

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 11th Dec 2014
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present Cllrs P Allcroft, S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, D Farrar, W Grisdale, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore, S Patience, R Roberts, A Shilton, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

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

C14/114 Questions from the public
There were no questions from the public.

C14/115 Apologies for absence
None.

C14/116 Declarations of Interest
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in county council matters.

C14/117 Minutes of previous meeting (November 13th 2014)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2014 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

C14/118 Matters Arising

C14/100 War Memorial Update The Admin Assistant advised councillors that English Heritage have agreed a further grant of £1,105 to cover some of the costs of the work to the lantern. The grant is now for £8,270 (£7,165 initial grant plus £1,105 additional grant). This means that the Town Council contribution is £3,738.

The Mayor again thanked the Admin Assistant for her work on the War Memorial.

C14/104 Bike Track Lease The Town Clerk informed councillors that the lease had not been able to be completed at this time but that they have received new head of terms. The land has an agricultural tenant who will be given notice by Northumberland Estates once planning permission is given.

Councillor G Mavin asked if the Town Council were talking to the tenant. The Town Clerk advised that they weren't but that the tenant was aware of the bike track application.

C14/111 NCC Walkabout The Town Clerk advised that this has been arranged for December 18th to review the areas highlighted by Councillor Holt at the last meeting.

C14/119 Consultations

a) Removal of phone box

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that BT had announced their intention to remove 65 low usage phone boxes across the county. One of these is opposite the Shepherd's Rest pub in Alnwick. He also advised councillors that, in addition to the NCC/BT notice of intent in the phone box inviting objections, an Alnwick Town Council notice had been put in the phone box with contact details. The consultation runs until 18th December 2014 and as yet no community comments have been received.

Councillor Swinbank asked if he knew if any of the calls made in the last year were 999 calls. The Town Clerk said he didn't.

Councillor Castle commented that as the location has the best signal strength in Alnwick and mobile phone usage is high, he supported the removal of the phone box.

Councillor Patience thought the phone box should be retained even if the phone was removed. She also asked if the Town Council could explore the possibility of keeping it for another use such as installing another defibrillator.

Councillor Symmonds said he supported the views of Councillor Castle.

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had been informed by BT that the Town Council can have the phone box. He also confirmed that the phone box was not in the best state of repair.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Town Clerk could ask if we could have one of the other phone boxes that BT are removing. Councillor G Mavin thought the Town Council should ask if one of the red phone boxes was available. Councillor Castle thought the phone box could also be moved to a better location outside the Shepherd's Rest pub. The Town Clerk advised he would speak to the Ambulance Service and the Stephen Carey Fund about possibly having another defibrillator.

RESOLVED: i) To advise British Telecom that Alnwick Town Council support the removal of the phone ii) To contact the Ambulance Service and the Stephen Carey Fund about other uses for the phone box.

b) Pharmacy Needs Assessment

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that Northumberland County Council is consulting on a Pharmacy Needs Assessment for Northumberland and have requested comments by 30th January 2015. He had previously distributed the report which highlights the distribution of 100 hour pharmacies - Cramlington, Blyth, Ashington (2), Berwick (1) and Hexham (1). Alnwick has three pharmacies: Boots in Bondgate Within offers a seven day service and is open a total of 57 hours, Boots on Paikes Street offers a six day service over 53 hours and the pharmacy at Infirmary Close is open for 5 days a week for a total of 47.5 hours.

Councillor Roberts was concerned that the report seemed to focus on Morpeth but the nearest 100 pharmacy to Alnwick is Ashington or Cramlington. She also felt that there was no enough cover in the town.

Councillor Symmonds said he was surprised that there wasn't much cover in Morpeth. He also advised councillors that Alnwick Infirmary Drive would be open on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The Town Clerk said the Town Council need to flag the distance from Alnwick to a 100 hour pharmacy and the overlap of chemist opening hours in Alnwick to NCC.

RESOLVED: To advise NCC of the two issues regarding pharmacies in Alnwick i) the distance from Alnwick to a 100 hour pharmacy; ii) the overlap of chemist opening hours in Alnwick.

c) NCC Budget

The Town Clerk had downloaded information from NCC website regarding the potential budget cuts in 2015/16. He advised councillors that he had also received a letter from NCC to arrange a meeting with 34 Town and Parish Councils to talk about the location of toilets and use of other facilities.

Councillor Castle advised that he had received a brief about the budget figures and confirmed that Alnwick would absorb a lot of the cuts. He is chair of the Street Scene for Rural Areas group and advised the Town Council to talk to the group.

Councillor Symmonds commented that he thought NCC did a good job. He also gave a update on the North Area meeting he had attended earlier in the week at which NCC had advised the meeting that this was not going to be a toilet closing exercise. NCC had also advised that daily opening / closing of toilets was very costly and had asked if any T&PCs could take on that function.

Councillor Symmonds also advised that as some T&PCs had already set their precept for 2015/16 they would have no opportunity to make any budget changes to reflect any potential changes, but as Alnwick Town Council set their precept in January 2015 the budget could reflect these potential changes, if this was felt necessary.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council precept would be set on January 15th 2015, the same night as the next NCC meeting.

Councillor Grisdale reminded councillors that the Town Council cannot just set a higher precept just in case of extra costs during the year.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Town Council could do their own cost exercise on the toilets. The Town Clerk advised that Morpeth Town Council look after three toilets at a cost of £70,000 (including £45,000 for the toilets at the bus station). He also informed councillors that they go out to tender for the services.

Councillor S Allcroft asked if the toilets in Greenwell Lane were used very much.

Councillor Castle advised that the Town Council could cost out the figures then suggest that any decision regarding Alnwick is deferred for a year.

Councillor G Mavin asked if Alnwick Garden would allow visitors to use their toilets. The Town Clerk advised that there was already public access.

Councillor Patience commented that Alnwick does not have any other purpose built toilets, other than Greenwell Lane, so needed to think about the facilities in Alnwick.

Councillor Farrar felt the Town Council should be mindful not to give anything away at the start of the discussions by agreeing to take over services that other Town and Parish Councils do not take on and still get their current level of services from NCC.

Councillor S Mavin felt there was a benefit from the Town Council looking at the whole budget list rather than focusing on toilets.

Councillor Broom said that toilets were still the biggest issue in the town so the Town Council need to choose how they best use their money for Alnwick and its residents.

Councillor S Allcroft commented that she took Councillor Castle's point and that the Town Council should work out how much everything costs before making a decision.

Councillor Castle advised that the Town Council did not need to make a decision right away but that it would be useful to work out how much things would cost including cleaning the toilets.

Councillor Roberts felt there were several other potential areas of cuts and that the Town Council should take a longer term view on the whole thing. She was especially concerned about two areas - Leisure with cuts of £760k, rising to £1m in 2016/17 and Library / Visitor Information Rationalisation with cuts of £1m in 2016/17. Councillor Castle advised that cuts to Library budgets does not necessarily mean closures and could be made up through increased charges.

Councillor Symmonds felt NCC must have known earlier about the potential budget cuts so could have produced more information for Town and Parish Councils. He understood the need for confidentiality but NCC must have had more details to have worked out the figures which they could have shared with the Town Council.

Councillor Holt endorsed Councillor Symmonds comments.

The Town Clerk advised that he would contact NCC for more information on the areas that affect Alnwick most to discuss with the Finance & Policy Committee Chair in advance of setting the precept for 2015/16.

RESOLVED: To obtain more information from NCC about areas that affect Alnwick and discuss with Finance & Policy Committee chair prior to setting the precept for 2015/16.

C14/120 Outside Body appointment

Councillor Farrar proposed that Councillor Holt be appointed as a Town Council representative on Alnwick in Bloom.

RESOLVED: To agree that Councillor Holt be appointed as one of the Town Council's representatives on Alnwick in Bloom.

C14/121 Employee 2014-16 Pay Award

The Town Clerk informed the council that the national 2014-16 pay award had just been determined so the new pay scales would be implemented from 1 January 2015. He advised them that this pay award, of around 2%, together with a 'lump-sum' for payment in December 2014, would have a financial implication for the Town Council's 2014/15 budget amounting approximately to an additional £800. He also advised that the full year implications would be built into the budgets for 2015/16.

RESOLVED: The Council makes additional budgetary provision for the 2014-2016 pay award.

C14/122 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (13th November 2014) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 13th November 2014 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (20th November 2014) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on 20th November 2014 were agreed as a true record.

At the Cemetery Committee meeting on 20th November the cemetery fees were reviewed and the recommended revised fees were presented to the Full Council for approval and inclusion in the 2015/16 budget (with effect from 1st April 2015).

RESOLVED: To approve the revised Cemetery Fees with effect from April 1st 2015.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (27th November 2014) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 27th November 2014 were agreed as a true record.

C14/123 Agenda for Next Joint Meeting with NCC

The Town Clerk advised that there were no items from the Cemetery Committee. Councillor Roberts asked for Section 106 to be added provisionally to the agenda.

Councillor Broom said the issue of weeds growing around town should be raised.

Councillor Patience requested drain cleaning be added as it leads to flooding.

Councillor Humphries said cigarette ends outside pubs in Alnwick was an issue.

Councillor Roberts asked for gritting around the town to be added. She also asked if the Town Council could be advised of NCC proposals for gritting. Councillor Castle advised that he had checked and that NCC grit 28 routes around Northumberland (shown on the NCC website) at 4am and 4pm each day and would continue to do so.

Councillor Roberts advised that Alnmouth Station car park was a real problem and although not in Alnwick many Alnwick residents use it. Councillor Castle advised that the car park may not be on one of NCC's planned routes or may be gritted early in the morning as not all places could be done at 4am.

Councillor Symmonds said that as NCC were still keen on an economic strategy it was vital that they share the Town Council's vision on jobs, houses (including affordable housing) and schools. The last request for NCC to talk to Alnwick Town Council, to ensure Alnwick were integrated into NCC policies, has had no response. Councillor Castle supported the comment made by Councillor Symmonds and agreed that NCC had promised to send someone to talk to the Town Council.

Councillor Farrar advised that the Town Council still had not received the minutes of the last joint meeting.

RESOLVED: To add councillor items to the January joint meeting with NCC.

C14/124 Correspondence

The following correspondence has been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action
27th Nov	NCC- Removal of weekly planning list document on website	Councillors to note
26th Nov	NCC Schedule of Joint meetings 2015. (April 2015 and October 2015)	Available from the clerk on request
4th Dec	RAF Boulmer Lookout magazine	Available from the clerk on request
	NCC temporary road closure – Wagonway Road / Willowburn Avenue likely to be from 16th March 2015 – 29th March 2015.	To note
See note ≠ below	NCC temporary road closure for bridge works from Feb 2nd to Aug 28th 2015. A1068 affected and A1 closed southbound with contra-flow on northbound carriageway.	To note

≠ Councillor Caste advised that this would mean a lot of additional traffic in Alnwick. Councillor Moore felt the letter did not give enough information and that some of it was inaccurate.

RESOLVED: To receive and note the communication.

C14/125 Financial Matters – Payments

The following invoices have been received for payment:

HMRC	£1,982.74	Tax and NI
Wages Account	£5,000	

BT	£47.35	Phone and internet bill Fenkle Street (£23.97 by D/D)
John Gray Ltd	£60.46	Machine part
Rickerby Ltd	£51.60	Protective Clothing
Northumberland County Council	£325.57	Installation of banners for Town Team (to also include their removal) (town team budget)
NCC	£150	Occupation of Fenkle Street 13nov - 12dec
CBS Ltd	£20.59	Stationary
Azure	£199.02	Remembrance Day – order of service
Glasdon UK Ltd	£877.95	2 new seats
WR Batey	£53.00	Postage
Glendale Gateway Trust	£60	Cost of visit to Trust
Alnwick Markets	£612.50	Rent of Willowburn Unit Oct – Dec 14
Glasdon UK Ltd	£1,424.59	2 new litter bins and 2 replacement bin liners
National Pen Promotions Ltd	£169.79	Town Council pens – for Mayoral gifts
James McLean	£86.76	Tools and materials
TOTAL	£11,121.92	

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and are reported for information		
BT	£66.51	Phone bills cemetery and cemetery lodge Paid 27th Nov 14
npower	£22.49	Cemetery Store
npower	£29.00	Town Hall Clock

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payment amounting to £11,121.92 and to note the direct debit payments of £118.

C14/126 Feedback Local Multi-Agency Crime Prevention Initiative Meeting

Councillor Moore advised the council there was nothing to report.

C14/127 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Castle advised that a major BBC production would be in Alnwick during January and would be using one of the Greenwell Lane car parks.

Councillor Harington commented that the Christmas Lights were fantastic as well as the lights at Column Cottage.

Councillor Gridale advised that the readings for the Civic Carol Service were now ready for councillors who had volunteered to read.

C14/128 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The following resolution was moved and seconded, to exclude the public and press. "That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act". The item considered in private were:

The co-option of a new Town Councillor for the Clayport Ward

Meeting closed at 8.33pm