

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

Present: Cllrs A Symmonds (Mayor), G Watson (Deputy Mayor), S Allcroft, E Blakey, W Grisdale, M Harrington, 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.

C11/165. Apologies: Cllrs J Bell, G Castle, K Gray, B Thompson & S Walton.

C11/166. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Blakey and Allcroft declared a personal & prejudicial interest in item 8 (in relation to floral planting). Councillors Patience, Grisdale and Knox declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 7 (in relation to the proposed cycle track) and Councillor Symmonds declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8 (in relation to the stage for events).

C11/167. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (10th November 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2011 were agreed as a true record.

These were agreed and duly signed by the Mayor.

C11/168. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

It was reported that the footpath inspection was to take place on 13th December at 9.00am. Councillors Watson and Knox agreed to join Councillor Castle.

C11/169. Mayor's Report

The Mayor's report for the period 11th November to 7th December had been circulated with the agenda. He reminded Councillors of the Carol Service on Monday 19th December and obtained volunteers to take the collection.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

C11/170. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee (10th November 2011) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Highways and Transport Committee held on 10th November 2011 were agreed as a true record.

The Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee (24th November 2011) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee held on 24th November 2011 were agreed as a true record.

Councillors considered the following recommendation from the Recreation & Amenities Committee and made the following resolutions:

RESOLVED: Subject to clarification about the legal and insurance issues, the town council look to establish a volunteer snow scheme for Alnwick.

RESOLVED: Subject to clarification of some minor details, the Town Council approves the lease for the cycle track and confirms their willingness to sign it..

C11/171. Proposed transfer of services from Northumberland County Council and payments for additional services in 2012/13.

The clerk updated the council on current proposals which will apply from 1st April 2012.

a) Transfer of 5 more bus shelters.

The Town Council already owns one bus shelter at Howling Lane. The additional ones are at, Wagonway Road, Alnwick Infirmary, Lower Barrasdale, Adjacent Royal Oak Gardens and South Road adjacent to Willowburn Trading Estate. A budget provision of £750 was proposed for repairs.

b) Transfer of all local authority seats

An exact list of seats is still be finalised but it would appear that an additional 50 or so seats are likely to come under the town council's ownership. Some seats such as those in the Column Field could belong to Northumberland Estates and they will need to be consulted. Some councillors felt that Northumberland Estates should be asked about making a contribution to the maintenance. Replacement costs are likely to be up to £600/£700 depending on the style of seat. A budget provision of £3000 for replacements and £750 for repairs was proposed.

c) Additional grass cuts

Costs of the three additional grass cuts undertaken in October and March for 2012/13 have been given as £1,995. The figure in 2011/12 was £1,953. Some councillors agreed that these cuts were much needed whilst others said that consideration should be given to more sustainable solutions.

d) Planting of annual plants

The costs of planting annual plants in summer and winter (comparable to the current years planting), have been given at £11,718.87. If the town council does not wish to proceed with this service, the county council will plant perennial or shrub planting, or possibly grass over formal bedding areas. One flowerbed has been identified by Alnwick in Bloom as being suitable for perennial planting, this is at The Oaks roundabout, and if this option is chosen, the costs would reduce by £710. Some councillors were concerned about the overall costs. Discussions were on-going and it was felt that this subject could be looked at further by the Recreation and Amenities Committee on 15th December.

e) Stage used in Alnwick Market Place for festivals

County Council officers have agreed in principle to the transfer of the stage to the Town Council. This stage originally belonged to Alnwick District Council and is stored in the NCC Alnwick Depot. In 2012/13, the Country Council have indicated that they will be charging for the use of the stage, the Music Festival has been given an indication that this cost will be £2,000. It was reported that Councillor Castle had been involved in discussions with county officers, he feels that if this was to belong to the Town Council then volunteers could be trained in the erection of the stage and significant costs could be saved for local events

f) Play areas and parks

It was proposed to transfer to the Town Council the play areas at Alnwick North (not already owned by the Town Council), together with the play area at Swansfield Park. This would

mean that all play areas in the town would be the responsibility of the Town Council. Some Councillors highlighted the need for adequate signage at the zip wire equipment (about the suitable ages) and the need for any outstanding repairs to be completed prior to handover. The clerk was investigating any developer contribution that might be available for future maintenance at Swansfield Park. Councillors felt that this could be looked at further by the Recreation and Amenities Committee on 15th December. Next year discussions are likely about transferring parks to the Town Council with effect from April 2013.

g) Elections

It is proposed that local councils will for the first time, have to pay for some of the election costs for normal parish council elections. The next elections are in 2013 and in the event that all three Alnwick wards are contested, the costs for the Town Council could be in the region of £3200. It was proposed that this cost should be split and raised through the precept, over the next two financial years.

RESOLVED:

- a) Budget provision of £750 be made in 2012/13 for bus shelters**
- b) Budget provision of £3750 be made in 2012/13 for seats**
- c) The additional grass cuts be undertaken in 2012/13 at a cost of £1995**
- d) The Recreation & Amenities Committee consider the floral planting and playground proposals, further.**
- e) The Council agree in principle to taking over ownership of the events stage**
- f) Budget provision of £1600 be made in 2012/13 towards the election costs in 2013.**

C11/172. Correspondence

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

Date	Detail	Action
7/11	Lawrence Craiggs Friends of Voerde, request to host civic reception for the visit of the Friends of Alnwick, 24 th May 2012	Request considered
11/11	NCC – Precept information	To submit by January 24th
14/11	NCC – copy of Archaeology in Northumberland	Available from the clerk on request
17/11	Les Slater – Royal British Legion, letter of thanks for Remembrance Sunday	Noted
23/11	Independent Monitoring Board – looking to recruit members for the IMB for Acklington and Castington	Request considered
25/11	CAN News – Autumn 2011	Available from the clerk on request
28/11	The Journal of the Northumberland & Newcastle Society – Nov 2011	Available from the clerk on request
28/11	NCC – copy of highway services in Winter, publication	Available from the clerk on request
2/12	NCC – Campaign for recycling small electrical goods in Dec and Jan.	Available from the clerk on request

RESOLVED: That the correspondence received be noted and the Council agrees to host a civic reception for Friends of Alnwick in May 2012.

C11/173. Financial Matters – Payments.

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

Inland Revenue	£976.29	Tax and NI (Nov)
Wages Account	£5500	Transfer to wages account
AON Ltd	£291.95	Additional insurance premium for assets transferred from ACDT (paid 28/11/11)
St Cloud Bursaries	£300	Bursaries for Autumn Semester (paid 28/11/11)
Chris Bowden	£325	Joinery Repairs to Cemetery Lodge
Northumberland County Council	£146.99	3 new dog bins
Petty Cash	£45	Petrol and Materials
WR Batey	£183.79	£44.74 postage, £3.45 stationary £135.60 ink
Pottergate Pantry	£175	Buffet for Remembrance Sunday
The Cryer	£120	Advert for Neighbourhood Plan
Diamond Business Systems	£46.20	Service Charge
Royal Mail Group	£80.20	Setting up Freepost licence
TOTAL	£8,190.42	

The following payments were paid by direct debit and were reported for information		
BT	£87.72	Phone bills cemetery and cemetery lodge Paid 28 th November

The Band of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers led the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Councillors agreed that a £75 donation be made to the band. In addition, it was proposed to purchase a gift token to the value of £20 for each of the three ladies who assisted with the Remembrance Service and refreshments.

RESOLVED: a) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £8,190.42 plus a £75 donation to the Band of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and a total of £60 for gift tokens for the three volunteer helpers on Remembrance Sunday and b) to note the direct debit payments of £87.72

C11/174. Councillor Issues

- a) **Councillor J Thompson – the position of the 30mph signs on Denwick Lane – can they be moved to beyond the Gardens car park entrance?**

Councillor Thompson suggested that this would aid road safety especially near to the car park garden entrance

RESOLVED: To ask Northumberland County Council for their comments.

- b) **Councillor J Thompson - the condition of some road signs, covered in algae.**

It was proposed that the clerk write to NCC to clarify the policy on cleaning signs.

RESOLVED: To ask Northumberland County Council for their comments.

- c) **Councillor Roberts- The icy condition of the new car park at Alnmouth Station.**

Councillor Roberts outlined a recent problem in icy weather when the car park was not gritted and station staff were unable to request assistance out of hours.

RESOLVED- That the Town Council request that the car park be added to the gritting schedule.

C11/175. Any Other Business

Councillor Patience updated councillors on the Possible TPO at Thomas Percy Woodland and the lack of progress and response from Northumberland County Council Planning Department. It was agreed to take this up at a higher level.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm