

Minutes of the proceedings of the **ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING** for the Parish of Great Aycliffe, held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 21st MAY 2014** at **7.15 p.m.**

PRESENT Councillor Mrs. W.P. Hillary (Chairman / Mayor)
and there were 39 Electors present.

The Chairman (Mayor) of the Council opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Annual Assembly of the Town Meeting. The Mayor read out a statement of how the meeting would proceed and involvement by members of the electorate.

1. **NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

2. **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Mr. R.S. Fleming, seconded by Mr. J. Atkinson and

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Annual Assembly of the Town Meeting held on the 23rd May 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The Mayor gave a verbal report giving details of the past year.

Information was given on the annual Parish Performance Plan which sets out the targets and strategic aims of the Town Council. This document is produced each year as part of the aim to deliver quality services for the residents of Great Aycliffe.

The Environment Officer had continued to improve the towns environment and had engaged in a number of themed events and projects:

- Maintaining and enhancing the towns natural green area.
- 41 public countryside events had taken place.
- 39 environmental workshops with local school groups had been carried out.
- 750 man hours of volunteers help had been given to improve the nature areas around the town.
- An Environment Week had been organised with the assistance of the Youth Council. They visited primary schools in the town, giving an interactive presentation on litter together with litter picks in their local community.
- A licence agreement with Durham County Council to operate and maintain areas of land and woodland which form part of the Great Aycliffe Way had been obtained.
- The Council had taken over the ownership of Seven Hills Woodland near Neville Parade and entrance gates, signage, tree maintenance works, bulb planting and regular litter picks were being carried out.
- Facilitate and support had been given to the Friends of Byerley park Local Nature Reserve and also the recently formed Friends of West Park.

The Council continues to provide leisure facilities such as Parks, Golf Course / Driving Range and the Sports Complex, however they also continue to provide a series of annual events such as the Senior Citizens Excursions, Great Aycliffe Show, Fun in the Parks and

the Santa Tours and Letters. It has been agreed to re-look at the Great Aycliffe Show 2015 with a view to replacing this outdoor two day Show with a series of events taking place over a week. Additional arrangements are also to be put in place to enable the Firework Display to re-commence.

Support is also given to events run by local organisations.

Oakleaf Sports Complex

Refurbishment works and maintenance projects to keep the Complex up to standard are being continued.

Activities being held at the Sports Complex included:-

- Oaklife Club
- Bowls drop in sessions
- Junior Football and Golf
- Promotions in the bar for specific events
- The bar had received a 'face-lift'
- Indoor Bowls Club and Squash Clubs had a successful year.
- Bygones Vintage Car Society held a rally on the fields and hoped to make this an annual event.
- Go Run for Fun event had taken place with over 300 young people taking part.

Partnership Working

The Council continues to further explore partnership working / joint procurement with Durham County Council.

We have worked with Horndale Residents Association to provide a Multi-Use Games area and Friends of West Park to seek ideas for improving West Park.

The Council has been building partnership working and are looking at some interesting projects. One in particular is through Active Aycliffe Group based at the Pioneering Care Centre. This is an intergeneration art project to help those with mental health problems and has been funded by our Youth Council.

Youth Council

The Council continue to support the Youth Council with Officer assistance and a financial sum that enables the Youth Council to give grants, subject to approval by the Council, to organisations or individuals connected with children and young people.

They are also piloting projects with 3 organisations on the business park which they hope will eventually be adopted by the Aycliffe Schools. They are aiming to dispel the myth about apprenticeships, get young people 'work ready' and improve their understanding of what businesses are looking for.

Neighbourhood Plan

Work has commenced on the Neighbourhood Plan. An Officer has been appointed and a steering group will be formed from 2 people representatives and a group from other organisations.

The Neighbourhood Plan is a very important document which will help to plan for things that are important to the residents and businesses of Great Aycliffe. It will become a statutory planning document that will steer future development of our neighbourhood areas.

It is only about planning but an important factor to note is that it is not about saying no to development.

Grants and Donations

The Council considers applications for Grants and Donations to local organisations over the year and a list had been compiled for the past year.

Capital Works

The Council continues to develop its Asset Management Plan in order to keep the Council's buildings and assets up to a required standard.

Council Finances

The Mayor asked the Town Council Finance Manager, Mr. Dan Austin, to give a brief overview of the Council's Finances.

Mr. Austin gave a verbal report on the Council's finances for the past year which had culminated with a unqualified Audit Report being received.

He also gave an overview of what the Council would be facing in the future with new legislation which is being implemented.

A detailed hand-out leaflet on the Annual Financial Report of the Council had been prepared.

4. **QUESTIONS**

The Mayor / Chairman had not received any prior notices of questions on the official sheets, however, she did ask if any of the electors in attendance had anything they wished to raise or question before closing the meeting.

There were no questions or issues raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

CHAIRMAN.