FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **COUNCIL MEETING** of the Council held on **WEDNESDAY, 29th July 2026** at **6.00pm** at **Ferryhill Town Hall.**

PRESENT: **Councillor:** C Bihari (Chair)

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

Officials: L Owens, Town Clerk
E Gildersleeves, Finance & Admin Manager
S Hewitson, Committees & Civic Administrator

Before the meeting commenced the Chair, Councillor C Bihari, brought to members attention that this would be the Clerks last meeting and took the opportunity to thank Leeanne for her hard work, she has been a brilliant Clerk and the Council are very grateful and wish her all the best.

30.26-27 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies were received from Councillors A Ferguson and C Johnson.

31.26-27 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Councillor J Quinn declared an interest in agenda items 8 & 9 – DCC Consultations on The County Durham Plan and Selective Licensing, he felt as his name will be on the report for the selective licensing, it wasn't fair for him to give opinion.

Councillor C Atkinson declared an interest in agenda item 10 – Honorary Burgess.

32.26-27 **MEMBERS' DISPENSATION**
There were no members' dispensations in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

33.26-27 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SUBJECT TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY)**
There were no members of the public present.

34.26-27 **MINUTES**
To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of:-

a. Full Council held on 17th June 2026

Moved by Councillor L Fellows to approve the minutes of the full Council held on 17th June 2026 as a true and accurate record

RESOLVED
That the minutes of the full Council meeting held on 17th June 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

b. Events Committee held on 14th July 2026

Moved by Councillor V Collins to approve the minutes of the Events Committee held on 14th July 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

RESOLVED
That the minutes of the Events Committee held on 14th July 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

35.26-27 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND INCOME
To approve the statement of accounts and income.

Councillor J Quinn apologised that he hadn't managed to get his queries to the Clerk before the meeting but raised the following:

- Page 1 – Grass seed – he advised that Football Clubs weren't happy with pitches, whilst he sympathised with the Clubs, this issue was down to the lack of rain, the grass isn't growing. Discussion took place regarding the pitch maintenance and whether seeding is the best option, the Clerk advised that the Pitch Maintenance Company had confirmed this was the best option. It is planned for staff to do some extra work on the pitches but with the current weather it was advised that it would be beneficial to wait, the work will therefore be carried out in approximately 6 weeks.

  Members were advised that goalposts are removed during pitch maintenance and a suggestion was made to fence off the area, members agreed that the installing fencing would leave dead patches of grass.

  It was suggested that a meeting be arranged with the teams that use the top pitch at Dean Bank.

- Repair ckt pav doors £648 – what is this? Cllr Bihari advised this was repairs to the main doors at the Cricket Pavilion.

- Repairs to mowers – appear a lot on the Statement of Accounts, Councillor C Bihari queried if the Council own these? The clerk confirmed we do, it was therefore suggested that the Council look at leasing – a review should take place.

- Page 4 – locks – spending a lot of money replacing locks, the Clerk advised that sometimes locks are misplaced by football teams and it is planned to start charging teams for missing locks, other options could be looked at.

- Refill Postage machine – what is this? It was confirmed this is the franking machine.

Chair: _____________

RESOLVED
That;
1. the Statement of Accounts & Income be approved
2. the Clerk to arrange a meeting with Ferryhill Town Youth FC and Ferryhill Athletic FC to discuss pitches
3. a review take place of machinery/mowers
4. football teams be charged for any missing locks that need replacing

36.26-27 BUDGETARY CONTROL TO 30 JUNE 2026 AND BUDGET UPDATE
Members considered a report from the Town Clerk and Finance and Administration Manager.

The Clerk gave a summary of the report, she advised Members that with regards to the change of use for Swann House, it was hoped this would be changed from residential property to business, meaning a saving could be made on Council tax, however she had recently been informed that this could take up to 1 year. Councillor J Quinn asked that the Clerk forward him an email and he would look into this matter.

Councillor L Fellows asked if the earmarked reserves for Duncombe Cemetery was a choice by Council and can it be moved. The Clerk confirmed this was the case.

Councillor J Quinn queried why there was a budgeted figure of zero in the solar panel heading for Dean Bank Sports Facility, however there was an actual figure of £1,438. The Clerk confirmed that no payment had previously been received for solar panels so that is why the budget figure was set at zero but the Council had now started receiving payments. This figure can now be used as a guide for the 2027/28 budget.

RESOLVED
That ;
1. Members note the financial position of the Council at 30 June 2026 and the financial projection for the year to 31 March 2027.
2. The Clerk email Cllr J Quinn regarding the change of use for Swann House

37.26-27 CONSULTATION – DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY DURHAM PLAN
Members considered a report which was previously circulated.

Councillor J Quinn reminded members that this is an important piece of work.

Councillor C Bihari encouraged members to complete the survey as individuals and the Clerk also submit a response on behalf of the Council.

It was agreed that members complete the survey individually and Councillors also email the the Clerk with any comments to enable the Clerk to send a collective response from the Town Council.

The Clerk advised that a collective response does hold more weight as a Council.

Chair: _____________

RESOLVED
That members should complete the survey individually and and Councillors also email the the Clerk with any comments to enable the Clerk to send a collective response from the Town Council.

38.26-27 CONSULTATION – DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, SELECTIVE LICENSING
Members considered a report which was previously circulated.

It was agreed that members complete the survey individually and the Council also submit a response, members should email any comments to the Clerk as soon as possible.

RESOLVED
That members should complete the survey individually and the Clerk to submit a response on behalf of the Council and members should get any comments to the Clerk as soon as possible.

39.26-27 HONORARY BURGESS
Members considered a nomination from Councillor P Mountford to appoint Mr Peter Atkinson as an Honorary Burgess of Ferryhill for his service as a Town Councillor and County Councillor for many years as well as his involvement in various local organisations.

RESOLVED
That Mr Peter Atkinson be appointed as an Honorary Burgess of Ferryhill and be invited along to the presentation evening in September 2026.

40.26-27 FILMING OF MEETINGS
Members considered a report which was previously circulated and discussed the methods available for filming meetings.

Members agreed to the filming of meetings using the Owl system which retails between £999 and £1500, this will have no cost implications for the Town Council as Councillor J Quinn had agreed to fund this project from his Neighbourhood Budget.

Considerable discussion took place and it was agreed that Council meetings not be broadcast live, but instead the meetings be recorded and uploaded to you tube within 24 hours, with a link being added to the meetings page on the Council website, this seems to be the method other Council's use too.

Concerns were raised about editing to recordings, monitoring the uploaded recordings to protect Members and also making any members of the public in attendance at meetings aware that recordings will be taking place. It was agreed that a policy be drafted to include all issues raised.

It was suggested that the policy be brought to a Council meeting by the new Clerk, giving members the opportunity to make additions.

RESOLVED
That the Clerk look into purchasing the Owl system at a cost of approximately £1,500, costs to be covered by Councillor J Quinn and new policy be drafted and brought back to Members for approval.

41.26-27 VEHICLE USAGE
Members considered a report from the Neighbourhood Manager which was previously circulated.

Councillor J Quinn expressed his concern that this was not a service review as requested and not enough depth to the report. He also commented that it would have been useful if the Neighbourhood Manager had been in attendance to answer any questions.

Members therefore asked the Clerk for her opinion on whether it was viable to lose a vehicle and, if so, how much could the Council gain from this. The Clerk confirmed that in her opinion the van isn't required and this could possibly bring in approximately £6,500.

Councillor J Quinn pointed out extra savings that could be made from losing the vehicle such as insurance costs, mot, service, repairs etc. He also stated that he doesn't know of any local Council's that have a 1:1 Staff/Vehicle ratio. Councillor L Fellows added that if this vehicle had previously been used by the Works Supervisor and this role was no longer, why is it needed now.

Councillor C Bihari proposed that a further report be brought back to Council and the Neighbourhood Managers view be sought.

RESOLVED
That a more detailed report be brought back to Council and the Neighbourhood Manger be available to give her view.

42.26-27 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."

At this point Mrs S Hewitson left the meeting.

43.26-27 MINUTES
To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of:-
a. HR Committee held on 19 January 2026
b. HR Committee held on 20 February 2026
c. HR Committee held on 13 March 2026
d. Disciplinary and Grievance Appeals Committee held on 28 May 2026
e. HR Committee held on 10 June 2026
f. Disciplinary and Grievance Appeals Committee held on 10 June 2026

Chair: _____________

RESOLVED
That all of the Committee Minutes detailed above be approved as an accurate and true record.

44.26-27 UPDATE ON THE ROLE OF TOWN CLERK RECRUITMENT UPDATE

The Chair of the Human Resources Committee, Councillor Fellows, updated Members on the interviews for the position of Town Clerk which had been held on 24 July 2026. Four candidates had been invited for interview but one withdrew before the interview date and one withdrew on the day of the interview, leaving two candidates to be interviewed. The candidates were first asked to summarise their careers to date, highlighting areas which they thought most relevant to the post, followed by a number of questions relevant to the job.

The HR Committee agreed to recommend to the Council the appointment of Mr Alan Shaw.

It was **RESOLVED**, and agreed unanimously, that:

a) The post of Town Clerk be offered to Mr Alan Shaw;
b) The salary range for the post be confirmed as Scale LC3, Points 37 to 45, with a pay award pending from 1 April 2026;
c) The starting salary for Mr Shaw be Point 44;
d) In accordance with the Contract of Employment agreed by the Council, progression through the salary scale will be incremental, with the first increment being paid on 1 April 2028;
e) Six months priorities be discussed and agreed with Mr Shaw and reviewed regularly with appropriate Members.
f) In the interim until the new Town Clerk commences employment, which will be the 2nd November 2026, the Finance & Administration Manager will cover the role of Town Clerk and be paid an honorarium in line with the policy.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7:15pm.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR...

DATE…………………………………………………………..