

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL 2026 – 7.00 p.m.

Minutes of an **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL 2026** at **7.00 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Ken Robson (Chairman) and:
Councillors Tunde Akinsanya, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jaci Beddard, Tony Beddard, Richard Burchell, Arun M. Chandran, Neil Collinson, Luke Ellis, George Gray, Phill Hawkins, Richard Hutchinson, Sandra Kirby, Jackie McFadden Lewis, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Kyle Robinson, Brian Sowerby, Michael Stead, Tracey Williams, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr. Dan Austin (Town Clerk)
Mrs. Tracey Woodhead (Finance Manager)
Miss. Amanda Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mrs. Sharna Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE

Co-Option Candidates – Chris Clement, Sharon Hutchinson, Stephen Smith and Paul Symons

There were also two members of the public present.

The Chairman opened with a statement welcoming the prospective co-option candidates.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft asked everyone present to welcome the newly elected Councillor, Richard Burchell.

151. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dorothy Bowman, Brian Haigh and Andy Hill.

153. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

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

154. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

155. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

156. CO-OPTION CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

The candidates were each given five minutes to introduce themselves to the members and provide details of their background, experience and the reasons why they would like to become a councillor.

Members then had the opportunity to ask candidates questions.

A number of questions were asked including how the candidates would engage with the residents, how they would prevent anti-social behaviour in the town and how they would manage adverse social media.

157. CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLORS

The Town Clerk gave a brief statement to explain the voting process and confirming that each candidate met the eligibility criteria for standing as a councillor and advising that one candidate had withdrawn their application.

It was confirmed that there were two candidates for West Ward and three for Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall Ward.

It was advised that the meeting would need to take each vacancy in turn with Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall ward first, followed by West Ward.

Each candidate will require a proposer and a seconder and the vote will be by show of hands, only one vote per vacancy, and per person and the Chairman having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

In order for a candidate to be elected to the Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes (50% + 1 of the votes available) which based on attendance numbers for this meeting, would be 13 votes.

It was advised that in line with national guidance and the Council's Co-Option Policy, once the successful candidate has been declared, they will be immediately co-opted to the Council and asked to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, This would mean that the successful candidate for the Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall ward would be able to vote on the second co-option.

Councillor Arun Chandran requested a named vote.

The Chairman requested proposers and seconders for the candidates for the Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall Ward.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Phillip Hawkins that Sharon Hutchinson be co-opted.

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson, and seconded by Councillor Richard Hutchinson that Stephen Smith be co-opted.

It was proposed by Councillor Tony Beddard, and seconded by Councillor Tony Armstrong that Paul Symons be co-opted.

A named vote took place with the following results:

For Sharon Hutchinson:

Anne Woodward	Michael Stead
Arun Chandran	Neil Collinson
Brian Sowerby	Phillip Hawkins
Jaci Beddard	Richard Burchell
Jacqui McFadden Lewis	Richard Hutchinson
John Woodward	Sandra Kirby
Kyle Robinson	Tony Armstrong
Lindsey Aston	Tony Beddard
Luke Ellis	Tunde Akinsanya
Total: 18	

For Stephen Smith:

Carl Robinson
George Gray
John Moore
Tracey Williams
Total: 4

For Paul Symons:

Ken Robson
Martin Ashcroft
Total: 2

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that Sharon Hutchinson be co-opted to the Town Council to represent the Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall ward;

Councillor Sharon Hutchinson signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office then took her seat on the Town Council.

The Chairman requested proposers and seconders for the candidates for the West Ward.

It was proposed by Councillor Michael Stead and seconded by Councillor Luke Ellis that Chris Clement be co-opted;

It was proposed by Councillor Richard Hutchinson and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that Stephen Smith be co-opted;

A named vote took place with the following results:

For Chris Clement:

Anne Woodward	Michael Stead
Arun Chandran	Neil Collinson
Brian Sowerby	Phillip Hawkins
Jaci Beddard	Richard Burchell
Jacqui McFadden Lewis	Tony Armstrong
John Moore	Tony Beddard
John Woodward	Tracey Williams
Kyle Robinson	Tunde Akinsanya
Lindsey Aston	Sandra Kirby
Luke Ellis	Sharon Hutchinson
Martin Ashcroft	
Total: 21	

For Stephen Smith:

Carl Robinson

George Gray

Ken Robson

Richard Hutchinson

Total: 4

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that Chris Clement be co-opted to the Town Council to represent the West Ward.

Councillor Chris Clement signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office then took his seat on the Town Council.

Councillor Tony Beddard thanked the unsuccessful candidates.

CHAIRMAN