

Ashington Town Council
Draft Minutes of the Climate Change & Environment Committee Meeting held at
7:00pm on Tuesday 20th June 2023, at Ashington Town Hall, Council Chamber, 65
Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Cllr Sophie Robinson (Chair), Louis Brown, Vicky Brown, Lynne Grimshaw, Glyn Davies, Jim Lang, John Tully, and Matthew Cuthbert.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:

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

CCE23/001 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was AGREED that in accordance with Standing Orders, to receive nominations for Chair of Climate Change & Environment Committee of Ashington Town Council, and in the event of more than one Councillor being proposed and seconded, to take a vote and elect the Councillor with the majority.

It was AGREED to appoint Cllr Sophie Robinson as Chair.

CCE23/002 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was AGREED that in accordance with Standing Orders, to receive nominations for Vice-Chair of the Climate Change & Environment Committee of Ashington Town Council, and in the event of more than one Councillor being proposed and seconded, to take a vote and elect the Councillor with the majority.

It was AGREED to appoint Cllr Pauline Thompson as Vice-Chair.

CCE23/003 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

CCE23/004 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests from Councillors.

CCE23/005 DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensations from Councillors.

CCE23/006 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were two members of the public present.

CCE23/007 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and sign as a true record, the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21st February 2023.

CCE23/008 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES

It was AGREED to RECEIVE an update on items actioned since the previous meeting, sent out in advance of this meeting.

Visit to Sleekburn Suez Plant

The visit to the plant was very informative and Sarah, along with Cllrs Caroline Ball, Marjorie Chambers, Louis Brown, and Pauline Thompson, got a lot out of it. We will share a press release on the visit before the end of Great Big Green Week.

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Additionally, we are waiting for a link to a video that was filmed at the plant (I can't find it online), so we can have a look and see if it appeals in the way the Council had suggested, with the aim of educating people about using the correct bins. The site manager would be more than happy for the Council to make their own video featuring the plant, which we discussed may be a project we could get LUKLUK filming involved in, with local people, schools, etc.

We took some short videos ourselves and it was unbelievable what some people discard into recycling. On a positive note, it was helpful to see the result of used, sorted and packed recycling that can be sold to offset the cost of the plant.

Carbon Literacy Training

Cllrs will have completed the training and their pledges, and we will be informed of the outcome in due course. Once members are signed off as Carbon Literate we will arrange for a presentation of certificates and some publicity for the Council and the course. ATC is the first Council in this area to undergo the training.

In pursuit of our priority to 'Fight the effects of Climate Change' it would be good to share the experience with others in the hope that the training will be taken up. We would expect that Cllrs' pledges will translate to motions for the agenda. If anyone wants to speak to officers prior to working up a motion, please let us know.

Litter Picking Group Meeting

A coffee morning was held with volunteers, Cllrs, and officers from ATC and NCC. Various initiatives were discussed; those concerning action by ATC will be brought forward for consideration by the Council when time allows. NCC agreed a dedicated email address for litter pickers making reports and there was a greater appreciation of the challenges on both sides. Amanda from Asda took away a suggestion for vape disposal in store, as they already collect batteries. The continued offer to support with positive publicity, recruiting new volunteers and attending events was also reinforced.

Love Ashington

Following positive feedback on the Council's barrier planters, Gary had the idea of sharing photographs from members of the public, of their favourite places in Ashington. We all loved the idea and the positive about Ashington message and have included a question to seek further engagement. Members on Facebook may have seen some of the images shared.

Repurposeful

We have engaged with a new social enterprise that hopes to open in Ashington with a 'scrap shop'. You can check out similar using the links below:

[Scrapstores Film \(reusefuluk.org\)](https://www.scrapstoresfilm.com/)

[Virtual Tour | ScrapStore Hull](#)

[Facebook](#)

The aim is to repurpose waste materials from businesses as resources for arts and crafts, namely for community groups and schools. They need a venue to work out of, specifying Hirst

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Welfare as ideal. We have suggested contacts and will invite Vicky Morgan to the next CCE Committee.

National Lottery Community Fund Application

Martin Conway from NCVA achieved funding from VONNE and Going Green Together (www.goinggreentogether.org) and advised that he has been holding consultations with members of the community across Hirst in particular. Looking at the relevance of climate change in a disadvantaged community and what the reality is on the ground for people in their daily lives.

This needs to move to the 'project development' stage which means pulling together stakeholders from across Ashington, of which we are one, to look at the findings. The aim is to discuss the practicality of a larger funding application with VONNE to the National Lottery Community Fund. We had planned for Martin to attend this meeting, but this has been put back to the next.

Great Big Green Week

Cllrs advised that the day on the market was very successful, and they spoke to a lot of people who were surprised with the 'free raffle' and brilliant prizes. The Executive Officer noted that representatives of the Council explained to those visiting the stall that some of the Council's Climate Change and Environment budget had been used to purchase environmentally conscious prizes that were: an electric bike, air fryers, a slow cooker, gardening equipment, water butts, and energy monitors. Wansbeck Climate Action, NCC Climate Change and Groundwork North East attended also, and all reported positive engagement on the day.

Tree Planting – The Great Northumberland Forest

It was indicated by the Executive Officer that this will be updated once Stephen Humphrey – The Assets and Facilities Manager. was available.

Groundwork Northeast – Wansbeck Estuary

Cllr Louis Brown gave a verbal update on two meetings attended but reported that meeting on-line was not without issue. Cllr Brown explained that Groundwork NE would be moving away from this project which would be headed up by NCC Green Spaces Manager, Neil Dawson. Cllr Brown reiterated the importance of keeping the dialogue between all stakeholders open.

CCE23/009 GRASS CUTTING FOR BIODIVERSITY

a) Grass cutting maps

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** maps where NCC have responsibility or contract for grass-cutting.

b) Grass-Cutting for Biodiversity

It was **AGREED** to support ward/resident engagement on grass-cutting schedules, following liaison with NCC, with a view to improving biodiversity where this is welcomed, and improving the quality of cuts where this is possible.

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It was **AGREED** Cllrs would come back with suggestions in their own wards, and that the Executive Officer would send an email reminder to all.

CCE23/010 WILDING, WILDFLOWER PLANTING AND BULB PLANTING

a) Identify Sites for Planting

It was **AGREED** that ward Cllrs, in dialogue with the Assets & Facilities Manager, identify sites that would benefit from wilding, wild-flower planting, and/or bulb planting.

It was **AGREED** Cllrs would come back with suggestions in their own wards, and that the Executive Officer would send an email reminder to all. It was **AGREED** that bulb planting could be progressed more quickly as there are not expected to be any objections to sites for this purpose.

b) Engagement and Action

It was **AGREED** to seek the permission of landowners, and costs, for those schemes that are feasible with minimal impact on residents and other stakeholders.

It was **AGREED** to support local engagement on sites where the impact on residents and stakeholders is significant, before taking any further action.

CCE23/011 CARBON LITERACY TRAINING – SPORTS CLUB TOOLKIT

It was **AGREED** to make funding available from the Climate Change budget to facilitate representatives from local sports clubs to be able to take part in Carbon Literacy Training for Sports Clubs. The Executive Officer would engage with sports club in the town to ascertain the interest, prior to committing to any paid for training, dates/times.

CCE23/012 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 19th September, 18:00pm, in Council Chamber.

Meeting ends 19.45pm