

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Special Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday 3 March 2020, at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Richard Timson – Horticultural Officer
Members of the Public – 1

OPEN SESSION

The member of the public left the meeting at 7.15pm.

C20/884 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

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

C20/885 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.

There were no disclosures of interest from members present.

C20/886 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of the last meeting held on the Tuesday 28 January 2020, were agreed and signed as a true record.

C20/887 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES.

There were no matters arising from the last minutes.

C20/888 5. CIVIC HEAD'S REPORT.

Cllr. L.Henderson reported that he had attended, as the Civic Head of Ashington, the Ashington Sea Cadets Presentation Evening on Tuesday 11 February 2020 at the Sea Cadets HQ.

C20/889 6. LEADER'S REPORT.

Cllr. M. Cuthbert reported that a focus for the Town Council in coming weeks would be the development of the commemorative tree planting scheme at Ashington Cricket Club and the plans for new entrance features into Ashington on the B1334 (off North Seaton roundabout) and the A196 (at Wansbeck Bridge).

Cllr. Cuthbert reported that preparatory work had commenced on Station Road for the new floral displays which would be covered in detail through Agenda item 7.

Cllr. Cuthbert reported that the next Neighbourhood Services Partnership meeting would take place on Thursday 5 March 2020 at the Town Hall. Cllr. Cuthbert requested that members with any specific issues in their wards contact him before that date.

Cllr Cuthbert informed members that he would arrange any applicable training if required and asked Councillors to notify him of any specific training courses or conferences they wished to attend.

C20/890 7. FLORAL DISPLAYS AND PRESENTATIONS – STATION ROAD

The Town Clerk introduced the Horticultural Officer, Mr Richard Timson, who commenced employment with Ashington Town Council on the 6 January 2020. The Town Clerk reminded members that the Town Council had a clear intention to see a continual improvement in the full range and standard of floral displays across the town, with a focus on Station Road. The Resident & Visitor Survey, undertaken on Station Road, reinforced the view held by the Town Council, that displays developed by NCC in 2016, were seen as dull, unimaginative and having very little appeal. The appointment of the Horticultural Officer would allow for clear direction and plans to be developed to improve the displays both on Station Road and across the town.

Since the appointment in January the Town Council had accessed a sizeable growing space at NCC's Stakeford Nursery to address storage and growing requirements including the purchase of large-scale poly tunnel. The Town Council is also

seeking an agreement to use facilities at the recently completed Growing Zone at Hirst Park.

The Town Clerk reported that the Memorandum of Understanding, with NCC, for a seasonal operative was, by agreement, brought forward to provide a dedicated seasonal worker for the Town Council with appropriate vehicle and equipment. The Town Clerk highlighted that NCC staff had been supportive through this process which had enabled early progress on clearing the floral beds on Station Road. The Town Clerk highlighted that 85% of the usable plants had been replanted within the town, enhancing existing displays at the Ashington Memorial Garden, Mining Wheel Entrance Feature and Workers Memorial Garden at North Seaton Cemetery.

The Town Clerk reported that the major preparatory work on Station Road was now completed and we were now at the critical design and planning phase of the works.

The Horticultural Officer provided a detailed presentation of planting options for Station Road with three options for the 'north side' of the street and two options for the 'south side' to be considered. The Horticultural Officer highlighted that Station Road presented a number of challenges in terms of choice of planting schemes due to the street lying East to West. This often caused a 'wind tunnel' effect with the south side of the street having limited sunshine particularly in winter months due to the built environment. In selecting a planting scheme consideration for the robustness of plants would have to be considered which would also mitigate for any possible damage or anti-social behaviour.

After lengthy discussion two planting options were selected by members. The option selected for the north side of the street would be predominantly based around the use of Yucca's (Gloriosa Variegata and Bright Edge) and other planting with robust variegated foliage. The benefits of this scheme would be that it would be hardy in nature and provide all year-round colour. The planting scheme would be complemented by the use of annual planting as required, supplemented by the possible use of hanging baskets. The option selected for the south side of the street would be predominantly based around the use of Hosta's and Asplenium and again complemented by annual planting. The benefits of this scheme would be that it would be tolerant of low light levels, high moisture content with long displays limiting the costs of the supplementation of annual planting.

Members thanked the Horticultural Officer for his detailed report and looked forward to work commencing on the planting schemes planned to take place in the spring.

C20/891 8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES.

There were no reports from members.

C20/892 9. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the Full Council was scheduled for 7:00pm, Tuesday 12 May 2020, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

Members were reminded that the meeting will be the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

The meeting closed at 8:30pm