



Ashington Town Council
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ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday 29 January 2019, at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Pauline Thompson (Deputy Chair) Eleanor Armstrong
Victor Bridges Marjorie Chambers
Nicola Chambers Matthew Cuthbert
Stephen Fenwick Brian Gallacher
Lynne Grimshaw Lawrence Henderson
Jim Lang Liam Lavery
Ken Parry Bob Walkinshaw

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer
Members of the Public – 1

C19/809 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Avril Chisholm, Kris Lavery, Mark Purvis (Chair) and Tom Wilson.

C19/810 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.

There were no disclosures of interest from members present.

C19/811 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6 November 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

C19/812 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

There were no matters arising from the minutes held on Tuesday 6 November 2018.

C19/813 5. CIVIC HEAD'S REPORT.

The Civic Head, Cllr. Marjorie Chambers, reported that she had attended the following events;

- **Tuesday 23 October – Northumberland County of Sanctuary visit,**
- **Thursday 8 November – Diamond Wedding Anniversary,**
- **Sunday 11 November – Remembrance Sunday,**
- **Sunday 11 November – Armistice Service,** at Hexham Abbey,
- **Thursday 15 November – at Ashington Police Station,** for the presentation of 2 bicycles for Neighbourhood Police Officers for use in and around Ashington,
- **Monday 19 November – Civic Head Charity Night,** Northumberland County Council Civic Head Charity Night at the Boat House in Blyth,
- **Thursday 22 & Friday 23 - Christmas Lighting Competition,** visited 5 schools and presented prizes to the winners of the Christmas Lighting Features Competition.
- **Wednesday 28 November – Stallholder Event & Afternoon Tea,** at County Hall, Morpeth. Showcasing fine foods, drinks and crafts all of which were produced in Northumberland,
- **Friday 7 December – Civic Carol Service,** held at St Lawrence Church, Dial Place, Warkworth,
- **Friday 14 December – Joint Women's service,** celebrating the 100th Anniversary since women were first given the vote and 100 years since World War I,
- **Saturday 15 December – The Pines Christmas Fayre,**
- **Saturday 15 December – Ashington Male Voice Choir,** Christmas concert held at St Cuthbert's Church, Bedlington,
- **Friday 25 January – Bothal Primary Upper,** met with staff, pupils and various outside bodies involved in the introduction of S.T.E.M (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

- **Town Twinning visit planned on 6 to 8 March – Hosting, together with Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council, a visit from Remscheid – Executive Officer Sven Wiertz and the Oberburgermeister, Burkhard Mast-Wiesz.**

C19/814 6. LEADER'S REPORT.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr. Stephen Fenwick, gave a brief summary of the work undertaken in 2018/19 and set out matters and his objectives moving forward into 2019/20. Items covered included:

- **2018 Town-Wide Residents Survey**
- **Provision of new floral planters** – the entrances into the town were enhanced with the addition of new floral towers and planters,
- **CCTV** – provided and funded for use by Northumbria Police and other statutory agencies in addressing Town Centre anti-social behaviour and to provide a safe and secure area for all residents
- **Neighbourhood Services Partnership Agreement** – work had continued in addressing performance management and seeking to ensure value for money in service delivery
- **Hirst Park** - refurbishment and renewal work had commenced on the major improvement scheme to restore and revitalise the park.
- **Portland Park Regeneration Scheme** – work and discussion was continuing with Northumberland County Council and Advance Northumberland to progress the outstanding capital schemes for the area.

Going forward in 2019/20:

- **Public Toilets** – public toilets provision to be looked at and partner organisations be asked to address adequate service provision in the Town Centre,
- **New Neighbourhood Services Partnership Agreement** – new revised partnership agreement to commence in April 2019.
- **Music & Arts Working Group** – A working group had been established to explore the options for enhancing the music and arts events in Ashington,
- **Communal Bins** – Possibility of looking at the option of a further communal bins pilot scheme to address ongoing issues of litter and low-level fly-tipping in certain wards
- **Christmas Lighting Provision** - extension of the Christmas lights.

C19/815 7. BUDGET AND ANNUAL PRECEPT 2019/20.

The Chair of the Finance and General Services Committee, Cllr Lynne Grimshaw thanked the Budget Working Group and the Town Clerk for the detailed work carried out on the Budget. Cllr.Grimshaw proposed that, further to full discussions and recommendation from Working Group, the 2019/20 budget as presented be agreed.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The 2019/20 gross budget expenditure of £893,400 be agreed, inclusive of the specified use of £133,600 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 2020, be agreed at £759,800**
- (iii) The Precept (Council Tax) increase for 2019/20 be agreed at 1.0% for a Band D property in Ashington, equivalent to an annual increase of £1.04; and that**
- (iv) 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 all external funding opportunities; and**
 - examining "invest to save" projects and options that will lower on-going costs.**

C19/816 8. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES.

Cllr Thompson was nominated and agreed to become the Town Council representative to Real Deal Plus with immediate effect.

The Leader of the Town Council advised that Cllrs. Avril Chisholm, Marjorie Chambers and Pauline Thompson had been selected to be the Town Council representatives on the recently formed Ashington Project Coordination Group.

The Leader of the Council further advised that the initial members of the new Music & Arts Working Group would be Cllrs. Marjorie Chambers, Cllr. Pauline Thompson, Eleanor Armstrong and Tom Wilson. Members commented that any other members with a keen interest in the Group should be welcomed to participate in the Group.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) Cllr Thompson be appointed the nominated as the Town Council representative to Real Deal Plus,**
- (ii) Cllrs. Avril Chisholm, Marjorie Chambers, and Pauline Thompson be appointed as the Town Council representatives on the Ashington Project Coordination Group; and that**
- (iii) Cllrs. Marjorie Chambers, Pauline Thompson, Eleanor Armstrong and Tom Wilson be appointed as the members of the Music & Arts Working Group.**

C19/817 9. PEOPLE'S PARK PLAY AREA PROJECT.

Cllr .Grimshaw thanked the Town Clerk and Funding & Project Officer for all of the work that had been carried over recent months in realising and finalising this major project plan. The Leader of the Council added his thanks and drew particular attention to the level of diverse external funding that had been secured and the quality of the Town Council's bid submissions.

The Town Clerk reported that, subject to approval and formal resolution to proceed, the scheme was provisionally planned to commence in late March/early April with a completion date in very early June.

Resolved:

That, further to appointment of Kompan Scotland Ltd as the preferred partner of the delivery of the project (Minute FGS 18/860 refers) and on recommendation from the appointed Working Group:

- (i) The contract for the project, in the sum of £209,542 (exclusive of VAT) be agreed and awarded to Kompan Scotland Ltd,**
- (ii) Noting the success of the Working Group in acquiring significant external funding for the project, the sum of £60,000, representing 26% of the overall project cost, be allocated from the General Reserves of the Town Council as the agreed contribution; and that**
- (iii) It be noted that the project is due for on-site commencement in late March 2019, with an expected completion in June 2019.**

C19/818 10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for 7:00pm, Tuesday 5 March 2019 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm