

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 15th December 2016
at the Embleton Room, St James's Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors W Grisdale (Chair), P Broom, P Holt, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

In attendance: B Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer, Ian McRae (IM) and Graham Lockwood (GL), Gallery Youth Project for Item FP16/29 and Peter Hatley, Alnwick Town Juniors for Item FP16/30.

FP 16/27 Apologies

Councillors S Allcroft, P Allcroft, G Castle, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin and S Patience.

FP 16/28 Declarations of Interest

Councillor W Grisdale declared a pecuniary interest in Item 3 (Gallery Youth).

The following declaration of interests were declared in relation to the grant applications (Item 8.) listed below because the Councillors/officers held positions of responsibility in the organisations, or did work for them:

Bailiffgate Museum – Councillor Grisdale

Friends of Bullfield Community Orchard - Councillors Grisdale and Swinbank

North Northumberland HospiceCare – Councillor Grisdale

Alnwick & District Sports Council – The Town Clerk

Northumberland Touring Theatre Company – The Town Clerk

Friends of Alnmouth Station - Councillor Grisdale

FP 16/29 Presentation by representatives from Gallery Youth project requesting future Council funding (Councillor Grisdale left the meeting for this item and Councillor Symmonds was voted in as Chair).

Ian McRae (IM) indicated to councillors that Gallery Youth were looking for financial assistance of between £12k - £15k, from the Town Council in 2017/18. He gave an overview of the history of the organisation and its links with the Town Council and DCHS.

Ian explained that Gallery Youth supported 350-450 individuals each year including the National Citizen Scheme (NCS) and summer activity with the Youth Offending Team involving 95 young people from Alnwick. He added that although staff time had been reduced from 5 days to 3 days they were still able to have a presence all 5 days.

He explained that a review of their 2015 business plan had revealed that rurality was still a big issue in the Alnwick area. In 2016-17 NCC and Alnwick Town Council had supported Gallery Youth with grants of £12.5k and this had enabled Gallery Youth to attract a further £62k.

Ian gave out information on the level of grants given to Youth Services and youth projects in other areas of Northumberland, details of Gallery Youth income since January 1st 2016 and Revenue Budget / Funding Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Graham Lockwood (GL) advised that the project was struggling financially. He also advised that they have a lottery funding application in. He added that Rothbury had many of the same problems and had coast-tailed on the back of provision provided by Gallery Youth.

The Town Clerk asked where they were with their budget. IM advised that Gallery would struggle without additional support. GM added that some funders do not use rurality to

measure potential need.

Councillor Broom asked how many staff were currently employed. IM advised that there were currently 2 permanent staff but that they used to have 4 staff. He added that they currently able to offer 21 hours provision each week.

Councillor Broom asked if Gallery had any volunteers. IM advised that they did.

Councillor Broom said he would like to visit the project. He also asked if any provision was offered to help with anti-social behaviour. IM advised that provision was provided and that there was some correlation between the reduction in anti-social behaviour and the amount of interventions they receive. IM added that Gallery will be working with young people on a one to one basis.

Councillor Symmonds asked why Gallery did not offer more than 3 evenings a week. IM explained that this was because they needed to be able to offer afternoon appointments to be able to offer more detailed support. He added that a lot of 15-19 year olds do need a lot of individual support.

Councillor Swinbank asked how long Gallery would need the £12k - £15k. IM advised that, this would be long term. He explained that some funders ask about local T&PC contribution and some funding relies on having local council funding in place.

Councillor Swinbank asked how much funding they used to receive. IM advised that Gallery had received £7k + £5k from Alnwick District Council and £2k from Alnwick Town Council. He reiterated that a contribution from T&PCs did attract more matched funding.

Councillor Holt asked why Alnwick was not receiving enough funding. IM explained that there was a lack of Youth Services and that careers staff had been cut from 3 full-time staff to 3 hours a week for the whole of Alnwick.

Councillor Holt asked if the needs of the young people in Alnwick was different from elsewhere where funding was available. IM explained that Alnwick did not have the multiple deprivation which other places had.

Councillor Symmonds asked if Gallery had links with other providers in Alnwick. IM explained that Gallery undertook some joint work with the Community Centre.

Councillor Holt asked how much funding would be needed to offer provision between 5pm and 9pm 5 days a week. IM advised he would send this information to the Town Council.

Ian and Graham left the meeting.

Councillor comments:

Councillor Symmonds said he would have liked to have seen more about what Gallery will do in 2017/18.

The Town Clerk advise that he had spoken to Prudhoe Town Council who had indicated that they do allocate money for youth services but specify the services they want and pay quarterly after seeing what has been delivered.

Councillor Swinbank felt the Town Council should make budget provision for Youth Services.

Councillor Symmonds asked if other councillors thought the Town Council should allocate money for Youth Services in Alnwick.

Councillor Broom felt the Town Council needed to consider exactly what and where services were offered.

Councillor Holt said that she liked the Prudhoe model where the council ask for the services they want and funding allocated for those specific services.

The Town Clerk advised that he had also spoken to NCC about the money they receive from T&PCs for Youth Services to spend on local areas and whether this was a good idea

for Alnwick. He had been advised that this was not necessarily a good way forward in the current financial climate.

Councillor Symmonds felt it would be prudent to conduct a review of the current youth provision in the town to determine the future financial provision required from the Town Council.

RESOLVED: i) To recommend to Full Council that the Town Council agree in principle to allocate money for Youth Services in their 2017/18 budget; ii) To conduct a review of the current youth provision in the town to determine the level of future Town Council support; iii) To present a report at the Finance & Policy meeting in February 2017 with recommendations to the Full Council meeting in March 2017.

Councillor Grisdale re-joined the meeting.

FP 16/30 Presentation by Peter Hatley, Chairman of Alnwick Town Football Club Juniors regarding proposals for Greensfield facilities and requesting Town Council to guarantee a loan repayment

It was explained that Alnwick Town Football Club Juniors are looking to provide a full sized 3G floodlit all weather pitch, changing facilities, and improved playing pitches at Greensfield. This is on an area which previously had a planning permission to Alnwick Sporting Club, but this expired, as funding could not be secured. With surrounding developments contributing to improved infrastructure, the new school now open and looking for more facilities and the offer now of significant Football Foundation funding, there was now more likelihood of a scheme being progressed.

Peter Hatley (PH) explained that Alnwick Town Junior Football Club had been playing football for 30 years but did not have good facilities on this site in Alnwick. He explained that the plan would cost just under £1m. So far £200k had been allocated from the former Alnwick District Council, £250k from NCC and £320k from the Football Foundation. This leaves a shortfall of some £190k. NCC had suggested the Town Council could take as an interest free loan over 15 years, which they would arrange, for this figure. He explained that the loan would equate to £12.5k a year and that NCC had proposed taking this out of the annual precept paid to the Town Council by NCC and then the football club would repay the Town Council. PH advised that The Duke of Northumberland was willing to underwrite £5k per annum over the first 10 years of the loan period.

The Town Clerk advised that he did not have any more details on the loan at this stage.

Councillor Swinbank asked if there would be interest on the loan to pay. The Town Clerk advised that he had been told by NCC it would be an interest free loan over 15 years.

PH explained that the scheme had taken several years to get to this stage and that the loan was the final piece of the jigsaw before it could go ahead. He confirmed that the Football Foundation would have the final say on the scheme. Councillor Swinbank asked who the Football Foundation were. PH explained that they were part of the Football Association.

PH explained that the 3G pitch would need replacing between years 10 and 20 and that he was looking for DCHS to pay for 50% of the replacement cost, given their proposed usage. Councillor Swinbank asked what assurance they had from DCHS. PH advised that they had some assurance that the school would look to pay the cost.

PH confirmed that the club has 170 junior players registered in 18 teams and that pitches are leased at present. The club is run by volunteers who also maintain the pitches and that job descriptions are now in place at the club including for the 20+ coaches who train the youngsters. He added that the club had a development plan which had been worked on with the FA and that by the end of this financial year they may have 24 teams.

PH took councillors through the income and expenditure sheet for 2016/17 and the predicted income and expenditure from 2017/18 until 2021/22. He explained that the income had been based on 33% of the possible usage of the pitch by outside individuals and organisations.

PH explained the timescales:

Feasibility study commenced – completed February 2017
Planning Application April 2017
Procurement – July 2017
Build Sept / Oct 2017

PH finished by saying that this was a great opportunity to develop facilities for the young people of Alnwick.

Councillor questions / comments:

Councillor Symmonds asked what would happen if PH left the club. PH explained that with the job role descriptions it was easier to replace individuals and that he was confident he could be replaced.

Councillor Broom asked what the current link was with the main Alnwick Town Football Club. PH explained that the Junior Club was affiliated to them.

Councillor Broom thought it was a brilliant concept and was very supportive of the idea.

Councillor Swinbank asked what the facilities would include. PH advised that there was an FA blueprint for the size of the facilities and he would send a copy to the Town Council.

Councillor Swinbank asked how the pitches would be paid for. PH explained that between 8am and 4pm the pitches would be used by the DCHS, between 4pm and 7pm the 3G pitch would be used by the club and between 7pm and 10pm generally the pitches would be available for people / other clubs to hire on a commercial basis. As it would be a full size all weather pitch it could be divided into 2 x 7-a-side pitches or 4 x 5-a-side pitches.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the club had tested the market. PH advised they hadn't but that felt the pitches would be well used.

Councillor Swinbank asked if there was a pre-determined length of time that the pitch should last. PH explained that the FA had specified a pitch surface which would be used 12 hours a day.

Councillor Swinbank asked why NCC would not take out the loan directly with the Football Club. The Town Clerk explained that NCC had indicated to him that this was not possible.

Councillor Symmonds asked if other sports would be allowed to use the pitch. PH explained that as it was a football specification it would have some limitations for other sports, but could be used for some activities and training. He added that other sports clubs could make use of the changing facilities and infrastructure and could potentially look to provide their own pitches on the same site.

Councillor Symmonds was concerned what would happen if the Town Council agreed to take the loan, the project fails and the football club cannot afford to repay the loan. PH thought this very unlikely and offered the Town Council a place on the organisation that was being set up.

Councillor Holt said she was keen on girls' football and asked if other facilities had been visited. PH advised that they had visited Sunderland FC.

Peter Hately left the meeting.

The Town Clerk explained that a number of T&PCs have loans with NCC and that it was an interest free loan that was being offered, which was not always the case. He explained that the loan would need Secretary of State approval and that NCC would need to examine

Town Council accounts. He felt that the Town Council would need to examine the proposal carefully and should speak to NCC and NALC. If the Council wished to proceed, he suggested speaking to the Duke of Northumberland to see if the terms of the guarantee could be changed to give an equal risk.

Councillor Symmonds said he was supportive of the project in principle.

Councillor Swinbank felt there were lot of questions to be answered. The Town Clerk advised that there could be some movement in the overall costs, as the feasibility study was still underway.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the changing facilities at DCHS could be used. Councillor Grisdale advised that this was not possible due to safeguarding.

Councillor Grisdale thought football was a good way forward for youngsters in Alnwick.

The Town Clerk highlighted that there would be a new Town Council in May and an option was to have all the information in place for a decision to be made by them. He also advised that many details would need to be clarified such as the 1st repayment date for the loan.

Councillor Holt thought it was a very attractive project.

RESOLVED: i) To recommend to Full Council that the Town Council is in principal supportive of the project, and ii) To explore the legal requirements and financial consequences, taking external specialist legal advice if appropriate, to safeguard the Town Council's interests, before deciding to enter into a loan agreement with NCC.

FP 16/31 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

None.

FP 16/32 Update on CCTV provision in Alnwick

The Project & Funding Officer explained that the Arriva had installed 2 cameras under the canopy at the bus station. The specification for the CCTV town system needed in Alnwick was almost complete and the locations had been agreed and discussions were taking place with NCC about using existing streetlights to affix the cameras. He added that it was hoped quotes would be returned by January 31st 2017 and a report would be presented at the Finance & Policy meeting in February. He asked for two councillors to help in the process to accept the quotes. Councillors Broom and Grisdale agreed to help.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

FP 16/33 Budget update 2016/17

The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at 12th December 2016. The expenditure to-date was reviewed with the following highlighted:

INSURANCE – slightly over budget due to new items being added during the year.

POSTAGE – slightly over budget due to additional letter being sent out to allotment holders.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION – budget still in place for a new office.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN / COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN / OTHER COUNCIL PRIORITIES – £7k could be needed from this budget if the whole CCTV system is installed

CCTV – Budget of £15k will be used with additional money transferred from Council Priorities budget if agreed.

He advised that an additional £1k could be allocated to the Grant budget due to underspends elsewhere.

RESOLVED: a) To accept the budget update, b) To increase the CCTV budget to £23,000 and allocate an additional £1,000 for 2016/17 Grant Applications.

FP 16/34 Grant Applications

Councillors Griddale and Swinbank signed a Dispensation sheet to enable them to take part in the discussions about grant applications from Friends of Bullfield Community Orchard; this was in order to have enough councillors present to make a decision on that application. The Dispensation was agreed.

The Town Clerk advised that 26 grant applications had been received. A summary document had been circulated to councillors, each one having been reviewed against the grant criteria by the Chairman, the Town Clerk and the Assistant to the Town Clerk, which had included initial recommendations for grant amounts. Each application was considered and the following 24 grant awards were agreed:

Organisation	Agreed support form Town Council	Grant Award
<u>Alnwick and District Playhouse Trust</u>	Assistance with core running costs	£1,400
<u>Bailiffgate Museum</u>	Assistance with core costs	£1,400
<u>Northumbrian CAB – Alnwick Office</u>	Assistance with the cost training volunteers in the Alnwick office	£1,400
Hospice Care North Northumberland	Assistance with the cost of providing 80 hours of Hospice at Home	£1,400
<u>Alnwick & District Sports Council</u>	Assistance with cost of annual sports awards	£300
<u>Alnwick Hockey Club</u>	Assistance with the cost of new equipment	£300
<u>Alnwick Cricket Club</u>	Assistance with purchase of new junior equipment	£300
<u>Alnwick Scout Group</u>	Assistance with purchase of new archery equipment	£300
<u>Northumberland (Masters) Open Water Swimming Club</u>	Assistance with set up costs including coaching qualifications and equipment	£200 (must be used for Alnwick schools)
<u>Northumberland Health Walks</u>	Assistance with walking programme in Northern area	£200 (must be used for walks in and around Alnwick)
<u>Weavers Court</u>	Assistance with fitness/activity equipment	£200 (subject to NCC confirmation that Weavers Court is now in Alnwick parish)

<u>Lionheart Radio & Media CIC</u>	Assistance with licence costs and insurance	£450
Community@NE66	Assistance with cost of sexual health pop in sessions for 13-19 year olds at Alnwick Rugby Club and girls session	£250 (subject to satisfactory outcome of ATC youth provision in Alnwick review)
<u>Friends of St Michael's (FOSM)</u>	Assistance with cost of five-day POP project for pupils of St Michael's	£250
<u>The Portable Theatre Company</u>	Assistance with set up costs of new theatre company	£250
<u>Bailiffgate Singers</u>	Assistance with the cost new music books	£250
Alnwick Food Bank	Assistance to address unmet need for the service including p/t member of staff	£500
<u>Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard</u>	Assistance with cost of equipment	£300
Alnwick Stroke Club	Assistance towards transport costs	£200
Alnwick Arthritis Care	Assistance towards transport costs and room hire	£200
Pathfinder North East	Assistance with start-up costs of tailor made careers service	£200
<u>Friends of Alnmouth Station</u>	Assistance with costs of additional planting	£150
RE-NU-IT	Assistance with van running costs	£500 (subject to satisfactory outcome of discussions with Arch regarding lease at St Thomas's)
Northumberland Credit Union	Assistance with promotion of Credit Union in Alnwick and DBS checking	£200 (must be used in Alnwick only)

The expenditure for the organisations highlighted in bold and underlined was covered by specific Town Council powers and duties. Those not underlined and in bold are covered by the general Local Government Act 1972 Section 137 power.

The committee also considered requests from:

- Northumberland Touring Theatre Company – this grant application was put on hold until new location of NTC is known following discussions about the use of the Playhouse
- Alnwick District Round Table – grant application was referred to Recreation & Amenities Committee as it related to an event.

RESOLVED: That the grants listed above be approved from the 2016/17 budget.

RESOLVED: To waive standing orders to enable the meeting to proceed beyond 9.30pm.

FP 16/35 Mayor's Allowance and funding of civic events

The Town Clerk advised councillors that, for several years, an allowance of £1,000 has been paid to the Mayor. He advised that historically there were certain events and items which the Mayor has paid for but which are Civic in nature and for which a separate council budget may be more appropriate and given that the cost of some events were now more expensive. He advised that a budget of £200 was already allocated as part of the Recreation & Amenities budget for the Mayor's Civic Awards and that it might be appropriate to increase this by £500 to cover the costs of Council Christmas Cards and the Civic Carol Service.

RESOLVED: a) To recommend that the Civic Events budget in 2017/18 be increased to £700 and b) To pay the costs of the 2016 Christmas Cards and Civic Carol Service Order of Service.

FP 16/36 Draft Budget proposals for 2017/18 including a) Staffing costs, b) Venue for meetings, c) Economic Development and d) Projects

The proposed 2017/18 budget, in the budget summary which was circulated, was reviewed and discussed. The following changes were recommended:

ROOM BOOKINGS – budget increased to £2,000, to enable alternative venue to be considered for Committee meetings.

GRANTS – budget increased to £16,000 (£5,000 more)

TOWN TWINNING – budget reduced to £2,000 but still to cover the cost of two council representatives visiting Time Kommune in 2017

ELECTION COSTS – budgeted for 2 wards and agreed at £4,000

PROJECT & FUNDING OFFICER – to continue with an additional day for Economic Development. (Cost £7,000). Total Budget agreed at £31,000

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN/COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES – budget increased to £25,000

CCTV – budget agreed at £5,000 to cover annual maintenance and replacements (£3,000 annually to be set aside for system replacement)

MISC / CONTINGENCY – budget agreed at £2,500.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.

ADMINISTRATION – the Mayor advised that staff appraisals had been carried out for all staff. He thanked the officers for their continued support of the Town Council.

Having undertaken the appraisal for the Town Clerk, and undertaken a review of the salary and duties compared to the national benchmarks he felt that the salary grade for the post should be raised from the highest band on Local Council Clerk's Scale 2 to the Lowest Band on Scale 3. This would mean an increase in the budget in 2017/18 to cover salary and on-

costs of £1,325, he also suggested that The Town Clerk should be a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Town Council should pay the £240 membership fee. This was agreed.

The Town Clerk re-joined the meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend that the Finance & Policy Committee draft budget for 2017/18 be initially set at £161,565.

FP 16/37 Initial consideration of draft 2017/18 Precept

The Town Clerk took councillors through the information circulated by the Town Clerk showing a comparison between the Alnwick Town Council precept and other Town Councils. This showed that based upon the 2016/17 figures, Alnwick had a below average town council precept of £93.62 for a Band D dwelling. Based on the total draft budget for the Council for 2017/18 of £266,356 and using the Tax Base figure of 2661.06, this would give a Band D equivalent Town Council element of just over £100 per annum. It was explained that the total budget may change slightly due to for example a reduction in grass cutting charges and the Band D dwellings figure was likely to change following the boundary change. The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the reserves policy states that these should be a minimum of 4 months and a maximum of 8 months' gross expenditure. It was anticipated that the unallocated reserves at the year-end would sit within this band. Councillors agreed that this year reserves should not be utilised to reduce the precept.

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Full Council that the precept for 2017/18 should be £266,356 (with any further amendments being reported to the Council Meeting) and that Council reserves should not be used to reduce the precept.

FP 16/38 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Symmonds gave a vote of thanks to the Vice Chair for his able conduct of the meeting.

Meeting closed at 10.07pm