

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 26th November 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 Patience, R Roberts, A Shilton and A Symmonds.

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

RA 15/24 Apologies

Councillors D Farrar, S Mavin and M Swinbank.

RA 15/25 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Symmonds declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 5. Consideration of **grant** applications for Events 2016/17. Councillors Holt and Broom declared a non pecuniary interest in Agenda item 5. Consideration of grant applications for Events 2016/17.

RA 15/26 Consideration of grant applications for Events 2016/17 (moved up the agenda)

Alnwick in Bloom - 2015-2016 received a grant of £2,855

Elizabeth Jones from Alnwick in Bloom gave an update of the activities AiB had undertaken in 2015 and what they planned in 2016/17. She explained that their main activity during the year had been Northumbria in Bloom competition. Alnwick had won Gold for the fourth year running in the Town Category. There had also been 20 special entries around the town which had won 9 Golds, 8 Silver Gilt and 3 Bronze awards.

They has also run local competitions including a schools competition.

Other projects during the year were focused at Pottergate Garden, Column Field, Pinfold / Green Batt Gardens, Greenwell Road, South Road, the bus station and Gardeners House.

Their aim is to make the whole of Alnwick town look as good as Alnwick Garden.

At Green Batt Garden there proposed to put a topiary in the shape of an urn.

Alnwick in Bloom were asking for £6k from the Town Council.

Councillor G Mavin advised Elizabeth that the plants in the hanging baskets were a problem for those with a disability in the town. Elizabeth explained that the wrong plants had been put in which had hung further down than planned.

Councillor Patience asked if AiB received grants from anywhere else. Elizabeth advised they didn't and wondered if the Project & Funding Officer could help.

Councillor Symmonds commended the AiB group on the work they do. He recommended an increase of £500 giving an award of £3,355.

Councillor Shilton suggested that AiB looked at Community Foundation and Awards for All for possible grants.

The Town Clerk advised that the Project & Funding Officer had already been given Elizabeth's contact details and that he would contact her.

Councillor Edge advised that Alnwick Garden could give more plants to AiB and would also give compost. He commented that it was the weeding that was time consuming.

Councillor Roberts thanked Elizabeth for the information she had given and asked her to identify the activities which were priority in 2016/17. Elizabeth said it was all priority but there were a couple of activities including the topiary that could wait.

Councillor Patience endorsed Councillor Symmonds recommendation for £3,355.

Councillor Holt commented that she was very pleased with the work of AiB. She added that the AiB team were some of the best people she had come across for maintaining the floral displays.

RESOLVED: To give a grant of £3,355 to Alnwick in Bloom

Alnwick Christmas Lights (in 2015-2016 they received a grant of £2,500)

The Town Clerk advised that Alnwick Christmas Lights team are not asking for a grant this year as they have received money from NFU, Hardy's, the Downton Abbey team and another anonymous donor.

He also advised that they have asked if the Town Council would cover the cost of providing staging for the switch on evening. This will amount to about £800 - £1,000. In 2015 the team put up / took down the town bunting for the Tour of Britain in lieu of this.

The Town Clerk suggested putting a provision of £1,000 in the budget for this.

Councillor Roberts thought that if this was not put into next year's budget it could become a problem in a couple of years time and suggested that the money was left in the budget.

Councillor G Mavin thought the team made a valuable contribution to the town.

Councillor Broom advised that they do get some money from the shops for the lights. They also do raffles to raise money and money for a name on light.

Councillor Symmonds supported Councillor Roberts and thought that putting up the staging was a valid thing to do.

RESOLVED: To pay for the staging (approx. £1,000) and at £1,000 and leave £1,500 in reserve.

Alnwick Spring Show (in 2015-2016 they received a grant of £500, £300 of which is used for the storage at Willowburn)

The Town Clerk advised that the Spring Show made a small profit in 2015 as they did not incur printing costs for the programme. He added that they have healthy reserves.

RESOLVED: To pay a grant of £500 to Alnwick Spring Show.

Alnwick International Music Festival (in 2015-2016 they received a grant of £4,075).

The Town Clerk explained that they had a surplus in 2015 due to some groups not being able to attend and so did not incur costs for them. They had also attracted some income from local businesses.

Councillor G Mavin advised that this was a key festival to the town and that they will need a lot of support in 2016 with the restructuring. He suggested a grant of £4,650.

RESOLVED: To give a grant of £4,650 to Alnwick International Music Festival.

Councillor Roberts asked if the Town Council had received a grant application from the Food Festival. The Town Clerk advised that no application had been received. He suggested leaving £1,100 (£500 storage unit and £600 grant) in the budget.

Councillor Roberts asked if any feedback had been received from Local Living on this year's smaller food festival. Councillor Symmonds said he would also like to see some feedback. The Town Clerk advised that he would ask Local Living for some feedback and invite them to the next committee meeting.

Councillor G Mavin asked who owned the stalls. Councillor Symmonds advised that they were owned by the Food Festival but were for community use as they were bought using Community Chest funding.

RESOLVED: To ask Local Living for feedback on the smaller Food Festival held in 2015 and invite them to the next committee meeting.

RA 15/27 Budget Update 2015/16

The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure as at 25th November 2015. This showed expenditure of £9,516.05 on events, £5,719.92 on projects and £30,670.02 on assets & services. Income was £490 at this point, all of which is from Allotments rents. The Town Clerk note the following:

EVENTS:

Grants - item agenda at this meeting.

PROJECTS:

Peters Mill Bridge - £500 unspent. Councillor Harrington advised that this would be completed by the end of the financial year.

Town Promotion - £1,000 in budget + £1,000 from NCC for reprinting of Town Leaflets.

Councillor G Mavin thought that a leaflet was needed to promote the town better. He had done some initial research including distribution to cafes, coffee

shops, hotels, TICs etc. He had got a price of £28 per thousand leaflets for distribution. He would like to have a budget of £2,000 to cover design, printing and distribution.

Councillor Harrington felt that a good leaflet did work and that he had seen leaflets for Alnwick Garden in Harrogate and Edinburgh.

Councillor Roberts asked what the costs of design and printing would be. Councillor G Mavin said this would be in the region of £750 - £1,000.

Councillor Harrington suggested that the item be discussed again at a future meeting, when more details were available, but that a budget be allocated.

The Town Clerk advised that there would be no map in the leaflet.

Councillor G Mavin felt the leaflet needed to be ready to distribute in February 2016.

Councillor Roberts felt it would be good to set aside some budget but not agree the content. She also advised that she had an example of a leaflet from another town which had shops marked with symbols on a map.

Councillor G Mavin felt that the Town Council's website could be used to market shops.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the Town Council should seek support from ARCH.

Communication Project - The Town Clerk advised that there was £4,000 unspent on notice boards and reminded them to submit suggestions for additional locations.

Litter bins - have ordered three new litter bins.

Bulb planting - budgets allocated to plant the Willowburn Roundabout (£195) and the bank down from the cemetery (£212).

ASSETS & SERVICES:

Seats / benches - unspent budget of almost £3,000. Still awaiting feedback from bus companies and NCC on suggested locations.

RESOLVED: To accept the budget update and allocate a budget of up to £2,000 for the town promotion leaflet.

RA 15/28 Location of Oak Trees

The Town Clerk advised that Bill Pringle (NCC) had been asked about locations for oak trees who felt that there was more space at Swansfield Park. He also advised that NCC had previously planted oak trees in Swansfield Park.

Councillor Harrington proposed two oak trees be planted in Swansfield Park.

RESOLVED: i) To agree Swansfield Park as the location of the Oak Trees to commemorate Magna Carta ; ii) To purchase and plant two oak trees when weather suitable.

RA 15/29 Updates

The Town Clerk gave updates on Allotments and Play Areas:

a) Allotments - Ratten Row and St James's rent letters had gone out and that there is a rent collection day on December 5th. He also advised that the Project & Funding Officer has started looking at Allotment Associations and funding that might be available for water installation at Ratten Row and St Georges.

b) Play Areas - Glovers Green: two of the three play areas had been completed. The Project & Funding Officer had a meeting with Councillor Patience to discuss the possibility of putting play equipment in the Community Orchard. In this case the third piece of equipment at Glovers Green may not be needed.

Swansfield Park: spoken to company who provide play equipment for older children. Also looking at possible funding sources including Awards for All.

Some repair work had been undertaken at Swansfield Park (wetpour) and Allerburn Lea (wetpour due to shrinkage).

Alnwick North play area has a broken gate mechanism that needs replacing.

He reminded councillors that the money for works and equipment for Swansfield Park can come from the endowment fund.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

RA 15/30 Options relating to Public Toilets in Alnwick and Street Cleaning and consideration of improved standards

The Town Clerk advised that he had met with NCC to talk about cleaning around the county. Many Town & Parish Councils give additional money to NCC to enhance the services provided. These additional services differ for different T&PCs. For example:

Cramlington - give £300k (from a precept of £759K) to NCC who provide 10 additional staff (pus vehicles and equipment) to do weekly grass cuts.

Newbiggin - two seasonal workers to undertake litter collection / handyperson work.

Holy Island - fund NCC to do an extra month of seasonal work, including pruning and cleaning in October.

Berwick - agreed two seasonal workers for 7 months to have a 7 days a week cover at a cost of £35k. (£24.5k staff costs and £9.5k equipment).

Some other councils are likely to pay additional money for winter opening of toilets.

There were no examples of T&PCs taking over the entire operation of the toilets.

He advised that these items could be discussed at the Away Day in January 2016.

Councillor Holt advised of a vehicle accident involving the road sweeper and

asked how often it went around the town. The Town Clerk advised that he didn't know. Councillor Patience reminded Councillor Holt that she could use NCC's website to log an issue.

The Town Clerk advised that this area would be big budget decisions and that the precept would be set at the January 2016 Full Council meeting.

Councillor Roberts felt that more information ahead of the Away Day would help to make budget decisions.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

RA 15/31 Setting the Draft Budget for 2016/17

The Town Clerk advised on the proposed budget for each of the areas:

Events £13,305 (including the agreed grant awards)

Projects £6,800

Assets & Services £51,950 (£56,750 less £4,800 income)

It was highlighted that some £2,000 of the budget could be funded from the Swansfield Park play area endowment.

Councillor Broom asked if the number of hanging baskets could be extended along outside W H Smiths and M & Co on the lampposts that already have fixings. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council pay for a specified amount of hanging baskets. He felt that the locations of the lampposts that the Town Council would like hanging baskets on could be marked on a town map.

Councillor Symmonds felt that a flag pole in Column Field was a good idea as, when it wasn't flying the Union Flag it could be used to fly other flags including the Town Flag.

RESOLVED: To agree a draft budget of £72,055 plus any additional expenditure agreed at the Away Day.

RA 15/32 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm