

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2021 – 8.15 p.m.

Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2021** at **8.15 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs. Sandra Haigh (Chairman)

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Jim Atkinson, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Maureen Shelton, and Michael Stead.

OFFICERS

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs. S. Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

Miss Amanda Donald (Town Clerk's P.A)

The Chairman welcomed back Councillor Maureen Shelton and advised that, as a result of her attendance, Items 13-17 would be removed from the Agenda.

82. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bob Fleming, Phillip Hawkins, and Andrea Miller.

84. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

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

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Peter Bergg declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10 (Greenfield Community College Consultation) as the Chairman of the Asset Management Trust linked to the college.

Councillors Joanne Jones and Neville Jones declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10 (Greenfield Community College Consultation) as their company runs the school bus contract for the school. It was advised that Councillors Joanne Jones and Neville Jones would leave the meeting when this item is discussed.

86. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following written public questions had been submitted by Mr. J.D. Clare:

“At its Full Council meeting of 12th June 2019, the Town Council resolved to:

- 1. Declare a ‘Climate Emergency’; and*
- 2. Adopt targets and actions which will make significant progress towards making Great Aycliffe Town Council carbon neutral within an ambitious timeframe”.*

It is appreciated that Covid, and changes at the Council, have unavoidably delayed progress on this. However, in accord with the government’s recently published ‘Net-Zero’ plans, and given the heightened urgency afforded this issue by COP26:

- 1. What is the Town Council currently doing to mitigate its climate impact?*
- 2. What is the Town Council currently doing to adapt to the weather and environmental impacts expected to accompany climate changes in our region?*
- 3. What is being done to prepare a costed Climate Plan ‘with an ambitious timeframe’ which will allow Great Aycliffe Town Council to become carbon neutral”.*

The Town Clerk made a statement outlining the significant progress which had already been made by the Town Council in relation to climate change and the inevitable delays in making further progress caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. He further advised that significant further progress in relation to the calculation of a carbon footprint, preparation of a Climate Change Policy and costed Carbon Reduction Plan, including specific targets and actions, would involve substantial work, for which there may not be the capacity within the existing staffing structure of the Council. He advised that the Council may need to consider putting in place a Climate Change Reserve, specifically setting aside monies for both the capital investment that will be required to address climate issues, as well as the possible revenue funding of a dedicated officer, on a fixed term contract, to undertake the substantial initial work involved.

Councillor Eddy Adam thanked Mr. Clare for his questions and suggested that the Town Clerk bring a full report to a future meeting of the Council in relation to the issue of climate change. He also suggested that the Town Council may wish to consider declaring an ‘Ecological Emergency’ at a future meeting.

87. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Jim Atkinson seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 27th October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

88. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor submitted a list of appointments which had been attended for the period up to 1st December 2021.

The Chair made a speech recording her thanks for the work undertaken by councillors and officers regarding the high temperature thermal treatment facility planning application which has been refused at a Durham County Council Planning Committee Meeting this week. Thanks were expressed in particular to Chrissy Walton, the Council's Corporate and Policy Officer, who stepped in to cover the absence of the Council's planning consultant, County Councillors Neville Jones, Jim Atkinson, Ken Robson, Eddy Adam and Michael Stead, Town Councillor Carl Robinson, as well as the local businesses and members of the public who spoke at the meeting. A standing ovation was given in recognition of the councillors and officers.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

89. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 24th November 2021 be received
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(b) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 24th November 2021 be received
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(c) 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 1st December 2021 be received
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(d) Special Policy and Resources Committee

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

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on the 8 December 2021 be received
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

90. CODE OF CONDUCT DECISION

The Town Clerk advised the Council that a Code of Conduct complaint had been made against a Member of the Council. The Code of Conduct Complaint investigation has been completed by the Durham County Council Solicitor and the decision made.

The Solicitor had decided that local resolution is required in respect of this complaint.

RESOLVED – that:

- i) the report and Code of Conduct Decision Notice be received.

91. GREENFIELD SCHOOL CONSULTATION

Councillors Joanne Jones and Neville Jones left the meeting at this point.

A consultation document from Durham County Council had been received outlining the proposal to close the Sunnydale site of Greenfield Community College on 31 August 2022 and rebuild the Newton Aycliffe site.

A number of councillors expressed concern at the loss of a school in Shildon.

RESOLVED – that:

- i) the consultation document be received, and the consultation dates and response methods be noted for individual responses.

Councillors Joanne Jones and Neville Jones returned to the meeting at this point.

92. NEWTON AYCLIFFE MASTERPLAN

A consultation document had been received from Durham County Council outlining the draft masterplan for Newton Aycliffe. This masterplan sets out a vision and general principles for the future development of the town.

Councillor Arun Chandran requested that officers check if there are any issues in the Masterplan that conflict with Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan policies.

RESOLVED – that:

- i) the consultation document be received, and the consultation dates and response methods be noted for individual responses.

93. **MOBILE COFFEE UNIT – SCHOOL AYCLIFFE PLAYING FIELDS CAR PARK**

The Town Clerk provided information on a request to site a mobile artisan coffee business in the car park at School Aycliffe playing fields which is under the Council's ownership.

Members considered the proposal and the appropriateness of siting a mobile coffee takeaway unit in the football changing rooms car park.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft that the request be rejected.

RESOLVED – that:

i) the report be received.

ii) the request to site the mobile artisan coffee business in the car park at School Aycliffe playing fields be refused.

94. **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**

Councillor Arun Chandran had attended a meeting and there was nothing to report.

(c) **Aycliffe Village Hall Association**

This agenda item requested the appointment of a replacement representative to this outside body. It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson, seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran that Councillor Neville Jones be appointed as representative.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Neville Jones be the nominated representative for Aycliffe Village Hall Association.

(d) **Woodham Village Community Association**

There had been no meeting.

(e) **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee**

There had been no meeting.

(f) **Larger Local Councils' Forum**

Councillor Arun Chandran had attended a meeting and there was nothing to report.

(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 report.

(i) **Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**

Councillor Brian Haigh gave an update report.

(j) **Western Area Partnership**

Councillor George Gray gave an update report.

CHAIRMAN.