

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 26th May 2016
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, B Gridsale, M Harrington, 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 and Philip Angier, Local Living.

RA 16/01 Apologies

Councillors G Mavin and S Bell.

RA 16/02 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Shilton and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest and Councillor B Gridsale declared a pecuniary interest in Item 3. Presentation on Taste North Food Festival.

RA 16/03 Presentation on Taste North Food Festival

Philip Angier gave a short presentation about the Taste North Food Festival 2016. He informed that committee that Local Living were looking to provide a leaflet to attendees of the Taste North Food Festival to get people out of the Market Place and into the town. He issued a draft mock-up of the leaflet.

Councillors Symmonds asked what would be in the empty squares. Philip explained that there would be generic pieces of text about the different areas of the town. He added that there would be no individual adverts as businesses were not making a contribution towards the leaflet.

Councillors felt that they would like to support the leaflet to the value of £400, as requested.

Councillor Edge asked how Local Living would measure the success of the Taste North Food Festival. Philip advised that this would be measured on the increase in footfall over a two-year period.

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that there was £600 allocated towards the Food Festival 2016 and asked if this could now be allocated to Local Living. Councillors agreed that it could.

RESOLVED: i) To contribute £400 towards the cost of the Taste North Food Festival 2016 leaflet; ii) To agree the £600 allocated to the Food Festival 2016 go to Local Living.

RA 16/04 Update from Bob Hodgson – Northumberland County Council Neighbourhood Services

The Town Clerk advised that Bob Hodgson was unable to attend the meeting.

He reminded the committee that any questions they had for Bob should be sent to him and would be forwarded to Bob.

Councillor Symmonds asked if the questions raised at the North Area meeting about street cleaning and potholes could be forwarded. The Town Clerk advised that the questions regarding street cleaning would be passed to Bob and the questions regarding potholes to Graham Bucknall (North Area Highways Manager) who was responsible.

Councillor Harrington commented that there was a lovely floral display at the back of Greenwell Lane. Councillor Broom asked that thank you letters were sent.

Councillor Symmonds asked if the additional toilet cleaning was being effective. Councillor Broom advised that whilst it had improved the cleanliness of the toilets it was still not at the standard the Town Council expected.

Councillor Grisdale felt it was more about the through flow of air rather than the standard of cleaning that was the issue.

Councillor Patience added that it was not to do with the toilets but with the infrastructure of the building itself.

Councillor Broom suggested the Town Council could speak to the cleaning operative themselves to get some feedback.

Councillor Swinbank asked if any spot checks of the toilets had been done. The Town Clerk advised that none had been done as yet. Councillor Patience suggested that councillors could volunteer to carry out spot checks. Councillor Broom suggested a standard checklist be used. The Town Clerk will draw up an inspection schedule and ask for volunteers.

RA 16/04 Working Group Membership for 2016/17

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that in 2015/16 there were Working Groups for **Communications, Events, Allotments and World War I**.

Councillors considered the working groups for 2016/17.

Communications – Councillor Grisdale felt this working group could publicise the work the Project & Funding Officer was undertaking. Councillors Broom, Grisdale, G Mavin, Patience and Swinbank will be on this Working Group.

Councillor Patience reminded the committee that the Community Noticeboards still needed to be done.

Events - The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the Events Working Group had been set up for festivals in the Town. Councillor Grisdale felt that, as the Project & Funding Officer was now in post this group was no longer needed.

Allotments - Councillors Edge, Harrington and Patience will remain on the Allotment Working Group. Councillor Bell to be asked if she wants to join.

World War I – The Town Clerk advised councillors that the Working Group could continue until 2018. Councillor Symmonds asked if the Terms of Reference could be sent out to the member of this groups so that they could best commemorate the key events of WWI.

Councillors Broom, Edge and Symmonds will remain on this Working Group.

RESOLVED: To accept the members of the 2016/17 working group membership as follows:

- 1. Communications - Councillors Broom, Grisdale, G Mavin, Patience and Swinbank**
- 2. Allotments - Councillors Edge, Harrington and Patience**
- 3. World War 1 - Councillors Broom, Edge and Symmonds**

RA 16/05 Budget Update 2016/17

The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure as at 23rd May 2016. He advised that there had not been much expenditure or income as yet in the financial year. Expenditure was £81.68 for events £805 for projects and £897.78 for assets & services. Income was £485, all of which was Allotments rents. The Town Clerk noted the following:

EVENTS:

Civic Awards – small amount of expenditure still to be allocated.

PROJECTS:

Several areas of carry forward - £4,000 from Communication Project, £500 from WWI projects, £500 from Peters Mill and £4,250 from Unallocated. He reminded councillors that new ideas were needed for this £4,250.

RESOLVED: To accept the 2016/17 budget update.

ASSETS & SERVICES:

Allotment expenses – £1,700 carried forward from 2015/16.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget update.

RA 16/06 Play Area Audit

The Project & Funding Officer gave an update on the final draft report (1st draft was circulated at the March meeting) that had been circulated. He advised that there were some slight changes:

Page 1 – additional background information had been added.

Pages 2 and 6 – Cycle and BMX bike site had been changed to Windy Edge and the date changed to 2016/17.

Page 7 – play equipment for older children (aged 6 – 13) had been added at Windy Edge.

Councillor Patience asked that the status of Community NE66 be clarified.

Councillor Grisdale felt that the report underlined the value of play area in Alnwick so should be encouraged.

RESOLVED: To accept the updated Play Audit report; ii) For the Project & Funding Officer to give the committee an update every 6 months.

Councillor Swinbank asked if there was any update on the proposed boundary change. The Town Clerk advised that the change had been through consultation and should be in place from March 2017.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the Town Council should be involved in providing play equipment for older children.

RA 16/07 Town Lectern Maps

The Project & Funding Officer reminded councillors that there are currently three Lectern maps in Alnwick. There had originally been four but that one had been knocked down by a vehicle. Currently no-one owns or has responsibility for them and it was felt that the Town Council could take charge of these and get them updated. He advised that Infinite Designs (the company who had produced them originally) had quoted £3,600 to produce the three new versions and that Cityscape had quoted £1,800. There would also be a fee of £88 payable to Infinite Designs for the artwork.

So far £1,250 funding had been promised from businesses and organisations.

Councillor Grisdale felt that the fourth lectern could be reinstated and that each quarter in the town could have one panel.

The Project & Funding Officer asked for councillors' comments on the proposed maps from Cityscape. Councillor Harrington liked the new map.

Councillor Swinbank asked how many Cityscape maps there were already in the town. Councillor Grisdale advised that there were about ten. He also felt that the map could be adapted to match the four quarters.

The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Grisdale had suggested that the new Lecterns could be linked to commemorating the Queen's 90th birthday.

RESOLVED: i) For Alnwick Town Council to take over ownership of the town lecterns; ii) To take forward the lectern project, (final decisions taken by the Chair in consultation with the Town Clerk) with a budget of up to £2k and linked to the Queen's 90th birthday commemoration.

RA16/08 Updates on:

a) Allotments

1. St Georges – Water Supply.

Views from allotment holders are currently 4 in favour of installing water, 3 not in favour and 4 who had not given their views.

The Town Clerk advised that a complaint had been received about the state of one of the allotments at St George's and that the allotment holder had been written to requesting that work be carried out by June 13th. The allotment will then be reviewed again and notice given if no improvement is seen.

2. Ratten Row

Tidy up day - still needs organising for the site.

Locking gate – around half of the allotment holders (plots 34 to 61) have been written to asking about their views on providing them with a key for the gate at their end of the site. Feedback by June 3rd.

Cockerels – written to four allotment holders about the noise caused by cockerels. The allotment agreement states that permission needs to be sought from the Town Council for anyone wishing to keep poultry.

Councillor Swinbank asked if there was an update on the Allotment Association. The Town Clerk advised this needed progressing further.

b) Play Areas

The Town Clerk advised that the schedule of work for Allerburn Lea had been produced.

An area of Wetspour needed to be enlarged at Swansfield Park and a schedule of work had been produced.

c) Armed Forces Week 2016 and Queen's Birthday Celebrations

Armed Forces Week 2016 (June 20th to 25th)

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that as the Northumberland Hall could not be used for the flag ceremonies during Armed Forces Week it had been arranged that the flagpole on the Northumberland Fusiliers Museum would be used instead and that an additional flag would be raised on the building in Fenkle Street where the Town Council office is based. A meeting had been organised at the Castle to discuss logistics for the Monday (flag raising) and Saturday (flag lowering).

The ceremonies will involve the Mayor, a representative from each of the armed forces plus the relevant associations, a member of the clergy, a bugler and town councillors.

The Queens 90th Birthday celebrations

The Project & Funding Officer that the Street Party idea for the Queen's 90th birthday had not been thought a good idea by the Chamber of Trade or Town Team. The Clerk also explained that a new Heritage bench with plaque had been bought and installed at Pottergate Gardens which commemorated the Queen's birthday.

Councillors Gridale asked if there had been any feedback from residents. Councillor Broom advised that he had not had any feedback.

d) Flagpole Planning Application

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the Town Council's planning application for the flagpole is being determined and currently had several objections from residents.

Councillor Swinbank asked if a flag policy would be needed. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that she was preparing one for review.

e) War Memorial and Hotspur Statue inspections

War Memorial - The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that when the conservation work was being carried out on the War Memorial the column was found to have some movement. Although an initial assessment had confirmed that the column was safe it was thought advisable for a detailed structural survey to be carried out. Three structural engineers from the CARE (Conservation Accreditation Register for Engineers) list will be sent details of the memorial and asked to give a quote.

Hotspur Statue - The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that she had spoken to Keith Maddison, the original sculptor of the statue. He had advised that he had been to Alnwick a few weeks before and had felt that the statue was not too bad but would benefit from further waxing as parts had started to go green. He also felt this would be useful as there was also some evidence of graffiti scratched in the surface. He will email a cost and timescale for completion of the work. It was also felt advisable that he provides an up to date valuation of the statue for insurance purposes.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the sculptor had given good value for money originally and should be used again.

The Town Clerk advised that a budget would need to be set for both the survey and waxing.

RESOLVED: i) To proceed with the structural survey of the War Memorial delegated to the Chair and Town Clerk; ii) Email the committee with the information on the waxing of the Hotspur statue.

RA 16/09 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Swinbank asked if bunting would be put up for the Queen's birthday. The Town Clerk advised that this would be discussed with the Christmas Lights Committee.

Councillor Patience felt the Community Orchard needed a dog bin. Councillor Swinbank asked if bins could have signs on them. Councillor Harrington advised that the nearest bin was at the far end so an additional bin would be useful.

Councillor Edge asked for an update on the Your Welcome scheme. The Town Clerk advised that the signs were in the windows of the three new locations around Alnwick and that signs were done for the toilet doors and awaiting fixing.

Councillor Edge asked about hanging baskets in the town and who paid for them. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council paid for 20+ hanging baskets and the rest were paid for by Alnwick in Bloom.

Councillor thought that the town would benefit from more hanging baskets on the lampposts in Narrowgate.

Councillor Broom advised that the town quarter signs in Bondgate Without needed to be re-hung.

Meeting closed at 8.51pm