

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm
on Tuesday 29 March 2022
at North Seaton Community Centre, Manley View, Ashington

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Eden – Town Clerk & RFO
 Stephen Humphrey – Assets and Facilities Manager
 Sharon Parmley – Administration Officer (minute taking)

Before the meetings commencement Councillors held a minute's silence for Cllr Avril Chisholm who sadly passed away on Friday 25th March 2022.

C22/991 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Eleanor Armstrong, Victor Bridges and John Tully.

C22/992 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllr. Brannigan declared an interest in Agenda item 17. TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC SEATING.

C22/993 DISPENSATIONS

Cllr. Brannigan asked that special dispensation be given in relation to Agenda item 17. TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC SEATING, to answer any queries that may arise regarding the project.

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

C22/994 PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There were no questions received from members of the public.

C22/995 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and SIGN the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25th January 2022 as a true record.

C22/996 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATE.

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the following update on the team priorities agreed in January, which were sent out in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk informed members that progress had been made regarding the team priorities agreed in January, with a good percentage having been completed.

C22/997 REPORT FROM THE CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON.**22nd & 23rd (Thursday /Friday) July - Judging Garden Competition**

Two days of doing something I really enjoy and spent time judging gardens, allotments and schools in this years' Competition. I was joined by a team including two previous winners.

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Sunday 22nd August Hirst Park Grand Opening Day

Several Officers, along with Leader of the County Council Cllr Glen Sanderson and Ashington Town Councillors were guided around the park by Staff to see the work recently carried out over the previous months in the Flower Park. The Ashington Colliery band played, and stalls were erected for various local organisations and crafts. We were treated with a sunny day!

Thursday 16th September Garden Competition Presentations

This was held at the Masonic Hall in John Street, with a buffet provided. Yet another good occasion bringing the Community together, plus being able to both compliment and award Trophies and Shields to all the successful entrants.

Friday 17th September Full Circle Official Opening

This was a very successful packed occasion with many people invited including Ian Lavery MP, The High Sheriff and Council Leaders and Funders. Various activities taking place included crafts, information about the Full Circle Food Bank, Growing Zone, and work with the Asylum Seekers Group. Also provided on the day was a wonderful buffet for everyone.

I was particularly interested in the Asylum Seekers Group, whom I have been able to provide entry for the under 25's to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and to help plan a o Kielder expedition.

Monday 11th October Teen Bar Art Exhibition Opening

This was well attended and held in the Hirst Park Pavilion. The Pavilion was filled with an array of paintings and artwork created by members of the Teen Bar. It was surprising just how many people turned up on the day, yet another successful afternoon in Hirst Park.

Wednesday 26th January Northumberland Line Special Service

I was invited to board the new Northumberland Line at Platform 1 Newcastle departing at 12.47pm to travel through the new 6 Stations along the new line. The coach on this line coming into service will be a 2-car Class 158 seating capacity of 130-140 passengers. I was told that 140 new drivers will be fully trained by December 2023 to run the new Service to Ashington.

The line will run through Newcastle – Heaton – Benton Station – Palmersville – Northumberland Park – (link with Metro) – Backworth – Hollywell – Seghill – Seaton Deval – Newsham – Blyth Bebside and Bedlington Station. Work was currently ongoing on the last section to Ashington. As a result of this work, we continued to Morpeth and returned on the same route. This line will make a big difference to those travelling regularly to Newcastle and most importantly makes travel to and from so much a greener way of doing so. It was interesting to note that the proposed Hospital Underpass was no longer in the plans.

Sunday 27th March Robert & Margaret Auld's Platinum Wedding Anniversary

This was held at the White House, High Market. I was delighted to attend and congratulate them both on such a wonderful occasion. They were married at Holy Sepulchre Church 70 years ago! They appreciated the flowers and card from the Council and recalled how Cllr. John McCormack had attended their Diamond Wedding Anniversary 10 years ago. They also received congratulations for Her Majesty the Queen

Cllr Pauline Thompson, Ashington Civic Head

C22/998 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm
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The Leader reported on the following:

22 February 2022, Personnel Committee meeting. Arrangements were made for the appointment of a further Neighbourhood Services Officer.

