

FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **COUNCIL MEETING** of the Council held on **WEDNESDAY, 17th June 2026** at **6.00pm** at **Ferryhill Town Hall**.

PRESENT: Councillor: C Bihari (Chair)

Councillors: C Atkinson, V Collins, L Fellows, T Hewitt, C Johnson, K Lloyd, P Mountford, J Quinn

Officials: L Owens, Town Clerk
E Gildersleeves, Finance & Admin Officer
E Clark, Neighbourhood Manager
K Younghusband, Events & Projects Officer
S Hewitson, Committees & Civic Administrator

18.26-27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A Ferguson.

19.26-27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Bihari declared an interest in agenda item 12 – Members Initiative Fund Applications as he plays for the Miners Utd FC, he said he would leave the chamber for this item but members agreed that wasn't necessary.

20.26-27 MEMBERS' DISPENSATION

There were no members' dispensations in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

21.26-27 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SUBJECT TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY)

There were no members of the public present.

22.26-27 MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of:-

a) Annual General Meeting – 13th May 2026

Moved by Councillor C Atkinson, **Seconded by** Councillor C Johnson to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record. Councillor L Fellows pointed out minute number 15.26-27(c) is incomplete, once amended Members were happy to approve.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 13th May 2026 be agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the amendment to minute number 15.26-27(c).

23.26-27 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2025-2026

Members considered a report that was previously circulated.

Considerable discussion took place with members querying items of the budget such as:

Councillor J Quinn queried the following:

- Surtees Corner Miner's Lamp – cost of £31,009 is this everything or just our contribution. The Projects Officer confirmed that there was no cost to Ferryhill Town Council as grants were received to cover the full cost of the project, which are shown in the Income section.
- Christmas decorations – gone up by £2,000 – It was confirmed that this was due to work being carried out at Chilton Town Council and this is reflected in the income.
- Tree surgery – overspend on budget – as mentioned previously staff should be upskilled – the Neighbourhood Manager advised Members that staff had received free tree surgery training however, they had since left their employment and therefore new staff will need to be trained.

Councillor L Fellows asked about a clause being added to future contracts about repaying training costs if leaving FTC employment within 2 years of completing any training.

Councillor C Johnson raised the following queries:

- Insurance costs recovered – what is this - the Finance Officer confirmed this heading comes under a number of items and it is for insurance claims recovered.

Councillor T Hewitt queried the following:

- Computer rental – why rent? – The Finance Manager advised this is for annual computer licences such as Microsoft.
- Professional fees over £5,000 what is this for? The Finance Manager advised that this covers HR advice for the restructure.
- Allotment repairs seem to have double and water costs trebled, need to keep an eye on it
- Energy lighting is that not DCC - the Clerk confirmed this was lights on the A167 and this agreement has since come to an end.
- Why do we pay water for car park? Advised that this is for Highways drainage
- Keep an eye on gas & electric for Sports Facility – Fees don't cover this. Confirmed that Ferryhill Town Youth FC pay towards the gas & electric too. Councillor Bihari added that if the Council were to increase fees this would force clubs out.
- What are Equipment Inspection fees? – The Clerk advised that this was for things like Legionella checks & fire alarms etc.

Councillor C Atkinson reminded members that if they have any finance queries with regards to accounts or Statement of accounts/income the Clerk has previously asked that these be brought to her attention before the meeting enabling her to provide all the answers at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Members:

- a) Note the financial performance for the year 2025/2026 and the financial position at 31 March 2026.
- b) Approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the Annual Governance Statement, and note the answers given to each of the questions;
- c) Approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the Statement of Accounts for Ferryhill Town Council;
- d) Authorise the Chair of the meeting and the Responsible Financial Officer/Town Clerk to sign the AGAR in the appropriate places on pages 4 and 5
- e) Approve the placing of the Return and associated documents on the Council's website on Thursday, 18 June 2026, with the 30-working day public inspection period to start on Friday, 19 June 2026 and end on Thursday 30 July 2026 and
- f) Add into any future contracts a clause that any costs for training be repaid if an employee leaves within 2 years of completion of training.

24.26-27

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND INCOME

To approve the statement of accounts and income.

Councillor J Quinn queried the following the following items on the statement of accounts:

- Service Honda mower – is this a ride on mower or a machine?
The Neighbourhood manager confirmed this is a push mower.
- Defty's purchase of locks, keys etc – asked previously for breakdown of such invoices.
The Clerk confirmed she would provide a breakdown for the Defty's Invoices.
- Service repairs on renewables – it was queried what the payment was for.

The Projects Officer explained to Members that the original system installed, which included Solar PV array with battery storage unit, was fully operational and was saving the Council money however, to be able to sell any excess energy generated back to the Grid, wi-fi and a SMART meter were required. The Town Council had not been made aware of this initially and therefore works were being carried out now to enable this to happen going forward.

- Drainage charge car park – what period is this for – The Finance Officer confirmed this is an annual charge.
- Ultra trail cameras – these can be purchased cheaper on amazon – the Clerk advised these were a recommendation by the auditor & recommended by the warden.
- Union payments – the Finance Officer confirmed these payments are taken from staff wages.
- Purchase of dog bags – do we sell them?
The Finances manager confirmed we do sell the dog bags at a small profit, Councillor L Fellows confirmed income from dog bag sales is shown on the Statement of Income.
- Empty kiosk in Market Place – Is this in arrears
The Clerk advised that all rent was paid and the kiosk emptied before the tenancy ended.

RESOLVED

The Statement of Accounts & Income be received and the Clerk provide a breakdown of the Defty's invoices to Councillor Quinn.

25.26-27

TOWN COUNCIL'S VEHICLE

Members considered a report that was previously circulated.

Considerable discussion took place to decide the best option for the Council and whether a replacement van was needed, the Neighbourhood Manager confirmed that another van was needed.

Moved by Councillor L Fellows, **Seconded by** Councillor C Atkinson to go with option 1 and accept the settlement figure. Councillor Quinn asked if a service review be carried out of the Council vehicles and report be brought back to Council. Members agreed.

RESOLVED

That

- i) the settlement figure be accepted.
- ii) Option 1 be accepted - £298.66 per month over 60 months, plus 1 initial payment of £7,000.00 and the option of paying a final payment of £6,750.00 after 60 months to buy the vehicle.
- iii) a service review be carried out on the Council vehicles and a report be brought back to the next Council meeting.

26.26-27

REGENERATION OF KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD (BROOM REC)

Members considered a report that was previously circulated. Considerable discussion took place regarding the consultation and the plans for the regeneration of the field.

Members agreed that the regeneration should take place in two phases commencing with the replacement of play equipment. Members considered match funding towards phase 1 and it was suggested a minimum of 10%

match funding be allocated by Ferryhill Town Council towards Phase 1, this could be taken from the Town Council's Unallocated Reserves, Capital Receipts or a mix of both. Phase 2 match funding would be considered at a later date. The Events & Projects Officer said every effort would be made to minimise the level of match funding required from the Town Council.

Councillor J Quinn also asked if the bike/scooter humps could be spruced up at a minimal cost, in-house by staff.

RESOLVED

That:

- i) Members agree that the KGV Playing Field Regeneration Project be delivered in two Phases.
- ii) The Events & Projects Officer submit funding applications to the Landfill Operator and Local Networks at the earliest opportunity.
- iii) Members agree that a minimum of 10% match funding be allocated by Ferryhill Town Council towards Phase 1 of The KGV Playing Field Regeneration Project, with the contribution for Phase 2 being agreed at a later date, as the project develops.
- iv) If funding is successfully secured to deliver Phase 1 of the project, that a formal Procurement Process take place incorporating consultation with children and young People to ensure their needs are met by the project.
- v) Regular updates will be brought to Town Council Meetings throughout the Project.
- vi) Council staff look at sprucing up the bike/scooter humps.

27.26-27 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members moved the following motion:

"That in accordance with the provision of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the public and press for the remaining items on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to public interest."

28.26-27 ENDEAVOUR WOODCRAFTS CIC COMMUNITY VOICE ART PROJECT

Members considered a report that was previously circulated.

At this point Councillor C Atkinson declared an interest in the item.

Moved by Councillor J Quinn to accept the recommendations of the report but the matter be referred to the Events Committee to agree designs.

RESOLVED

That

- i) Members note the contents of the report.
- ii) the matter be referred to the Events Committee Members consider concept designs shown at Appendix 1 and offer constructive comments for Endeavour to consider, when producing a tryptic canvas for display at Ferryhill Town Hall.
- iii) An Official Unveiling Event be organised to celebrate the artwork created, with publicity being issued to raise awareness of the Community Voice Art Project.

29.26-27

MEMBERS INITIATIVE FUND APPLICATIONS

Members considered a report that was previously circulated.

As Councillor C Bihari had declared an interest in this item he didn't take part in any discussion.

Members considered both MIF Applications and whether to award a grant for their projects and if so, how much to award individual applicants.

After discussion it was decided to offer the Humble Garden CIC the full £1,500 that they had requested and the Miners United FC be offered £1,000 for a line marking machine. Members didn't feel it was appropriate to offer the full amount as the purchase of trophies should be made by funds collected by the club.

Members were made aware that some groups who have received funding had not returned the necessary monitoring form with receipts, making them ineligible for future MIF funding. It was **moved by** Councillor J Quinn and **seconded by** Councillor L Fellows that any organisation ineligible for MIF funding be ineligible for any Council funding.

RESOLVED

That

- i) the Humble Garden CIC be awarded £1,500 and the Miners United FC be awarded £1,000 from the Members Initiative Fund.
- ii) any group/organisation ineligible for MIF funding is ineligible for any Council funding.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7.45pm.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR.....

DATE.....