



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 10th December 2015 in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm

- Present** Cllrs W Grisdale, (Chair), S Allcroft, P Allcroft P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, D Farrar, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, 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; Alex Bennett, Deborah Brown and John Dunn, Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service; Representative from Wooler Parish Council.
- C15/112 Questions from the public**
None.
- C15/113 Apologies for absence**
Cllrs G Mavin, S Mavin.
- C15/114 Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in county council matters.
Councillors Grisdale and Patience declared a pecuniary interest in the In Private items.
- C15/115 Minutes of the Last meetings**
Minutes of the Full Council meeting on (12th November 2015) were tabled for approval.
RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 12th November were agreed as a true record and duly signed.
- C15/116 Consultation on the proposed changes to the Fire & Rescue Service**
Alex Bennett, Chief Fire Officer for Northumberland gave an overview about the new changes and answered questions sent through by Town Councillors.
He explained that he had been asked to reduce the budget by £500k but to minimise public risk and maintain a 247 service across Northumberland. There had already been a £3m saving since 2010 and a 42% drop in the number of incidents in Northumberland. Retained firefighters live within 5 minutes of their fire station. He confirmed that the decisions would ultimately be made by NCC.
Alnwick The building of the new fire station would go ahead but the 2nd appliance will be replaced with a smaller appliance.
This smaller appliance would have all the equipment firefighters will need at a scene. The funding capital for large appliances will be used to buy smaller appliances and support vehicles. Smaller appliances will be manned to two people giving better coverage at the fire station. Sometimes there are not the three people needed to man the two large appliances so they cannot be deployed. In some stations the smaller appliances will mean better coverage.
Alex reiterated that he must be sure that the community are protected across the county. He also confirmed that all firefighters across the county do a really good job.
Alnwick currently has 21 retained firefighters but do struggle to have 4-5 people on call all the time.

Councillor Swinbank advised that he was reasonably reassured about the provision being put in place but wondered if the same level would still be there in 2020. Alex Bennett confirmed that with Northumberland being the smallest fire service in England he could not know what might happen by 2020. He confirmed that some PCCs are taking over the Fire Service in some areas; the new Metro Mayor may run the Fire Service; could join forces with Tyne & Wear or the Fire Service could become a North East wide service.

Councillor Broom asked Alex to confirm how cover would be provided if the appliance from Belford was sent to Alnwick. Alex Bennett confirmed that he would bring in more appliances and move resources around if this situation was to happen.

Councillor Broom asked if Alex felt that the day staffing at Berwick and Hexham was working. Alex Bennett confirmed that it did and also gave resilience across the county especially in regard to the rescue truck.

Councillor Castle thanked Alex and said that his presentation was very clear.

Councillor Roberts asked Alex about the staffing at Alnwick and how many people he would ideally like. Alex Bennett confirmed that more retained firefighters would not necessarily give better provision. He did confirm that he would like to recruit more women retained firefighters.

Councillor Broom asked Alex to explain the flexible terms for retained firefighters. Alex Bennett confirmed that people need to commit to work 120 hours and that they received a minimum of four days training.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

C15/117 Matters Arising

C15/92b The Town Clerk advised councillors that the Away Day was on January 9th between 10am and 12 noon at Alnwick Cricket Club. Councillor Roberts thought councillor might struggle with just two hours to discuss everything that needed to be covered. The Town Clerk advised that the room had been booked from 10am to 1pm so the meeting could be extended if needed.

C15/99 Councillor Humphries asked for clarification on Q23 of the response to the Core Strategy regarding Affordable Housing. Councillor Castle advised that the minimum requirement is for 15% on all developments and that NCC Policy would be complied with. He also confirmed that there is a risk that any planning decision can be overturned on appeal.

Councillor Cairns advised that NCC had received a government letter confirming that if a developer could not afford to build the % of affordable housing they can have the need for it withdrawn.

C15/105 BUS SERVICES IN NORTHUMBERLAND Councillor Holt advised that the meeting she had attended had been well run and that information had been given out. There were concerns regarding the number of bus breakdowns but NCC Officers had spoken to the bus companies and had been assured that new buses would be bought. A lot of commuters used the bus service and the level of breakdowns is causing them to be late for work. It was felt that any new buses should have platforms to accommodate wheelchairs / pushchairs and would also have a larger luggage area.

C15/108 Councillor Castle asked if there was any update on the Town Council co-ordinating the use of the sports facilities. The Town Clerk advised that he had requested a meeting with Sue Aviston in the new year.

C15/118 Mayor's Report

The Mayor's Report is on his blog www.alnwickmayor.wordpress.com. He highlighted a few events he had attended since the last meeting:

The Christmas Lights switch on November 21st and confirmed that he thought they were the best lights in the county; opened the new renal unit in Alnwick; had a meeting with Berwick Town Council to discuss Neighbourhood Plans and been at an Allotment Rent collection day.

He reminded councillors about the Civic Carol Service on December 15th. Councillor Castle informed councillors that Margaret Spence, who accompanied the Bailiffgate singers, had sadly been killed in a car accident a few days before. Councillor Cairns asked if the Town Council should send condolences. The Mayor advised that the Reverend Scott would be saying something during the Carol Service.

C15/119 County Council Issues

a) Feedback from Economic Development meeting in Alnwick

The Town Clerk advised that a meeting had taken place between the Town Council, NCC officers and representatives of ARCH, on November 24th.

The meeting confirmed that NCC was responsible for Economic Strategy whilst ARCH were responsible for delivery through a number of business advisers.

NCC had confirmed that Hexham's BID (Business Improvement Development) would give around an extra £1m to spend on the town.

Leader programme - NCC will provide more information about the Leader programme.

The Town Clerk confirmed that they had given NCC/ARCH a series of questions and are awaiting the answers.

Covance – it was confirmed that meetings were on-going and included NCC and ARCH.

Councillor Symmonds advised that he felt it had been a very good meeting as it had given the Town Council examples of good practice used elsewhere. He was concerned that there is no-one currently outside the town who is thinking about the needs of Alnwick. He felt that the Town Council need to be much more proactive in promoting Alnwick.

Councillor Farrar asked why Arch had been set up. Councillor Castle confirmed that ARCH was set up by NCC, as sole shareholder, to give a private entity the remit to run business services in Northumberland

Councillor Cairns advised that they could make money which they could donate to other organisations.

Councillor Castle confirmed that ARCH had not been as transparent in the past as they could have been.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

C15/120 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (12th November 2015) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 12th November 2015 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (19th November 2015) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on 19th November 2015 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (26th November 2015) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee held on 26th November 2015 were agreed as a true record.

C15/121 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if Any
26 th Nov	NCC – briefing on the Devolution Agreement for Town & Parish Councils on 9 th Dec at either 2.30pm or 5.15pm at County Hall. (also update on proposed move of County HQ)	Councillors to inform clerk if they wish to attend. Slides will be sent through and circulated to councillors.
2 nd Dec	Sow Wild Project. Details of project running in spring 2016	Available from clerk on request
4 th Dec	NCC – Book bank withdrawn at certain locations (20 including Denwick Lane)	Circulated to Councillors. Councillor Castle reminded councillors that books can still be taken to recycling centres

RESOLVED: To accept the correspondence.

C15/122 Feedback from Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Initiative Meeting

Councillors Cairns and Castle had attended the last meeting at which a presentation was given by Alex Bennett, Chief Fire Officer. It was also reported that there was a lack of serious crime in Alnwick.

Councillor Roberts asked if there was any discussion or update from Inspector Truscott on on-line bullying. Councillor castle advised that this had not been included in the figures given. He advised that most of the presentation had been about Community Speed Watch.

C15/123 Financial Matters – Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL PAYABLE	VAT ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
HMRC	£2,586.43	£0.00	Tax/NI payment for November
Wages Account	£5,000.00	£0.00	
Northumbria In Bloom	£200.00	£0.00	In Bloom entry fee (paid 20 Nov)
KW Purvis	£84.60	£14.10	Aggregate for Cemetery
Playdale Playgrounds Ltd	£1,084.94	£180.82	New Team Swing

NCC	£12,960	£2,160	Planting in 2015/16
MBC Badge Co	£420.00	£70.00	Alnwick Badges
Azure	£154.58	£0.00	Remembrance Sunday orders of service
BT	£87.60	£14.60	Broadband (Nov-Jan)
CBS World	£18.86	£3.15	2016 Diaries/calendars
WR Batey	£738.88	£113.52	Laptop & software (£654.99), Postage £57.78, Refreshments £22.11, Key £4.00
Local Living	£612.50	£0.00	Unit rent Oct - Dec
NCC	£900.00	£0.00	Rent Fenkle Street
Petty Cash	£40.00	£6.66	Petrol
John Gray	£648	£108.00	Tractor repairs
NCC	£82.50	£0.00	Northumberland Hall booking
Johnson Publishing	£400.80	£66.80	Advertising for vacancy
W Grisdale	£48.00	£0.00	Maps – Neighbourhood Plan
Abacus	£3438.00	£573	Wetpour replacement
Diamond Bus Systems	£59.40	£9.90	Photocopier charges
James McLean	£100.88	£16.81	Tools & materials
Team Valley	£599.90	£99.98	Website hosting
W R Batey	£344.90	£44.98	£25 vouchers x 3 (Remembrance Sunday); Internal Auditor gift, Printer inks
TOTAL	£30,610.77	£3,482.32	

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

BT	£87.29	£14.55	Phone Bills Cemetery and Cemetery Lodge paid Nov 26th
BT	£24.86	£4.14	Phone Bill Fenkle Street paid 23 rd Nov

RESOLVED: i) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £30,610.77 and note the direct debit payments of £112.15.

C15/124 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Grisdale advised that there was a lantern parade on December 20th at 5.30pm. The parade organisers wanted the parade to come out of the garden and parade up Greenwell Road through Bondgate Tower and into the market place. They require a road closure and have asked the Town Council to approve Councillor Castle submitting their request to NCC.

Councillor Symmonds did not feel that the Town Council should pay 100% of the road closure fee. Other councillors were also concerned that Alwick Garden would expect the Town Council to pay for the road closure.

Councillor Castle asked if the council would pay a contribution of £250. Councillor S Allcroft advised that she had met with Mark from Alwick Garden and that they might pay the whole fee.

Councillor Harrington felt that the Garden were trying to be positive so the Town Council should support them.

Councillor Farrar commented that at this stage Alwick Garden were only asking for the relevant contact at NCC.

C15/125 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 items considered in private were:

C15/126 Approval of Private Minute – Full Council (12th November 2015)

C15/127 Funding Request from Gallery Youth

The meeting closed at 9.02pm