

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday 14th May 2015  
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

**Present** Cllrs S Allcroft, P 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, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

**In attendance** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk. David Taylor, Philip Angier and Peter Biggers (Neighbourhood Plan Team and present for Minute C15/07).

**C15/01 Questions from the public**

QUESTION 1 - Mrs Bowie asked a question about when the play area at Glovers Green would be installed. The Town Clerk replied that the issue had been a little complex as NCC owned the land but the Town Council were responsible for the play equipment. He explained that the area had been seeded. Mrs Bowie also asked if the turf could be put on the area. The Town Clerk said it could but that the area would need to be cordoned off.

Mrs Bowie said that the area seemed to be the poor area of the town. The Town Clerk advised that the area of Glovers Green that had previously had an old seesaw was also being replaced. Councillor Cairns said that she had some money available that could be used to provide more equipment.

The Town Clerk also advised that the Town Council would investigate putting more play equipment in the Community Orchard field. Mrs Bowie said that it was a waste as it was a large field but that children did not think they were allowed to play in it. Councillor Patience advised that no one stopped anyone from using the orchard field. Councillor Roberts suggested that a sign could be installed to say "You are encouraged to use this area".

Councillor Castle felt that are would benefit from more equipment and he would support providing money to do this.

QUESTION 2 - Carlo Biagioni asked about the possibility of a 20mph speed limit in the town centre. Councillor Grisdale advised that this was not a Town Council matter, but at this stage, it could be put onto a Planning Committee agenda for discussion.

QUESTION 3 - David Taylor asked what rate relief charity shops in the town get above the 80% threshold. Councillor Castle thought it was 100%. He also commented that this was a difficult question for the Town Council to answer as it was a County Council matter which he would take forward.

**C15/02 Apologies for absence**

Cllr A Shilton.

**C15/03 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in county council matters. Councillors Castle and Roberts declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 as they are on the Alnwick Playhouse Board. Bill Batey, Town Clerk declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 as he is a Director of Northumberland Theatre Company that owns the Playhouse building.

**C15/04 Mayor's Report**

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

**C15/05 Election of the Mayor**

The Town Clerk reported that one nomination had been received which was for Bill Grisdale.

**RESOLVED: That Councillor Grisdale be elected as Mayor**

Councillor Grisdale read out and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

**C15/06 Election of the Deputy Mayor**

The Town Clerk reported that one nomination had been received which was for Sue Allcroft.

**RESOLVED: That Councillor Sue Allcroft be elected as Deputy Mayor**

Councillor S Allcroft read out and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

**C15/07 Presentation by Paul Leo (NCC)**

Paul explained that he was responsible for the accommodation projects across Northumberland including Alnwick. He advised that NCC leadership were trying to accelerate this programme in order to reduce spend on buildings and that he had been given task of coming up with a plan to reduce spend and support each town.

He explained that Allerburn House was now empty and that since Housing staff had moved out of the Clayport Street offices, the building had been sold. He also explained that NCC did not own most of the buildings they used in Alnwick. NCC did not want to close the library but the building is leased from Northumberland Estates and single use of a building was not best provision.

He also explained that NCC staff would make more use of IT facilities in order to locate them where customers / consumers are based.

There are two key buildings in Alnwick, they were looking at:

Northumberland Hall - owned by NCC but it needs to be invested in to get more usage although there are no plans to add any new facilities.

Alnwick Playhouse - the better the building can be made to work efficiently the more it would be used. He had been looking at how the building could be more vibrant and how the library and TIC could potentially be moved into the premises. He informed the Town Council that he did not have any detailed information at present.

**QUESTIONS:**

Councillor S Allcroft asked who had bought Clayport Street. Paul advised that he couldn't say as yet.

David Taylor (ADNP/Town Team) asked if the money raised from the sale of Clayport St would be fed back into Alnwick. Paul said this had been a really common question but that he couldn't guarantee that it would be. He said that improvements were not linked to the sale of buildings.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the plans for Northumberland Hall included extending the toilet area to bring them up to the required standard for the town. Paul advised that whilst there were currently no plans NCC can consider this. Councillor Swinbank reiterated that this was quite major for the town.

Councillor Holt asked how many other buildings were up for sale and how many of the NCC leases were up. Paul advised that Clayport St and Allerburn House were up for sale along with Thornburn and Alnbank and advised that the old Fire Station building was undecided as yet. He also explained that there were a number of buildings in Alnwick which were leased by NCC which were being looked at to see how staff and functions can be pulled together better.

Councillor Broom asked if the Thornburn and Alnbank buildings had been undervalued. Paul advised that they had been professionally valued and actually sold for more than the valuation.

Councillor Symmonds asked that if new administrative processes and ways of working were being reviewed did NCC really need a very expensive centre in Ashington. He felt that this contradicted what Paul had been saying. Paul explained that the priority was to reduce the number of desk spaces used by NCC across the county from 14,500 to 7,750.

Philip Angier explained that both the Market Place and Northumberland Hall were key parts in both the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (ADNP) and the Town Centre so early information would be useful to have. Philip advised that NCC could be provided with a copy of the ADNP. Philip Angier also asked about the suggested use of the Northumberland Hall as a wedding venue and explained that markets happen on Saturday and that this needs to be considered. Paul explained that the wedding venue in Morpeth has improved economic development and has combined well with other functions. He said it was important that NCC provided Alnwick with a better wedding venue.

Peter Biggers explained that there are two sites in Alnwick identified for housing in the ADNP (Allerburn House and the Fire Station site) so it was important that NCC had the same agenda and crucial that more information was provided as soon as possible. Paul advised that housing on the Allerburn House site was certainly NCC's preferred option. The Fire Station would not be identified for housing at this stage.

Councillor G Mavin said that he saw the benefit of moving the library into The Playhouse building this would not increase the footfall in the Market Place. Paul agreed and confirmed that in the past there had been some plans to put the library into Northumberland Hall.

Councillor Castle asked what the next steps were and that it was important that the Town Council were involved in the process.

Councillor Patience agreed that there needed to be further consultation. She advised that there was a draft copy of the Neighbourhood Plan logged on the NCC website. Paul agreed that there was a need to talk but he had been asked to get a quick result to reduce costs on property. Councillor Patience said that that NCC could consult on the ideas given in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Edge asked that if there was a shortage of premises to use in Alnwick, then perhaps the Mechanics Institute could be used for the library. Paul confirmed that NCC could look at this but did need to protect the future of the Playhouse.

Councillor Roberts asked for clarification on the use of Northumberland Hall for wedding services and receptions. Paul advised that it was proposed to use it for both.

## **C15/08 Committee Appointments**

The proposed committee membership was tabled at the meeting which took into account the preferences of councillors.

**RESOLVED: That the membership of the Cemetery Committee, Planning, Highways and Transport Committee, Recreation and Amenities Committee be approved as follows:**

CEMETERY COMMITTEE Councillors S Allcroft, P Allcroft, D Farrar, J Humphries, S Mavin, K Moore, M Swinbank and A Symmonds plus a representative of Denwick Parish Council.

PLANNING, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE Councillors P Broom, P Edge, D Farrar, W Gridale, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, K Moore, R Roberts, A Shilton and A Symmonds.

RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEE Councillors P Broom, D Farrar, M Harrington, P Holt, G Mavin, S Mavin, S Patience, R Roberts, A Shilton, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

## **C15/09 Appointments of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees**

Councillor Roberts was proposed and seconded for the position of Chair of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Roberts be appointed as Chair of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee**

Councillor Farrar was proposed and seconded for the position of Chair of the Cemetery Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Farrar be appointed as Chair of the Cemetery Committee**

Councillor Broom was proposed and seconded for the position of Chair of the Recreation and Amenities Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Broom be appointed as Chair of the Recreation and Amenities Committee**

Councillor G Mavin was proposed and seconded for the position of Vice Chair of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor G Mavin be appointed as Vice Chair of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee**

Councillor Moore was proposed and seconded for the position of Vice Chair of the Cemetery Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Moore be appointed as Vice Chair of the Cemetery Committee**

Councillor Swinbank was proposed and seconded for the position of Vice Chair of the Recreation and Amenities Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Swinbank be appointed as Vice Chair of the Recreation and Amenities Committee**

## **Finance Committee appointments**

**RESOLVED: That following selection of Chairs and Vice Chairs of other committees the membership of the Finance and Policy be approved as follows:**

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE Councillors P Allcroft, S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, D Farrar, W Grisdale, G Mavin, S Mavin, S Patience, R Roberts and A Symmonds

Councillor Symmonds was proposed and seconded for the position of Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Symmonds be appointed as Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee**

Councillor Castle was proposed and seconded for the position of Vice Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Castle be appointed as Vice Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee**

### **C15/10 Appointments to Outside Bodies**

A schedule of the outside bodies, and suggested representatives, was tabled at the meeting. Councillor G Mavin asked if there could be more feedback from every outside body representative. Councillor Farrar suggested that a schedule for the year which could have feedback more frequently than annually. Councillor S Allcroft suggested that councillors could email their feedback to the Town Clerk for circulation.

**RESOLVED: That the Outside Body appointments be approved. (The Outside Bodies appointments made as per the schedule attached to these minutes).**

### **C15/11 Approving dates of ordinary meetings of the council and standing committees**

A draft schedule of Council and Committee meetings was tabled for approval and is attached to these minutes.

**RESOLVED: That the Council and Committee dates be approved.**

### **C15/12 Minutes of previous meeting (April 9th 2015)**

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2015 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.**

### **C15/13 Matters Arising**

**C14/187** Councillor Broom reported that some areas in the town are being flooded due to blocked drains. He advised that the three drains opposite The Plough were blocked as were all the drains on the right hand side of Swansfield Park Road. Councillor Holt reported the drains in Bailiffgate were blocked again. Councillor S Allcroft suggested asking NCC for a date when these would be cleared.

Councillor Castle reminded councillors that they could report a blocked drain through the NCC website. Councillor Holt said it wasn't just a single drain but a series of drains that were blocked.

**C14/188** Councillor Roberts asked for clarification as to when the Constitution Amendment RESOLVED on page 3 would be used. The Town Clerk advised that this could be used when a committee had an item that councillors felt should go to Full

Council. Councillor Farrar asked if the item could still be discussed at the committee level. The Town Clerk advised that it could.

**C15/14 Draft Accounts**

The Town Clerk updated the meeting on progress regarding the production of the 2014/15 accounts. The Draft Accounts were tabled and the Town Clerk gave an overview. He advised councillors that income was significantly up by about £40,000 due to the Swansfield Park endowment, increased Cemetery Fees and the Cemetery refund from NCC. He also advised that he had received two additional invoices which he would like to put into 2014/15.

From the 2014/15 budgets a number of specific expenditure items/projects were not completed during the year, it was therefore recommended that these be carried forward into 2015/16 and the budgets adjusted accordingly. These items are listed below:

<b>Cemetery Committee</b>	
Building Repairs	£2,000
Grounds (Tree Works)	£2,000
New Area	£500
<b>Finance and Policy Committee</b>	
Grants	£400
Town Team - Contribution to scheme	£500
<b>Recreation and Amenities Committee</b>	
Town Promotion - leaflet project	£1,000
Notice Boards Communications project	£2,000
Allotment works	£1,000
Play Area Replacements – Cawledge View, Glovers Green	£7,500
Peter’s Mill Bridge Project	£500
Contribution to Toilet refurbishment	£3,000
Purchase of new Flower Barrels at War Memorial	£175

In addition, Cemetery income was higher than budgeted but the tree survey identified additional works required in 2015, it is therefore recommended that an additional £5,000 is carried forward to cover this work.

**RESOLVED: The draft accounts were noted, and the carry over expenditure into 2015/16 was agreed.**

**C15/15 Tour of Britain**

The Town Clerk advised councillors that the Tour of Britain visits Alnwick on September 9th 2015. He suggested referring the item to Recreation & Amenities Committee for discussion.

Councillor Moore asked if a detailed route was know yet. The Town Clerk advised that the detailed route would be known after the formal launch in June.

Councillor Castle reminded councillors that this was a great event for Alnwick.

## **C15/16 Project & Funding Officer Post**

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that in 2015/16 the Town Council has agreed to fund a part-time post (3 days a week) for a Projects and Funding Officer. He had distributed a Proposed Project Work sheet prior to the meeting. He explained that he had based it on two strands: i) CAPs from the Neighbourhood Plan which it was envisaged would take up two days per week and ii) Funding Opportunities which would take up the other day per week.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the list was in priority order. The Town Clerk advised it wasn't.

Councillor Farrar felt that some of the wording might be unhelpful. The Town Clerk agreed that some of the wording might need changing. Councillor Farrar also suggested that a Dog Fouling Strategy could be added.

Councillor S Allcroft thought that although this was a three year post she would like to see a six month probationary period.

Councillor S Mavin felt that a wheelchair access survey within Alnwick could be a useful project to add.

Councillor Roberts felt that the information needed to specify that the post would be applying for funding. The Town Clerk agreed.

Councillor G Mavin felt the list was not very exciting. He also reminded councillors that the other councils / Development Trusts they had visited had business start ups. He also felt that the bus station needed looking at again.

Councillor Holt had reservations about the post being for three years and the list did not seem dynamic enough to attract the right person. The Town Clerk advised that there was a job description and person specification for the post.

Councillor Roberts asked if the list was just for Year 1. The Town Clerk advised that it was. Councillor Roberts felt it did not need to be too set in stone as it needed to be flexible if the Town Council priorities change.

Councillor Symmonds said the comments from Councillor G Mavin about interview questions were good. He also thought that although Year 1 would focus on CAP actions there should be mention of offering support to events / festivals. He also felt that interviewees should be asked about their vision beyond Year 3.

Councillor Castle felt the post was important as it, in part, replaced the Development Trust which is missed. He also felt that short job descriptions tended to mean that there was more involved in a job. He felt that general statements would take the Town Council forward but would like to see the links with Alnwick Garden expanding.

**RESOLVED: The broad outline of the proposed project work list for 2015/16 be agreed.**

## **C15/17 Minutes of Committees**

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (9<sup>th</sup> April 2015) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (16<sup>th</sup> April 2015) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015 were agreed as a true record.**

**C15/18****Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Action</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> April	NCC – Car Parking Consultation on changing the all day stay to a maximum of 4 hours for the large car park on Greenwell Road	Recommendation from Planning Committee considered – see below.
17 <sup>th</sup> April	Request for litter bin near to children’s play area at Cawledge View	To agree to the request
20 <sup>th</sup> April	CAB – Changes in Northumberland	Available on request

The Planning Committee had discussed the car parking item earlier and had the following feedback:

**Car Parking NCC Consultation**

The consultation was following changes requested by Town & Parish Councils with regard to car parks. In Alwick the request had been made to change the time limits in Greenwell Lane Car Park D which is currently All Day free parking. The Town Council had suggested a 3 hour stay with no return in 4 hours but to keep it in line with core changes to car parking NCC were suggesting 4 hour stay with no return within 5 hours.

The Town Clerk advised Full Council that the Planning Committee are in agreement with the new proposed 4 hour time limit for Greenwell Lane Car Park D and advice NCC that the new parking limits need to be signed properly.

Councillor Castle reminded councillors that it had been agreed that the Town Council would review car parking after a year so it was the right thing to do.

Councillor Patience asked which car parks it related to. The Town Clerk advised it was Greenwell Lane Car Park D.

**Litter bin request**

The Town Clerk reported that a litter bin had been requested near the children’s play area at Cawledge View.

**RESOLVED: i) To accept the correspondence and update; ii) To agree the suggested NCC Car Parking time changes provided proper signage is put in place; iii) To purchase and install a new bin near the Cawledge play area.**

**C15/19****Financial Matters – a) Payments**

The following invoices had been received for payment. The Town Clerk advised that the list was split into 2014/15 and 2015/16 invoices.

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYABLE</b>	<b>VAT ELEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
HMRC	£2612.83	£0	Tax/NI payment for April
Wages Account	£5000	£0	
Town & Country Tree Surgeons Ltd	£2,328	£388	Phase one of Tree Works at Cemetery

NALC	£1044.34	£0	Subscription
W R Batey	£426.38	£71.06	Printer Cartridges
W R Batey	£138.65	£23.11	Stationery (£124.84 Viking Direct and £13.81 Wages Book)
CBS World	£10.02	£1.67	Lever Arch Files
H2Flow	£270	£45	Boiler Service and repair
AFS Country Store	£80.78	£3.05	Supplies
James McLean Ltd	£369.64	£61.61	Generator Hire and Tools
Chubb Fire & Security	£85.79	£14.30	Annual Service
NCC	£150	£0	Fenkle Street Rent April/May
C Bowden	£170	£0	Bin Store for Cemetery
npower (2014/15 budget)	£141.88	£6.76	Cemetery Chapel (paid 6 <sup>th</sup> May)
Frank Flannigan Skip Hire	£282	£47	Skip Hire Ratten Row
Magna Carta Barons Assn.	£25.56	£0	Merchandise
Grannies	£100.00	£0	Refreshments for Mayor's Awards
W Grisdale	£49.80	£0	Travel Costs (Magna Carta)
Magna Carta Barons Assn.	£19.80	£0	Merchandise
Thomas Sherriff	£142.80	£23.80	Machine Parts
Chubb	£47.47	£7.91	Work to Alarm system - cemetery
Argyle Planning Consultancy (2014/15 budget)	£1885	£0	Neighbourhood plan consultancy
Sanders Plant & Waste (2014/15 budget)	£6206.36	1034.39	Path works at cemetery
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£21,587.10</b>	<b>£1727.66</b>	

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

BT	£24.34	£4.05	Phone Bill Fenkle Street (Paid 26 <sup>th</sup> April)
----	--------	-------	--

BT	£72.55	£12.08	Phone Bills Cemetery & Cemetery Lodge (Paid 28 <sup>th</sup> April)
npower	£117.71 £75.74	£5.61 £3.61	Robertson's Fountain Paid 20 <sup>th</sup> April Cemetery Store (Paid 23 <sup>rd</sup> April) (2014/15 budget)

The following agreed payment was also due:

Mayor (as elected)	£1,000	Annual Mayoral Allowance
--------------------	--------	--------------------------

**Financial Matters – b) Replacement Cheque**

In October 2014, the Council agreed a grant payment of £1,350 to the Alnwick International Music Festival; this cheque has never been cashed and has been lost. A replacement cheque had been requested.

**RESOLVED: i) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £21,587.10 and note the direct debit payments of £290.34; ii) To pay £1,000 as the Mayor's Allowance for 2015/16; iii) To issue a replacement cheque for £1,350 to the Alnwick International Music Festival.**

**C15/20 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Castle advised councillors that white lining on the cobbles would be taking place that week.

Councillor Swinbank asked if an officer from NCC was still coming to talk about pavements in Alnwick. The Town Clerk advised that they were.

The meeting closed at 9.26pm