

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016  
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

- Present** Cllrs W Griddale, (Chair), S Allcroft, P Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, D Farrar, M Harrington, P Holt, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore, R Roberts, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.
- In attendance** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Carlo Biagioni and David Taylor from Alnwick Chamber of Trade.
- C15/128 Questions from the public**  
Carlo and David from Alnwick Chamber of Trade gave a brief overview of a couple of projects they are currently working on in the town. Once more information is available they will do a presentation to the Town Council.
- C15/129 Apologies for absence**  
Cllrs. J Humphries, S Patience, A Shilton and H Cairns (County Councillor).
- C15/130 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in county council matters. Councillors Edge, Harrington and Symmonds declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 12 Draft Accounts of the Mechanics Institute.
- C15/131 Presentation to Mr R McConnell former Cemetery Superintendent, on his retirement**  
The Mayor presented Rob McConnell with a gift and some flowers. He thanked Rob for all his hard work. Rob had been Cemetery Superintendent from October 1999 to his retirement in December 2015.  
Rob said he had enjoyed his time and was still happy to help out when he could.
- C15/132 Request for Dispensation**  
Following guidance from Northumberland County Council, relating to declarations of interest when setting budgets and precepts, a form had been circulated prior to the meeting which the councillors present had signed requesting a dispensation to participate in full decisions relating to the setting of the 2016/17 Budget and Precept. Councillors acknowledge receipt of the requests and voted to grant the dispensation.  
**RESOLVED: To grant a dispensation to all Councillors to enable them to participate in full decisions relating to the setting of the 2016/17 Budget and Precept.**
- C15/133 Minutes of the Last meeting**  
The Public and Private minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10th December 2015 were tabled for approval.  
**RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December were agreed as a true record and duly signed.**
- C15/134 Matters Arising**  
**C15/116** The Town Clerk asked for clarification as to whether the Town Council intended to respond to the consultation. The general view was this was not necessary.

**C15/117 (15/108) CO-ORDINATING SPORTS FACILITIES** The Town Clerk advised that a meeting with Sue Aviston was planned for January 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

**C15/124 LANTERN PARADE** Councillor Grisdale reported that the Lantern Parade went off very well. Councillor Castle said it had been very well run. He also confirmed that there had been no charge from NCC and that it had taken four men to undertake the road closure.

**C15/135 Mayor's Report**

The Mayor's Report is on his blog [www.alnwickmayor.wordpress.com](http://www.alnwickmayor.wordpress.com). He highlighted the successful Christmas Carol Service held on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2015.

**C15/136 Minutes of Committees**

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (10<sup>th</sup> December 2015) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (17<sup>th</sup> December 2015) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were agreed as a true record.**

**C15/137 2015/16 Budget Update, to agree the 2016/17 budget and to set the 2016/17 precept**

a) **2015/16 Budget Update**

The Town Clerk gave a budget update as at December 31<sup>st</sup> 2015: Income was at £261,122.56. He noted that this cannot be compared to last year's figure as that contained £99k from the Swansfield Park endowment.

Expenditure was at £161,463.67. He noted that the Play Area figure was considerably higher than budgeted due to additional new equipment which needed to be purchased during the year. He advised that there was currently a balance of £352,861.65 with about £80k still to be spent in 2015/16 which would give a carry forward figure of around £270k (including the endowment).

**RESOLVED: To accept the 2015/16 budget update.**

- b) **2016/17 Budget** The Town Clerk reminded councillors of the budgets that had been proposed by each committee giving a total budget of £218,253 currently. He summarised the main areas of change as: an additional £7k towards bigger office accommodation, an additional £10k for Neighbourhood Plan/Community Action Plan delivery, an additional £2,500 for town twinning visit, an additional £2,575 for increased grants and events support and an additional £10k towards a new tractor at the cemetery.

He advised that there were several additional budget items that had been identified during the Council Away Day:

- i) Additional Toilet Cleaning – £6k
- ii) Delivery of Projects - £5k (£15k in total)
- iii) Economic Development - £7.2k to provide more staff support. The Town Clerk advised this figure could be covered from underspend from 2015/16
- iv) CCTV – old system in need of upgrading and currently managed by NCC. He also advised that NCC were currently undertaking a review of the CCTV systems around the county.

Councillor Castle advised that NCC had inherited the systems which is why there are different systems across the county. He felt that good CCTV was needed and that the Town Council should be involved in the review and should put provision of £15k in the Budget for 2016/17.

Councillor Broom supported Councillor Castle's proposal to allocate £15k although he felt that the Town Council should not cover areas outside businesses in the town. He thought that the Town Council could speak to the Chamber of Trade about being involved.

Councillor Symmonds also supported Councillor Castle's proposal. He advised that he was thinking about the safety of Alnwick residents and public protection. He felt it was crucial that the Town Council were involved in the review of the CCTV early in the process so they can work in partnership. He also felt that NCC need to be open about the costs involved.

Councillor Edge asked if NCC were consulting with the police about CCTV. The Town Clerk advised that it was not a review of the actual systems but possible options available to them. He also noted that the current CCTV cameras in Alnwick were installed in 2004.

Councillor Edge asked if six cameras would be enough. The Town Clerk advised that six could be supplemented by deployable cameras.

Councillor Farrar supported Councillor Castle proposal. He also felt that the system could cover both public areas and business coverage. He commented that a bulk purchase may be possible on behalf of businesses who might be interested.

The Town Clerk advised that Ponteland Town Council allocate £3k in their budget each year for CCTV.

Councillor S Mavin felt that the Pub Watch Scheme works very well in Alnwick. The Town Clerk advised that the Pub Watch in Berwick are contributing £1k towards the costs of a replacement CCTV system.

Councillor Castle advised that the NCC review is very much a first step of where we are at present. He also explained that if a business downloads data from their CCTV system they can be asked to attend court if needed if an incident occurs.

**RESOLVED: To increase the 2016/17 budget to £244,253.**

- c) **Setting of the 2016/17 Precept** The Town Clerk advised that if the Precept was set at the Budget figure then the council tax for a Band D property would be £93.62 which would be about average for a Band D property across Northumberland towns.

**RESOLVED: To set the precept at £244,253 for 2016/17.**

**C15/138 Review of Constitution**

The Town Clerk advised councillors that the meeting to review the constitution was February 25<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

**RESOLVED: To note the date of the constitution review meeting.**

**C15/139 Draft Accounts for the Mechanics Institute 2015/16**

The Town Clerk took councillors through the accounts for the Mechanics Institute which had been circulated. He advised that there were a couple of items to add – interest at about £3.86 and servicing for the fire extinguishers.

He noted the following:

- Rent / usage increased by £1.2k during the year

- Transferred £23k from the Interest Account to cover the costs of undertaking works in the building including a new central heating system
- Fuel – a big reduction from the previous year (but new system not operational for full year)
- Insurance - big reduction on the previous year

There is currently £13.9k in the current account and £31.1k in the deposit account giving a current balance figure of £45K.

The Town Clerk explained the cost of the works that had been undertaken / or were due to be undertaken at the Mechanics Institute. Budget £23k; Expenditure £19,544:

- Central Heating system – £13,588
- Decoration - £2,137
- New chairs – not done yet but budgeted at £600
- Energy efficient measures (lighting / water) - £3,819
- Vinyl flooring to rear 1<sup>st</sup> floor room and new carpet for ground floor front room – suggested leaving in light of other priorities

The Town Clerk explained the proposed work plan for 2016/17 which included connecting the hot water system to the central heating; renewing three rear external doors; plastering first floor landing; chairs and external decoration.

Councillor Broom felt that Wi-Fi in the building would increase potential groups/ organisations to rent the building.

Councillor S Mavin thought that the rooms were still very cold. The Town Clerk advised that he would look at the settings for the heating system.

Councillor Symmonds wondered if the Hive system could be used to turn on the heating system remotely. He also complimented and thanked the Town Clerk for all his work organising the works in the building.

**RESOLVED: i) To approve the draft accounts; ii) To agree the work plan for 2016/17.**

#### **C15/140 Notes of the Away Day held on January 2016**

Additional notes from the Town Council Away Day will be circulated to councillors when completed.

#### **C15/141 Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Action if any</b>
19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	NCC – Road Closure C92 Bank Top Junction to Deanmoor Junction expected closure 18/1– 5/2	To Note
22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	NALC – Briefing on future audit arrangements	To be considered by next Finance Committee
4 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Request for dog bin near 59/60 Willoughby Park	To consider
8 <sup>th</sup> Jan	CAN e –news	Available from the clerk on request

Councillor Harrington advised that the location of the bin was in a residential area.

Councillor Swinbank asked who had requested the bin. The Town Clerk advised that it had been requested by a local resident. Councillor Swinbank asked if the Town Council could request that the developers what they have planned in regard to bins any other facilities on the new development. The Town Clerk advise that he would enquire.

Councillor Moore asked if NCC would empty the new bin. The Town Clerk advised that he would need to ask.

**RESOLVED: To accept the correspondence.**

**C15/142 Feedback from Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Initiative Meeting**

Councillors Moore advised that there had not been a meeting since last month.

**C15/143 Financial Matters – Payments**

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
HMRC	£2,855.98	£0	Tax/NI payment for Dec
Wages Account	£5,000	£0	
John Gray Ltd	£126.00	£21.00	Repair to Hedge cutter
Chubb	£162.95	£27.16	Annual Contract – fire equipment, cemetery
Information Commissioner	£35.00	£0	Data Protection Registration
James N McLean	£19.98	£3.33	Gloves and parts
Town & Country Tree Surgeons Ltd	£648.00	£108.00	Tree works following storm damage (cemetery)
Streetscape	£1,518.00	£253.00	New Play Area Gate, (Alnwick North)
NCC	£763.20	£127.20	Stage Erection for Christmas Lights
J Turnbull	£250.00	£0	JCB Training & Assessment
St James’s Church Centre	£225.00	£0	Room Hire Oct - Dec
Davidson & Son	£3000.00	£500.00	Xmas lights work – grant payment
NCC	£20.00	£0	Room hire for allotment collection
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£14,624.11</b>	<b>£1,039.69</b>	

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and were reported for information:		
BT	£100.65	Phone Bills Cemetery and Cemetery Lodge paid 29 <sup>th</sup> Dec
Npower	£189.97	Robertson’s Pant and Town Hall Clock
Northumbrian Water	£1,365.96	Water bills Cemetery (2), Allotments and Robertson’s Fountain. Paid 4 <sup>th</sup> Jan

BT	£27.65	Phone Bill Fenkle Street paid 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec
BT	£27.85	Phone Bill Fenkle Street
Npower	£42.35	Electricity for Cemetery

The following grant payments were approved at the Finance & Policy meeting in December 2015 for approval at this meeting:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Grant Award</b>
Alnwick and District Playhouse Trust	£1,400
Bailiffgate Museum	£1,400
Hospice Care North Northumberland	£1,400
Northumberland CAB (Alnwick Office)	£1,400*
Alnwick & District Sports Council	£ 350
Alnwick Town Juniors FC \$	£400
Alnwick Amateur Boxing Club	£400
Alnwick Cricket Club	£400
Alnwick Rugby Club	£400
Northumberland Touring Theatre Company	£500
Lionheart Radio & Media CIC	£600*
Community@NE66	£350*
League of Friends of the Alnwick Hospital	£400*
Lionhearts Service User Group - Alnwick	£400
RE-NU-IT	£500*
Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard	£400
Northumberland Credit Union	£200*

\* LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure

\$ The application from Alnwick Town Football Club Juniors has been changed to Alnwick Town Football Club and will be used towards the purchase of a treatment table.

**RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £14,624.11, to note the direct debit payments of £1,746.53 and authorise the grant payments of £10,900.**

#### **C15/144 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Castle advised that special parking permits were being considered for Market Place businesses.

Councillor G Mavin requested images for the revised Town Leaflet

The meeting closed at 8.35pm