



ALNWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Cemetery Lodge Office
South Road
Alnwick
Northumberland NE66 2PH

Your Ref:

Our Ref: FC/1 /2014

Dear Councillor

Clerk to Council

Bill Batey

Tel: 01665 714922

Mobile: 07971 810267

9th January 2015

The next meeting of the Council will be held on **Thursday 15th January 2015** in St James Church Rooms Pottergate Alnwick at **7.00pm**. You are hereby requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

Bill Batey
Clerk to Town Council

Agenda

1. Questions from the Public
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Presentation on proposals for Animating Alnwick Market Place – Philip Angier, Local Living.
5. Request for a Dispensation
6. Minutes of the Last meeting – 11th December 2014
7. Matters Arising
8. Mayor's Report
9. Committee & Outside Body appointments for Councillor Peter Edge
10. Minutes of the Committees
 - a) Planning Committee Meeting (11th December 2014)
 - b) Finance & Policy Committee (18th December 2014)
11. 2014/15 budget update, to agree the 2015/16 budget and to set the 2015/16 Precept.
12. Schools Consultation
13. Review of Constitution
14. Correspondence
15. Feedback Local Multi-agency Crime Prevention Initiative Meeting
16. Financial Matters – Payments
17. Councillor Issue – Councillor Patience, condition of former Corn Exchange Building
18. Any Other Urgent Business

Declarations of Interest

To receive disclosures of pecuniary interests from Councillors, on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware, during the course of the meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it.

Agenda item 5**Request for a Dispensation**

Guidance from Northumberland County Council relating to declarations of interest when setting the budget and precept, is that all councillors should apply in writing for a dispensation to the Council to enable them to be involved and vote. At the start of the meeting the clerk will circulate a form and ask councillors present to sign it (this covers the application in writing). Under this agenda item we will acknowledge the receipt of the requests for dispensations and will then vote on granting the dispensation.

Recommendation: That the Council grants a dispensation to all Councillors to enable them to participate in full decisions relating to the setting of the 2015/16 Budget and Precept.

Agenda item 8**Mayor's Report**

An update on the mayor's diary can be obtained at <http://alnwickmayor.wordpress.com/>

Agenda Item 9**Committee & Outside Body appointments for Councillor Peter Edge**

At the last meeting of the Council, Peter Edge was co-opted onto the Council. At present there are vacancies on the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee, Recreation and Amenities Committee and the Finance & Policy Committee. There are also a small number of vacancies on outside bodies. Following discussion with Peter, which are due to take place on Monday 12th January, the Clerk will recommend appointments.

Recommendation: That Councillor Edge be appointed to committees and outside bodies as outlined at the meeting.

Agenda item 11**2014/15 budget update, to agree the 2015/16 budget and to set the 2015/16 Precept.**

A budget update for 2014/15 will be given at the meeting by the clerk.

Recommendation: a) To note the 2014/15 budget position

Each of the Council's committees has approved a recommended budget for 2015/16, these are as follows:

Committee	Net Expenditure
Cemetery	£26,555
Recreation & Amenities	£63,670
Finance & Policy	£124,130
TOTAL	£214,355

Some of the main changes to the proposed committee budgets for 2015/16 are as follows:

Cemetery Committee	
Grounds work – additional budget provision	£1,000
Building Repairs – additional budget provision	£3,000
Additional fee income	£2,500

Recreation & Amenities Committee	
Additional support for events	£560
Play Area replacements	£10,000
Additional fee income - allotments	£1,200

Finance & Policy Committee	
Town Handyperson post made permanent (15 hrs. per week)	£4,781
Administration including additional hours for Assistant to the Clerk (total to be 15 per week) and new pay grades for Clerk and Assistant to Clerk	£6,610
Appointment of part time Project/Funding Officer post	£21,000
Rent for meeting venues	£800
Delivery of Community Action Plan proposals (incl Housing Needs Survey)	£10,000
Saving arising from less expenditure on Neighbourhood Plan preparation	£4,000

The overall recommended budget for 2015/16 following the committee meetings was therefore £214,355

Since the Finance & Policy Committee meeting, the Council's part time operative at the cemetery has given notice that he intends to take up other employment and will leave the Council on 20th February 2015. The post holder works up to 20 hours a week for the Council and has actually averaged 16 hours this financial year. His main duties include grass cutting, strimming, grounds maintenance and assisting with burials. This vacancy would enable the council to combine the part-time posts of the Town Handyperson and Cemetery Operative into a single permanent 37 hour a week post. This has been discussed with the Chairman of the Finance and Policy Committee and he is supportive of such a proposal. When not working for the Town Council, the Town Handyperson is employed by the County Council as a seasonal worker undertaking grass cutting and ground maintenance. Initial enquiries indicate that he would look favorably towards becoming a permanent full time (37hr per week) Town Council employee. If this route is followed this would give an additional budget cost of approximately £2,500 (to cover the additional 2 hours per week, mileage and pension contributions). This would give an overall budget for 2015/16 of £216,855

Recommendation: b) To approve the 2015/16 budget of £216,855

Having agreed the budget the Council must then set the precept. At the Finance and Policy Committee on 18th December 2014, the Committee considered the extent to which reserves should be used to support the 2015/16 budget. The Committee has recommended reserves are not used to reduce the precept in 2015/16. In the light of this, it is recommended that the 2015/16 precept be £216,855. In 2014/15 it was £179,455.

The Finance and Policy Committee also reviewed the Town Council precept for 2014/15 in comparison to other town councils in Northumberland. In 2014/15 the average Town Council precept for a Band D dwelling was £89.92, compared to £71.88 for Alnwick. The highest in the northern area was Morpeth at £109.61, whilst the overall highest was Choppington at £134.06.

Based on the total draft budget for the Council for 2015/16 of £216,855 and using the Tax Base figure of 2558.38, this would give a Band D equivalent Town Council element of £84.76 per annum. This would be £1.63 per week in 2015/16 compared to £1.38 in 2014/15, giving an increase of 25 pence per week.

In 2014/15 the Band D Council Tax breakdown in Alnwick was as follows

	£
NCC	1399.61
Police	86.61
Alnwick TC	71.88
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£1558.10</u>

In 2014/15, the Alnwick Town Council precept was 4.6% of the total bill.

Recommendation: c) to set a precept of £216,855 for 2015/16.

Agenda item 12 Schools Consultation

Consultation is currently underway for school organisation in the Alnwick Partnership. Discussions from schools in the Alnwick Partnership have resulted in two alternative options being proposed and views of interested parties are being sought. A consultation document is available on the NCC website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/alnwickconsult. A copy has been circulated with the agenda. Various school meetings are being held, the last of which is at the Duchess's High School on 24th February. The Consultation is open until 11th March 2015. Parish Councils are invited to respond if they wish. The Council are recommended to determine if they wish to respond and if so, how to formulate the response.

Recommendation: That the Council considers how to respond to the consultation.

Agenda item 13 Review of the Constitution

Under the Council's constitution it is a requirement to have an annual review. It is therefore proposed to have a working group meeting, to which all councillors are invited, to undertake the review and report back to the March or April Council meeting. The proposed date for the working group will be given at the meeting.

Agenda item 14 Correspondence

The following correspondence has been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
15 th Dec	NCC Notification of approval of 'No waiting' at any time parking restrictions at Sawmill Cottages Alnwick	To Note

19 th Dec	NCC – Core Strategy Consultation Workshops	Circulated to Councillors
19 th Dec	NALC e-news	Available from the clerk on request
19 th Dec	NCC – Consultation on Broadband Coverage in Northumberland – comments required by 19 th Jan	Comments to clerk
29 th Dec	Alnwick District WW1 Centenary Group – Invitation to events on 31 st Jan (in Newcastle and Felton) and 1 st Feb (Alnwick)	Mayor to attend on 1 st Feb. Representatives required for 31 st Jan
5 th Jan	CAN News Winter 2014	Available from the clerk on request
8 th Jan	Northumbrian CAB, New office details	To Note
9 th Jan	NCC Availability of County Council's Learning Together resource to councillors and clerks (e-learning modules)	Circulate to Councillors

Recommendation: That the correspondence received be considered.

Agenda item 15

Financial Matters –Payments

The following invoices have been received for payment (as at 8th January); this list will be updated at the meeting, if necessary.

HMRC	£2,240.52	Tax/NI payment for Dec
Wages Account	£5,000	
N Tait	£1,152	Fencing works at cemetery
Northumbrian Water	£855.09	Water – Allotments and Cemetery (Paid 7 th Jan)
Information Commissioner	£35	Data Protection Registration
James N McLean	£75.49	Tools
npower	£734.92	Cemetery Chapel Electricity
Davidson & Son	£2,640	Parts for Christmas Lights (net cost £2,200)
E Wright	£500	Initial costs for Structural survey on War Memorial
Chubb	£156.83	Annual Contract
NCC	£188.14	NNDR for Room 5, 27 Fenkle Street
AFS Countrystore	£18.28	Poison
Oswald Hughes	£556.50	Robertson's pant – electrical report, electrical works and time clock
TOTAL	£14,152.77	

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and are reported for information		
BT	£72.13	phone bills cemetery and cemetery lodge paid 28 th Dec 14
npower	£282.20	Cemetery Store £63.56 Robertson's Pant £130.36, Town Hall Clock £88.28
BT	£22.77	Fenkle Street phone bill paid 23 rd Dec 14

The following grants were approved for payment by the Finance and Policy Committee on 18th December:

Organisation	Grant Award
Alnwick and District Playhouse Trust	£1,000
Alnwick Garden Club	£200
Northumberland Touring Theatre Company	£500
Alnwick Community Centre-Play	£500
Alnwick Branch of Arthritis Care	£150
Alnwick Young Peoples Association	£600
Bailiffgate Museum	£1,250
Lionheart Radio & Media	£500
Northumberland CAB (Alnwick Office)	£1,300
RE-NU-IT	£350
Hospice Care North Northumberland	£1,000
Alnwick & District Sports Council	£350
Mighty Oaks	£250
Alnwick Town Juniors FC	£350
Alnwick & District Choral Society	£200
Friends of Bullfield Community Orchard	£350
Friends of Abbeyfield	£250
Alnwick Wheel Sports Facility Association	£350
Alnwick Amateur Boxing Club	£400 (accounts needed prior to payment)

Recommendation: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £14,152.77, to note the direct debit payments of £377.10 and to authorise the grant payments of £9,850.

Agenda item 17

Councillor Issue - Condition of former Corn Exchange Building

Councillor Patience wishes to raise the condition of the Former Corn Exchange Building. She is concerned about the state of the building and safety issues around the public right of way that runs down the side of the building to the Roxburgh Place car park.