

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 23rd July 2015  
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, M Harrington, P Holt, G Mavin, S Mavin, S Patience, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

**In attendance:** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

**RA 15/09 Apologies**

Councillors D Farrar, R Roberts and A Shilton.

**RA 15/10 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Broom, Patience and Swinbank declared a non pecuniary interest in Item 4a) Allotments and 4b) Play Areas.

**RA 15/11 Budget Update 2015/16**

The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure as at 23rd July 2015. This showed expenditure of £870.67 on events, £3,634.53 on projects and £3,928.29 on assets & services. Income was £345 at this point, all of which is from Allotments rents. The Town Clerk took councillors through each section noting the following:

**PROJECTS:**

Volunteer Fair - some more expenditure to come.

Magna Carta - outstanding expenditure for book for library and oak trees. There is also some income to come from Bailiffgate Museum for the merchandising items sold.

Peters Mills Bridge - milestones still to be collected from the Cemetery.

Councillor G Mavin asked what was included under Communication Projects. The Town Clerk advised that this included notice boards and other items discussed at the Communications sub group such as the IT project suggested by Newcastle University.

**ASSETS & SERVICES:**

Planting Floral displays - planting invoices will come in from NCC later in the year.

Councillor Harrington asked if there were any other play areas to be replaced. He thought the one at Glovers Green had been very well done. The Town Clerk advised that he had accepted a quote for another small play area in Glovers Green.

Councillor Swinbank advised that work on the seat half way up Clayport Bank needed to be finished.

**RESOLVED: To accept the budget update.**

**RA 15/12 Working Group Updates (Events, Tour of Britain)**

Events: Councillor G Mavin gave an update on the Volunteer Fair that had taken place in Northumberland Hall on June 27th. It had been well attended and the Gazette had supported the event by carrying a series of press releases. He had tried to publicise the event but some shops in the town would not take posters and he felt that publicity on lampposts may have worked better. He advised that the Town Council write to Paul Larkin to thank him for his support.

Councillor Holt advised that Alnwick in Bloom had completed the feedback form. She also confirmed that AiB had possibly attracted four new volunteers. The Town Clerk advised that the AiB form had been returned and confirmed that Alnwick Hospital League of Friends had attracted five new volunteers.

Councillor Symmonds confirmed that some young lads had been interested in being involved in the sound side of the Music Festival.

Councillor Patience said that the opportunity to network with other groups had been really useful.

Councillor G Mavin commented that the idea for the Volunteer Fair had come from Councillor Patience and was a very good one.

Councillor Broom thought it was the type of event the Town Council should be involved with.

Councillor Holt said that AiB were very keen to have an event next year.

Councillor S Mavin felt that a copy of the details of all the organisations who had attended should be kept.

Councillor G Mavin reminded councillors that at the Events sub group meeting, with organisations in the town, it had been agreed to find out what resources organisations had and whether they would share them with others. The Town Clerk advised that this would be organised.

Councillor Broom felt it was a good idea for the Town Council to keep a list of all volunteers so that they could email them when an organisation needed volunteers.

Tour of Britain: The Town Clerk advised that he had been informed that the Alnwick schools would be part of the activities on the 9th September and would each have a dedicated location during the event. He confirmed that the Town Council had been asked to look to get the Chamber of Trade involved with a shop window display competition.

He also advised that The Town Council had also been asked to see if the Town Bunting could be put up. NCC were also looking at decorating some areas around Northumberland. Active Northumberland would also have a full programme of events in the market place on the day.

The working group had suggested that there should also be an Alnwick Town Council photography competition with the theme "Capturing the moment" with a possible display at The Playhouse or Bailiffgate Museum and winners displayed on the Town Council's website.

He also confirmed that NCC were asking people to donate bicycles to be decorated and used to line the route. Councillor Patience advised that these could be decorated with spray art. Councillor Broom asked if it would be possible for any of the bikes to be strung across the road. He advised speaking to the Christmas Lights team.

The Town Clerk advised that a budget needed to be agreed for these activities.

Councillor Harrington proposed £1,000 which was seconded and agreed. He also suggested that the Town Council contacted the shops rather than the Chamber of Trade who do not have all the retailers as members.

Councillor G Mavin felt NCC had left it very late to get Town Councils involved.

Councillor S Mavin felt it needed money spending to make a good show in the town.

Councillor Harrington thought it would benefit all the retailers and restaurateurs.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Gazette would publicise the event and what the

Town Council could do to publicise it. Councillor Broom felt that people needed to know about the event whilst Alnwick is busy.

Councillor S Mavin felt that more toilets would be needed in town during the event.

Councillor Symmonds advised that the company they use for the Music Festival might be able to do a feasibility survey.

The Town Clerk said he would speak to NCC at the meeting on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July.

Councillor Patience thought that the Town Council could look for sponsorship for them e.g. toilets at the bus station could be sponsored by Morrison's or Arriva.

Councillor Holt felt that advertising needs doing properly and felt that the Town Council should deliver the letters to the shops and restaurants in the town.

**RESOLVED: To allocate £1,000 budget for the Tour of Britain event with delegated powers to the Town Clerk and Chair to decide on how this is spent.**

#### RA 15/13 Updates:

a) **Allotments** - The Town Clerk gave an update:

St James - all plots let and all rents paid. Two plots have been let since last meeting. No waiting list at present.

St Georges – all plots let. One person on waiting list.

The Town Clerk advised that there was an issue with an overgrown allotment plot. He had spoken to the allotment holder to try to get some action.

Councillor Patience asked how long the issue had been going on for. The Town Clerk advised about 18 months. He had talked to her that day and she will do what she can over the weekend.

Councillor Harrington asked if the Town Handyman could go and help by strimming the plot. The Town Clerk advised that he had offered to take away any rubbish from site.

Councillor Broom felt that the site could be cleared and the allotment holder charge.

Councillor Patience asked if the allotment holder knew what would happen if she didn't clear the plot. The Town Clerk advised that she did. Councillor Patience also felt that there should not be a charge made.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town handyman was at St Georges the following week trimming hedges so could offer some help with strimming if needed.

Councillor Holt felt it was the Town Council's responsibility but that it needed to be done with sensitivity.

Ratten Row – Two plots had been let since last meeting, one person on waiting list and £425 owing in rent. A complaint had been received about someone using an air rifle which had been dealt with. He felt it was time for a press release to attract new people.

Councillor G Mavin asked how big an allotment plot was. The Town Clerk advised that a full plot was about 200 sq m (20m x 10m).

Councillor Holt asked if all the allotment sites had water. The Town Clerk advised that they all except for St Georges.

Councillor Patience asked if the Town Council would need to reflect the cost of the new three year lease with Northumberland Estates. The Town Clerk felt this could be done when the new rent letters were sent out in November.

Councillor Broom said he was aware of the amount of water used on the allotment sites.

**b) Play Areas** - The Town Clerk gave an update

Glovers Green (Top area) The Town Clerk advised that the new play equipment in the top play area was now in place.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the grass seed had taken but some more seeding was needed plus a new seat, which had been ordered and delivered ready for fitting. The total cost for this area had been £10,000 plus VAT.

(Bottom area) this used to have an old seesaw which was being replaced with a four seater see saw and a new seat.

(Middle area) currently has one double seat swing. The Town Clerk suggested re surveying the houses to see if they want to keep a piece of equipment in this area.

Councillor G Mavin said had received comments about areas to play football and other ball games. Councillor Harrington felt that people should be able to use Lindisfarne.

Councillor Broom reminded councillors that Mrs Bowie had asked about a play area in the Bullfield Orchard. The Town Clerk also reminded the committee that Councillors Cairns and Castle had offered money for more equipment.

Councillor Swinbank thought it might be an idea to take the brick walls out in Glovers Green and put in trees and seats. The Town Clerk advised that only the play equipment belonged to the Town Council and the hard landscaping to NCC.

Councillor Patience suggested doing some research with young people and the Bullfield Community Orchard Committee. The Town Clerk was advised to write to Rachel Roberts.

