

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 10th November 2011 in the Council Chamber, Clayport Street Alnwick at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs A Symmonds (Mayor), G Watson (Deputy Mayor), E Blakey, J Bell, G Castle, K Gray, W Grisdale, B Hewison, G Knox, K Moore, S Patience, R Roberts, J Thompson, R Waddell.

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

Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

C11/146. Sam Egdell, Mayor Alnwick 1994-95.

Councillors stood for a brief silence in memory of Sam Egdell, former Mayor of Alnwick (1994–95), who died on 16th October 2011.

C11/147. Apologies: Cllrs S Allcroft, M Harrington & S Walton.

C11/148. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Knox declared a personal & prejudicial interest in items 10 and 11 (former ACDT issues) and Councillor Castle declared a personal interest for any county council matters.

C11/149. Feedback from 2011 Alnwick Food Festival

Philip Angier and Karen Larkin from the Alnwick Food Festival attended the meeting and Mr Angier gave feedback on this years event. The event had been a major success, with an estimated footfall of over 30,000 people. Jean Christophe Novelli had been a major attraction. Feedback from stallholders and businesses had been good although only three local businesses had opened specially on Sunday for the event. Many day visitors had travelled 50-80 miles. The festival will carry forward reserves of some £8,000 towards 2012 and a similar festival, with some refinement is planned. Mr Angier thanked the Town Council for their financial support. Councillors were positive about the festival and thanked all organisers for their efforts. It was reported that the festival committee were keen to recruit another councillor to attend meetings.

RESOLVED; Councillor Geoff Watson be appointed to the Food Festival Committee.

C11/150. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (13th October 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2011 were agreed as a true record.

These were agreed and duly signed by the Mayor.

C11/151. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

Councillor Castle informed members that he had been asked by the County Council to attend a meeting of representatives of the neighbourhood plan front runners in London. He had tried to get town council representation, but this had not been possible.

C11/152. Mayor's Report

The Mayor's report for the period 14th October to 7th November had been circulated with the agenda. He reminded members of the Remembrance Sunday Service on 13th November and the Carol Service on Monday 19th December.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

C11/153. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee (13th October 2011) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Highways and Transport Committee held on 13th October were agreed as a true record.

C11/154. Special Motion to reconsider the Hotspur Statue

At the last council meeting it had been resolved not to take on the ownership and responsibility of the Hotspur Statue. A special motion had been received, signed by 6 councillors (Councillors Hewison, Castle, Gray, Moore, Harrington and Blakey) asking for this decision to be reconsidered. The motion asked for the matter to be returned the agenda as an item and that reasoned debate be given as to ownership and responsibility with a view to changing the decision taken by the council on the 13th of October 2011. To assist the debate the clerk had looked into the cost of insurance and maintenance. The council's current insurance policy was due for renewal on 1st June 2012. The quote of insuring the statue for all risk until the renewal date was £108.65 and for impact only £73.81. The policy carries an excess of £125. In terms of future maintenance, to protect the statue and assist with the retention of the original colour required the application of a wax from time to time – perhaps every two or three years. This did not need doing at present. A single treatment would cost in the region of £500, although the original sculptor had agreed to do this for £200 - £300. Councillors debated the matter and whilst some indicated residents were keen to take on the statue others claimed there was little interest. Some argued that the level of expenditure required was low whilst other suggested it was not the best use of public money. It was also suggested that consideration be given to future maintenance cost when this became necessary, rather than at present.

RESOLVED: The council take on the ownership and responsibility for the Hotspur Statue, including all risks insurance and the issue of future maintenance be reviewed at the appropriate time.

C11/155. Other ACDT issues

At the last meeting of the council it was agreed to take on the ownership and responsibility for town map cases and two seats in the market place. A decision was now required on the insurance of these items of street furniture. A similar decision was required in relation to two seats being transferred to the council. These seats were made under a special community project at a cost of some £11,000.

The clerk had been advised by the administrator that the bond lodged with the Trust by the former Ragged School Foundation to help those who require assistance with schooling and for example school uniforms, was protected. The administrator had asked for views on how this can be administered in the future. The Alwick and Denwick Relief in Need Charity, had charitable objects which could cover this and to a slightly lesser extent the St Paul's Educational Trust could also be a possible home. Whilst any decision will be a matter for the trust in question, the views of councillors were requested.

Some councillors had been concerned that the Trust going into administration would have had consequences for the Alwick Community Centre funds. Members were reassured that there is no question of the Community Centre funds being placed in jeopardy and that appropriate accounting and line management arrangements were to be implemented to ensure that these funds are fully accessible by the Youth and Community worker, as before.

RESOLVED: That the map cases and seats be insured all risks and Councillors recommend that the most appropriate future location of the former Ragged School Foundation Bond, be the Alwick and Denwick Relief in Need Charity.

C11/156. Defibrillators in Telephone Boxes

At the last meeting of the council a presentation was made about placing defibrillators in decommissioned telephone boxes. A suitable telephone box in Cedar Grove had been identified by the North East Ambulance Service. Under the scheme, NEAS defibrillator equipment will be placed in a locked cabinet in the phone box and will be able to be accessed by a member of the public once they are given a security code. BT provide the cabinet and pay for the first 7 years electricity costs. A local organisation, such as a local council, takes responsibility for the phone box, then pays the electricity costs estimated at £35 per year after year 7 and is required to do regular checks of the equipment. Councillors discussed participation in the scheme and whilst most thought the scheme worthy of support, some were concerned about potential vandalism in the chosen location.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council participates in the scheme.

C11/157. Proposed transfer of services from Northumberland County Council.

The clerk had circulated a draft response to the revised Northumberland Charter for Local Councils. This draft was outlined. Members were keen to ensure that prior to the handover of any allotments or play areas they are brought up to standard. A query was also raised about the possible transfer of the Community Orchard lease from NCC.

RESOLVED: to agree the response, and any further comments to be submitted to the clerk before the next meeting.

C11/158. Winter Service Plans

At the last meeting of the council it had been agreed to include winter service plans on the agenda for discussion. Councillors attention was drawn to the fact that NCC is unable to fulfil all requests for new grit bins (approx. 200 requests were outstanding). They have therefore proposed that Parish Council's will be offered a package of £200 per additional/new bin which will include the bin, delivered full, and then 2 additional refills over the winter period. It would be for the Parish Council to decide the location with support from officers. Councillors were keen to look at a volunteer scheme for snow removal and also to ensure that shopkeepers were aware of their responsibilities and the liability issues, regarding shop fronts.

RESOLVED: To refer Winter Plan preparation to the Recreation and Amenities Committee.

C11/159. Pedestrian Priority for Narrowgate

Councillor Hewison outlined that having pedestrian priority in Narrowgate would be better than the present arrangement. Shops in that area were reporting low footfall and trading was difficult. It was agreed to discuss this further with the Chamber of Trade and local businesses.

RESOLVED: To facilitate a meeting with the Chamber of Trade and local businesses regarding establishing pedestrian priority for Narrowgate.

C11/160. Bailiffgate Museum – Request for a Trustee from the Town Council.

Bailiffgate Museum had asked if a Town Councillor would like to be appointed as a Trustee, as they would find it helpful to have a Town Councillor linked to the museum.

RESOLVED: Councillor Bill Grisdale be put forward as a Trustee of the Bailiffgate Museum.

C11/161. Correspondence

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

Date	Detail	Action
14/10	CANNY news Oct 11. Community Action Northumberland	Available from the clerk on request
14/10	Changes to bus services service 406 & 813	Available from the clerk on request
Oct/Nov	Various Grant applications for 2012/13	To be considered by the next finance committee
2/11	Info. on Rural Energy Champions project – training organised for 10 th December	Any interested councillors to contact the clerk

RESOLVED: That the correspondence received be noted.

C11/162. Financial Matters – Payments

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

Inland Revenue	£862.57	Tax and NI (Oct)
Wages Account	£4000	Transfer to wages account
Diamond Business Systems	£110.40	Photocopier Toner
W. R. Batey	£266.61	Stain for Park Benches (£25.99), Postage (£5.52), Order of Service Remembrance Sunday (£181), Refreshments for Remembrance Sunday (£54.10)
James McLean	£49.95	Safety Boots
npower	£26.75	Store, Cemetery (Paid 2 nd Nov)
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	£19.00	Poppy Wreath
Northumberland & Newcastle Society	£15.00	Annual Subscription
Northumbria in Bloom	£125.00	Entry fee for 2012
Alan Symmonds	£19.80	Mileage 10 th Oct. meeting
Dean Smith, Painter & Decorator	£1200	Painting of Cemetery Lodge
Viking	£57.23	Stationary
TOTAL	£6,752.31	

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and were reported for information		
BT	£80.55	Phone bills cemetery and cemetery lodge Paid 27 th October

Councillors were in agreement to make an additional donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal of £19.00.

RESOLVED: a) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £6,752.31 plus an additional donation of £19 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, and to note the direct debit payments of £80.55.

C11/163. Councillor Issues

- a) **Councillor Castle - the inadequate pedestrian crossing provision on the corner near Clayport St.**

It was outlined that the pedestrian crossing near the junction of Clayport Street and Lagny Street was inadequate.

RESOLVED: to ask NCC to review the pedestrian crossing arrangements.

- b) **Councillor J Thompson - the condition of the steps adjacent to 29 and 30 Windsor Gardens.**

It was reported that these steps are damaged and a gap has formed and they need to be reinstated.

RESOLVED: To bring to the attention of Homes for Northumberland.

- c) **Councillor Hewison – a) St Michaels Lane, erection of bollards and removal of timber structure and b) Hole in cobbles outside Penrose's TV Shop (where a tree was previously planted).**

In discussion, it was outlined that there was still an insurance wrangle which was preventing the removal of the timber structure on St Michaels Lane. It was also understood that a temporary repair had been carried out to fill in the tree grid hole.

C11/164. Any Other Business

- a) The clerk highlighted that Councillor Blakey wish to stand down from the Olympic Torch Task Force. He was reminded that Councillor Knox was appointed as a reserve. Councillor Watson offered to attend in the event that Councillor Knox was unable to.
- b) Councillor J Thompson requested that the County Council give urgent attention to emptying of the dog bin at Swansfield Park (adjacent to the play area).
- c) The clerk was asked to contact the new developer of the Malthouse site to see if it was worth setting up regular contact or a working group.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm