

## **COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2020 – 7.15 p.m.**

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, and virtually, on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.15 p.m.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Councillor Wendy Hillary (Chairman) and**

Councillors Eddy Adam, M. Ashcroft, Derek G Atkinson, Jim Atkinson, Kathy Beetham, P.J. Bergg, Mrs. D. Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, R.S. Fleming, George C. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, Dave Hardaker, Mrs. I. Hewitson, Jed Hillary, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, Mrs. V.M. Raw, Ken Robson, Michael Stead and Paul Symons.

### **OFFICERS**

Mr A Bailey (Town Clerk)  
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)  
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin. Officer)  
Mrs. S. Stretch (Administrative Assistant)

**IN ATTENDANCE** Inspector S. Honeyman and Sgt. A. Boyd (Durham Constabulary)

### **182. NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

### **183. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bill Blenkinsopp, Mrs. M. Dalton and B. Hall.

### **184. MEMBERS' DISPENSATION**

No dispensation requests had been received.

### **185. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

### **186. DURHAM CONSTABULARY PRESENTATION**

The Chairman welcomed Inspector S. Honeyman and Sgt. A. Boyd to the meeting to provide an update on anti-social behaviour within the Town.

Inspector Honeyman and Sgt. Boyd spoke at length on issues of anti-social behaviour which is taking place within the Town whilst pointing out other issues which also took Police time.

Members were given the opportunity of asking questions which were duly answered by the Police Officers.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chairman thanked the two Officers for attending and hoped that they would keep the Council up to date with any progress or issues.

Inspector Honeyman thanked the Council for the opportunity given for them to attend and discuss current issues.

#### **187. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

#### **188. MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor Mrs. V.M. Raw and

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council, held on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **189. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements from the Mayor and Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED** – that the information be received.

#### **190. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

##### **(a) Environment Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor M. Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor M. Iveson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

##### **(b) Recreation Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, seconded by Councillor M. Iveson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

**(c) Policy and Resources Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 be received and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted subject to the following:-

**Minute No. 146 (a) – Acorn Community Association**

It be noted that the seconder to the proposed amount of £500 being donated was Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp and not Councillor M. Ashcroft.

**191. FINANCE MANAGER RECRUITMENT - UPDATE**

The Finance Manager submitted a report setting out options in relation to the recruitment process for the Finance Manager's post. This action was necessary as only four applications had been received from the initial job advertisement. Two of the candidates met most of the criteria set out in the person specification but had limited experience of working in local government sector finance. The other two applicants did not meet the criteria of the position.

Members were asked to consider the following options in relation to the Finance Manager recruitment process:-

1. Interview the two appropriate candidates from the initial batch of applications for the job and seek to appoint one of these individuals.
2. Extend the deadline for receipt of applications until the end of December and re-advertise in the hope of receiving further applications.
3. Consider adding a 'market supplement' to the grade of the post to provide the option of paying a salary more in line with the 'market rate' for similar positions in other Town Councils and Principal Councils.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That a 'market supplement' be added to the grade of the post to provide the option of paying a salary more in line with the 'market rate' for similar positions in other Town Councils and Principal Councils.
- (iii) That the appointment of Finance Manager be re-advertised and the vacancy deadline and revised timetable for the recruitment be agreed.

## **192. LAND AND PROPERTY MATTERS – VIRGIN MEDIA**

The Town Clerk had submitted a report to update members in regard to wayleaves given and required in the vicinity of the Council Offices and Council Depot sites.

One of the wayleaves was required from the public highway utility strip to the mast located in the Council Depot. The second wayleave is required from the public highway utilities strip into the Council Offices to provide the dedicated line for internet and wifi purposes.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Town Clerk's action in entering into the two formal wayleaves be endorsed.

## **193. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT – DECISION NOTICE**

The Town Clerk submitted a report to advise the Council of the decision in respect of a Code of Conduct complaint which had been made against Councillor Paul Symons.

The decision notices had been sent to the person making the allegation, the Member against whom the allegation was made and the Town Clerk.

The Governance Solicitor had determined that local resolution is required in respect of the complaint. The Member is to provide an apology to the Complainant for the offence caused as a result of their account being hacked and that training from the Clerk on the use of social media and security settings to minimise risks of accounts being hacked again be undertaken within three months of the date of the decision notice.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That Councillor Paul Symons is to provide an apology to the Complainant.
- (iii) That training be provided to Councillor Paul Symons on the use of social media and security settings within three months of the date of the decision notice published on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

## **194. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT**

The Town Clerk had submitted a report to advise the Council that a Code of Conduct complaint had been made against a Member of the Council and is pending an investigation by Durham County Council Governance Solicitor (Ref. Standing Order No. 32 – Code of Conduct.)

The Monitoring Officer had received a complaint that Councillor Mrs. I. Hewitson had breached the Council's Code and will consider and decide if any action should be taken.

**RESOLVED** – that the information be received.

## **195. ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT – A167**

Information had been submitted seeking support in regard to reviewing Motor Vehicle (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999 by the Driver Medical Group of the DVLA in regard to time frames associated with the surrender of driver licences as recommended by the Assistant Coroner for County Durrham and Darlington following the tragic fatal accident which had occurred in 2019.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary and seconded by Councillor Mrs. V.M. Raw that the Council write a letter of support to the Driver Medical Group for DVLA for the reviewing of the time frames for licences being readmitted to persons

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the Council write a letter of support to the Driver Medical Group for DVLA for the reviewing of the time frames for licences being reissued.

## **196. OUTSIDE BODIES**

To receive reports from representatives on the following Outside Bodies:

- (a) **Youth Council**  
No meeting.
- (b) **County Durham Association of Local Councils**  
No meeting.
- (c) **Aycliffe Village Community Association**  
No report.
- (d) **Woodham Village Community Association**  
No meeting.
- (e) **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee**  
No meeting.
- (f) **Larger Local Councils' Forum**  
Councillor R.S. Fleming reported on the virtual meeting which had taken place on the 19 November 2020.
- (g) **Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society**  
Councillor I. Gray gave an update report.
- (h) **Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve**  
Councillor I. Gray gave an update report.
- (i) **Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**  
Councillor Dave Hardaker gave an update report.
- (j) **GAMP – Community Safety Task Group**  
No report.

**CHAIRMAN.**