

AGENDA 6, Enc ii) ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL, DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 26th MAY 2026, AT 6:00PM AT ASHINGTON TOWN HALL

CLLRS PRESENT

Cllrs Mark Purvis (Chair), Scott Amery, Jessica Appleby, Caroline Ball, Marjorie Chambers, David Coyle, Glyn Davies, Melanie Fox, Lynne Grimshaw, Sonia Simm, and Karl Green.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Eden – Executive Officer and Gary Holmes – Administration and Communications Officer

FC2627/001 ELECTION OF BUSINESS CHAIR

Nominations for Chair of Ashington Town Council were **RECEIVED**. Cllr Mark Purvis was the only nomination, and a majority vote was cast in favour of Cllr Purvis.

It was **AGREED** to elect Cllr Mark Purvis as Business Chair.

FC2627/002 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Cllr Mark Purvis **SIGNED** and **DELIVERED** the form that confirms the elected Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.

FC2627/003 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Steven Roberts, Jim Lang, Kerry Davison and Bob Walkinshaw.

FC2627/004 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (DOI)

There were no declarations of interest.

FC2627/005 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations requested.

FC2627/006 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were 4 members of the public present.

FC2627/007 DRAFT MINUTES OF PREVIOUS FULL COUNCIL MEETING

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 31st March as a true record.

FC2627/008 DRAFT MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** minutes of the personnel committee meeting held on 21st April for information. The minutes would be presented for agreement as a true record at the next meeting of that committee.

FC2627/009 ELECTION OF BUSINESS VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were **RECEIVED** for the position of Business Vice-Chair. Cllr Kerry Davison and Cllr Melanie Fox were nominated and seconded. Upon a vote being taken, the result was five votes for Cllr Kerry Davison and five votes for Cllr Melanie Fox. The Chair exercised their casting vote in favour of Cllr Melanie Fox.

It was **AGREED** to elect Cllr Melanie Fox as Business Vice-Chair.

FC2627/010 ELECTION OF CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON

Nominations for Chair of Ashington Town Council were **RECEIVED**. It was **AGREED** to elect Cllr Caroline Ball as Civic Head of Ashington.

FC2627/011 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON

Nominations were **RECEIVED** for the position of Deputy Civic Head of Ashington. Cllr Louis Brown and Cllr Melanie Fox were nominated and seconded. Upon a vote being taken, the result was zero votes for Cllr Louis Brown and five votes for Cllr Melanie Fox.

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It was **AGREED** to elect Cllr Melanie Fox as Deputy Civic Head of Ashington.

FC2627/012 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

It was **CONFIRMED** that Sarah Eden should be re-appointed as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

FC2627/013 STANDING ORDERS

It was **AGREED** to adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders (Updated 2025)

FC2627/014 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It was **AGREED** to adopt the NALC Model Financial Regulations with local changes pursuant to how we operate financial affairs (updated 2025).

FC2627/015 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

The Executive Officer reported that the Council had been confirmed as eligible to adopt the General Power of Competence (GPC), as introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Under Section 1 of that Act, a local council has the power to do anything that an individual may do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation.

The Executive Officer advised that the eligibility criteria set out in the Parish Council (General Power of Competence) Order 2012 had been met in full. All members of the Council had been elected, satisfying the requirement that at least two thirds of members hold elected status. The Executive Officer further confirmed that the Clerk held the Certificate in Local Council Administration and was a Fellow of the Society of Local Council Clerks, meeting the requirement for the Clerk to be suitably qualified. The Council could therefore resolve to adopt the GPC at this Annual Meeting of the Council.

It was **AGREED** to adopt the General Power of Competence.

FC2627/016 STANDING COMMITTEES

a) Finance and General Services Committee (FGS)

The terms of reference of the Finance and General Services Committee were **RECEIVED, CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**

It was noted that, due to changes outlined in the Personnel Committee terms of reference, it was necessary to agree the Chair of the Finance and General Services Committee at this meeting, as the Chair holds ex officio membership of the Personnel Committee.

It was **AGREED** to elect Cllr Lynne Grimshaw as the chair of the Finance and General Services committee.

b) Personnel Committee

The terms of reference of the Personnel Committee were **RECEIVED, CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**.

It was **AGREED** that the membership of the Personnel Committee to be Cllrs Lynne Grimshaw, Mark Purvis, Marjorie Chambers, Paul Wright, David Coyle, Kerry Davison

It was noted that Cllr Purvis, as Chair of the Council, and Cllr Grimshaw, as Chair of the Finance and General Services Committee, hold ex officio membership of the Personnel Committee. To ensure political balance, four elected members were agreed, with two drawn from each political party.

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It was **AGREED** that the Disciplinary Panel comprise Cllrs Glyn Davies, Melanie Fox and Scott Amery.

It was **AGREED** that the Appeals Panel comprise Cllrs Caroline Ball, Louis Brown and Sonia Simm.

c) *Climate Change and Environment Committee*

The terms of reference of the Climate Change and Environment Committee were **RECEIVED, CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**.

