

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday 15th March 2015  
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present** Cllrs S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, 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, Cllr H Cairns.

**C14/161 Questions from the public**  
There were no questions from the public.

**C14/162 Apologies for absence**  
Cllr. P Allcroft.

**C14/163 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in county council matters.

**C14/164 Presentation by Geoff Paul (NCC)**

Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Housing & Planning gave a presentation about Economic Development in Northumberland and Alnwick.

He explained that NCC had reviewed their policies on economic development and had put together a North East combined authority proposal covering seven council areas. One of their first tasks had been to review the ambitions in Northumberland and had done a lot of work on researching the area to develop a new strategy and delivery programme. Their initial findings showed that there is a very diverse economy across Northumberland and that although more people are in work in Northumberland, than in the other six authority areas, the gross value added is the lowest.

The latest population projection for 2030 show a reduction of 22,000 in the number of working people. One of NCC's key areas was to support small businesses who make up the majority of employers, to grow. He also explained that they were setting up a map to plot opportunities across the county.

NCC's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) had a target of 10,000 new jobs in Northumberland by 2025.

Councillor questions:

Councillor Castle asked how reliable the figures, including age profiles, were. Geoff advised that the figures used were at the lower end of the projections.

Councillor G Mavin commented that he had read the Development Strategy and felt that all the information was based in the south east of the county. He also explained that 30% of jobs in Alnwick are part time and that unemployment was almost 10% and was concerned that any new employer would be pushed into Cramlington. Geoff said that the biggest issue for any

new company was sourcing labour and that this was obviously more difficult to find in rural areas. He also felt that digital connectivity should help support businesses relocating or setting up in the area and that his directorate needed to understand how people use connectivity and IT.

Councillor G Mavin felt that the key challenge was to deal with the whole of Northumberland. He also asked what the Town Council could do to help. Geoff thought that, as the North East was on the periphery of the UK and Northumberland was on the periphery of the North East it was important that it had links within both England and Scotland. He felt that the Neighbourhood Plan was a key process to develop and support growth and that the Town Council should work with ARCH to develop activities across the whole county.

Councillor Roberts asked if the 10,000 new jobs in Northumberland by 2025 would be distributed across the county. Geoff advised that he would hope so, but that he could hit his target all in the South East of the county.

Councillor Roberts commented that North Northumberland was not far from Edinburgh and for many people in the county it was closer than Newcastle. Geoff advised that he was attending a conference as part of a Borderlands group to discuss synergy and share issues and ideas. There was also talk about lobbying on a national level.

Councillor S Mavin felt it was disappointing that there were no skills being taught in the Alnwick area and that this was a major problem.

Councillor Holt was concerned about the lack of resources to attract people to the area including training.

Councillor Grisdale asked how this issue could be taken forward. Geoff advised that another session would be useful once the strategy and documents were ready in 3-4 months time.

Councillor Cairns was concerned about the push on tourism in Alnwick as local people go to university and have no job opportunities to come back to or want to start their own businesses but the lack of connectivity means they can't.

Geoff Paul left the meeting.

Councillor Symmonds felt another longer session was needed to get some key issues discussed properly. He felt that there should also be more discussion about areas to benefit Alnwick residents.

Councillor S Allcroft thought that the council should do more preparation before the next meeting with Geoff.

The Town Clerk informed the council that Geoff had advised he would email the answers to the outstanding questions.

**RESOLVED: To note the update from Geoff Paul.**

**C14/165 Minutes of previous meeting (February 12th 2015)**

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2015 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.**

**C14/166 Matters Arising**

**C14/154 School Consultation** Councillor Holt advised that she had been to one of the consultation meetings and that this was a very complex issue and there was a lot of confusion from parents.

**C14/157 Planning Review by NCC** Councillor Roberts advised that there had been an update given in the preceding Planning Meeting from Councillor Castle (see Planning minutes for March 12th for more information).

**C14/160** Councillor Castle advised that there had been some problems with the work on the cobbles but that the work should be completed by Easter. Councillor S Allcroft advised that they were building walls around the tree locations.

**C14/167 Mayor's Report**

Councillor Grisdale reported that the Mayor's Report is on his blog [www.alnwickmayor.wordpress.com](http://www.alnwickmayor.wordpress.com).

**C14/168 Minutes of Committees**

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (12<sup>th</sup> February 2015) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Meeting (19th February 2015) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy meeting held on 19th January 2015 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (29<sup>th</sup> January 2015) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015 were agreed as a true record.**

**C14/169 Assessment of Risks Report**

The Town Clerk advised that this had previously been discussed and agreed at the Finance & Policy Committee but the internal auditor had advised that it should come to Full Council for approval.

**RESOLVED: To approve the Assessment of Risks Report and Action Plan.**

**C14/170 Asset Register**

The Town Clerk circulated the current Asset Register explaining that this was an expanded list from last year and now included insurance value, as requested by the Finance & Policy Committee. He also explained that only items with a long life or significant value had been added and that it needed to be kept as an on-going document. He also advised that the insurance policy would be reviewed at the next Finance & Policy Committee meeting.

**RESOLVED: To approve the Asset Register.**

**C14/171 Request for Community Governance Review**

The Town Clerk explained that the proposed developments south of the town all fall within Denwick Detached. He advised that the Finance & Policy Committee had felt that these could better sit in Alnwick so he and the Mayor had initially met with Denwick Parish Chairman and the Town Clerk had subsequently gone to a Denwick Parish Council meeting in January after which they had agreed that Alnwick Town Council could request NCC carry out a Community Governance Review. He confirmed that the next meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee would look at the possible boundary options to put forward to NCC.

Councillor Castle felt it would enhance the role of Alnwick Town Council and benefit the residents of the new development. He suggested writing to Denwick Parish Council to thank them for their support on the matter.

**RESOLVED: To contact NCC requesting a Community Governance Review with regard to boundary changes between Alnwick and Denwick.**

**C14/172 Northumberland Flood Risk Strategy**

The Town Clerk reminded the council that NCC had developed a Local Flood Risk Strategy for Northumberland, which will be a key policy document setting out how the County Council will manage flood risk across the County in the future. They are asking for comments from T&PCs by April 24th.

Councillor Farrar commented that although the document identified 100 houses at risk of surface and river flooding it did not identify where the houses were. He felt that more information would be useful. Councillor Moore asked if it included the issue with the drains. Councillor Humphries asked how the NCC flood risk matched the Environmental flood data. Councillor Farrar thought that they used the Environmental Agency data.

**RESOLVED: To submit comments to the Town Clerk by 31<sup>st</sup> March to draft a response to be tabled at the next Council meeting in April.**

**C14/173 Magna Carta**

At the last Council meeting, Councillors were reminded that 2015 marks the 800 year anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta and one of the 25 barons involved was Eustace de Vesci of Alnwick. A working group of the Recreation and Amenities Committee has been putting together a draft programme of events (with partners) to mark the occasion and will be discussed in more detail on the next Recreation and Amenities Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> March. The activities and events include:

- An exhibition at Bailiffgate Museum running from 19<sup>th</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> July including the display of a facsimile, translation etc. and an Exhibition at the Castle including the display of a King John seal
- Weekly events at the museum, including a talk by Peter Carter on 15<sup>th</sup> June (the date of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary)
- Local schools competitions around the Magna Carta theme, with entries

- being displayed in the Museum
- Planting an English Oak tree
- Purchasing a book on the Magna Carta (possibly to present to the local library)
- Undertaking a consultation event on or around Sunday 14 June. – this is being earmarked as the date for people to celebrate, debate or reflect on their liberties. (Part of the national 'Libertea' events).

He asked that to enable the schools competition to be launched, it would be useful if a budget could be set. Although this could be done at the Recreation and Amenities Committee later in the month, an earlier decision would help with event organisation

**RESOLVED: A budget of up to £750 was agreed for the 2015 Magna Carta celebrations.**

**C14/174 Draft Accounts and Expenditure plans - Mechanics Institute**

The Town Clerk presented the draft 2014/15 accounts for the Mechanic's Institute before submission for the audit. Income was slightly down on last year showing a small loss of £351.

He also issued a sheet showing potential expenditure for 2015/16 for review, which included proposed expenditure of £23,000.

Councillor Swinbank thought that if a bit more income could be generated this would help and he asked if enough marketing was done. The Town Clerk advised that the building did get some publicising more may need to be done to increase income. He informed the council that some new bookings had been taken.

Councillor Broom asked if it would be possible to have an internet hub in the building to attract more people and groups. He also asked if it was used much during the day. The Town Clerk advised that it wasn't used very much.

Councillor Broom also asked if NCC could be contacted to ask any of the furniture taken out of Clayport Street could be made available. He suggested using the building for an 'adopt a grandparent scheme' getting sixth formers to teach them how to use IT including using an iPad.

Councillor Castle asked if there was any opportunity for an office facility in the building.

**RESOLVED: i) To accept the Mechanic's Institute draft accounts; ii) To agree the expenditure plans.**

**C14/175 Correspondence**

The following correspondence has been received since the last meeting:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Action if any</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Police – incident at Alnwick News, Alnwick North	Circulated to ward members
26 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Alnwick Spring Show - Copies of this year's schedule	Copies given to councillors

26 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Alnwick & District Choral Society – re grant award offered and subsequent change of plans (i)	Councillors considered at the meeting
2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Alnwick Cub scouts –request for funding towards centenary year (2016)	Referred to Finance & Policy Committee
5 <sup>th</sup> March	National Plant Monitoring Survey	Available from the clerk on request
5 <sup>th</sup> March	Alnwick Tourism Fair – 18 <sup>th</sup> March 10am–2.30pm Willowburn	To note and attend if interested
5 <sup>th</sup> March	Temporary Road Closure U3129 Wagonway Road/Willowburn Avenue Alnwick, now taking place between 9 <sup>th</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> March	To note
6 <sup>th</sup> March	Carers Northumberland – Change of address to 107-109 Station Road Ashington	To note

(i) Alnwick & District Choral Society – The Town Clerk advised that they had been awarded a grant of £200 for a concert they were planning to hold during the summer in Rock. This concert was not now taking place so they had returned the cheque. They are doing a concert in St Paul's Church instead and had submitted costings for the new concert. He asked the council to consider this new request.

Councillor Roberts felt that whilst she applauded them for returning the cheque she thought they should the council should have all the information usually asked for before making a decision.

Councillor Symmonds said he agreed with Councillor Roberts. He suggested that a cheque for £100 was given to them.

Councillor S Allcroft felt that although the procedure needed to be followed the Town Council should give them £100.

Councillor Roberts said she still felt that more information was needed to make the correct decision.

**RESOLVED: To contact Alnwick and District Choral Society to request further information to be reviewed at the next Finance & Policy Committee in April.**

**C14/176 Feedback Local Multi-Agency Crime Prevention Initiative Meeting**

Councillor Moore reported that the meetings were moving to quarterly rather than monthly and that the next meeting would be in Berwick. The next meeting in Alnwick would be June.

**C14/177 Financial Matters – Payments**

The following invoices had been received for payment:

PAYEE	TOTAL PAYABLE	VAT ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
HMRC	£2,116.87	£0	Tax/NI payment for Feb
Wages Account	£4,000	£0	

Alnwick Paint & Glass	£116.42	£19.42	Materials for seat repairs
CBS	£32.40	£5.40	Photocopying
Weasdale Nurseries	£1,314.59	£219.10	Trees for new cemetery area
BT	£85.20	£14.20	Internet bill for 27 Fenkle Street (Paid 6/3/14)
NFU Mutual	£1,925.94	£0	Clerk's pension contribution 14/15
Glasdon UK Limited	£115.22	£19.20	Replacement bin locks
Local Living (NE) Limited	£612.50	£0.00	Rent for Willowburn unit
Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd	£1,740.00	£0.00	Neighbourhood Plan Co-ordinator fees (Oct-Dec 14)
The Northumberland Estate	£75.00	£0.00	Rent for Ratten Row allotments (Mar 1 <sup>st</sup> 2015 – Feb 29 <sup>th</sup> 2016)
NCC	£10,507.73	£1,751.29	Planting of planters/flowerbeds for 2014/15
NCC	£2,452.27	£408.71	Planting of hanging baskets for 2014/15
NCC	£150.00	£0	Rent for Fenkle Street,13/2-12/3
Janet Pibworth	£104.99	£21.00	Two external hard drives (£90.00) and mouse mat (£14.99) for office
Diamond Business Systems	£59.40	£9.90	Photocopier quarterly charge
James N McLean Ltd	£40.14	£6.69	Helmet and tools
Fife Plant Hire	£127.80	£21.30	Cemetery materials for headstone bases
Thomas Sherriff	£106.76	£17.79	Materials
Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth	£75.00	£12.50	Plants at The Oaks roundabout
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£25,758.23</b>	<b>£2,526.50</b>	

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and were reported for information

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYABLE</b>	<b>VAT ELEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
BT	£81.09	£13.51	Phone bills cemetery and cemetery lodge paid 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2015
BT	£24.37	£4.06	Fenkle Street phone bill paid 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 2015

### **Financial Matters – Direct Debits**

The Town Clerk explained that at present some but not all the Council's utility bills (6 out of 12) are paid by direct debit. He recommended that the council agrees to pay the remaining utility bills not paid by direct debit in this way. This would apply to the electricity bill for the Cemetery Chapel, all the water bills and the internet services bill for Fenkle Street.

**RESOLVED: i) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £25,758.23, to note the direct debit payments of £105.46; ii) To agree that the Clerk sets up direct debits for the utility bills not currently paid in this way.**

### **C14/178 Notes on Joint Meeting with NCC on January 26th 2015**

The Town Clerk had circulated minutes and actions from the previous joint NCC/ATC meeting.

Councillor Patience asked about the action regarding Alnwick Youth Hostel and explained that this was currently run by ARCH and had a group of directors.

Councillor Shilton explained that the building was owned by NCC having been taken on at the demise of the Alnwick Community Development Trust.

Councillor Symonds explained that the item started as a discussion about Development Trusts owning property. His thoughts were that once the Youth Hostel became profitable the building could have been handed to the Town Council. Nothing had been done at this stage but the building could be used for the benefit of the town.

Councillor Farrar wondered how likely NCC were to give up a profit making building.

**RESOLVED: To take the actions forward to the relevant committees / meetings.**

### **C14/179 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Cairns reported that she and Councillor Castle had had representation from residents in Chapel Lane regarding parking, bins, lights and the arch. It was agreed to take the matters up with the relevant departments at NCC to ask for better signage and heritage lighting begin changed for low energy replacements.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm