

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. John Tully as the representative on the NALC County Committee of Northumberland.

*The Northumberland Association of Local Councils is an organisation which represents the interests of parish, town, and community councils, whilst offering specialist training, advice, and other support to its members. The County Committee of Northumberland meet quarterly on a Saturday morning.*

**b) Ashington Town Board**

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. John Tully as the representative on the Ashington Town Board.

*The Board aims to support regeneration in the town through investment, strengthening cultural assets, supporting skills and business development for local people and businesses. The Board was established in April 2021 and is made up of representatives from key public, private and community sector organisations.*

**The meeting ended at 18:08.**