



Ashington Town Council
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ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday 30 January 2018, at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Mark Purvis (Chair)	Victor Bridges
Marjorie Chambers	Nicola Chambers
Avril Chisholm	Matthew Cuthbert
Stephen Fenwick	Brian Gallacher
Lynne Grimshaw	Lawrence Henderson
Liam Lavery	Ken Parry
Pauline Thompson	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Sharon Parmley – Senior Admin Officer (minute taking)
Members of the Public – 0

C18/743 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Jim Lang, Kris Lavery, Bob Walkinshaw and Tom Wilson.

C18/744 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest from Members present.

C18/745 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14 November 2018, were agreed and signed as a true record.

C18/746 4. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes held on the 14 November 2018.

C18/747 5. CIVIC HEAD'S REPORT

The Civic Head reported that he had attended the following events,

- Saturday 9 December, St John's Church, Christmas Concert with Ashington Male Voice Choir
- Tuesday 19 December, Bothal Primary School, Christmas Lunch and Christmas performances
- Thursday 14 December, Thomas Bewick Campus, Carol Service
- Monday 18 December, Josephine Butler Campus, Carol Service

C18/748 6. LEADERS REPORT

The Leader reported to members that;

- The installation of Town Centre CCTV cameras had already proved successful and had led directly to secure evidence in relation to recent shop burglaries on Station Road.
- Highways Interactive Speed Cameras, funded by the Town Council and Divisional Ward County Council members, had also now been installed and appeared to have been well received by residents. The Leader reported that the data captured would be monitored in coming months and that the current locations would be reviewed for either permanent or temporary cameras.
- The Leader informed members that the Town Clerk had requested that the Council give proper consideration to another town-wide survey at this time and had stressed the importance of seeking residents' views on a range of key emerging issues. The Leader reported that this issue would be placed on the agenda of a forthcoming Finance & General Services.

C18/749 7. BUDGET AND ANNUAL PRECEPT 2018/19

The Chair of the Finance and General Services Committee, Cllr Matthew Cuthbert thanked the Town Clerk for the detailed work carried out on the Budget and proposed that, further to full discussions and recommendation from Finance and General Services Committee, the 2018/19 budget as presented be agreed.

Resolved:

Full Council resolves that:

- (i) The 2018/19 gross budget expenditure of £797,050 be agreed, inclusive of the specified use of £62,450 from the General Reserves balance,
- (ii) Ashington Town Council's precept requirement from Northumberland County Council in respect of the Financial Year Ending 31 March 2019, be agreed at £734,600,
- (iii) The planned use of the General Reserves balance, subject to (i) above, be further considered at the Full Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 6 March 2018,
- (iv) The Precept (Council Tax) increase for 2018/19 be agreed at 1.5% for a Band D property in Ashington, equivalent to an annual increase of £1.53; and that
- (v) While recognising that the government intends to defer the setting of referendum principles ("capping") for Town and Parish Council's for three years, commencing in 2018/19, Ashington Town Council resolves to take all available steps to mitigate the future need for Council Tax increases, including:
 - the responsible use of non-earmarked general reserves,
 - maximising external funding opportunities; and
 - examining "invest to save" projects and options that will lower on-going costs.

C18/750 8. ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT WORK - ASHINGTON

The Chair, Cllr Mark Purvis, introduced Phil Atkinson, the new Environmental Enforcement Officer for Ashington, funded by the Town Council via a Service Level Agreement with Northumberland County Council.

Mr Atkinson presented a summary report of work completed since he had started in Ashington at the beginning of January 2018. Members were informed that the work undertaken to date had

included waste accumulations, fly-tipping, Litter, dog fouling and abandoned vehicles.

Mr Atkinson reported that had issued several tickets, general warnings and offered “educational talks” to offenders in the past few weeks alone and asked for help from the Town Council members by reporting any issues or problem areas as they arose via the town council office.

Members were informed that clearly dog-fouling remained a very serious issue in a number of areas and it was apparent that a significant number of animals simply let out late at night by irresponsible dog owners given the early-morning evidence. Mr Atkinson stressed the difficulty in tackling this issue but agreed with members that well-reported successful action in a small reported number of cases often led to a reduction in instances as people took heed.

Members thanked Mr Atkinson for his work to date and looked forward to successful partnership working and results in coming weeks and months.

C18/751 9. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) Arch Stakeholders Group

Cllr Marjorie Chambers reported that the stakeholder group had only recently re-commenced following the change in NCC administration.

Members were informed that the situation regarding maintenance and cleanliness of Station Road had been discussed at length with request being made for cleansing work and re-sealing to be properly carried out at an early point.

Cllr.Chambers informed members that the Town Council representatives and County Councillors had stressed to the NCC administration the need for regular communication and updates to residents regarding emerging plans for the Town Centre regeneration. Concern has also been expressed that the results of recent limited consultation carried out by NCC had not been shared with the Town Council or other stakeholders.

Cllr.Gallacher reminded members that the role and remit of the Stakeholder Group was, subject to any commercial confidentiality, to share and maintain regular clear information and communication with residents in order to both avoid rumour or speculation and to reassure residents that work was progressing.

Cllr.Gallacher informed members that NCC administration had been asked to make early public comment regarding their overall plans for the Town Centre and to also consider the provision of new public conveniences at an early date as part of the work to the new bus interchange provision.

(ii) Neighbourhood Services Partnership

Cllr Gallacher reported that early discussion would be taking place regarding the operation of the agreement and the priorities for the financial year 2018/19 and beyond.

Members were informed that 2018/19 was the final year of the initial 5-yr agreement and that serious discussion would need to be given to the format and content of any new agreement from 2019/20. Members were reminded that, although it was not yet known, it was likely that the Town Council would be expected to take on a number of additional environmental functions including the likelihood of all floral presentations in the Town.

Cllr.Gallacher informed members that, were this to be the case, the Town Council, given its limited resources, would have to carefully consider the financial impact and the level of contribution to any new partnership agreement. Cllr.Gallacher stressed the need for the Town Council to be clearly guided by both value for money and clear improvement in determining future spend on the partnership.

Cllr.Gallacher reported that together with the Leader and the Town Clerk, he had met with Cramlington and Blyth Town Council representatives to discuss the operation of their current Neighbourhood Services Partnership agreements and to discuss any common issues and challenges few to improving future outcomes. Cllr.Gallacher reported that the meeting had been very productive and helpful.

C18/752 12. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for 7:00pm, Tuesday 6 March 2018 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 7:05pm.