Councillor Harrington felt a 5-a-side football area in the Orchard would solve the issue.

Councillor Holt said she was very pleased with the new equipment and the work that had been done.

Councillor Patience thought that, once the work was all done, the Town Council should publicise them and the amount spent on it.

Swansfield Park - The Town Clerk advised that, once again, there had been some vandalism to the play area surface which had cost £300 - £400 to repair. He also reported that there had been some much more serious criminal damage to the horse springer by teenagers. This had been reported to the police who were investigating. The cost of the repair should have cost £500 but the supplier had a spare spring which only costs £30 plus delivery. He had asked the police to visit the site more frequently which they had agreed to do.

Councillor Holt felt that this incident should be publicised. The Town Clerk advised that it was on the Gazette website.

Councillor Harrington felt it needed proper signage including legal implications. He asked what age range the equipment which had been damaged was aimed at. The Town Clerk advised it was up to six years for the small equipment and up to 14 years for the large equipment.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the recent damage to the surface was one of the new areas. The Town Clerk confirmed it was and that the latest damage had cost £100 to repair and was about an area about 2m x 2m. The safety surface had quite a bit of repair and may need replacing. The area under the swing would cost about £1,000.

Councillor S Mavin asked if equipment for older children could be looked at. Councillor Broom suggested wooden equipment might be put in for them.

Councillor Symmonds felt that a consultation exercise might be helpful.

The Town Clerk advised that he had asked if NCC had any money for equipment.

Councillor Patience felt that any consultation should be with young people not residents. Councillor S Mavin reported that Whitley Bay have exercise equipment. The Town Clerk said he had information on this sort of equipment.

The Town Clerk also advised that Councillor Castle had been asked by a resident for floodlights and cameras. Councillor Symmonds felt that a monitoring camera could be put in. The Town Clerk said he would speak to NCC enforcement officers.

Barresdale Basket swing needs new part.

**RESOLVED: i) To accept the updates; ii) To trim overgrown plot at St Georges if the allotment holder does not clear it; iii) To investigate putting in a 5-a-side football area in Bullfield Orchard, subject to agreement by the Bullfield Community Orchard Committee; iv) To research cost of play equipment / exercise equipment for Swansfield Park; v) To ask NCC about surveillance equipment they could provide for Swansfield Park.**

#### **RA 15/14 Any Other Urgent Business**

**BIKE TRACK** Councillor Harrington asked about the progress of the bike track. Councillor Patience advised that the planning application was on NCC website but no decision had been made. The acreage was greater than they had thought so a survey needed to be done. The Town Clerk advised that the outcome should be known soon and if permission is granted the tenant will be served notice and the lease offered to The Town Council. Once this was done a new SITA grant application would be put in. He also confirmed that S106 funding is already in place.

**SHOP FRONTAGE / PAINTWORK** Councillor Swinbank advised he had walked around the town and whilst most shop frontages looked good there were about 10 which look untidy and dated. He wondered if the Town Council could encourage shop owners to update their frontage/paintwork in the light of the Tour of Britain coming to Alwicks.

Councillor G Mavin agreed with Councillor Swinbank and the Town Council need to decide what they can do to encourage people to repair their buildings. The Town Clerk advised that although the Town Council have no legal powers they could write to businesses. NCC does have some powers which could be used if necessary.

Councillor G Mavin also advised that the Town Council should send a letter to the owner of the Malthouse. Councillor Symmonds felt that there were serious foundation problems and that the bank now owned the building.

Councillor Patience felt that a letter should be sent to the owner of the Corn Exchange. Councillor Edge thought that the letter could be worded pointing out what they can do and the benefits to themselves. The Town Clerk advised that the letter could be tied in with the Tour of Britain event.

Councillor Edge asked who was organising parking for the Tour of Britain. The Town Clerk advised that this was being organised by NCC.

Councillor Edge felt that people could be encouraged to visit the town by bike. He also supported an A board sign close to the Castle / Garden pointing people into the town.

Meeting closed at 8.48pm