

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 1 August 2017, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

## PRESENT:

**COUNCILLORS:** Matthew Cuthbert (Chair)                      Marjorie Chambers  
Nicola Chambers    Stephen Fenwick  
Lawrence Henderson    Jim Lang  
Liam Lavery    Ken Parry  
Mark Purvis    Pauline Thompson  
Ely Turnbull    Bob Walkinshaw  
Tom Wilson

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer (minutes)  
Members of the Public - 0

## FGP 17/731 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors, Victor Bridges, Avril Chisholm, Brian Gallacher, Lynne Grimshaw and Kris Lavery.

## FGS 17/732 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllrs M. Chambers and N. Chambers disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 5, "Friends of Josephine Butler Primary" funding application.

## FGS 17/733 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27 June 2017, were agreed and signed as a true record.

## FGS 17/734 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

## **FGS 17/735 5. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT (Appendix 1)**

Applications for financial support were received from Ashington Pantomime Group, Ashington Jazz Club, Friends of Josephine Butler Primary and North Seaton Colliery Community Centre.

### **Resolved:**

**That:**

- (i) A donation of £200 be awarded to Ashington Pantomime Group to assist in the purchase of costumes for the 2017 Pantomime,**
- (ii) A donation of £300 be awarded to Ashington Jazz Club, to be funded from the Music & Arts Budget,**
- (iii) A donation of £400 be awarded to Friends of Josephine Butler Primary to purchase top soil and decorative slate to complete work carried out on an area of the garden at the school; and that**
- (iv) A donation of £1,000 be awarded to the North Seaton Colliery Community Centre, to support costs of installing two heavy duty triangular vehicle barriers with enclosed heavy duty security padlocks.**

## **FGS 17/736 6. ANNUAL FUNDING SUPPORT TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2017/18**

Cllr Turnbull presented a report to members outlining details from a visit made to Real Deal Plus, consisting of a presentation and tour carried out by Kath Falcus, Project Coordinator.

Members were informed that the project has three paid staff and several volunteers; services provided by Real Deal Plus included a Teen Bar, the provision of low-cost meals and a cafe service for needy members of society, a Food Bank Scheme and also a furniture project providing a stock of second hand furniture which could be purchased at a small cost or free to those setting up a home.

Members were informed that the Real Deal Plus had been successful in securing additional external funding from other sources during 2016 including the Greggs Foundation and the Sir Bobby Robson Community Award. Members were also informed that Greggs also provided food for the kitchen and emergency food parcels.

**Resolved:**

**That a grant of £6,000 be awarded to Real Deal Plus for the financial year 2017/18.**

**FGS 17/737 7. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS. (Appendix 2)**

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, for the financial period 23 June to 27 July 2017.

**Resolved:**

**That the Schedule of Payments for the period 23 June to 27 July 2017 be formally agreed and approved.**

*The full schedule of payments is attached to the minutes as schedule 1.*

**FGS 17/738 8. BUDGET REPORT (Appendix 3)**

The Town Clerk presented a quarterly update budget report for the period 1 April to 27 July 2017 for consideration and discussion.

The Town Clerk reported that, at this point, there were no exceptional issues to be reported or requiring virement. Member's attention was drawn to the further agreed use of financial reserves for the newly-agreed programmes of work including the planned Town Centre CCTV provision and the installation of interactive speed cameras.

**Resolved:**

**That the 2017/18 Budget Report for the period 1 April to 27 July 2018 be formally accepted.**

**FGS 17/739 9. ENVIRONMENTAL & AMENITIES IMPROVMENT PROGRAMME**

- (i) Cllr M Chambers asked for an update on the request for a play area at Chiltern Close. The Town Clerk informed Cllr Chambers that there had been several initial early objections to the development of any play park and further investigations needed to take place should local members wish to pursue the scheme.
- (ii) The Town Clerk informed members that the play area at the old sports centre site had been formally closed. The play equipment

had been vandalised or was in a bad state of repair and had become a dangerous hazard.

- (iii) The Town Clerk informed members that the play park on Alexandra Road had been fully restored and re-painted by the Neighbourhood Services Officer. Members welcomed this planned work and the fact that the Town Council had received a number of compliments for the improved work.
- (iv) Weed Killing Contract – the Town Clerk informed members that further to the Neighbourhood Partnership discussions and direction of Leadership of the Town Council, a contract for town-wide weed killing had been awarded to W.L. Straughan & Son Ltd.

The Town Clerk reminded members that given the specialist nature of this work, the Standing Orders of the Council had been suspended and the agreed contractor appointed. Members welcomed this news and the detail of the contract including full initial treatment, follow-up post treatment and the tackling of hot spot areas and key entrances into the town. The Chair reported that this work represented a significant financial commitment from the Town Council in addressing this major problem. Cllr.Fenwick requested that members monitor the work in their respective wards and liaise with the Town Clerk regarding any specific areas or hot spots.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- (i) A contract in the sum £26,700 plus VAT be awarded to W.L.Straughan & Son Ltd for comprehensive town-wide weed spraying and killing in all divisional wards,
- (ii) That in view of the specialist nature of the work and early need for progress, the Standing Orders of the Town Council be suspended and the contract awarded based on expertise, price and quality of previous environmental contracts with the Town Council,
- (iii) That the funding, in the first instance, be met from the General Reserves of the Town Council; and that
- (iv) The funding of the programme be discussed by the Neighbourhood Partnership Board with a view to a shared cost and contribution from within the Partnership Budget.

The Chair reminded members that, it had been agreed that, schemes for funding consideration from the Environmental and Amenities programme could be tabled from all Council members when fully supported by work details including inclusive cost of the work.

Members were reminded that the full detail of all work programmes needed to be forwarded to the Chair in advance for consideration and inclusion on the future agendas.

**FGS 17/740 10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

**FGS 17/741 11. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The date, time and venue for the next meeting was agreed for Tuesday 3 October 2017, at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

**The Meeting ended at 7.40pm**