

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday 21 September 2021 at Hirst Welfare Centre.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Mark Purvis (Chair)	
	Caroline Ball	Louis Brown
	Vicky Brown	Marjorie Chambers
	Avril Chisholm	Matthew Cuthbert
	Lynne Grimshaw	Lawrence Henderson
	Jim Lang	Liam Lavery
	Sophie Robinson	Pauline Thompson
	John Tully	Bob Walkinshaw

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

Stephen Humphrey – Assets and Facilities Manager

Sharon Parmley – Senior Admin Officer/PA (minute taking)

Members of the Public – 0

C21/958 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Eleanor Armstrong, Michelle Brannigan and Victor Bridges.

C21/959 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.

There were no disclosures of interest from members present.

C21/960 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the Thursday 29 June 2021, were agreed and signed as a true record.

C21/961 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

C21/962 5. REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.

The Leader Cllr. Matthew Cuthbert provided the following update report;

- **Staffing** - The Neighbourhood Services Officer commenced employment on the 31 August 2021.
- **Litter Bins** - As part of an on-going programme several new litterbins had been installed. There was now a focus on removing smaller, older column mounted bins and replacing with larger ground mounted litter bins.
- **Bus Shelters** - A deep clean of the town's bus shelters was underway as well as the painting of several older shelters.
- **Floral Planting** - The floral towers and troughs around the town had been cleared in preparation of winter planting, which was scheduled to take place in the next few weeks.
- **Allotment Sites** - Work has been completed at the Hirst East End Allotment Site to improve roadways and clearance of redundant plots to create a wildlife area.
- **Garden Competition 2021** - The presentation evening of the Ashington Garden Competition took place on Thursday 16 September at Ashington Masonic Hall.
- **The Great Big Green Week** - The Great Big Green Week will see communities come together, from across the country, to raise awareness and develop plans for our climate and environment. The campaign is running from the 18 to the 26 September with activities taking place to raise the issue of climate change.
- **Remembrance Day 2021** - The Remembrance Day Service is planned to take place on Sunday 14 November in the Ashington Memorial Garden. The Town Council is working with the Royal British Legion and Ashington Churches Together in the organisation of the Service.
- **Neighbourhood Services Partnership** – The Leader reported that he was looking to organise a meeting of the Partnership Board at the earliest opportunity with the aim of drawing up an action plan to address some of the current issues.

C21/963 6. JACK CHARLTON STATUE PROJECT.

Cllr. Liam Lavery reminded members that at the Full Council meeting held on 29 June 2021, it was agreed that:

- (i) Douglas Jennings ARBS be formally appointed and commissioned as the sculptor for the statue project,
- (ii) The project budget be agreed in the in the sum of £54,000 (exc.VAT); and that
- (iii) The Working Group be authorised and delegated to oversee the progress and development of the work, including all required planning and site permissions.

Cllr. Lavery reported that further to the resolution and in order to move the project forward, a site visit with the sculptor to Hirst Park was agreed and arranged for Monday 23 August 2021. All members of the Working Group (Cllrs. L. Lavery, J. Lang and M. Purvis) and the Town Clerk attended the site visit which was extremely informative and helpful. A full assessment of the preferred location was undertaken, including an initial survey of ground works and services and the preferred siting in keeping with the park and its related assets. A preliminary meeting with the Parks Management of Northumberland County Council had also taken place in the prior week to confirm general permissions for works within the park.

Members were informed that Douglas Jennings was asked for his personal views on the statue style and type and stated that, while it was an excellent and thoughtful brief and a privilege to be asked to undertake the project, the Council itself would need to carefully manage the publicity and communication with the public and family as the word “statue” always implied life-size.

Members agreed that the wider public had been supportive to date and had also clearly expected to see a statue size in keeping with the current Jack Milburn statue, a direct comparison within Ashington.

Cllr. Lavery reported that members had a full on-site discussion and agreed that a full life-size sculpture would clearly have greater impact and would likely be expected by the public.

There was also discussion regarding the funding gap and options, possibilities of additional external funding and the need to address the matter at an early opportunity. Members agreed that the option of a full-size

Resolved:

That:

- (i) That the full commissioned brief for the Jack Charlton Statue, to be sited within Hirst Park, be amended to that of a full life-size sculpture,**
- (ii) That the revised contract price of £72,800 (Exc. VAT and ground works) be agreed,**
- (iii) That an additional sum of £24,000 be agreed from the General Reserves balance of the Town Council, such sum representing the real savings made in the 2020/21 budget for Hirst Park; and**
- (iv) That subject to agreement in (i) to (iii) above, the Working Group agree to continue to fully explore and examine all external funding sources for the project.**

C21/964 7. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the Full Council was provisionally agreed for Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 7.00pm. (venue to be agreed).

The meeting ended at 8:10pm