



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 11th February 2016 in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm

Present Cllrs W Grisdale, (Chair), P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore, S Patience, A Shilton, 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.

C15/145 Questions from the public

None.

C15/146 Apologies for absence

Cllrs. S Allcroft, P Allcroft, D Farrar, M Harrington, R Roberts and H Cairns (County Councillor).

C15/147 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in county council matters.

Councillor Grisdale declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 4 Presentation by Roy Bearpark, Manager of Bailiffgate Museum.

Councillors Grisdale and Patience declared a pecuniary interest in Item 10 Update on Alnwick Bike Track project.

C15/148 Presentation by Mr Roy Bearpark, Manager of Bailiffgate Museum

Roy gave a summary of the last year at the museum and gave an overview of the plans for the coming year. He advised that the Heritage Lottery funding (£380k) had ended in December 2015. He also advised that the museum had 5,500 visitors during 2015.

He explained that over the summer of 2015 they had done some research about current number of visitors that had shown that although they had good visitor feedback the vast majority of visitors didn't know the museum was there. The museum had responded by looking at their event programme to better engage visitors. In 2016 there would be six exhibitions:

- Finding Your Place – community outreach projects outcomes
- Do I Look Good in This – Fashion exhibition and dress up
- Frances Anderson: Watemarks
- Summer Exhibition 'Wild' – Natural History exhibition
- Open Rag Rugging – with Jane Jackson
- Home Front – volunteer led exhibition

He explained that the museum was seeking funding to refurbish the upstairs gallery space and will have additional cash for marketing.

He felt that the more options the better for residents and visitors. He issued several copies of a book called 'Telling the Story of Alnwick and District' written by Peter Carter, one of the museum volunteers and which will be on sale from Friday 12th February.

Councillor questions / comments:

Councillor Holt said she was very interested to hear about the upper floor as she felt that some exhibitions didn't always look as good as they could and the impact was lost.

She also asked if people got chosen to be part of the exhibitions or if people apply.

Roy agreed that in the past some exhibitions have looked lack lustre and that the museum needed to be more creative with the space. He explained that in the future demountable walls and improved lighting would help. He advised that until recently people involved in exhibitions tended to have a relationship with volunteers. He was planning to streamline the process by having a proposal document to be completed and reviewed by the museum. This should help maintain the quality of the exhibitions.

Councillor G Mavin asked about visitor numbers over the past five years. Roy advised that numbers had remained fairly static although 2014 had been an exceptional year.

Councillor Edge asked if the museum had ever considered free entry and ask for donations instead. Roy advised that, as an independent museum, they needed to make income from entry fees. He also advised that on occasions they do drop entry fees for Alnwick residents.

Councillor Castled advised that Barter Books do get asked for books on the History of Alnwick.

Councillor Grisdale thanked Roy for his presentation.

C15/149 Minutes of the Last meeting

The Public and Private minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 14th January 2016 were tabled for approval. Councillor Castle requested a small amendment to his comments about parking permits (C15/144 AOUB). This was agreed.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2016, as amended, were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

C15/150 Matters Arising

C15/138 REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION The Town Clerk reminded Councillors that the date for the meeting to review the Constitution was February 25th.

C15/141 REQUEST FOR DOG BIN The Town Clerk advised councillors that NCC had confirmed that if the Town Council or the developer purchased an additional litter / dog bin at Willoughby Park bin they would empty it.

C15/151 Mayor's Report

The Mayor's Report is on his blog www.alnwickmayor.wordpress.com. He highlighted the Alnwick Raffle event being held on February 20th at The White Swan Hotel.

C15/152 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (11th January 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 11th January 2016 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (18th January 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on 18th January 2016 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (25th January 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Finance Committee held on 25th January 2016 were agreed as a true record.

C15/153 Update on Housing Needs Survey

The Projects & Funding Officer gave an update. He advised that the Housing Needs Survey was one of the Community Action Plans from the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan for which the Town Council were the lead. The results of the survey would inform decisions about the level and type of housing needed in Alnwick and Denwick.

Following discussions with NCC it was agreed that the survey would be jointly commissioned (and funded) by NCC and the Town Council, and that a housing consultant would carry out a postal survey and analyse the results.

It would be a 100% survey and would have a 12 week turnaround. The final Housing Needs Survey report would then be jointly owned by NCC and the Town Council.

Key dates:

February 12th – issue Housing Needs Survey brief and invitations to bid

February 26th – deadline for receipt of returns from bidders

March 21st – selection of contractor (NCC and Town Council)

April (beginning) – start of survey

July 2016 – survey complete, analysis of returns and production of report.

Councillors questions:

Councillor Swinbank asked that as it was an Alnwick & Denwick housing survey would Denwick Parish Council contribute towards the cost. The Town Clerk said he thought this was unlikely.

Councillor G Mavin asked why NCC could not give an indication of the potential cost of the survey. The Town Clerk advised that broad costs were available but the survey would be tendered.

Councillor Symmonds felt that it made sense to work with NCC and other towns. He also felt that the cost of the survey should provide value for money for the Town Council and their council tax payers and that if the cost seemed too high the Town Council could relook at the specification for the survey.

Councillor Patience asked if it was only planned to do a postal survey? The Project & Funding Officer advised that it was. The Town Clerk advised that other data would be use along with the returned household questionnaires.

The Town Clerk also advised that the project brief would include what measures the contractor would put in place to maximise the return of the surveys.

Councillor S Mavin felt that people with a housing need would reply.

Councillor Broom asked how the survey would cover more rural areas. The Town Clerk advised that the Post Office database would be used to obtain the addresses.

Councillor Broom wondered how the survey would cover people who wanted to live in Alnwick but didn't now.

The Town Clerk advised that there was Government guidance on the survey process which councillors could see.

Councillor Castle said that the survey needed to be credible.

Councillor G Mavin asked how long the results of the survey would be valid. The Town Clerk advised that a survey was usually undertaken about every five years.

Councillor Symmonds asked if there would be a large print format of the survey available. Councillor Gridale advised that this should be possible.

Councillor Humphries wondered what housing data Taylor Wimpey had accessed for the new development south of the town and whether this was for the whole of Alnwick.

The Town Clerk advised that a housing survey had been done in about 2010 across Northumberland but this had not included many Alnwick dwellings.

Councillor Castle felt it was important to have valid and up to date housing data to help respond correctly to Planning Applications.

RESOLVED: To receive the update and the approach being taken.

C15/154

Update on Alnwick Bike Track project (Cllrs Gridale and Patience left the meeting and Councillor Symmonds was voted into the chair for this item)

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that this item had been discussed at the Recreation & Amenities meeting in January and recommended to Full Council.

He advised that Alnwick Town Council had agreed to take on the lease for the land from Northumberland Estates. Gallery Youth were a partner in the project and the scheme was designed by Groundwork North East.

He also advised that heads of terms had been received from Northumberland Estates and reminded councillors that the SITA application needed planning permission and a lease to be in place before they would consider funding. Planning permission has been obtained and Northumberland Estates were now asking for the Town Council to sign the lease.

The SITA application needs to be submitted by mid-April and the outcome would be known by the end of August. He asked councillors for approval to get the lease signed.

Councillor G Mavin asked if there would be any liability for the Town Council at the end of the lease in the future and had any cost been built in to cover reinstating the land. The Town Clerk advised that any reinstatement costs would need to be covered by the Town Council.

RESOLVED: To receive the update and give delegated authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of Finance & Policy to finalise and sign the lease.

C15/155

Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the Queen celebrates her 90th birthday on April 21st a number of events are planned:

Clean for the Queen is a campaign, launched by Country Life Magazine in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy, aimed at volunteers across the country cleaning up their local areas in time for the Queen's birthday. March 4th – 6th are the suggested dates.

The council has had previous clean ups but as March 6th is Mothering Sunday he suggested that March 20th was a more suitable date. Councillor Castle agreed that March 20th was a better date. Councillor Moore asked if the NCC equipment / machines could be used to clean footpaths etc.

He also advised that a weekend of events will take place between June 10th – 12th including a large party in The Mall for 10,000 people.

RESOLVED: i) To organise a town tidy on March 20th ii) To discuss the Queen's birthday celebrations at the Recreation & Amenities meeting in March.

C15/156 Notes of the Away Day held on January 2016

The Town Clerk advised that the notes from the Away Day on January 9th had been circulated to all councillors.

RESOLVED: To receive the notes from the Away Day on January 2016.

C15/157 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
23 rd Jan	Request to consider obtaining a Blue Plaque for William Davison (Alnwick printer of the 19 th century) on behalf of Adrion Ions	Councillors to consider (a)
30 th Jan	NCC – Details of Grit Bins in Alnwick	Circulated to Councillors
1 st Feb	NCC – Details of LED street light roll out – Alnwick is March to July 2017	To note (b)
3 rd Feb	NCC – New Community Regeneration team being established	Circulated to Councillors
4 th Feb	NCC – Road Closure Anson Court 22 nd – 25 th Feb.	To note
5 th Feb	CAN e –news	Available from the clerk on request
9 th Feb	NCC - Letter to David Cameron from number of Town Councils	Circulated to Councillors
9 th Feb	NCC - Letter regarding next joint NCC / ATC meeting on April 4 th at 2pm	To note

(a) The Town Clerk advised that he had been asked to apply for a blue plaque for the premises William Davison had lived in and worked at on Bondgate Within. The committee were in favour of exploring this further.

(b) Councillor G Mavin advised that he had feedback from a town in South East Northumberland who had complained about the new street lights.

The Town Clerk also advised that he had been asked to report to NCC any businesses that had been affected by flooding. He also advised that he had received a number of thank you letters from organisations who had received grants from the Town Council.

He also advised that he had received information regarding Heritage Lottery Funding which could be used for World War I projects.

RESOLVED: To accept the correspondence and to investigate the possibility of a Blue plaque being provided for William Davison.

C15/158 Feedback from Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Initiative Meeting

Councillors Moore advised that there had not been a meeting since last month. The Town Clerk advised that he had received information about the new format and frequency of the LMAPs meetings.

Councillor Broom asked if feedback from other meetings could be on the agenda in months where LMAPs did not have meetings.

Councillor Patience felt it was really useful if councillors sat in on groups / organisations in Alnwick as it was useful to see how they operate.

C15/159 Financial Matters – Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
HMRC	£2,690.46	£0	Tax/NI payment for Jan
Wages Account	£5,000	£0	Playsafety Ltd
Playsafety Ltd	£407.40	£67.90	Annual play area inspections
S Murray	£270	£0	Internal Painting Cemetery Lodge & Office (paid)
C Bowden	£60	£0	Door repairs cemetery lodge
W.R.Batey	£979.51	£158.71	New computer & printer for cemetery (£527.68), Stationery, new filing cabinet and first aid kit for cemetery (£235.97); New Vacuum cleaner (cemetery), stationary and files (£176.69), Stamps £12.96, refreshments £5.85, Retirement Card £5.99, Flowers £14.37
J Pibworth	£58.95	£9.82	Paint for Cemetery Office
Northumberland County Council	£44.22	£0	Council Tax, Cemetery Lodge (3/1-15/1)
Fife Plant Hire	£187.80	£31.30	Cemetery Materials
Johnston Publishing	£400.80	£66.80	Advertising for vacant post
James McLean	£51.20	£8.53	Tools and Supplies
Chris Bowden	£50.00	£0	Window repairs Cemetery Lodge
Peter Nyssen	£65.50	£10.92	Bulbs
North East Banners	£1,170.00	£0	Town Leaflets
TOTAL	£11,435.84	£353.98	

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

BT	£85.00	Phone Bills Cemetery and Cemetery Lodge paid 26 th and 28 th Jan
Npower	£477.40	Cemetery Chapel (paid 20 th Jan)
BT	£27.85	Fenkle Street Phone Bill (paid 25 th Jan)

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £11,435.84, to note the direct debit payments of £590.25.

C15/160 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Moore informed councillors that there was a concert on 10th March at St James's Church.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm