

## COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 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 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022** at 7.15 p.m.

### PRESENT

#### **Councillor Ken Robson (Chairman)**

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, George Gray, Ian Gray, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Kate Hopper, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Michael Stead and John Woodward.

### OFFICERS

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs. T. Woodhead (Finance Manager)

Ms. A. Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)

Mrs. S. Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

**A minute's silence was observed to show solidarity and support for the Ukraine during the ongoing conflict, recognising the bravery of its soldiers and courage of its people, and in honour of the lives already lost.**

### 111. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

### 112. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Clark, Neil Collinson, Bob Fleming, Brian Haigh, Mrs. Sandra Haigh, Wendy Hillary, Andrea Miller and Maureen Shelton.

### 113. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No dispensation requests had been received.

### 114. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Please note that *Councillors Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Lindsey Aston, John Woodward and Michael Stead declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 13 during the discussions on this Agenda Item, following a proposal to provide a donation to Community Spirit.*

### 115. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

## 116. MINUTES

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

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 117. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor submitted a list of appointments which had been attended for the period up to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022.

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

## 118. COMMITTEE MINUTES

### (a) Environment Committee

It was noted that the original minutes which had been circulated to Members with the Agenda was not the final version and the correct version had been circulated to Members separately.

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

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- i) That the redistributed minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 be received; and
- ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

### (b) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 be received; and
- ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

### (c) Policy and Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Martin 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> March 2022 be received; and
- ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

## **119. BUSINESS RISKS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23**

A report with a full list of current corporate business risks for the Town Council for the Financial Year April 2021 to March 2022 was submitted for approval.

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

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- i) That the report be received; and
- ii) That the Outturn Business Risk Register for the year-end 2021/22 be approved.

## **120. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

The Corporate Management Team submitted a report on the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control for the 2021/22 financial year for approval.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- i) That the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control in respect of the 2021/22 financial year is approved by the Council; and
- ii) That the review is taken into account in providing the assurance that the Council requires in order to approve the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement, as set out in Section 1 of the 2021/22 Annual Governance and Accountability Return later in the year.

## **121. COUNCIL COAT OF ARMS**

The Town Clerk submitted a report providing Members with new information regarding the Council Coat of Arms / Crest and to request consideration of what actions the Council may wish to take in light of this information.

Councillor Arun Chandran provided background information and research to support the report on this issue.

Councillor Eddy Adam asked that the Town Clerk should seek to clarify the legal position and that the updated Council Crest design be approved if permitted by the College of Arms.

Councillor Peter Bergg thanked the work carried out by Councillor Arun Chandran and suggested that the Council should seek to have the Coat of Arms transferred.

Councillor Chandran suggested that officers should contact Homes England (the successors to Aycliffe Development Corporation) to ask if they would be prepared to pay or contribute towards the cost of formally transferring the Coat of Arms to the Town Council, pending a further report back to the Council on the issue.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- i) That the report be received;
- ii) The Town Council continue to use of the Coat of Arms / Council Crest as previously;
- iii) The Town Clerk to clarify the legal position in terms of using the updated Council Crest design provided by Councillor Chandran;
- iv) the Town Clerk approach Homes England to ask if they would be prepared to pay or contribute towards the cost of formally transferring the Coat of Arms to the Town Council; and
- v) a further report be submitted in due course with updated information.

**122. DCC CONSULTATION ON AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTY**

The Town Clerk submitted information received from CDALC advising the Council of a consultation from Durham County Council on an Economic Strategy for the County and how to get involved.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the information be received

**123. ITEM FROM COUNCILLORS CHANDRAN AND ASHCROFT - UKRAINE**

*Councillors Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Lindsey Aston, John Woodward and Michael Stead declared a non-pecuniary interest during the discussions on this Agenda Item, following the proposal to provide a donation to Community Spirit.*

Councillors Chandran and Ashcroft had submitted an agenda item requesting that the Council consider purchasing two Ukraine flags and flying these in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

It was noted that a local charity; Community Spirit are raising funds for a truck to take essential supplies goods such as baby food, nappies, sanitary products, non-perishable foods, bedding etc for the Ukrainian refugees in Poland.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that under the requirements of Standing Order 5(a)xxii, the Council agree to the suspension of Standing Order 4(a) in relation to motions requiring notice, in order to ensure that due process is carried out correctly in relation to the proposals being put forward in on this Agenda Item.

