

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday  
5 November 2019, at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road,  
Ashington.**

**PRESENT:**

<b>Councillors:</b>	Mark Purvis (Chair)	Eleanor Armstrong
	Victor Bridges	Avril Chisholm
	Matthew Cuthbert	Stephen Fenwick
	Brian Gallacher	Lynne Grimshaw
	Lawrence Henderson	Jim Lang
	Kris Lavery	Ken Parry
	Pauline Thompson	Tom Wilson

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

**C19/864 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Marjorie Chambers, Nicola Chambers, Liam Lavery and Bob Walkinshaw

**C19/865 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.**

There were no disclosures of interest from members present.

**C19/866 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.**

The minutes of the last meeting held on the Tuesday 3 September 2019, were agreed and signed as a true record.

**C19/867 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.**

There were no matters arising from the last minutes.

## **C19/868 5. CIVIC HEAD'S REPORT.**

Cllr. L.Henderson reported on recent events he had attended as the Civic Head of Ashington, including:

- **8 September** – Ashington Hirst Celebratory Cup Bowls Competition.
- **Monday 9 September** – Town Council Gardens Competition Presentation Evening.
- **Friday 13 September** – Opening of Hirst Park Play Area.
- **Tuesday 24 September** – James Knott Primary School, Mini Police Scheme.
- **Thursday 26 September** – Opening of the Art & Photography Exhibition, with Ashington Art Group, Ashington Camera Club and Ashington Pitmatic Art Group.
- **Saturday 27 September** – Charity Race Night with all proceeds going to Northumberland County Council's Civic Head Charity.

## **C19/869 6. LEADER'S REPORT.**

Cllr M. Cuthbert reported on the following items;

- Neighbourhood Services Partnership Board meeting to take place on Thursday 21 November 2019 to discuss winter works services and further planned works,
- Budget Working Group to begin the process of drawing up the draft budget for 2020/21. Members were actively encouraged to present any ideas or plans for new projects,
- Plans to again look at member training options and requirements.

## **C19/870 7. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2018/19.**

The Town Clerk reported that the Auditor's Report on the 2018/19 Accounting Statements and Annual Governance return had now been received.

Members were informed that, on the basis of the External Auditors review, the information in the annual return was in accordance with proper practices and no matters had come to attention giving cause for concern that the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

Cllr. Grimshaw thanked the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, for the thorough and detailed work undertaken in managing the Town Council's financial accounts and systems.

**Resolved:**

That, further to the completion of the external audit review by PKF Littlejohn LLP of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Ashington Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2019,

Full Council resolve that:

- (i) The Annual Return for the financial year 2018/19, including the External Auditor report and certificate, be approved and accepted,
- (ii) The Council formally note that there were no matters giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements had not been met; and that
- (iii) The Council formally note that there were no other matters that required the issue of a separate additional issues arising report or needed to be drawn to the attention of the Council.

**C19/871 8. APPLICATION FOR FUNDING SUPPORT – ASHINGTON HIRST RUNNING CLUB.**

Members were informed that Ashington Hirst Running Club requested a contribution towards the anticipated cost of £4,325 for a major new running event to be held in Ashington. The sum of £750 had been applied for with the balance of the event to be met by entrance fees. Members were advised that the event was to take place on Sunday 8 December 2019, in Ashington Community Woods.

Members were further informed that the event was aimed at encouraging people to take up running, whatever their ability and the Club envisaged that some 350 runners would be likely to take part in the event. The Project & Funding Officer informed the meeting that funding, if approved, would support the organisation of the event as well as purchasing t-shirts for the participants. It was envisaged that the majority of runners would be from Ashington but it was hoped that the event would also bring visitors into the town to participate.

**Resolved:**

That Ashington Hirst Running Club be awarded a grant in the sum of £750 towards the costs of holding the event.

**C19/872 9. ASHINGTON MINeworkERS FEDERATION – BANNER.**

The Town Clerk informed members that a request had been received from the Ashington Mineworkers Federation that consideration be given to housing the banner of the “Mineworker’s Federation” within the Town Hall Chamber. The Town Clerk reported that in a preliminary conversation, the secretary of the Federation had indicated that while other mining banners were housed at Woodhorn Museum, it had been a specific request that the option of the Town Hall be pursued as a preferred location.

The Chair reminded members that, in addition to the political and industrial role, the Federation had played a central role in the development of the Ashington and surrounding community and had driven an agenda that had introduced leisure facilities such as welfares and allotments, hospitals and cinemas as well as offering various funds including death and rehabilitation grants to miner’s families.

Members considered and agreed that the Council Chamber would be an excellent location for the banner as a permanent reminder of the town’s long and rich mining history and heritage. Members however recognised that the banner was not in overall good condition, that permissions would be needed from Northumberland County Council and that all likely expense would fall on the Town Council.

It was agreed that further enquiries be made and that the Town Clerk be delegated to look into the matter as a key project for 2020.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- (i) The Town Council agree to support in principle the request for the Miners’ Federation Banner to be housed within the Town Hall Council Chamber; and that**
- (ii) Town Clerk be delegated to make appropriated enquiries and to report back to a future meeting of the Full Council,**

## C19/873 10. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES.

### (i) **Wansbeck Valley Foodbank – Cllr. Cuthbert**

Cllr.Cuthbert presented Wansbeck Valley's Foodbank mid-year report, highlighting;

- A letter of thanks for the Town Council grant of £8,000,
- The increasing demand for food parcels since the introduction and rolling out of Universal Credit,
- That Ashington represented over half of all of the food parcels distributed.

Cllr Cuthbert also informed members that the Town Council intended to work with the Foodbank to promote the service and encourage more donations of food for the coming winter months.

Cllr Cuthbert informed members that he would likely be bringing a motion forward at the next council meeting requesting further support in the run up to Christmas.

### (ii) **Real Deal Plus – Cllr. Thompson**

Cllr.Thompson presented a report to members, highlighting the recent completion of major internal building works in the building. Cllr.Thompson reported that the front of the building has been opened up by combining three rooms into one creating a larger entrance / reception area. Members were also informed that an area on the first floor was being prepared to accommodate a lift, enabling the property to be DDA compliant in the future.

### (iii) **Northumberland Community Bank (NCB) – Cllr. Purvis**

(iv) Cllr.Purvis presented a full report form NCB. The report highlighted how well the bank had developed in past months and the increase in new member numbers. Cllr.Purvis reported that the number of loans had decreased and the interest received for 2019 had also increased. Members were informed of the major changes that had taken place in 2019 to raise the profile and make the organisation far more accessible. Some of the key changes included;

- **Members Area** – area on website that gave the ability to update personal details, view account balances and transactions, request a withdrawal to a designated bank account and contact us,
- **Improved Accessibility** – new members can join on-line
- **Loan applications** – members can now apply for a loan online. The goal is to reduce processing times to allow

- NCB to compete with the 'instant' decisions of pay day lenders but at morally acceptable interest rates,
- **Mobile Smartphone App** – available from both Apple iStore and Google Play the mobile app offers all the functionality (except member joining) of the web site, including loan applications,
  - **Updated website** – NCB commissioned a refresh of the website to deliver increased functionality and marketing ability,
  - **Social Media** – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts had been active since 2018,
  - **Savings Return** – issue of a 2018 Dividend 0.5% - this is the first dividend for depositors in several years.

Members agreed it was a very positive report and confirmed that the decision for the Town Council to fund the bank had certainly helped with the development and success.

**C19/874 11. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.**

The next meeting of the Full Council was scheduled for 7:00pm, Tuesday 28 January 2020 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington NE63 8RX.

**The meeting closed at 8:00pm**