

## **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024 – 7.15 p.m.**

Minutes of the proceedings of the **ANNUAL MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024 at 7.15 p.m.**

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Eddy Adam, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Simon Hocking, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

### **OFFICERS**

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)  
Mrs. T. Woodhead (Finance Manager)  
Miss. A. Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)  
Mrs. S. Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Four members of the public.

**Councillor Carl Robinson took the Chair for the meeting as the current Mayor.**

#### **1. APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25**

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill, that Councillor Ken Robson be nominated as Mayor for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

It was further proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson, that Councillor John Clark be appointed as Mayor for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

A vote took place with the following results:

Councillor Ken Robson - 10 votes  
Councillor John Clark - 15 votes

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor John Clark be appointed Chairman (Mayor) of the Council for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

**Councillor John Clark took the Chair for the meeting.**

#### **2. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The newly appointed Mayor made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**RESOLVED** – that the information be received.

*The Mayor thanked the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Carl Robinson for his dedicated service during his year in office and presented him with a small gift.*

### **3. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25**

It was proposed by Councillor Lindsey Aston and seconded by Councillor Michael Stead, that Councillor Joanne Jones be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

It was further proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson, that Councillor Neil Collinson be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

A vote took place with the following results:

Councillor Joanne Jones - 15 votes

Councillor Neil Collinson - 8 votes

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Joanne Jones be appointed Vice Chairman (Deputy Mayor) of the Council for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

### **4. NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

### **5. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS**

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

### **6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Eddy Adam and Jim Atkinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 19 and 20, regarding the review of the licence arrangements with Durham County Council for environmental area maintenance and winter maintenance, as they are both Durham County Councillors.

### **7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Tony Armstrong, Peter Bergg, Sandra Haigh and Phillip Hawkins.

### **8. MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and;

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Mayor's Announcements

The newly appointed Mayor, Councillor John Clark, thanked the Council for the honour of being appointed as Chairman of the Council (Mayor) for the year 2024/25.

He added that his chosen charity for fundraising during the mayoral year is 'Quinn's Retreat'.

### Town Clerk's Announcements

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Parish Meeting was on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 7.00pm at the Council Offices with a guest presentation from Green Arts and that all councillors were welcome to attend.

He further advised that the councillors appointed to the Larger Local Councils Forum under the Outside Bodies Agenda Item, would need to note that there is a meeting of the Forum tomorrow morning (Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May).

## 10. ANNUAL CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The Town Clerk submitted a report to provide Members with information regarding the annual review of the Council's Constitution and to seek the approval and adoption of any new items or propose amendments as appropriate.

The report set out information on each Article of the Constitution separately attaching the relevant Article where any amendments had been recommended:

It was specifically requested that Members agree the Civic Dignitary Invitation List for 2024/25 and consider whether the Council wished to undertake a review of the Member's Allowances Scheme during 2024/25.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and;

### **RESOLVED** – as follows:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the amendments to the various Articles be confirmed and the Constitution of the Council be re-adopted.
- (iii) That the Civic Dignitary Invitation List for 2024/25, be agreed and the Mayor to notify the Council at a later date of the two additional authorities within the County Durham boundary that he wishes to add to the List, if required.
- (iv) That a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme should be deferred until after the 2025 Town Council Elections.
- (v) That a full copy of the Constitution of the Council, be made available for Members in the Council Chamber.
- (vi) That it be noted the information be made available via the Council's Website.

## 11. REVIEW AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

The Town Clerk submitted a report requesting members' consideration of the appointment of Committees for the 2024/25 year including setting the numbers on the three Standing Committees of the Council; Environment, Recreation and Policy and Resources and the appointment of Members to those committees.

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

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

- i) That the information in the report be received.
- ii) That no additional committees be appointed.

