

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday 23 February 2021, via Zoom.

**PRESENT:**

**COUNCILLORS:** Lynne Grimshaw (Chair) Eleanor Armstrong  
Victor Bridges Marjorie Chambers  
Nicola Chambers Avril Chisholm  
Matthew Cuthbert Brian Gallacher  
Lawrence Henderson Jim Lang  
Ken Parry Pauline Thompson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Stephen Humphrey- Funding and Projects Officer  
Andy Roberts - Principle Ashington Learning Partnership  
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer (minutes)  
Members of the Public - 0

**FGS 21/054 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Stephen Fenwick, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Mark Purvis, Bob Walkinshaw and Tom Wilson.

**FGS 21/055 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.**

There were no disclosures of interest.

**FGS 21/056 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING.**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 December 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 January 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record.

**FGS 21/057 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.**

There were no matters arising from the minutes held on Tuesday 1 December 2020.

There were no matters arising from the minutes held on Tuesday 19 January 2021.

## **FGS 21/058 5. APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING SUPPORT.**

### **(i) Ashington Learning Partnership.**

Mr Andy Roberts, Principal of the Ashington Learning Partnership (ALP), provided a detailed presentation informing members of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on home learning for children as well as the need to allow on site access to those children deemed vulnerable or of critical workers.

Members were informed that the logistics had been very challenging and demanding. ALP had purchased 200 Chrome Books from its own budget with government funding supporting the purchase of a further 150. Members were informed that to fully adhere to social distancing guidance ALP had also appointed additional staff and that currently there were 293 children requiring fully charged laptops on a daily basis.

To fully support these activities funding of £9,790 was required to purchase; Google licenses for the computers, 4 laptop charging trolleys and 15 additional Chrome Books. Mr Roberts thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to request this funding and was appreciate of any support the Town Council could offer.

### **(ii) Bishops Primary School.**

The Town Clerk reported that an application had been received from The James Knott Campus (Norham Road, Ashington) towards the cost of enhancing external space to create an outdoor classroom and learning facility within the established school garden. Members were informed that this would be used to support curriculum and extra curriculum activities with the aim of creating a learning environment that will be interactive and that will inspire the students.

Members were informed that to support outdoor learning there was a requirement for outdoor storage, seating, start-up tools and equipment and teaching aids. The focus for the learning would be;

- The 'Thrive' practitioner - to support groups which focus on the mental wellbeing of our learners.
- The 'Country Trust' project.
- 'Grow Your Own Potato' project - this will be an extra-curricular club activity.

Members were advised that the School Principal believed the challenges ahead were vast due to time lost over the past year with the children needing to revisit many basic skills. To support these activities funding of £2,588 was requested to purchase, a storage shed, picnic benches, tools & equipment and teaching aids.

### **(iii) Ashington Cricket Club**

Cllr. Gallacher informed the meeting that the heating system at the Cricket Club had been condemned and was in urgent need of replacing.

Members were informed that the Cricket Club was currently being used as a Covid-19 Vaccination Centre and that because of the nature of this service both sets of doors into and out of the club needed to be open. The Town Clerk informed members that despite the emergency use of portable heaters, the nurses and volunteers working in the clinic as well as members of the public were having to endure cold temperatures, particularly for staff and volunteers throughout long days providing the service.

Cllr. Gallacher informed members that the quotes for a replacement boiler and heating system ranged from £7,000 to £10,000 and that he, Cllr. Parry and Cllr. Purvis had all agreed to contribute £2,000 each to the project from their Northumberland County Council members local improvement schemes budget.

Town Council Members were asked to consider a funding contribution for the replacement of the heating system to support the Covid-19 Clinics to safely continue and operate for the foreseeable future.

#### **Resolved**

**That;**

- **Ashington Learning Partnership be awarded a grant of £5,000 towards the cost of Google licences and laptop charging trolleys,**
- **Bishops Primary School be awarded a grant of £2,760 for the development of an outdoor classroom; and that**
- **Ashington Cricket Club be awarded a grant of £3,000 towards the cost of a replacement heating system.**

### **FGS 21/059 6. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS.**

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income for the financial period 24 November 2020 to 15 February 2021.

The Town Clerk informed members that the insurance claim for the damage to the Ashington Memorial Garden wall had been settled in advance and that work would commence as soon as materials became available. The Town Clerk advised that work was expected to commence in late April 2020, due to the lead in time for procurement of specialist bespoke bricks.

**Resolved**

**That the schedule of payments and income for the financial period 24 November 2020 to 15 February be formally agreed and approved.**

**FGS 21/060 7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.**

The Town Clerk informed members that he had received correspondence from Advance Northumberland regarding the naming of the new highway in the town centre with a new proposal that suggested “Jack Charlton Way” instead of the formally agreed “Woodlands Way”.

Members discussed the name change and agreed that they wished to move ahead with the original choice of “Woodlands Way”.

**FGS 21/061 8. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.**

The next meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 30 March 2021 at 7:00pm, on-line via Zoom.

**The meeting closed at 8.30pm.**