

**ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting, held at 6:00pm**  
**on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023**  
**at Bothal Primary Upper Site, High Market, Ashington**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Cllrs. Mark Purvis (Chair), Eleanor Armstrong, Michelle Brannigan, Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Glyn Davies, Lynne Grimshaw, Pauline Thompson, John Tully, Sophie Robinson, and Bob Walkinshaw.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE**

Sarah Eden – Town Clerk & RFO, Sharon Parmley – Administration (minute taking).

**FC23/1096 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR**

Welcome by the Chair Cllr Mark Purvis.

**FC23/1097 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Caroline Ball, Victor Bridges, Matthew Cuthbert, Lawrence Henderson, Jim Lang and Liam Lavery.

With the Chair's permission the Clerk addressed members of the public in attendance. Following housekeeping and fire safety information, the Clerk advised that those County Cllrs who sit on the Strategic Planning Committee at Northumberland County Council have given apologies as they would not take part in the meeting, so as not to be seen to have taken a predetermined view of the application.

**FC23/1098 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Michelle Brannigan declared a disclosure of interest as having already responded to the planning application with an objection.

Cllrs. Lynne Grimshaw declared an interest as a Ward Cllr for Bothal Ward.

Cllr Bob Walkinshaw declared an interest a Ward Cllr for Bothal Ward, and as a neighbour who would be impacted by the development.

**FC23/1099 DISPENSATIONS**

Cllr Lynne Grimshaw requested a dispensation to allow her **to comment and vote** on the application in support of the residents she represents. **The dispensation was AGREED.**

Cllr Bob Walkinshaw requested a dispensation to allow him **to comment and vote** on the application in support of the residents he represents. **The dispensation was AGREED.**

Cllr Michelle Brannigan requested a dispensation to allow her **to comment** on the application in support of the residents she represents. **The dispensation was AGREED.**

**FC23/1100 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Prior to the commencement of Public Participation, the Chair invite Cllr Lynne Grimshaw to speak.

Bothal Ward Cllr, Lynne Grimshaw, thanked the Chair on behalf of Bothal Ward Cllrs and residents for calling the Extra-Ordinary Meeting. Cllr Grimshaw stated that she would be objecting to the proposed development on the basis that the newly adopted Northumberland Local Plan includes housing provision up to 2036, which the proposed development is outside of and that it is outside of the settlement boundary.

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Cllr Grimshaw concluded that there was no reason to overdeliver on housing and therefore no justification for building on this land.

Following invitation by the Chair, eight residents spoke in objection to the development. All agreed that Ashington neither had the infrastructure or services to accommodate the building of an additional 189 houses.

Speakers conveyed road safety concerns, describing the roadway being exactly as it was many years ago, despite the immense increase in vehicles being driven. The development could see more than 300 additional vehicles, plus construction traffic during the build, on a road that is reduced to a single lane during peak times.

Speakers expressed that the development would have a detrimental effect on the environment, with dire consequences to wildlife and greenspace. The rights of native and varied wildlife, and the breeding ground of the pond was defended, and a survey sought by those in control.

There were significant concerns expressed about the impact of the development, particularly the five-year construction phase, on the mental health and well-being of residents, in particular the younger generation. With reference to noise and light pollution, weekend and evening working, and increased traffic, this would have a significant and lasting effect of the quality of life of residents and their ability to 'enjoy where they live.'

Two further residents spoke out against the development, one asking for consistency in the application of the adopted Northumberland Local Plan, which had been used recently to refuse a development in near-by Bedlington as it was outside of the housing need requirements therein.

Cllr Brannigan commented that, as an elected member representing not only these residents in the room, but every resident in Ashington that she considered members and the Council as a custodian of Ashington's land. Cllr Brannigan considered an objection in the strongest possible terms, to support nature and wildlife. said that including nature and wildlife.

Cllr Brannigan commented that only 50% of the UK's food is grown in the UK, linking that as arable land it should be protected from housing developers and used for food production. This would reduce the UK's reliance on other countries for food which drives up costs.

Cllr Walkinshaw who thanked the residents and conveyed that he entirely agreed with their views on the matter. **Cllr Bob Walkinshaw proposed that the Council OBJECT** to the planning application for the material reasons outlined throughout the meeting.

**The PROPOSAL was SECONDED** by Cllr Tully, who encouraged the residents to continue to raise their objections.

The Chair took a vote which was **unanimous in favour of OBJECTING** to the application.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the residents and applauded them for the good work they had done.

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**FC22/1101 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 6pm, Ashington Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX  
*(date later changed to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023).*

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