

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 8th September 2011 in the Council Chamber, Clayport Street Alnwick at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs A Symmonds (Mayor), G Watson (Deputy Mayor), S Allcroft, J Bell, G Castle, K Gray, M Harrington, B Hewison, G Knox, K Moore, R Roberts, J Thompson, S Walton.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk.

The Mayor welcomed Bradley Sleeper, Professor of Business Law and students from St Cloud State University to the meeting.

Questions from the Public

Three St Cloud students asked questions of the council. These related to:

1. Responsibility for the footpath in the Pastures – Councillor Castle explained the difference between an adopted path and a permissive path. The Council agreed to write to Northumberland Estates as they were believed to be responsible, (the footpath between Abbeylands and the Pastures was also to be raised)
2. The perceived lack of litter bins in the town. Given that the town council may take over responsibility for litter bins in the future, it was agreed to undertake an audit in conjunction with NCC.
3. Speeding in the town centre. This was seen as a police responsibility.

C11/112. Apologies: Cllrs E Blakey, W Grisdale, S Patience, B Thompson and R Waddell

C11/113. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Castle declared a personal & prejudicial interest in item 10a (parking in the market place). Councillors Allcroft and Watson declared personal & prejudicial interests in item 12 (funding request by Alnwick in Bloom). Councillor Castle declared a personal interest in items 9 and 10b (local transport plan and 20mph speed limits). Cllr Watson declared a personal & prejudicial interest in the additional item regarding Alnwick Community Development Trust.

C11/114. Parking in the Market Place

The clerk updated the meeting on this issue. The police had indicated that they will be having a greater police presence in the area of the market place to deal with any obvious offences, but they cannot be there all the time. They also feel that the longer term solution will come about through decriminalisation of car parking. Paul McKenna from the Highways Dept. of NCC has indicated that the current controls are appropriate if enforced, but the County Council understands the difficulties of enforcement. He is currently looking to develop a range of options, which once finalised will be the subject of consultation. Andrea Perrett of Local Living addressed the committee; she suggested that due to safety concerns a more permanent arrangement was needed to restrict vehicles in the market place. Vehicles were causing difficulties for markets and events. A more workable order was required.

Tommy McKie, a local businessman addressed the committee, he was concerned about the possible pedestrianisation of the market place which would badly affect businesses. He felt that limited car parking, in properly marked bays, could be a solution.

Councillors debated the matter and points made included solutions has been proposed some 3 years ago but had not been followed up, other historic cities seem to be able to develop workable solutions, the police should undertake more enforcement, setting up and taking down market stalls with vehicles nearby could be dangerous as was the current mixture of cars and pedestrians in the market place.

RESOLVED: To invite Paul McKenna to a future meeting, once he has developed options for consultation.

C11/115. 20mph Speed Limits

This agenda item had been requested by Councillor Roberts. Councillor Castle outlined the background to the Swansfield Park Road trial, which he had funded and the County Council Policy on 20 mph limits. Councillor Castle stated that the evidence from this and other trials had not been conclusive. Generally members were in agreement that in certain areas, e.g. those with accident records and where residents had concerns, such speed limits may be appropriate.

C11/116. Olympic Torch Event 2012

Paul Larkin addressed the committee and outlined the fantastic opportunity that the torch event gave to showcase Alnwick around the world. As Chairman of the Alnwick torch event committee he outlined that it was the intention to have a week-long festival in the town ending on June 15th

On 25th August the local event committee had met to start preparations for the visit of the Olympic Torch. This was attended by The Mayor, Cllrs Castle and Watson and the clerk. At that meeting it was suggested that given the work involved and short timescales it would be beneficial to have a paid coordinator preparing for the event. The Town Council had been asked if they would be prepared to fund such a position and this would then enable local organisation to contribute to the actual events. The clerk suggested that as an illustration, costs could be in the region of up to £7,500 for 2011/12 and up to £4,000 for 2012/13 based upon approximately 15 hours per week. Such a post could be established as a town council employee. Members discussed the issue and were generally supportive. Councillor Roberts offered to assist with the recruitment process.

RESOLVED: To make budget provision of £7,500 in 2011/12 and £4,000 in 2012/13 to fund the position of event coordinator.

C11/117. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (14th July 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2011 were agreed as a true record.

These were agreed and duly signed by the Mayor.

C11/118. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

There were no matters arising.

C11/119. Mayor's Report

The Mayor's report for the period 28th June to 1st September had been circulated with the agenda. It was agreed that the Mayor would circulate councillors if he needed others to join him at events.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

C11/120. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of the following committees were tabled for approval:

- a) Planning, Highways and Transport Committee (9th June 2011)
- b) Planning, Highways and Transport Committee (14th July 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Highways and Transport Committees held on 9th June and 14th July were agreed as a true record.

C11/121. Alnwick Development Plan Update

The Alnwick Community Partnership Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group met on 2nd August and a meeting with NCC officers took place on 9th August. It was also reported that the outcome of the bid to DCLG to be a frontrunner project had been successful and this will ensure NCC resources will be available to assist in the plan preparation. A further meeting is planned with NCC officers to determine the exact nature of their assistance. Members were supportive of the need to progress with the plan and agreed that a budget of up to £5,000 be made available for 2011/12 to progress the plan, including initial consultation.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council endorse the production of a Neighbourhood Plan and up to £5,000 be made available in 2011/12 to progress matters.

C11/122. Local Transport Plan Priorities 2012/13

The County Council had invited the town council to submit its top three priorities for assessment and possible inclusion in the 2012/13 draft programme.

The town council priorities identified for 2011/12 were:

1. Provide mini-roundabouts Wagonway Road/South Road and Denwick Lane/Bondgate Without junction.
2. Improvements for pedestrians Stonewell Lane
3. Request for road widening and right turn lane at the service station on South Road.

None of the above schemes had been implemented. Councillor Castle expressed his dismay that the town council's top priority scheme had not progressed and furthermore that the initial NCC budget provision of £20,000 for the scheme seemed to have disappeared.

RESOLVED; That the Town Council's Local Transport Plan priorities for 2012/13 be confirmed as those submitted for 2011/12.

C11/123. Correspondence

The clerk reported that the following correspondence has been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
July	Alnwick in Bloom – request for additional grant to cover higher costs this year	Members considered this request
10 th Aug	Alnwick Lions – Request to be involved/support proposed St George's Day celebrations	Members considered this request.
August	CAN. CANe News	Available from the clerk
23 rd Aug	NALC AGM details 22 nd October	Available from clerk
30 th Aug	NCC – proposed removal of speed cushions between 1 & 24 Windsor Gardens	Members considered this.

RESOLVED: That the correspondence received be noted and:

1. An additional grant of £500 be awarded to Alnwick in Bloom.
2. The Council supports the proposed St George's Day celebrations.
3. The Council supports the removal of the speed cushions at Windsor Gardens.

C11/124. Financial Matters – Payments

The clerk reported that the following invoices had been received for payment:

Inland Revenue	£897.66	Tax and NI (Aug)
Wages Account	£4000	Transfer to wages account
Northumberland Estates	£55	Rent for Ratten Row
Chubb	£284.88	Extinguisher Service
TDC Waste Management	£107.94	Duty of Care Waste Transfer Note
Greenlay(Grass Machinery) Ltd	£92.24	Machine Parts
Alnwick Paint & Glass	£8.77	Materials
Alan Symmonds	£55.93	Civic gifts
Diamond Business Systems	£46.20	Service costs
TOTAL	£5,548.62	

The following payments had been made in August under delegated powers:

Inland Revenue	£905.11	Tax and NI (July)
Alnwick Community Dev. Trust	£3000	1 st Quarter payment for Community Partnership
npower	£216.92	Electricity Cemetery and Chapel
Northumbrian Water	£16.22	Water Supply Cemetery
TOTAL	£4,138.25	

The following payments are paid by direct debit and were reported for information		
BT	£83.84	Phone bills cemetery and cemetery lodge
	£78.65	Paid 28 th July and 28 th August

RESOLVED: a) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £5,548.62, and to note the direct debit payments of £162.49 and the payments of £4,138.25 made under delegated powers.

C11/125. Councillor Issues

a) **Councillor Castle – redundant, damaged and unsuitable signage**

Councillor Castle briefed members about the possibility of the Town Council assisting the County Council deal with the problem of redundant, damaged and unsuitable signage. This was something that could be looked into further by the Recreation and Amenities Committee. Councillors were supportive of the principle

RESOLVED: That the Town Council agree in principle to look at assisting the County Council deal with redundant, damaged and unsuitable signage.

b) **Councillor Hewison – state of the road surface in Bondgate Within.**

Councillor Hewison highlighted the poor condition of the road surface of Bondgate Within, which was made worse by patching with black/grey materials.

RESOLVED: to take this up with Northumberland County Council

C11/126. Any Other Business

a) Councillor Allcroft requested that a representative of the North East Ambulance Service be invited to the next meeting to discuss defibrillators in telephone boxes.

b) Councillor Moore asked that the County Council be requested to cut back vegetation at the A697 Moor House crossroads.

C11/127. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED: That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The following item was considered:

C11/128. Alnwick Community Development Trust

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.