The temporary suspension of Standing Order 4(a) was agreed.

It was further proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that:-

1. The Council agree to the retrospective purchasing of two Ukrainian flags and demonstrates its symbolic support to the brave and courageous Ukrainian people by flying their flag on the Council flag poles at the Council Offices and St Clare's Church.
2. The Council agree to make an immediate donation of £1,000 to Community Spirit to facilitate further purchases of essential items for the refugees from the Ukraine conflict this to be added to a voluntary donation from our community. The making of this donation would be subject to retrospective approval at the Policy and Resources Committee in April.
3. The Council write to the Ukrainian Government showing its support for their bravery and to state our condemnation of the Russian invasion on their democratic state.
4. The Council writes to the UK Government expressing its concern at the slow pace of the visa application process for Ukrainian refugees and request that they allow those displaced to stay in the UK and commit to ensuring existing obstacles are removed immediately.

It was further proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft that a running item be included on the Policy and Resources Agenda to consider further donations if required.

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) The Council agree to the retrospective purchasing of two Ukrainian flags and demonstrates its symbolic support to the brave and courageous Ukrainian people by flying their flag on the Council flag poles at the Council Offices and St Clare's Church;
- (ii) The Council agree to make an immediate donation of £1,000 to Community Spirit to facilitate further purchases of essential items for the refugees from the Ukraine conflict this to be added to a voluntary donation from our community. The making of this donation would be subject to retrospective approval at the Policy and Resources Committee in April;
- (iii) The Council write to the Ukrainian Government showing its support for their bravery and to state our condemnation of the Russian invasion on their democratic state;
- (iv) The Council writes to the UK Government expressing its concern at the slow pace of the visa application process for Ukrainian refugees and request that they allow those displaced to stay in the UK and commit to ensuring existing obstacles are removed immediately; and
- (v) A running item to be included on the Policy and Resources Agenda to consider further donations if required.

#### **124. NOTICE OF PLANNING APPEAL**

A planning appeal notice was received from Durham County Council in relation to the construction of a high temperature thermal treatment facility for clinical and hazardous wastes.

It was requested that members consider approving use of the Consultancy Budget to engage ELG planning Consultants to represent the Council in the appeals process and at the public enquiry.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

**RESOLVED** – as follows:-

- (i) That the Council receives the planning appeal notice letter;
- (ii) That the Consultancy Budget is used to engage ELG Planning Consultants to represent the Council in the appeals process and at the public enquiry at an estimated cost of £950.

## **125. OUTSIDE BODIES**

Reports were given by representatives on the following Outside Bodies:

- (a) **Youth Council**  
There had been no meeting. The Corporate and Policy Officer advised that the Council is looking to start the Youth Council up again in September 2022.
- (b) **County Durham Association of Local Councils**  
There was nothing to report.
- (c) **Aycliffe Village Hall Association**  
Councillor Neville Jones gave an update.
- (d) **Woodham Village Community Association**  
There was nothing to report. Officers were asked to contact Woodham Village Community Association to confirm the dates of meetings.
- (e) **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee**  
There was nothing to report.
- (f) **Larger Local Councils' Forum**  
Councillor Arun Chandran gave an update.
- (g) **Newton Aycliffe Bus Preservation Society**  
Councillor Ian Gray delivered an update report.
- (h) **Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**  
There was nothing to report.
- (i) **Western Area Partnership**  
Councillors George Gray and Martin Ashcroft each submitted update reports on the improvements being made in the Western Area.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft explained that due to the meeting times changing he will be unable to attend future meetings and that he wishes to step down from this outside body.

**CHAIRMAN.**