

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 27th March 2014
in the Committee Room, Clayport Street, Alnwick at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs S Patience (Chairman), S Allcroft, P Broom, C Goodfellow, D Farrar, P Holt, M Harrington, S Mavin, R Roberts, A Shilton and A Symmonds

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Administration Assistant, Terry Garnick (Local Services Group NCC)

RA 13/49	<p>Apologies</p> <p>None</p>
RA 13/50	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Councillor Harrington declared a pecuniary interest in the agenda item regarding a request for financial assistance towards the Round Table Fireworks display. Councillor S Mavin declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Food Festival application.</p>
RA 13/51	<p>Maintenance of Parks in Alnwick</p> <p>Terry Garnick gave an update on the upkeep of Swansfield Park. The newest of the parks in Alnwick, it was created in the late 1990s / early 2000's, to be low maintenance with footpaths and a play area. It is maintained at the same level as all other parks in Northumberland. There is approximately £100k in an endowment for the park which reduces each year as maintenance costs are taken out by NCC. Any agreed improvements could be funded from this budget. Terry suggested key feature should be sustainability and naturalistic planting to provide good pollination. Terry passed around examples of planting schemes with different pricing levels. He explained that plough planting of bulbs is good for slopes but does not give an instant impact in the first year. We could also do a semi wet planting area in the area which retains water in the park. Keen to explore ideas with the Town Council.</p> <p>Councillors asked questions. Councillor S Allcroft was concerned about the water that comes across the path in Swansfield Park. Terry explained that the water has been tested and appears to be natural water and the solution is to put a side intercept drain in but they need to think about where the water goes when drained.</p> <p>Councillor Broom asked about the footpath across Swansfield Park and who would be responsible for it if the Town Council take over the running of the Park. Terry confirmed that the responsibility would pass to the Town Council. Councillor Broom was also concerned that the park seems to be used as a dog toilet. Terry explained that Swansfield Park is too small to have a dog area but NCC are training people to target parks and fine people for dog fouling, he would ask for the park to be monitored.</p> <p>Councillor Goodfellow asked about planting an arboretum in the park, this was confirmed as a possibility and he asked about the relationship Morpeth Town Council have with Heighley Gate. He was informed that Heighley Gate plant baskets and planters to cover all areas of Morpeth except Carlisle Park. Morpeth Town Council pay some £20k and Heighley do planting, putting out and watering.</p> <p>Councillor Farrar asked about planting fruit trees and a wild flower meadow. Terry</p>

	<p>said that fruit trees are not recommend as children will climb them and a wild flower area was a possibility.</p> <p>Councillor Roberts asked about the solution to the drainage issue as the bed becomes really sodden when the water comes across the path; Terry thought that larger shrub planting would help. She also highlighted that sit on mowers have taken branches off some of the trees. Terry outlined that this should not happen.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To organise a site meeting at Swansfield Park with Terry Garnick to discuss options</p>
<p>RA 13/52</p>	<p>Budget Update</p> <p>The Clerk circulated a copy of the 2013/14 budget as at 20th March 2014. This showed expenditure of £10,839 on events, £6,686 on projects and £25,919 on services and assets. Income was currently £4,000 from allotment rents. Each sections was discussed in detail. Overall an underspend on the year was likely although most of the underspend was earmarked, for example allotment water supply, replacement play equipment and a new notice board.</p> <p>There was also an unallocated amount which the Town Council intended to use to investigate how best to help festivals, for example this could be used to fund a festival co-ordinator. Councillors agreed that the idea of a 'festival' needed to be broadened with regard to Alnwick. It was suggested that a meeting be held with all the festival organisers to see if they were interested in the idea of a festival co-ordinator.</p> <p>The installation of the mill stones at Peter's Mill Bridge had been discussed with the landowner and was currently being considered by Northumberland Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED: a) To receive the update and budget figures and to ask the Council to roll over the amounts identified for the 2014-15 budget and b) To arrange a meeting of existing festival organisers and Councillors Broom, Goodfellow, Harrington and Shilton.</p>
<p>RA 13/53</p>	<p>War Memorial Condition Survey and Renovation</p> <p>The Administration Assistant gave an update on the War Memorial Grants, Condition Surveys and Renovation. Handouts had been circulated. Councillors reviewed the handouts, images and the three Condition Survey quotes received and agreed Graciella Ainsworth should undertake the work.</p> <p>Once the Condition Survey Report is received further discussions and decisions will be made on the amount of renovation work to be carried out and the grant applications to be submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To receive the update and delegate powers to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to take a decision on the grant applications.</p>
<p>RA 13/54</p>	<p>Requests for assistance towards Round Table Fireworks display and the Alnwick Food Festival</p> <p><u>Round Table Firework Display</u></p> <p>A request had been received asking the Council for financial assistance towards the loss incurred on the 2013 event and future events. In 2013, the bad weather had significantly dropped the number of people attending the event. The request</p>

	<p>was for a contribution and the committee had mixed views on the merits of the application. It was agreed to make a one off contribution of £700 towards the 2013 event subject to accounts being received..</p> <p>RESOLVED: To ask the Round Table for their accounts then give a one off payment of £700 towards costs.</p> <p><u>Alnwick Food Festival</u></p> <p>A request had been received asking the Council for financial assistance towards the 2014 Alnwick Food Festival. The festival has previously had Leader funding but this has come to an end. The Town Clerk presented a financial overview provided by Alnwick Food Festival. The committee felt the festival was an important event but should have a more local focus and agreed to donate £1,100 towards the 2014 event. There was a feeling that the Town Council representatives are not always involved in the meetings.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To give a grant of £1,100 to Alnwick Food Festival subject to the festival taking place and full Town Council involvement in meetings between now and the event.</p>
<p>RA 13/55</p>	<p>Updates:</p> <p>a) Allotments</p> <p>The Clerk explained that the majority of rents for 2014 were now paid and new allotment agreement returned. Of the 133 allotment plots available, 23 were let in 2013/14 and there are currently 21 people are on the waiting list (the actual number is 11 as some people are on more than one waiting list).</p> <p>At St James's, where there are 48 plots, 7 plots have been let in 2013/14 and there are 8 people on the waiting list. At St George's, where there are 13 plots, 10 plots have been let in 2013/14 and there are 6 people on the waiting list. At Ratten Row were there are 69 plots, 6 were let in 2013/14 and there are 7 people on the waiting list. The work to clear the top triangle is nearing completion and this should offer another 8 plots.</p> <p>b) Public Conveniences (update from Terry Garnick as part of item 3)</p> <p>Terry Garnick informed the committee that NCC have started looking again at potential funding for refurbishment of public conveniences. These will focus on: painting inside and out; better signage; new doors and locks; enclosed toilet roll and paper towel holders; installing high level air fresheners and high efficiency hand driers. NCC will review the funding position.</p> <p>Councillor S Allcroft asked if NCC could add cleanliness of toilets to the list as the tiles really need replacing.</p> <p>c) Play area schemes</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed councillors that the new play equipment for Cawledge View and Clovers Green had been chosen and ordered. We are awaiting installation dates.</p> <p>d) Commemoration of First World War and the Anniversary of Magna Carta</p> <p>The committee reviewed the commemoration suggestion list circulated by the sub group (Cllrs Broom, Goodfellow, Holt, Mavin and Symmonds plus Administration Assistant). Poppy planting and War Memorial refurbishment have already started.</p>

	<p>The sub group will review the list and prioritise some ideas for consideration by the committee at future meetings.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that The Magna Carta Heritage Lottery Fund application had not been successful. No further work has been done on this at this stage. Sub group (Cllrs Farrar and Symmonds plus Town Clerk) to review for discussion at a future meeting.</p> <p>e) Green Batt Garden signage, Floral Clock mechanism and the Website</p> <p><u>Green Batt Garden sign</u></p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that we have not progressed with the Green Batt Gardens sign as Alnwick in Bloom will be putting one up with the Armillary they are installing.</p> <p><u>Floral Clock Mechanism</u></p> <p>Councillor Farrar updated the committee and confirmed that the mechanism would be too costly to repair and keep maintained.</p> <p><u>Website</u></p> <p>The Town Clerk confirmed that the website is now fully operational and the alnwick-tc emails are now working as are the forwarding emails from the Contact Us page to committee chairs. Usage data from Google analytics was issued and discussed and will be updated for each meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To receive the updates and the Town Clerk to check details of the Green Batt sign with Alnwick in Bloom.</p>
<p>RA 13/56</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Councillor Patience has been asked if Alnwick Town Council would put forward a representative for the Board of Local Living.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: To add to the Outside Representative list at the next annual meeting of the Council.</p>

Meeting closed at 10.00pm

(At 9.30pm the Committee resolved to waive standing orders to allow the meeting to proceed beyond 9.30pm).