



Room 5, 27 Fenkle Street, Alnwick  
Northumberland NE66 1HW

Your Ref:

Our Ref: FC/01/2017

Clerk to Council

Bill Batey

Tel: 01665 602574

Mobile: 07971 810267

Dear Councillor

6<sup>th</sup> January 2017

The next meeting of the Council will be held on **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017** in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at **7.15pm**. You are hereby requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

Bill Batey

Clerk to Town Council

### Agenda

1. Questions from the Public
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Request for a Dispensation
5. Minutes of the Last Meeting (8<sup>th</sup> December 2016)
6. Matters Arising
7. Mayor's Report
8. County Council matters:
  - a) Feedback from North Area meeting (January 9<sup>th</sup> 2017)
  - b) Feedback received from NCC since last joint meeting
9. Possible Changes to the Model Code of Conduct (to NALC by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017)
10. Minutes of the Committees
  - a) Planning, Highways & Transport Committee Meeting (8<sup>th</sup> December 2016)
  - b) Finance & Policy Committee (15<sup>th</sup> December 2016)
11. 2016/17 budget update, to agree the 2017/18 budget and to set the 2017/18 Precept.
12. Review of Constitution
13. Correspondence
14. Feedback from Alnwick Town Council Business Networking Event (10<sup>th</sup> January 2017)
15. Financial Matters – a) Bank Reconciliation b) Payments
16. Any Other Urgent Business

**Declarations of Interest**

To receive disclosures of pecuniary interests from Councillors, on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware, during the course of the meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it.

**Agenda item 4****Request for a Dispensation**

Guidance from Northumberland County Council relating to declarations of interest when setting the budget and precept, is that all councillors should apply in writing for a dispensation to the Council to enable them to be involved and vote. At the start of the meeting the clerk will circulate a form and ask councillors present to sign it (this covers the application in writing). Under this agenda item we will acknowledge the receipt of the requests for dispensations and will then vote on granting the dispensation.

**Recommendation: That the Council grants a dispensation to all Councillors to enable them to participate in full decisions relating to the setting of the 2017/18 Budget and Precept.**

**Agenda item 7****Mayor's Report**

An update on the Mayor's diary will be given at the meeting.

**Agenda item 8****County Council matters**

Verbal feedback will be given from the North Area meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2017, together with feedback on other matters.

**Recommendation: To note the update**

**Agenda item 9****Possible Changes to the Model Code of Conduct**

The Town Council has adopted the Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) model code of conduct. NALC are conducting a review of the code and have requested comments by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. A copy of the current code has been circulated to Councillors and any comments should be submitted to the Clerk by 8<sup>th</sup> January for inclusion in a report to this meeting.

**Agenda item 11****2016/17 budget update, to agree the 2017/18 budget and to set the 2017/18 Precept**

A budget update for 2016/17 will be given at the meeting by the Clerk.

**Recommendation: a) To note the 2016/17 budget position**

Each of the Council's committees has approved a recommended budget for 2017/18, these are as follows:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Net Expenditure</b>
Cemetery	£17,560
Recreation & Amenities	£87,231
Finance & Policy	£161,565
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£266,356.00</b>

Some of the main changes to the proposed committee budgets for 2017/18 are as follows:

- The Cemetery budget requirement is £10,890 less than in 2016/17, this is mainly because, of saving arising from NNDR relief, less budget requirement for replacement machinery and an increased income anticipated from fees.
- The Recreation and Amenities Committee are budgeting to spend an additional £3,000 on providing replacement equipment in the town's toilets (as NCC will not be in a position to fund this), an additional £1,150 to support local town events, £3,500 to provide a Town promotion tourism leaflet, an additional £985 for floral planting and £2,000 allocated towards the cost of repairs to the war memorial
- Within the Finance & Policy Committee budget an additional £5,000 is earmarked for grants to local organisations (making £16,000 available), £4,000 towards May 2017 election costs, £7,000 towards the delivery of economic development activity with local businesses (this commenced in 2016/17), and £5,000 towards the annual maintenance and replacement costs for the CCTV system which is due to be installed in Spring 2017.

In addition to these committee budgets the following adjusted need to be made:

1. The Recreation and Amenities Committee have recommended taking over the ownership of the fingerpost signage in the Town, These are currently owned by NCC and are in need of refurbishment. NCC has indicated they would agree to this. A refurbishment budget of £7,000 is suggested based upon a budget estimated received, (this needs to be added to the above budget figures).
2. The Recreation and Amenities Committee included a Grass Cutting budget of £3,171 based upon a figure given by NCC (this payment is made to them), however NCC have since confirmed that the cost will not be increased and will be held at the 2016/17 figure of £1,953, (the total budget reduction being £1,218).
3. The 2017 election budget was initially set at £4,000. It is difficult to predict the cost as it is not known if contested elections will take place. NCC have indicated that election costs will be known by September 2017 and that council may wish to either budget in advance – ie 2017/18, or in 2018/19 once the figure is known. In the light of this it is suggested that the budget provision in 2017/18 is reduced to £2,000 and in the event that additional budget is required, this could be included in the 2018/19 precept.
4. In 2016/17 there is an anticipated underspend on the work associated with Economic Development activity and it is recommended that £3,000 of this underspend is used towards the 2017/18 economic development budget.

With these changes, the overall recommended budget for 2017/18 is therefore **£267,138**.

**Recommendation: b) To approve the 2016/17 budget of £267,138, including taking over the ownership and responsibility for the fingerpost signs in the town.**

Having agreed the budget the Council must then set the precept. At the Finance and Policy Committee on 15th December 2016, the Committee considered the extent to which reserves should be used to support the 2017/18 budget. The Committee has recommended reserves are not used to reduce the precept in 2017/18.

The Finance and Policy Committee also reviewed the Town Council precept for 2016/17 in comparison to other town councils in Northumberland. In 2016/17 the average Town Council precept for a Band D dwelling was £98.32, compared to £93.62 for Alnwick. The highest in the northern area was Morpeth at £111.16, whilst the overall highest was Choppington at £144.54.

A precept of £267,138 would be an increase of £22,885. Whilst the final council tax base (taking into account the parish boundary change) is not known, this is likely to equate to an annual increase of approximately £8.50 (£0.16p per week) for a Band D dwelling. The new Band D town council precept is likely to be close to the Northumberland Town Council average.

**Recommendation: To set a precept for 2017/18 of £267,138.**

**Agenda item 12  
Review of Constitution**

Under the Council's constitution it is a requirement to have an annual review. It is therefore proposed to have a working group meeting, to which all councillors are invited, to undertake the review and report back to the March or April Council meeting. The proposed date for the working group is Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm in the Mechanics Institute.

**Recommendation: To agree the Constitution Working Group meeting.**

**Agenda item 13  
Correspondence**

The following correspondence has been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Archaeology in Northumberland Volume 22	Available from Clerk on request
15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	NCC Consultation on planning application validation checklist	Circulated to Planning Committee for comments
15 <sup>th</sup> Dec 3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan	NALC e-news	Circulated to councillors
20 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Northumberland CVA – seeking volunteer buddies	Available from Clerk on request
23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	North Tourism Fairs - Tourism Fair date 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2017- Willowburn	To Note

**Recommendation: That the correspondence received be considered.**

**Agenda item 15  
Financial Matters**

**a) Bank reconciliation**

The clerk will table the bank reconciliation for Sept-Dec 2016 and outline the contents to councillors.

**b) Payments**

The following payments are due (as at 6<sup>th</sup> January); this list will be updated at the meeting, if necessary.

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYABLE</b>	<b>VAT ELEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
HMRC	£3,367.38	0	TAX/NI for December
Wages Account	£7,000	0	Transfer to Wages Account
St James Church Centre	£225	0	Room Bookings
Peter Nyssen Ltd	£89.20	£14.87	Bulbs
J Farmer	£143.97	0	Allotment water repairs
Azure Charitable Enterprises	£80.64*	0	Carol Service Order of Service
Chubb Fire & Security Ltd	£169.31	£28.22	Security contract Cemetery
Viking	£45.05	£7.51	Stationary
Azure Charitable Enterprises	£76.91	£12.83	Council Christmas Cards
WR Batey	£75.00*	0	£75 – 3 x £25 vouchers (Remembrance Sunday)
NCC	£492.13	£82.02	Stage costs for Lantern Parade
South Road Tyres Ltd	£93.00	£15.50	Tractor Tyre repairs
Mole Country Stores	£23.99	£4.00	Protective Clothing
Bill Grisdale Design	£405.00	0	Lectern Map design work
Information Commissioner	£35	0	Data Protection Registration
Viking	£64.73	£10.73	Event name badges
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£12,386.31</b>	<b>£175.68</b>	

\*Indicates Local Government Act 1972 s137 Expenditure

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and are reported for information			
BT	£51.26	£8.54	Phone Bills Fenkle St. paid 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec
BT	£47.18	£7.86	Phone Bill Cemetery paid 28 <sup>th</sup> Dec
Northumbrian Water	£451.80	0	Water Rates Fenkle St. (paid 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec)
NEST	£540.40	0	Employer pension scheme contributions for paid 28 <sup>th</sup> Dec.

The following grants were approved by the Finance and Policy Committee on 15th December 2016 for payment:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Grant Award</b>
Alnwick and District Playhouse Trust	£1,400
Bailiffgate Museum	£1,400
Northumbrian CAB – Alnwick Office	£1,400
Hospice Care North Northumberland	£1,400*
Alnwick & District Sports Council	£300
Alnwick Hockey Club	£300

Alnwick Cricket Club	£300
Alnwick Scout Group	£300
Northumberland (Masters) Open Water Swimming Club	£200 (must be used for Alnwick schools)
Northumberland Health Walks	£200 (must be used for walks in and around Alnwick)
Weavers Court	£200 (subject to NCC confirmation that Weavers Court is now in Alnwick parish)
Lionheart Radio & Media CIC	£450
Community@NE66	£250* (subject to satisfactory outcome of ATC youth provision in Alnwick review)
Friends of St Michael's (FOSM)	£250
The Portable Theatre Company	£250
Bailiffgate Singers	£250
Alnwick Food Bank	£500*
Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard	£300
Alnwick Stroke Club	£200*
Alnwick Arthritis Care	£200*
Pathfinder North East	£200*
Friends of Alnmouth Station	£150
RE-NU-IT	£500* (subject to satisfactory outcome of discussions with Arch regarding lease at St Thomas's)
Northumberland Credit Union	£200* (must be used in Alnwick only)

\*Indicates Local Government Act 1972 s137 Expenditure (Total £3,450)

**Recommendation: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £12,386.31, to note the direct debit payments of £1,090.64 and to authorise the grant payments of £11,100.**