

FULL COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2023 – 7.00 p.m.

Minutes of the proceedings of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2023 at 7.00 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Carl Robinson (Chairman)

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Peter Bergg, Arun M. Chandran, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Simon Hocking, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)
Mrs. Tracey Woodhead (Finance Manager)
Mr. Steve Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)
Mrs. Judith Thexton (Head of Leisure and Events)
Mrs. S. Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE

One member of the public.

Prior to the meeting commencing, Councillor Phillip Hawkins and Councillor Andy Hill presented the Council with an engraved salver commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Town, on behalf of the 'Around Town' radio show on Aycliffe Radio.

98. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

99. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Jim Atkinson, Dorothy Bowman, John Clark, Sandra Haigh, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Ken Robson and Anita Sparrow.

100. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

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

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

102. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

103. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill, and seconded by Councillor Lindsey Aston and;

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 1st November 2023 and the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Council Meeting held on the 22nd November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

104. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor provided a list of appointments for the period from the 27th October to the 6th December 2023. He thanked the Sedgefield 75 Swimming Club for their fundraising efforts on behalf of his charitable appeal.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the announcements be received.

105. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Special Policy and Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill; and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on the 15th November 2023 be received, and
- ii) that the minutes and recommendations be approved and adopted.

(b) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill; and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 29th November 2023 be received, and
- ii) that the minutes and recommendations be approved and adopted.

(c) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Gray, and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill; and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 29th November 2023 be received, and
- ii) that the minutes and recommendations be approved and adopted.

(d) Policy and Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and 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 6th December 2023 be received, and
- ii) that the minutes and recommendations be approved and adopted.

106. YOUTH COUNCIL

The Town Clerk presented a report from the Corporate Management Team requesting members to consider the future of Great Aycliffe Youth Council in its current format, and to consider options and ideas as to how it wishes to engage with young people going forward.

Councillor Eddy Adam thanked the officers for an excellent report and stated that the Youth Council as it is at the present time is not working. He proposed that the recommendations set out in the report be agreed and that the Council agree to disband the Youth Council in its current form, agree to the inclusion of a dedicated youth section in the forthcoming townwide survey, and identify additional means of engaging with younger members of the community, for example, via electronic means or social media. He further proposed that officers investigate the feasibility of developing a Parish Youth Discussion Panel and seek to establish links with Durham County Council's Youth Council.

Councillor Jed Hillary suggested that the Council could link into already established School Councils and Forums.

Councillor Tony Armstrong spoke in support of the proposals and the importance of ensuring effective youth engagement, particularly if the Youth Council, in its current format, is to be disbanded. He also advised that a local youth organisation; The Cornforth Partnership may be keen to work with the Town Council and establish links via an outside body representative.

A lengthy debate took place regarding safeguarding issues and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for councillors.

The Chairman and Town Clerk clarified that there was nothing in the report, recommendations or proposals regarding safeguarding issues and DBS checks and that if/when a specific need arises, officers would investigate the implications, and bring a report to the Council for a decision.

Councillor Arun Chandran seconded the proposal put forward by Councillor Eddy Adam.

Councillor Tony Armstrong requested a named vote.

A named vote was taken on the proposal with the following results:

For:

Councillor Eddy Adam, Councillor Martin Ashcroft, Councillor Lindsey Aston, Councillor Peter Bergg, Councillor Arun M. Chandran, Councillor Neil Collinson, Councillor George Gray, Councillor Ian Gray, Councillor Brian Haigh, Councillor Phillip Hawkins, Councillor Andy Hill, Councillor Jed Hillary, Councillor Wendy Hillary, Councillor Simon Hocking, Councillor Sandra Kirby, Councillor Brian McAnaney, Councillor John Moore, Councillor Carl Robinson, Councillor Michael Stead, Councillor Anne Woodward and Councillor John Woodward.

Against:

None

Abstention:

Councillor Tony Armstrong

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) that the report be received;
- ii) that the Great Aycliffe Youth Council in its current format be disbanded;
- iii) that a section be included in the forthcoming townwide survey specifically aimed at young people;
- iv) that increasing use of electronic methods of communication with younger members of the community be used;
- v) the Council is open to further methods of youth engagement which are deemed appropriate and workable, to be reported to future meetings.
- vi) officers seek to develop links with Durham County Council's Youth Council
- vii) officers investigate the feasibility of establishing a Parish Youth Discussion Panel in the future.

107. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Town Clerk submitted a request from Councillor Sandra Haigh requesting a leave of absence for ill health reasons.

It was proposed by Councillor Michael Stead, and seconded by Councillor Wendy Hillary that the request be approved.

It was added that members best wishes be forwarded to Councillor Haigh.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) that the request be received; and
- ii) that the Council approve a leave of absence until further notice;
- iii) that it be noted that the Councillor will not be claiming Members Allowance for the period of the absence.

108. AYCLIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL 2024

The Town Clerk submitted a report and an Event Application Form from Ayclive Events for members' consideration, requesting the use of the Council's Oakleaf sports pitches to hold the Ayclive Music Festival on Saturday 27th July 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill; that approval be given, in principle, to Ayclive Events to hold the event on the date requested, subject to the various assurances and requirements set out in the report being provided, and an appropriate licence being drawn up and signed. It was further proposed that the requests for the loan of the Council's fencing, barriers, and limited support from the Council's Tractor Driver to set-up and take down the event be agreed subject to appropriate conditions being written into the licence and any overtime being paid for.

Councillor Jed Hillary further proposed that the Council recharge the full costs of the Tractor Driver's time to the organisers. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and was agreed as an addendum to the original proposal by Councillor Eddy Adam.

Councillor Peter Bergg stated that he was happy to support the festival going ahead next year, as there is no cost to the Town Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill; and

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that;

- i) the report be received;
- ii) approval, in principle, be granted to Ayclive Events to hold a music festival at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex field on 27th July 2024 subject to SAG approval being given for the event, the various documents, assurances and confirmations referred to in the report being provided, and a licence agreement being drawn up and signed;
- iii) the request to loan and use the Council's fencing, crowd barriers and traffic cones be agreed, subject to the licence condition referenced in the report being implemented;
- iv) the request for 'limited support' from the Council's Tractor Driver to move and place a few of the larger/heavier items when setting up and taking down the site be agreed; and
- v) officers recharge the organisers the full costs of the Tractor Driver's time.

109. REPLACEMENT PARK PATROL VEHICLE

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report requesting members' consideration of the sale of two current park patrol vehicles and their proposed replacement with one electric vehicle.

Councillor Michael Stead suggested that the option of leasing an electric vehicle be investigated.

Councillor Arun Chandran suggested that in light of the extended deadline for the move to electric vehicles, the Council could consider purchasing the cheaper like for like diesel replacement.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the possible leasing of vehicles, EV battery capacities and the pros and cons of electric vehicles and the financial considerations including revenue and capital budget implications.

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

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that;

- i) the report and information be received;
- ii) the £18,000 budget provision for the replacement park patrol vehicle be brought forward from the 2024/25 Capital Budget to this financial year;
- iii) the officer's recommendation that an electric Citroen Berlingo is purchased from Bristol Street Motors at a cost of £27,749 be agreed;
- iv) officers are instructed sell the current two vehicles via sealed auction to gain maximum value; and
- v) any shortfall between the purchase price and the Capital Budget, plus the sales auction proceeds for the two existing vehicles, be met from earmarked capital reserves, via an additional capital budget approval.

110. ROYAL GARDEN PARTY NOMINATIONS

A note was circulated from the County Durham Association of Local Councils seeking nominations for the 2024 Royal Garden Parties.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor John Moore; and

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that;

- i) Councillor Ken Robson be nominated to attend the 2024 Royal Garden Party.

111. OUTSIDE BODIES

Reports were given by representatives on the undermentioned Outside Bodies:-

- (a) Youth Council**
There had been no meetings.
- (b) County Durham Association of Local Councils**
Councillor Arun M. Chandran advised that minutes are with the Town Clerk for information.
- (c) Aycliffe Village Community Association**
There is no Council representative on this organisation at the present time.
- (d) Woodham Village Community Association**
There had been no meetings.
- (e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee**
There had been no meetings.
- (f) Larger Local Councils' Forum**
Councillor Arun M. Chandran advised that minutes are with the Town Clerk for information.
- (g) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society**
Councillor Ian Gray gave a verbal update. Councillor Tony Armstrong commended Councillor Gray for his informative update.
- (h) Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**
Nothing to report due to Councillor Jim Atkinson not being present.
- (i) Western Area Partnership**
Councillor George Gray gave a verbal update and advised that he is standing down from this Outside Body.

CHAIRMAN.