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

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

### (i) Environment Committee

- (a) That an Environment Committee be appointed for the Municipal Year 2024/25.
- (b) That it comprise of 25 Members of the Council plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as Ex-Officio Members.
- (c) That the membership of the Environment Committee be:

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

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

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

### (ii) Recreation Committee

- (a) That a Recreation Committee be appointed for the Municipal Year 2024/25.
- (b) That it comprise of 25 Members of the Council plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as Ex-Officio Members.
- (c) That the Membership of the Recreation Committee be:

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

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

**RESOLVED** – as follows:

**(iii) Policy and Resources Committee**

- (a) That a Policy and Resources Committee be appointed for the Municipal Year 2024/25.
- (b) That it comprise of 27 Members of the Council plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as Ex-Officio Members.
- (c) That the membership of the Policy and Resources Committee be:

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Simon Hocking, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

**12. ADJOURNMENT OF COUNCIL MEETING**

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and seconded by Councillor Jed Hillary and;

**RESOLVED** – that the Council Meeting be adjourned to enable Special Meeting of the Recreation, Environment and Policy and Resources Committees to take place to appoint their Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Sub-Committees and Working Groups.

*Please refer to the Minutes of these Committees.*

**13. RECONVENING OF COUNCIL MEETING**

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and seconded by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and;

**RESOLVED** – that the meeting of the Council be reconvened following the completion of the meetings of the Recreation, Environment and Policy and Resources Committees.

**14. MEMBERS' ATTENDANCES 2023/24**

The Town Clerk submitted a list of members' attendances for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft advised that he had previously noted Councillor Sandra Haigh's attendance figures required adjusting to reflect the correct total.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this adjustment had been carried out and the correct version will be published following the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – that the information be received.

## 15. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2023/24

The Finance Manager submitted a report setting out allowances and expenses which had been paid to Elected Members during the Financial Year 2023/24.

**RESOLVED** – that the information be received.

## 16. OUTSIDE BODIES

The Town Clerk submitted a report for the Council to consider membership of, and representation on any relevant outside bodies.

### (a) County Durham Association of Local Councils

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that Councillor Ken Robson be appointed, together with the Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Councillor Wendy Hillary and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that Councillor Jed Hillary be appointed.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Ken Robson and Councillor Jed Hillary be appointed to the County Durham Association of Local Councils, together with the Town Clerk.

### (b) Aycliffe Village Community Association

It was proposed by Councillor Lindsey Aston and seconded by Councillor Nev Jones that Councillor Carl Robinson be appointed.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Carl Robinson be appointed to the Aycliffe Village Community Association.

### (c) Woodham Village Community Association

It was proposed by Councillor Lindsey Aston and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that Councillor Michael Stead and Councillor Lindsey Aston be appointed.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Michael Stead and Councillor Lindsey Aston be appointed to the Woodham Village Community Association.

### (d) Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that Councillor Arun M. Chandran and Councillor Peter Bergg be appointed, together with the Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Arun M. Chandran and Councillor Peter Bergg be appointed to the Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils Committee, together with the Town Clerk.

(e) **Larger Local Councils' Forum**

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee be appointed, together with the Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Arun M. Chandran and Councillor Jed Hillary be appointed to the Larger Local Councils Forum together with the Town Clerk.

(f) **Newton Aycliffe Bus Preservation Society**

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that Councillor Ian Gray be appointed.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Ian Gray be appointed to the Newton Aycliffe Bus Preservation Society.

(g) **Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor John Clark that Councillor Jim Atkinson be appointed.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Jim Atkinson be appointed to the Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway.

(h) **Western Area Partnership**

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that Councillors Arun M. Chandran and Ken Robson be appointed.

Councillor Ken Robson further proposed that Councillor Dorothy Bowman be appointed, which was seconded by Councillor Neville Jones.

There were therefore three nominations for two places and a vote then took place with the following results:

Councillor Ken Robson – 14 votes  
Councillor Arun M. Chandran – 16 votes  
Councillor Dorothy Bowman – 8 votes

**RESOLVED** – that Councillors Arun M. Chandran and Ken Robson be appointed to the Western Area Partnership.

(i) **Cornforth Partnership**

It was proposed by Councillor Lindsey Aston, and seconded by Councillor Jed Hillary that Councillor Brian McAnaney be appointed.

It was proposed by Councillor Jim Atkinson and seconded by Councillor Simon Hocking that Councillor Eddy Adam be appointed.

Councillor Arun M. Chandran asked that it be noted that Councillor Tony Armstrong had requested to be appointed to this outside body. However there was no proposer or seconder for this nomination.

It was further proposed by Councillor Ken Robson and seconded by Councillor Neil Collinson that Councillor Dorothy Bowman be appointed.

There were therefore three nominations for two places and a vote then took place with the following results:

Councillor Brian McAnaney – 17 votes

Councillor Eddy Adam – 17 votes

Councillor Dorothy Bowman – 9 votes

**RESOLVED** – that Councillors Eddy Adam and Brian McAnaney be appointed to the Cornforth Partnership.

**17. MEETINGS 2024/25**

A suggested schedule of Council meeting dates for the Municipal Year 2024/25 was submitted by the Town Clerk for consideration.

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

**RESOLVED** – that the list of scheduled meeting dates for the Municipal Year 2024/25 be approved.

**18. COUNCIL INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS REVIEW**

The Finance Manager submitted a report setting out the annual review of the Council's insurance arrangements, including a list of insurance claims made or received over the last ten years, as required by the Council's Standing Orders.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and;

**RESOLVED** – that the annual review of the Council's insurance arrangements and list of insurance claims over the last ten years as required by Standing Orders, be approved.



**19. REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS WITH DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL - LICENCE TO OPERATE ON DCC ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS**

The Town Clerk submitted a report setting out a review of the licence agreement in place with Durham County Council allowing the Town Council to operate on County Council environmental areas, as required by the Council's Constitution.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Jed Hillary and;

**RESOLVED** – that the report be received and that the licence is continued.

**20. REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS WITH DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL - WINTER MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENT**

The Town Clerk submitted a report setting out a review of the licence agreement in place with Durham County Council covering winter maintenance works, as required by the Council's Constitution.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and;

**RESOLVED** – that the report be received and that the licence is continued.

**21. REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF LAND AND BUILDINGS**

The Town Clerk submitted a report to provide a list of land and buildings under the Council's ownership and advise of any sales, acquisitions or leases entered into over the previous year as required by the Council's Constitution.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and;

**RESOLVED** – that the report be received.

**22. REVIEW OF COUNCIL AND STAFF SUBSCRIPTIONS TO OTHER BODIES**

The Town Clerk submitted a report with a list of subscriptions to other bodies currently paid on behalf of the Council and its officers for consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and;

**RESOLVED** – that the report be received with no changes proposed to the list of subscriptions.

**23. REVIEW OF COUNCIL EXPENDITURE INCURRED UNDER THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE 2023/24**

The Town Clerk submitted a breakdown of expenditure incurred by the Council under the General Power of Competence during the 2023/24 financial year.

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

**RESOLVED** – that the report and information be received.

## **24. COUNCILLOR TRAINING 2023/24**

The Town Clerk submitted a report to provide Members with information on the training provided to and undertaken by councillors.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be received.

## **25. POLITICAL GROUPS**

The Town Clerk requested that each Political Group on the Council advise who their Spokesperson(s) are for the information of Officers of the Council to enable consultation and co-ordination of information outside of Council Meetings.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- (i) Councillor Eddy Adam is the spokesperson for the Labour group with Councillor John Clark as deputy.
- (ii) Councillor Lindsey Aston is the spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats.
- (iii) Councillor Ken Robson is the Chairman for the Independent Group with Councillor Arun M. Chandran as Secretary.
- (iv) Councillor Jed Hillary and Councillor Wendy Hillary are also identified as nominated representatives for dissemination of information as independents.

**CHAIRMAN.**