

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 12th November 2015
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

- Present** Cllrs W Grisdale, (Chair), P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, D Farrar, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore, S Patience, R Roberts, M Swinbank, A Shilton and A Symmonds.
- In attendance** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; H Cairns, County Councillor.
- C15/93 Questions from the public**
None.
- C15/94 Apologies for absence**
Cllrs S Allcroft, P Allcroft.
- C15/95 Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in county council matters. Councillors Shilton, S Mavin and K Moore declared a non-pecuniary interest and Councillors Grisdale and Patience declared a pecuniary interest, in the private agenda item.
- C15/96 Minutes of the Last meetings**
Minutes of the Full Council meeting on (8th October 2015) were tabled for approval.
RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 8th October were agreed as a true record and duly signed.
- C15/97 Matters Arising**
C15/84 Councillor G Mavin commented that Remembrance Sunday was very well run and he had especially enjoyed the band. Councillor Symmonds agreed saying it had been well organised by both staff and volunteers.
C15/85 Councillor Castle advised that the date had been put back one week.
C15/92b) The Town Clerk suggested dates for the next Town Council away day and it was agreed that this will be January 9th 2015 between 10am and 12 noon.
Councillor Symmonds asked when more precise budget information would be available from NCC as the budget report given at the North Area meeting on November 9th had been very superficial. Councillor Castle explained that the reason for this was that there had been no local government settlement as yet set.
The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council would be setting their budget on January 14th.
- C15/98 Mayor's Report**
The Mayor's Report is on his blog www.alnwickmayor.wordpress.com.
- C15/99 Core Strategy Response**
The Town Clerk advised that the closing date for comments to NCC was November 25th. An update had been given to the Planning Committee who had concerns about

affordable housing and suggested making a revised comment about the affordable housing target in the Core Strategy.

He issued a Table showing the comments on the Draft Plan made by the Town Council in December 2014 and a review of the Pre-Submission Plan against these comments. He highlighted a couple of questions in the Core Strategy:

Q11 Current draft suggests 10 hectares and references the ADNP.

Q23 Affordable housing - 30% overall target in the Dec 2014 document (35% in the north and 25% in the rest of Northumberland). To reflect the current housing being built / or in pipeline this figure has been reduced in the current Core Strategy to 15%.

Councillor Castle advised that the numbers given would meet the target set.

Councillor S Mavin felt that a housing needs survey needed to be done in order to properly review the figures. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council would be steered by the results of the housing needs survey.

Councillor Roberts felt it was important that there was some affordable housing in Alnwick. She also advised that some developers used viability as a reason not to build.

Councillor Broom asked if NCC owned any land in Alnwick that could be built on. The Town Clerk advised that NCC own the Lindisfarne and the High School sites and that these would be allocated to some housing.

Councillor Castle explained that if a potential development was refused planning permission, due to the amount of Affordable Housing, this decision could be overturned.

RESOLVED: To respond to NCC with a comment about the Affordable Housing target, outlining the concern at the reduced target and the need for area level targets to be reinstated.

C15/100 County Council Issues

a) Joint Meeting of ATC and NCC – 12th October

Councillor Moore asked about the Wheelie Bins obstructing Back Lane between Howick Street and Percy Street. The Town Clerk advised that NCC were to do a door knocking exercise to ask householders to put their bins away.

b) Consultation on proposed changes to the fire and rescue service

The Town Clerk informed councillors that there would be further opportunity to discuss this once more information was received. Councillor Broom felt it was an attack on the retained fire fighters across Northumberland. He felt that smaller fire engines were a real issue as they cannot carry all the equipment needed. He had a number of questions: what ladders will they carry? would the water provision be enough? would fire fighters carry breathing equipment and would there be enough staff to undertake searches? He felt there would not be enough fire fighters to cover effectively and this could be a real health and safety issue.

Councillor Farrar said that the situation sounded quite bleak. If the small appliances can do the work of the large appliances he wondered why they had large appliances.

He also said that the consultation referenced a risk assessment and that it would be helpful if the Town Council could see this.

Councillor Grisdale suggested that Alex Bennett, Chief Fire Officer, was asked if he could attend the Full Council meeting in December with any further information he had including the risk assessment.

Councillor Symmonds felt it would also be helpful to have an image of the smaller fire appliances as well as data for the number of call outs and types of incidents attended.

Councillor Castle reported that there had been a 50% reduction over the last 10 years and asked if Alex Bennett had looked at the structure of the fire service as a whole.

RESOLVED: i) To invite Alex Bennett to the December Full Council meeting, ii) Councillors to send the Town Clerk any questions for Alex Bennett which will be sent to Alex ahead of the meeting.

c) Meeting on Economic Development in Alnwick

The Town Clerk advised that a meeting was planned, between the Town Council, NCC officers and representatives of ARCH, on November 24th between 4-6pm at the Mechanics Institute. All councillors are welcome to attend.

Councillor G Mavin said he welcomed the opportunity to talk about this.

d) 2016/17 Precept Arrangements

The Town Clerk advised that NCC had set the deadline for submission of the 2016/17 precept information as 1st February 2016. He advised that the Town Council will look to agree its budget and set its precept at the Full Council meeting on 14th January 2016. The Indicative Council Tax Base (Band D equivalents) for 2016/17 would be 2608.98, an increase of 50.53.

RESOLVED: To note the updates.

C15/101 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (8th October 2015) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 8th October 2015 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (15th October 2015) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on 15th October 2015 were agreed as a true record.

C15/102 Approval of Investment Strategy

The Town Clerk advised that at the Finance and Policy Committee meeting on 15th October a draft investment strategy was approved for recommendation to Full Council. A copy of the strategy had been circulated to councillors.

Councillor Farrar gave an overview of the strategy. He advised that the strategy was based on government guidance which is followed by most Town & Parish Councils. He explained that an order of priority had been used in the Policy based on:

- 1st Security – policy advising 80% in cash and 20% in other types of funds
- 2nd Liquidity – policy advising 4 months equiv expenditure with instant access and a further 4 months equiv expenditure available within 12 months.
- 3rd Yield

Councillor Symmonds commented that the research done by Councillor Farrar was meticulous.

Councillor Swinbank felt the strategy was good but that he would like to see a piece of text added reflecting that the Town Council endorse and support local organisations. The Town Clerk advised that the strategy would be reviewed in April.

Councillor Farrar explained that an additional statement could be drafted which reflected the social return on the investments.

Councillor Castle suggested that the strategy was amended and circulated for discussion at a future meeting

RESOLVED: i) To approve the investment strategy in its current form, ii) To circulate a draft of the proposed additional text to all councillors for review in April 2016.

C15/103 Notes of Meeting with Northumberland Estates

The notes of the meeting had been circulated to councillors. Councillor Symmonds advised that he had been very impressed with the pods in Amble and Wooler. He felt that the units at Cawledge were not quite what the Town Council had envisaged and would like to ask Northumberland Estates about providing a similar facility to the pods in Alnwick for start up businesses.

Councillor Grisdale advised that the Town Council could talk to NCC.

Councillor G Mavin advised that this could be bought up at the Economic Development meeting on November 24th.

Councillor Broom advised that he had spoken to GENTO, who own the Store 21 building, about making it into smaller units for small retailers to use.

Councillor Castle advised that it was a planning condition that the retail units were built below the flats. He also advised that NCC will be in discussion with markets across Northumberland about providing starter units in markets.

Councillor Holt commented that accommodation for small businesses was very expensive and that new businesses are not always supported by landlords etc.

Councillor Farrar felt the Town Council could ask about market rates being charged on starter units. He also felt that Northumberland Estates could be asked how they are actively marketing the units that are only used for storage.

Councillor Castle thought it could be helpful to ask how the Town Council could help.

RESOLVED: i) To accept the notes, ii) To send a letter to Northumberland Estates about the units used for storage are being marketed and how the Town Council can help.

C15/104 Allotment Rents 2016/17

The Town Clerk advised that the Allotment group had met and had recommended the following rents for 2016/17:

Site	Proposed Rents	Rent Period
Ratten Row	Full Plot £45 with water £35 without water Half plot £35 with water £25 without water	Jan-Dec

St James's (site has water)	Full plot £45 Half Plot £30	Jan-Dec
St George's (no water supply)	Full plot £35 Half Plot £20	April-March
Cawledge View (no water supply)	Full plot £35 Half Plot £20	April-March

Councillor Broom asked what were the cost implications of improving the water supply at Ratten Row. He also advised that the Project & Funding Officer would be looking to see if some external funding could be obtained.

Councillor S Mavin asked why the proposed rent increases of £5 were not for all the plots. The Town Clerk advised that putting an increase on some plots rather than all meant that the rents were more balanced between full and half plots.

Councillor Patience commented that there was money in this year's budget to do the improvements to the water supply. She felt that the improvements needed to be done this financial year and did not feel this should wait until external funding was found.

Councillor Broom asked what water rates the Town Council paid on the allotments. The Town Clerk advised that water charges were paid on water usage, no water rates were paid.

RESOLVED: To approve the allotment rents for 2016/17.

C15/105 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
12th Oct	NALC – enews	Available from the clerk on request
14th Oct	CAN News Autumn	Available from the clerk on request
19th Oct	Highway Agency – A1 in Northumberland	Circulated to Councillors
27th Oct	NCC – Supported Bus Service meetings –invitation to attend (i)	Alnwick meeting is on 16th Nov 5pm-7pm in St James (Embleton Room). Details circulated to Councillors
30th Oct	NCC – re toilets – confirming no change in Alnwick (ii)	Circulated to Councillors
6th Nov	NALC - enews	Available from the clerk on request
10 th Nov	Road closure of Narrowgate for gas works for 12 weeks from January 4th 2016. (iii)	Available from the clerk on request

- (i) The Town Clerk asked councillors who would like to attend. Councillors Holt and S Mavin said they would attend.
- (ii) The Town Clerk advised that Alnmouth Parish Council were paying £2k to keep their toilets open.
- (iii) Councillor Broom felt that whilst the road closure was in place it would be a good time to trial a pedestrian area.

RESOLVED: To accept the correspondence.

C15/106 Feedback Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Initiative Meeting

Councillor Moore reported that Councillor Cairns had reported to NCC that the meetings were not working properly.

C15/107 Financial Matters – Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL PAYABLE	VAT ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
HMRC	£2,536.06	£0.00	Tax/NI payment for October
Wages Account	£5,000.00	£0.00	
British Legion Poppy Appeal	£19.00	£0.00	Wreath for Remembrance Sunday
Electratest (UK) Ltd	£54.00	£9.00	PAT testing - Cemetery
Electratest (UK) Ltd	£54.00	£9.00	PAT testing - Fenkle Street
Johnston Publishing	£400.80	£66.80	Advertising for vacant post
W R Batey	£95.19	£15.86	Stationery from Viking Direct
NCC	£2343.60	£390.60	3 additional grass cuts
Peter Nyssen Ltd	£239.50	£39.92	Bulbs
Azure Printing	£325.60	£0.00	Neighbourhood Plan printing
Azure Printing	£55.31	£0.00	Neighbourhood Plan Consultation statement printing
Thomas Sherriff	£308.90	£42.60	Machine repairs
Royal Mail Group	£94.00	£18.80	Renewal of Licence
James McLean	£33.56	£5.59	Tools, parts
Grannies	£75.00	£0.00	Buffet Remembrance Sunday
St James Church	£225.00	£0.00	Room Bookings
TOTAL	£11,859.52	£598.17	

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

BT	£95.36	£15.89	Phone Bills Cemetery and Cemetery Lodge paid Oct 28th
BT	£27.30	£4.55	Phone Bill Fenkle Street paid 26th Oct
npower	£372.60	£17.74	Cemetery Chapel paid 26th Oct.

The Town Clerk informed the council that three other payments from Remembrance Sunday needed to be approved.

Donation to the band - Councillors agreed £150.

Donation to British Legion - Councillors agreed £31 (This meant a total cheque for £50, they were kind enough to replace wreaths which had been broken in the high winds and rain).

3 ladies helping with refreshments - Councillors agreed £25 voucher each.

The Town Clerk also explained that the due dates for tax and NI payment to HMRC often mean that there is little time to have the payments approved and get them paid by the deadline dates each month. He asked if he could send the payment

earlier, then report it to the meeting as usual. Councillor S Mavin asked if the due dates could be moved. The Town Clerk advised not and that the bank needed about 6 days to process the payment.

RESOLVED: i) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £11,859.52 the additional payments amounting to £256.00 and note the direct debit payments of £495.26; ii) To authorise the Town Clerk to pay HMRC, then report at the next Full Council meeting.

C15/108 Any Other Urgent Business

- a) Councillor Moore advised that he had taken rubble to the tip and now that charges were being made the operatives had seen a reduction of 50%. He also advised that North Tyneside Council did not charge. Councillor Castle advised that charging was now NCC policy. Councillor Moore thought it was a SITA decision. Councillor Castle confirmed that it was an NCC decision.
- b) Councillor Castle advised that the decision on the school had now been made. He asked if the Town Council could now advance taking the lead about the use of sports facilities.

C15/109 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEM

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 item 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 was:

The consideration of request for financial assistance from Gallery Youth.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm