

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 31st July 2014
in the Committee Room, Clayport Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs A Symmonds (Chairman), S Allcroft, P Allcroft, P Broom, C Goodfellow, G Mavin.

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

FP 14/07 Apologies

Councillors G Castle, D Farrar, B Grisdale, S Patience, R Roberts.

FP 14/08 Declarations of Interest

None.

FP 14/09 2014/15 Budget Update

The Town Clerk circulated the committee budget as at 31st July 2014. This showed expenditure at £22,979.77 compared to £13,234.87 in May. This was examined line by line with the following highlighted and discussed:

SEASONAL OPERATIVE - expenditure is slightly up

RENT - no expenditure as yet but will start in August when Town Council no longer have access to Clayport Street for meetings

INSURANCE - has increased slightly due to adding new play equipment to insurance

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - currently being printed so expenditure will increase

GRANTS - this year's grant applications will be reviewed at the December meeting

SUBSCRIPTIONS - only NALC

MAYOR'S CHAIN - away for repair and revaluing. Quote of £1,200 received for repairs and adding additional names

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION - figure put in to cover move to Fenkle Street

GENERAL - mostly printer inks and copying

MISC/CONTINGENCY - to be used towards the cost of the unit at Willowburn

Councillor Broom asked if the groups who had been asked to provide accounts before receiving their grants had done so. The Town Clerk confirmed that both had provided satisfactory financial information.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget figures and update.

FP 14/10 Council Accommodation

The Town Clerk notified committee that NCC have agreed that the Town Council can use Clayport Street for the Full Council meeting on August 14th. He confirmed that the Town Council need to move their items from the corridor cupboard.

He also confirmed that St James's had been booked for the Full Council meetings from September 2014. The Mayor is speaking to NCC regarding the additional charges for the use of Fenkle Street for Committee meetings.

He updated the committee on the Town Council's new office. The Town Council have taken the lease on room 5 in Fenkle Street from August 1st 2014.

Councillor Broom asked how long the lease was for? The Town Clerk confirmed it was a rolling lease (month by month) with a 3 month notice period on both sides. The rent was £150 per month, reviewed annually, and included the furniture.

Councillor S Allcroft asked if there would be open access for residents. The Town Clerk said he would look at what was practical with the current staffing levels.

Councillor Symmonds suggested that the Town Council had a similar arrangement to Blyth Town Council who have open access for residents one morning and one afternoon each week.

FP 14/11 Storage of Documents

The Town Clerk advised the committee that NCC have asked them to confirm how they are storing documents. He also confirmed that Woodhorn have offered to store documents for all Town and Parish Councils. He has a copy of the Town Council documents already stored at Woodhorn. He informed the committee that they also have a box with deeds including for the play areas and cemetery and that these are with Barclays Bank.

The Town Clerk issued a list of the types of documents the Town Council need to keep with recommendations for duration and location. These were reviewed and comments / suggested changes made:

MINUTES - The Town Clerk confirmed that minutes need to be kept indefinitely, since 2009 the Town Council have kept electronic minutes and have paper minutes from 1999. Only the paper based minutes are signed. Councillor S Allcroft asked if the signed minutes could be scanned and kept. Town Clerk confirmed they could.

FINANCIAL RECORDS – need to add retaining documents relating to any grants received by the Town Council.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS / DECISIONS - planning documents kept only for one year plus with minutes only kept for anything older.

RESOLVED: To implement the recommendations for Storage of Documents with the amendments for Financial Records and Planning Applications / Decisions.

FP 14/12 Appointment of Internal Auditor and Interim Audit Proposal

The Town Clerk informed the committee that Norman Dunn, the internal auditor for 2013/14 had suggested that the internal auditor for 2014/15 be appointed at the beginning of the financial year so an interim audit could be undertaken. He had offered to do the internal audit for 2014/15, including an interim 6 month

audit, for £230.

RESOLVED: To appoint Norman Dunn as internal auditor for 2014/15 and undertake an interim audit in October 2014.

FP 14/13 Any Matters for next joint NCC/Town Council meeting

Councillor G Mavin raised the issue, previously mentioned by Councillor Holt, about the newspaper article by Scott Dickinson from NCC concerning relocation of NCC if County Hall closes and what impact this would have on local towns.

The Town Clerk thought Councillor Holt's concern was about what service delivery would look like in Alnwick if County Hall closed and felt it was important to have public facing staff at Alnwick including planning, building control and licensing. Councillor Symmonds thought that the Town Council should present what it would like to see in Alnwick, if NCC relocate to Ashington.

Councillor G Mavin felt the Town Council should ask what is happening about Economic Development in Alnwick. Councillor Broom felt it was important to know who was promoting Alnwick as an area for regeneration as several big employers had moved out of the town including Alnwick District Council, the Valuation Office and DEFRA. Councillor S Allcroft thought the Town Council should ask what NCC had as ideas for regeneration within Alnwick.

Suggested items for the next joint meeting:

- 1. Service Delivery in Alnwick** - To discuss service delivery in Alnwick if County Hall closes. ATC to present what it would like to see in Alnwick
- 2. Economic Development in Alnwick** - To discuss economic development in Alnwick and NCC's ideas for promoting Alnwick as an area for regeneration.

RESOLVED: To take any joint meeting items to the Full Council meeting on August 14th to draw up an agenda to send to NCC.

FP 14/14 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

Meeting closed at 8.05pm