

FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **COUNCIL MEETING** of the Council held online via Zoom, on **WEDNESDAY, 9 December 2020 at 7.00p.m.**

PRESENT: *Councillor:* J Makepeace (Chair)

Councillors: C Atkinson, P Atkinson, G Barker, J Cansella, K Conroy, D Farry, K Graham, N Jones, J Lindsay, Z Roddam, L Smith, R Smith, C Walton, C Woods

Officials: D. Anderson, Town Clerk
D. Shingleton, Consultant Accountant
S. Hewitson, Committees & Civic Administrator

35.20-21 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors K Campbell and M Seymour.

36.20-21 **MEMBERS DISPENSATION**

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

37.20-21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Z Roddam declared a prejudicial interest in Item 10 on the agenda, as a Director of Endeavour Woodcrafts.

38.20-21 **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of:-

- 1) Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 18th November 2020.

Councillor K Conroy queried the accurateness of minute number 26.20-21 (b) and asked that a paragraph be added at the end of this item referring to comments made regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor J Cansella disagreed with the amendment as the minutes were a correct record. The Neighbourhood Plan was only mentioned during discussion and had no bearing on the resolution.

It was agreed that the Clerk check the recording of the November meeting and insert a reference to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Moved by Councillor R Smith, **Seconded by** Councillor J Cansella to accept the minutes subject to the amendment.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 18th November 2020 be agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the above amendment being made.

39.20-21 **MOTIONS**

Members considered the following motions:

a. **Moved by** Councillor K Conroy, **Seconded by** Councillor P Atkinson

Would this council consider the planting of more trees and appropriate plants to combat climate change?

Perhaps we could consider planting a tree for every primary school age child and involving the children to plant them. Councillors and members of the public could buy a tree and a small plaque could be erected with their names on.

Could we put greater consideration in choosing plants with our wildlife in mind. Bees, butterflies and hedgehogs to name a few are disappearing from our country side. Planting wild flowers and plants such as buddleia and flowers rich in nectar will encourage our butterflies and bees to thrive.

Hedges can provide valuable shelter for a whole host of wildlife, especially our hedgehogs which are in serious decline.

Perhaps we could give consideration to planting butterfly gardens within our parks they can be a great attraction for children.

This motion could be a start in our battle against climate change.

RESOLVED

That the motion be agreed and the Council also apply to Durham County Council for £150 tree grant.

b. **Moved by** Councillor Cansella, **Seconded by** Councillor K Graham

In light of the unprecedented difficulties and financial hardship facing parts of our community, particularly this Christmas, and in view of the sizeable projected underspend in this year's grants and donations budget; in accordance with the powers vested in us, as a Council, I move that this Council agrees to support the Ferryhill Food Bank with a donation of £1000.00, to be used at the discretion of the Food Bank's Management, and to be paid to them via bank transfer by no later than Tuesday 15 December 2020.

Councillor D Farry moved the following amendment to the motion, **Seconded by** Councillor R Smith:

That the words "that this Council agrees to support the Ferryhill Food Bank with a donation of £1000.00, to be used at the discretion of the Food Bank's Management, and to be paid to them via bank transfer by no later than Tuesday 15 December 2020", be deleted and replaced with:-

"that this council agrees to continued support of Ferryhill food bank as well as all organisations within Ferryhill who need financial support which would include the likes of Supportive, Enter CIC, Dean Bank Institute and its many groups within it, Little Treasures, Ferryhill Scouts and Guides, Ferryhill WI, Ferryhill Town Youth, Mainsforth Cricket Club, Ferryhill Bowls, 2000 Committee, Caring and Sharing Ferryhill Remembers, Ladder Centre Ferryhill Sports and Education Centre Mainsforth Community Centre, Chance Drama, New Dance Generation, Team Poppy, Ferryhill Resident Associations, Endeavour Woodcrafts and any other

organisation who need the Town Councils support within the guidelines of Ferryhill Town Councils grants and donations policy. FTC actively encourages the Foodbank, funding applications to be determined at the January meeting of the Town Council”.

Considerable discussion took place with Councillor Farry indicating that he had received information from the Foodbank stating that it did not need additional funding for the Christmas period. The Foodbanks additional needs at Christmas were however disputed at the meeting.

The Clerk was invited to comment on the validity of the amendment and whether it negated the original motion.

The Clerk commented that in essence the motion was requesting £1,000 to be donated to the Foodbank prior to Christmas to enable it to cope with additional demands of the Christmas period. Councillor Farry’s amendment, although rather wordy and replacing the majority of the original motion was recommending that all community groups operating in Ferryhill be given the opportunity to apply for funds within the Council’s grants and donations policy, to be considered at its January meeting.

It was suggested that the following would be more succinct and may remove the perception that the amendment negated the original motion.

‘In light of the unprecedented difficulties and financial hardship facing parts of our community, particularly this Christmas, and in view of the sizeable projected underspend in this year’s grants and donations budget; in accordance with the powers vested in us, as a Council, I move that this Council agrees to support the Ferryhill Food Bank as well as other community operating in Ferryhill and they be encouraged to submit applications, which could be considered at the January meeting.’

Councillor Farry and Councillor R Smith agreed to the above version of the amendment.

Following considerable discussion it was decided that a named vote take place on Councillor D Farry’s amendment to the motion:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
G. Barker	C. Atkinson		K. Campbell
D. Farry	P. Atkinson		M. Seymour
N. Jones	J. Cansella		
J. Makepeace	K. Conroy		
L. Smith	K. Graham		
R. Smith	J. Lindsay		
	Z. Roddam		
	M. Walton		
	C. Woods		
6	9	0	2

This amendment was defeated, a vote then took place on Councillor J Cansella’s original motion:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
C. Atkinson		G. Barker	K. Campbell
P. Atkinson		D. Farry	M. Seymour
J. Cansella		N. Jones	
K. Conroy		J. Makepeace	
K. Graham		L. Smith	
J. Lindsay		R. Smith	
Z. Roddam			
M. Walton			
C. Woods			
9	0	6	2

Councillors abstaining from the vote did so as the Council's policy regarding grants and donations was not being followed

The motion was therefore agreed.

RESOLVED

That Ferryhill Town Council support the Ferryhill Food Bank with a donation of £1000.00, to be used at the discretion of the Food Bank's Management, and to be paid to them via bank transfer by no later than Tuesday 15 December 2020.

40.20-21

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND INCOME

Members considered the monthly statement of accounts and income.

RESOLVED

That the Statement of Accounts and Income be received.

41.20-21

BUDGET 2020/2021

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk, Mr D Shingleton, Consultant Accountant presented the report.

Mr Shingleton was thanked for his report and it was **Moved by** Councillor D Farry to accept the recommendations of the report, that a three year Repairs & Maintenance plan be developed, for the January Council meeting be held on 20th January 2021 to allow Council to decide on the precept before Durham County Council's deadline of 22nd January.

RESOLVED

That:

1. The draft budget for 2021/2022 be agreed in principle.
2. Any further amendments be submitted in writing by no later than 6 January 2021 for consideration in accordance with Financial regulations.
3. The Ordinary Council meeting in January 2021 be brought forward and be held on Wednesday 20th January 2021 to allow Council to meet DCC's deadline for the receipt of the Precept.
4. A three year Repairs & Maintenance plan be developed in the longer term.

Mr Shingleton was thanked for his report whereupon he left the meeting.

42.20-21

POLICY REVIEW - GRANTS AND DONATION

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk.

Discussion took place around the definition of 'grant' and 'donation'. Grants being given for a specific purpose with payments made on receipt of paid invoices. Donations are given to support organisations general running costs.

Councillor Smith queried if the forms are designed so that it is clear if organisations are asking for a grant or a donation. The Clerk confirmed that the forms can be redesigned to make that clear.

Members discussed an upper limit for grants and decided that larger grants will usually not be made above £1,000. It was decided that this would not apply to the two applications on this agenda as the requests had already been received before the decision was made.

RESOLVED

That:

1. The grant/donation forms be reviewed.
2. The upper limit for grants be set at £1,000.

43.20-21

APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Members considered applications for funding from:

- a) Seconds Out Boxing Academy - Request for financial assistance of £1,287 to purchase an iPad and accessories.

RESOLVED

That Seconds Out Boxing Club be awarded a donation of £1,287.

- b) Endeavour Woodcrafts - Request for financial assistance of £2,400 to help towards rent increase for premises

Considerable discussion took place, Councillor J Makepeace informed the meeting that he had already provided financial assistance to Endeavour from his County Council budget and therefore the rent should be covered for the current year. However, the group could face the same problem in subsequent years if Durham County Council continued to increase the rent. It was suggested that a letter be sent to Durham County Council about the rent increase and suggest a peppercorn rent be given to Endeavour Woodcrafts.

Members also agreed that they would still like to support the group and as there had been an underspend in the grants/donations budget in the current year it was **Moved by** Councillor D Farry, **Seconded by** Councillor R Smith that as no more applications will be considered this financial year the remainder of the budget, which would be in the region of £1,662, be donated to Endeavour Woodcrafts.

A named vote took place:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
C. Atkinson			K. Campbell
P. Atkinson			M. Seymour
G. Barker			
J. Cansella			
K. Conroy			
D. Farry			
K. Graham			
N. Jones			
J. Lindsay			
J. Makepeace			
L. Smith			
R. Smith			
M. Walton			
C. Woods			
14	0	0	2

Councillor Z Roddam had declared an interest in this item and therefore did not take part in the vote.

RESOLVED

That the balance of the grants and donations budget (in the region of £1,662) be made to Endeavour Woodcrafts and a letter be sent to Durham County Council requesting that they charge Endeavour Woodcrafts a peppercorn rent for their premises at the Old Fire Station.

At this point in the meeting Members agreed to a 15 minute extension.

44.20-21 PROJECTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report updating members on progress made on ongoing projects, projects proposed at the Council meeting held on 19th February 2020. (Minute No 159.19-20 refers).

Members noted the position of each project against the key stages set out in the report, together with the cost or estimated cost, contractor and anticipated timescales, where known.

Members noted that an achievable work programme needed to be developed for the projects that had yet to be complete. Key factors would be the urgency of the project and the availability of funding. Projects that required external funding would require evidenced community support. The projects were listed in the report under headings of Essential, Desirable and Longer Term.

Members were requested to prioritise two projects to receive attention for the remainder of the financial year. It was noted that whilst it may not be possible to complete the projects within the financial year, attention would be given to progress them as much as possible.

Councillor D Farry moved that the following projects be prioritised:-

- Repairs to the perimeter fence at Dean Bank Park
- Extension of the dog walking area, Dean Bank
- Installation of living Christmas Tree at Ferryhill Station
- Consultation of 4G pitches.

Councillor K Conroy reminded Councillor Farry that the Clerk had only asked for 2 projects. Following a discussion the Clerk agreed that it may be possible to progress 3 projects.

It was **Moved by** Councillor D Farry and **Seconded by** Councillor J Cansella to prioritise the following three projects:

1. Repair the perimeter fence at Dean Bank Park
2. Extension to the dog walking area at Dean Bank
3. 4G Pitches - Informal consultations to take place

RESOLVED

That;

1. Progress on projects be noted.
2. The following projects be prioritised:-
 - i. Repair the perimeter fence at Dean Bank Park
 - ii. Extension to the dog walking area at Dean Bank
 - iii. 4G Pitches - Informal consultations to take place

At this point in the meeting Members agreed to another extension of 15 minutes.

45.20-21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members were requested to move 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 Councillor K Graham gave her apologies and left the meeting.

46.20-21 PROPOSED REVISION OF STAFF STRUCTURE (PARKS AND OPEN SPACES).

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk.

Moved by Councillor R Smith, **Seconded by** Councillor K Conroy to accept the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED

That:

1. The proposed staffing structure set out in Appendix 2 be approved.
2. Subject to the outcome of consultation, the revised job description for the Parks & Maintenance Officer be approved and assessed under the job evaluation scheme.
3. That Stephen Tolson (Agency Worker) be offered the vacant Parks & Ground Assistant's Post.

47.20-21 BUNGALOW PROJECT DEAN BANK PARK - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk updating members on the bungalow project. The intention was to provide members with monthly updates.

RESOLVED

That the information be noted.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.45pm.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR.....

DATE.....