It was **AGREED** that membership comprise Cllrs Marjorie Chambers, Paul Wright, Glyn Davies, Jim Lang, Caroline Ball and Melanie Fox.

It was noted that all members of the Council are welcome to attend these meetings, regardless of membership.

d) *Partnership Board*

The terms of reference of the Partnership Board, including members, were **RECEIVED, CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**.

It was **AGREED** that membership comprise Cllrs Jessica Appleby, Marjorie Chambers, David Coyle, Kerry Davison, Melanie Fox and Jim Lang.

e) *Youth Advisory Committee*

The terms of reference of the Youth Advisory Committee, including members, were **RECEIVED, CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**.

It was **AGREED** that membership comprise Cllrs Caroline Ball, Louis Brown, Kerry Davison, Melanie Fox, Karl Green, Lynne Grimshaw and Paul Wright.

It was noted that all members of the Council are welcome to attend these meetings, regardless of membership.

Cllr Wright entered the meeting at 18:21.

f) *Allotment Liaison Group*

The terms of reference of the Allotment Liaison Group, including members, were **RECEIVED, CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**.

It was **AGREED** that membership comprise Cllrs Glyn Davies, Marjorie Chambers, Mark Purvis, John Tully, Sonia Simm and Kerry Davison.

Cllr Ball reported that a member of the public had expressed thanks to the team for their helpfulness in supporting them to overcome their anxiety around having a garden.

g) *CCTV Group*

The terms of reference of the CCTV Group, including members, were **RECEIVED, CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**.

It was **AGREED** that membership comprise Cllrs Lynne Grimshaw, Caroline Ball, Louis Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Kerry Davison, Karl Green, Sonia Simm, Steven Roberts and Scott Amery.

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FC2627/017 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

a) *Assets Register Policy*

The updated Assets Register Policy and Capitalisation threshold was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**.

b) *Building Security And Visitor Protocol*

The updated Building Security and Visitor Protocol was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

c) *CCTV Policy*

The updated CCTV Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

d) *Complaints Procedure*

The updated Complaints Procedure of the Council was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

e) *Data Protection Policy*

The updated updated Data Protection Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

f) *Disciplinary Procedure*

The updated Disciplinary Procedure was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

g) *Employee Code of Conduct*

The updated Employee Code of Conduct was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

h) *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy*

The updated Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy were **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

i) *Freedom of Information Policy*

The updated FOI Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

j) *Grievance Procedure*

The updated Grievance Procedure was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

k) *Health and Safety Policy*

The updated Health and Safety Policy were **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

l) *IT Policy*

The updated Ashington Town Council IT Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

m) *Lone Working Policy*

The updated Lone Working Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

n) *Model Councillor Officer Protocol*

The updated Model NALC/SLCC Councillor Officer Protocol was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

o) *Model LGA Councillor Code of Conduct*

The updated Code of Conduct for Ashington Town Council was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

p) *Model Publication Scheme*

The updated Model Publication Scheme was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

q) *Pension and Flexible Retirement Policy*

The Pension and Flexible Retirement Policy were **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

r) *Pension Discretions Policy*

The Pension Discretions Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

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s) *Press and Media Policy*

The updated Press and Media Policy were **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

t) *Reserves Policy*

The updated Reserves Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

u) *Safeguarding Policy*

The updated Safeguarding Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

v) *Sickness and Leave Policy*

The Sickness and Leave Policy were **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

w) *Social Media and Email Policy*

The updated Social Media and Email Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

x) *Training Costs Reimbursement Policy*

The Training Costs Reimbursement Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

y) *Vexatious, Persistent, Aggressive and Abusive Complaints Policy*

The updated Vexatious, etc. Complaints Policy of the Council was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

z) *Whistleblowing Policy*

The updated Model NALC Whistleblowing Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

aa) *Working from Home Policy*

The updated Working from Home Policy was **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**

The Executive Officer invited question on any of the policy updates presented, for which all updates for the current year were highlighted. Cllr Grimshaw thanked the Executive Officer for the work she has done in preparing the amendments and keeping the Council safe regarding governance.

Cllr Ball sought clarification on the press and media policy in relation to the election period and the naming of officers. The Executive Officer confirmed that it is typical practice to refer to officers by their role title rather than by name. She further clarified that during a period of heightened sensitivity, such as when elections are ongoing, it is usual practice to refer to collectively as "The Council" only, rather than individually naming Cllrs.

FC2627/018 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

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

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Kerry Davison continue as the representative on the NALC County Committee of Northumberland. The Executive Officer advised that as per the email sent that day, the Council was now part of the NALC Super Councils, for which Cllr Kerry Davison would also be listed as our representative. All Cllrs are welcome to attend meeting, which are held on-line.

FC2627/019 ASHINGTON TOWN FORUM

It was **AGREED** that the representatives of the Ashington Town Forum be Cllrs Mark Purvis, Jim Lang, Kerry Davison and David Coyle.

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FC2627/020 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Combined Full Council Meeting (AGAR) and FGS Committee – Tuesday 23rd June 2026, 6:00pm, Council Chamber

The meeting ended at 18:30

DRAFT