

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 22nd May 2014
in the Committee Room, Clayport Street, Alnwick at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors S Patience (Chairman), P Broom, C Goodfellow, D Farrar, P Holt, G Mavin, S Mavin, A Shilton, M Swinbank and A Symmonds

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Administration Assistant

RA 14/01 Apologies

Councillors M Harrington and R Roberts

RA 14/02 Declarations of Interest

None

RA 14/03 Membership of working groups

Councillors reviewed and updated the members of the existing working groups:

Allotments - Councillors Farrar, Harrington, Patience and Roberts

Communications - Councillors Broom, Farrar, G Mavin and Swinbank

Magna Carta - Councillors Farrar and Shilton

WWI - Councillors Broom, Goodfellow, Holt, S Mavin and Symmonds

Events (New working group) - Councillors Broom, S Mavin, G Mavin and Patience (plus any other councillors who want to be involved)

The Town Clerk reminded the committee there was £9,000 in the budget (including £4,500 carried over from 2013/14) potentially to spend on assisting festivals this could include some festival co-ordination for the town. There had also been a discussion about arranging a meeting with all the relevant people to discuss this.

Councillor G Mavin felt it was a good idea to discuss expanding the number of events that take place in Alnwick.

Councillor Holt asked how outside bodies invite the town council to meetings and how do they feedback into the council. Councillor Patience said that the report would come back into full council.

The Town Clerk reported that Berwick Town Council have a written report, as part of their Annual Meeting, from councillors about outside body involvement even if this reported there had been no meetings. Councillor Farrar commented that Councillor G Mavin had asked for something similar at the last council meeting.

Councillor Symonds commented that the Alnwick Lions had suggested that Alnwick became a 'festival town'.

Councillor S Mavin felt that the first meeting to discuss events and this festival co-ordination should be for councillors only.

RESOLVED: a) To agree the existing working groups as listed; b) To set up a working group for Events with the members above and invite all councillors who want to be involved.

RA 14/04 Budget Update

The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure as at 19th May 2014. This showed expenditure of £194.95 on events (Civic awards), £0 on projects and £ 5,797.69 on assets & services. No income was reported at this stage. It did not include the endowment received from NCC for Play Areas. Each section was discussed in detail, noting the following:

EVENTS - £9,000 (inc £4,500 from 2013/14 budget) unallocated as yet but perhaps for festival co-ordination.

PROJECTS - Budgeted £1,000 for the new Alnwick Town Guide and £3,850 for the new noticeboard. Litterbins were discussed at full council. Budget of £4,500 for items that might come up in the year.

ASSETS & SERVICES - Budget for seats is £3,750 and some of this will need to spent at Cawledge View play park where the seats are looking shabby. Allotment income budgeted at £3,200 but should be higher especially with the new allotments.

Councillor questions:

Councillor Farrar - will the three litterbins we have in stock be used and emptied?
Town Clerk – these were bought to replace existing bins so will used and emptied.

Councillor G Mavin - does the Town Council own the allotments at Ratten Row?
Town Clerk - We have a 3 year lease form Northumberland Estates.

Councillor G Mavin - felt the council were paying out a lot of money at Ratten Row
Town Clerk - yes, but it gets people into the allotments so we then get income. Also if Northumberland Estates wanted the ground back they would have to find replacement space.

Councillor G Mavin - how many allotments are there at Ratten Row?
Town Clerk - currently 72 plus the new ones we've just created.

RESOLVED: To receive the update and budget figures

RA 14/05 War Memorial Grant Update

The Administration Assistant gave an update on the WMT Grant application. The grant application is due in by 30th June and supporting documentation was currently being collated to accompany the submission. The LBC has been submitted to NCC and the Northumberland Gazette has offered access to their archives for additional historical documentation. Councillors were issued a summary of the five quotes received for the work on the War Memorial.

Councillor Symmonds said he thought there had been some previous work done on the memorial when the figures had been shot blasted to look shiny. Councillor Goodfellow asked if the vertigris finish on the memorial could be kept. Councillor Farrar commented that we should consider the patination of the memorial and how this would be maintained. The Administration Assistant thought the WMT might prefer it as it had been originally but she would send councillors the WMT Conservation of Bronze work document for review and would add the appropriate finish based on their thoughts, to the final submission.

Councillor Symmonds suggested that we ask the companies to add a maintenance cost into their quote to ensure the upkeep of the memorial. The Administration

Assistant said she would ask them to add this cost.

Councillor G Mavin asked if we had received any references with the quotes. The Administration Assistant said the companies quoting for the whole job had provided information about themselves along with examples of similar work carried out. All companies chosen to quote had been taken from an accredited conservators list, sent by WMT.

Councillor S Mavin asked if any of them were local. The Administration Assistant said one was based in Durham and one in Eglington. The others were based in Edinburgh and Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED: To look at the detailed quotes and give any feedback to Administration Assistant before full council meeting in June.

RA 14/06 Updates:

a) Allotments

ST JAMES'S - The Town Clerk explained that there was an issue with a request from a property owner (Mr Bell) who neighboured the St James's allotment site and his wish to create a hard standing for a car, and he had received a letter from two allotments holders who objected to this. He had visited the site and taken photographs which he showed to the committee. They showed that the neighbour has already taken down his fence between the access road and his property and was planning to put block paving on his own land and if possible, partly across a strip of council land to create a parking area for himself.

RESOLVED: To inform Mr Bell to put the block paving and edging stones within his own land for a vehicle parking place but not to extend onto council land.

RATTEN ROW There has been some interest in allotments at Ratten Row and the water is in the process of being put onto the site.

The Town Clerk agreed to organise an allotments working group meeting.

b) Public Conveniences

The Chair and Town Clerk met with Terry Garnick two weeks ago to discuss the proposed works. We are awaiting a reply from Terry with regard to i) how best to procure the work and ii) how to progress the scheme. NCC have stated they would need to do the work themselves but Terry feels that it could be a Town Council scheme and go out to tender. We still need a scheme of work from Terry.

c) Play area schemes

The Town Clerk informed councillors that the new play equipment for Cawledge View had been completed last week. The Glovers Green top area next to the Community Orchard was still to be commenced.

He reported that an accident has occurred with the basket swing at Barresdale. The basket had been replaced about 6 weeks ago and we also had to replace the chains as the shackles which hold the basket are attached to the chains. One of the chains had become detached on Saturday 17th May and a 5 year old child was injured. A complaint was received from the child's mother on Monday and a claim will be made on the Town Council's Public Liability Insurance.

The Town Clerk has spoken to the manufacturers who said this is not a common

fault. They suggested as an added security to using Loctite to secure the bolts and this is programmed to be done tomorrow.

Councillor Farrar asked if a notice could be put in each play area asking people to report any issues. He also asked if the manufacturers should not have a duty of care with regard to the equipment. The Town Clerk said there was a standard sign used by Northumberland County Council which he was waiting for from Terry Garnick. He also stated that the parts they had replaced had not been the part that seems to be the problem.

Councillor Broom reported that he had complaints about small children being bullied out of the play area at Swansfield Park and asked if there is a budget to provide play equipment for older children. Councillors were not sure that providing more equipment would resolve the issue and Councillor Symmonds suggested asking the people who had made the complaints if they felt this would solve the problem. Councillor Broom then asked if the play equipment for older children (12-15 years old) could be put somewhere else in the park.

Councillor Farrar asked if we could check the terms of the endowment to see if any if this could be spent on this type of equipment.

The Town Clerk said we could look into this and check with Northumberland County Council if we could put something on their land.

RESOLVED: To contact the manufacturers of the basket swing at Barresdale to ascertain, in writing, which standard of Loctite to use on the equipment and undertake the works and to look into equipment for older children for Swansfield Park.

d) Memorial Schemes

The Administration Assistant updated the committee on memorial benches and memorial planting schemes. She had initially looked at benches and planting. Morpeth Town Council have a bench scheme. This has a charge of £630 (2014-15), for a wooden bench with a name plaque, for a ten year period after which the plaque is taken off.

She reported that wooden benches need maintenance and benches made from recycled materials are becoming more popular. It was reported that we could offer a memorial planting scheme such as shrub roses, silver birch and willow trees. Some initial costings had been done.

Examples of recycled products and planting suggestions were handed out to committee. Councillor Symmonds suggested we identify benches that need replacing and initially offer these as locations for memorial benches.

Councillors discussed where the information about the memorial scheme could be sent and agreed to put details of the finalised scheme on the website and also send to Funeral Directors and Solicitors to distribute.

Updated sheets, including suggested costings, are to be sent to the committee for feedback.

RESOLVED: To send out initial memorial scheme costings and updated seating / planting suggestions to committee for comments.

e) First World War and Magna Carta

WWI - The committee reviewed the list the WWI sub group had presented. The top two suggestions identified by the working group (war memorial renovation and poppy planting) are already underway and the Cemetery Committee had discussed another suggestion (maintenance of WWI graves will be picked up by the Friends of the Cemetery). The next suggestion the group would like to take forward is the renovation of the bench opposite the War Memorial. The Town Council have been offered £50 plus material costs by WWI Commemoration Group through Councillor Goodfellow.

Councillor Symmonds commented that WWI went much further than the trenches of Flanders and felt the suggestion list should have a broader feel.

Councillor Goodfellow explained the WWI Commemorative Group have a series of activities between 2014-18 and we could ask them to update the full Council.

Councillor G Mavin asked if we knew what everyone else is doing.

Councillor Symmonds thought the council might also consider hosting a talk by a local historian.

Other suggestions on the list, including possible funding / budgets, will be reviewed and discussed at a future meeting.

MAGNA CARTA - The Town Clerk reported that there was nothing new to report. Sub group (Councillors Farrar and Shilton plus Town Clerk) to review for discussion at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: To ask WWI Commemorative Group to speak at full council meeting to update councillors on what activities they have planned.

f) Town Twinning Links

TIME KOMMUNE - The Town Clerk reported that having looked into the costs of video conferencing this would cost about £300-£400. The White Swan have suitable rooms available and had recommended someone for the recording equipment.

Councillors asked if we had enquired elsewhere about recording facilities and the Town Clerk said we had and this seemed the best solution.

Councillor Symmonds thought the time to have a meeting was when they came to visit but the Town Clerk said the Norwegians were keen to arrange something sooner.

RESOLVED: To go ahead with a video conference with Time Kommune in Norway.

g) Website and Noticeboard

Noticeboard

The Town Clerk told the committee that the Listed Building Consent form for the new noticeboard had been submitted to Northumberland County Council.

Website

The Administration Assistant gave out the updated website usage information. This now includes what people are searching for and where referrals to the site come from. Councillors were updated on the 'About Me' section for the councillors section of the website. The Administration Assistant will send a set of questions as prompts for a short piece (70-75 words) for the website.

RA 14/07 Any Other Business

Councillor Holt informed the committee that she was very concerned about a retaining wall in Pottergate. The wall is opposite the St James Church Centre and a crack has appeared over the last week. The Clerk agreed to contact Northumberland County Council Building Inspectors and ask them to investigate.

Meeting closed at 9.38pm

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