

## **COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022 – 7.15 p.m.**

Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022** at **7.15 p.m.**

### **PRESENT**

**Councillor Mrs. Sandra Haigh (Chairman)**

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, Bob Fleming, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Kate Hopper, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Andrea Miller, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Maureen Shelton, and John Woodward.

### **OFFICERS**

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs. T. Woodhead (Finance Manager)

Mrs. S. Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

**A minute silence was observed in memory of the late Councillor Barbara Clare.**

### **95. NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

### **96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Bergg, Phillip Hawkins, Wendy Hillary, and Michael Stead.

### **97. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS**

There had been no requests for dispensations under disclosable or non - disclosable interests.

### **98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **99. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

## 100. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming and

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 101. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor submitted a list of appointments which had been attended for the period up to 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The Town Clerk advised members that on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January, a farewell presentation will be held for the retirement of the Corporate and Policy Officer, which the Mayor will be attending shortly after 1pm.

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

## 102. COMMITTEE MINUTES

### (a) Special Policy and Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be received
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

### (b) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson, seconded by Councillor George Gray and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be received
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

### (c) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be received
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

#### **(d) Policy and Resources Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be received
- (ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

#### **103. COMMITTEE VACANCIES**

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) The Environment Committee be reduced to 26 Members plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Ex Officio, Councillor Andrea Miller stands down from the Committee, and Councillors Tony Armstrong, Andy Hill and John Woodward be appointed.
- (ii) The Recreation Committee be reduced to 26 Members plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Ex Officio, and Councillors Andy Hill and John Woodward be appointed to the Committee.
- (iii) Councillors Lindsey Aston and Andy Hill be appointed to the Policy and Resources Committee.
- (iv) Councillor Tony Armstrong be appointed to the vacancy on the Personnel Sub Committee.

#### **104. USE OF VILLAGE GREEN BY THE COUNTY PUBLIC HOUSE**

The Town Clerk submitted a report outlining a request from 'The County' Restaurant and Public House for an extension of the licence to allow the continued use of a section of Aycliffe Village Green, immediately to the front of the establishment, for the siting of tables and chairs.

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming and

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) members receive the report and request from The County Public House for an extension to the licence to use part of the village green (VG64) for the purpose of siting tables and chairs for use as a beer garden.
- (ii) A twelve-month extension of the licence be approved based on the current licence conditions and limited to a year to be reviewed after 12 months.
- (iii) A further consultation with local residents be undertaken during the year at the end of the license condition period.

## 105. REQUEST TO PURCHASE LAND AT SCHOOL AYCLIFFE

The Town Clerk submitted a report for members to consider a request from a member of the public to purchase or lease a piece of Town Council owned land, off School Aycliffe Lane, close to West Cemetery and the Oak Leaf Golf Course.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) the request to purchase the land is rejected.
- (ii) the Council re-confirms its general principle on land sales that it will only consider a request for the purchase of land if it:
  - 1. Would tidy up a boundary; or
  - 2. Would be to the advantage of the Town Council and conform to its Strategic Aim *“To manage the Council’s finances and assets in a responsible manner”*.

## 106. 2022/23 PRECEPT SETTING REPORT

The Finance Manager provided a report seeking the approval of the Council for the setting of the Council’s 2022/23 Precept, thereby allowing the submission of the Precept Request Form to Durham County Council and the setting of the Town Council proportion of the Council Tax.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) the 2022/23 Council Precept at £1,746,869 is approved;
- (ii) the Precept Form be signed by the Chairman
- (iii) the Precept Form to be sent to Durham County Council on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022;
- (iv) Members note the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council’s balances and reserves.
- (v) Officers are thanked for the report and prudent way the finances are managed, which protects the Council and its services.

## **107. BANK MANDATE CHANGE**

The Finance Manager submitted a report seeking approval for an amendment to the Council's bank mandate, which is required as a result of the forthcoming retirement of the Corporate and Policy Officer.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) the required change to the Council's bank mandate is approved.

## **108. CLIMATE CHANGE – TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Town Clerk gave an update to Members in relation to progress in making the Town Council carbon neutral within an ambitious timeframe.

Councillor Eddy Adam thanked officers for a forthright and honest report and proposed that officers discuss the issue of climate change with CDALC/NALC/DCC in consultation with other town and parish councils with a view to obtaining further information and support. He recommended that that the progress should be ongoing with regular update reports from officers.

Councillor Arun Chandran further proposed that no immediate further actions are taken in relation to the development of carbon footprint and carbon reduction action plan and that the Council review the situation again in 12 months' time. It was further proposed that the Asset Management Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan capital budget provision is reviewed to provide for the potential costs of climate change.

Councillor Jed Hillary proposed that the potential revenue costs in relation to climate change are considered as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) the members receive the report;
- (ii) the officers liaise with CDALC/NALC/DCC and the consultancy company Genee to discuss progressing the Council's climate change response.
- (iii) no immediate further actions are taken in relation to the development of carbon footprint and carbon reduction action plan and that the Council review the situation again as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.
- (iv) Officers begin the process of factoring in the possible additional capital costs of tackling climate change in the next update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plan.

## 109. MEETING PAPERS – POSTAL SERVICE DELAYS

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report asking for members' preferred options for receiving their meeting papers during the temporary period of postal disruption.

Councillor Eddy Adam commented that with the climate change issues, email is efficient and a cost-effective way to reduce the councils carbon footprint and therefore encouraged members to use email on a trial basis.

Councillor Arun Chandran outlined the law regarding the delivery of Council meeting agendas and papers. The Town Clerk clarified that Councillors must give their permission if they wish to have their papers issued by electronic means.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) the members advise office staff of their own individual preference for receiving meeting papers during the temporary period of postal disruption.

## 110. OUTSIDE BODIES

Reports were given by representatives on the undermentioned Outside Bodies:

- (a) **Youth Council**  
There had been no meeting.
- (b) **County Durham Association of Local Councils**  
Nothing to report.
- (c) **Aycliffe Village Hall Association**  
Nothing to report.
- (d) **Woodham Village Community Association**  
Nothing to report.
- (e) **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee**  
There had been no meeting.
- (f) **Larger Local Councils' Forum**  
There had been no meeting.
- (g) **Newton Aycliffe Bus Preservation Society**  
Councillor Ian Gray delivered an update report.
- (h) **Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve**  
Councillor Ian Gray gave an update to members advising that the Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve is to be discontinued.
- (i) **Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**  
There had been no meeting.
- (j) **Western Area Partnership**  
Councillors George Gray and Martin Ashcroft provided an update.

**CHAIRMAN.**