21 March 2022, Neighbourhood Services Meeting, discussing operational improvements, including street cleansing, weed control and cleansing schedules.

Upcoming events:

The Great British Spring Clean

Tuesday 29 March – Peoples Park, 10:00am

Wednesday 30 March – Wansbeck Riverside, 2:30pm

Thursday 31 March – Paddock Wood, 10:00am

Friday 1 April – QEII Country Park, 2:30pm

Saturday 2 April – Hirst Park and surrounding area, 10:00am

Wansbeck Square Public Consultation

Friday 2 April and Monday 4 April.

Also available as an online consultation.

Mortal Fools Production

Ashington YMCA

Saturday 8 April 2022.

Cllr. Matthew Cuthbert, Leader of Ashington Town Council.

C22/999 INTERNAL AUDITOR.

It was **AGREED** to **APPOINT** Mr Peter Basnett as the Internal Auditor for the financial year ending March 2022, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Part 2 (5).

C22/1000 SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATE LANDLORDS.

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the proposal sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** a further tabled item on the matter from Cllr Thompson.

It was **AGREED** to write to Northumberland County Council to request that they introduce a scheme of selective licensing of private landlords, as provided for in sections 79, 80 and 81 of the Housing Act 2004.

C22/1001 LONG-TERM EMPTY HOMES.

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the proposal sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was **further AGREED** to write to Northumberland County Council Head of Housing and Local Protection to request up to date information relating to the success of the strategy for dealing with long-term empty homes in Ashington.

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm
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C22/1002 COMMUNITY SAFETY.

It was AGREED to defer writing to the Community Safety Officer following a presentation via the Police and Communities Together meeting prior to the Council meeting, that outlined multi-agency working across parts of the town.

C22/1003 GRANT AID.

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the proposals sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was further AGREED,

- To adopt the revised Annual Grant Aid and Small Grant Funding procedures, as recommended in the Clerk's Report.
- To the timescales detailed, and to launch the Annual Grant Aid Funding opportunity immediately.
- To the timescales detailed and to publicise the timetable for Small Grants and launch according to the schedule throughout the year.

It was AGREED to amend the proposal that a small group of Cllrs and Officers review Annual Grant and Small Grant applications in detail, and consequently, **it was AGREED**

- All Cllrs be invited to review Annual Grant and Small Grant applications in detail, which would include a presentation by applicants for an Annual Grant.

C22/1004 ALTERNATIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION.

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and **APPROVE** the 'Alternative Scheme of Delegation' sent out in advance of the meeting.

C22/1005 PLANNING RESPONSES.**a) Strategic/Public Interest Responses**

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the motion sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was further AGREED to APPROVE the motion to continue to bring planning applications that are of strategic importance, or considered to have a significant public interest, to a meeting of the Full Council, for consideration and agreed response.

b) Routine/Other Responses

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the motion sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was further AGREED to APPROVE the motion that Ashington Town Council respond to all other Planning Applications received, as invited, with 'support' or 'object' or 'no comment' via delegated powers to the Clerk in consultation with Ward Councillors.

C22/1006 TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC SEATING.

It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that Ashington Women's Institute proceed with the project 'Happy to Chat' using Town Council seating to display the plaques, not in the Memorial Garden, but other seats in the town.

C22/1007 NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL – LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS.

It was AGREED to RECEIVE notice of consultation sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was further AGREED that Council members would email the Clerk with any comments to be sent as part of a Town Council response.

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm
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C22/1008 ASHINGTON AND MALE VOICE CHOIR.

It was **AGREED To RECEIVE** correspondence and to renew patronage at an annual cost of £15.

C22/1009 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Annual Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 10 May 2022, venue to be confirmed.

C22/1010 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Town Council agreed the following resolution:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, permitted under Part I (1) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) as the matter is confidential and relates to employment matters

C22/1011 JACK CHARLTON STATUE AND CHARLTON BROTHERS COMMEMORATION PROJECT.

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a verbal report from Cllr. Liam Lavery.

It was **AGREED** to write out to the Charlton family and maintain communication between the family and the office.

The meeting ended at 8:30pm.