

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 8th December 2016
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

Present Cllrs A Symmonds, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, W Grisdale, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore and M Swinbank.

In attendance W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer, Sharon Wilmore-Greaves, Northumbria Police and Councillor H Cairns.

C16/114 Questions from the public

None.

C16/115 Apologies for absence

Cllrs. S Allcroft, P Allcroft, Bell and Patience.

C16/116 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters.

C16/117 Update on Police Matters in Alnwick by Sergeant Sharon Wilmore-Greives, Northumbria Police

Sergeant Wilmore-Greives (SWG) explained that there were initiatives running up to Christmas focussing on sexual exploitation of young people especially in relation to alcohol. The police were also giving talks at the Duchess Community High School about excessive drinking of alcohol and sex texting.

Retailers and supermarkets - the police are also focusing on these to raise awareness about criminals operating in the town. This includes advising people, especially the elderly, about where they carry their purse or money. As Alnwick is a small market town, the police feel awareness of potential incidents is important.

Licensed premises are also being visited to re-enforce the age limits for the purchase of alcohol. Testing was taking place using under-age youngsters.

Bus station - She advised that a meeting had taken place to discuss the issues at the bus station and that dispersal notices had been used both there and in other locations around the town which can set a 48 limit on someone returning to the location. CCTV under the canopy had also been discussed and Arriva have agreed to put in CCTV (colour and sound) at the bus station. This will be installed on December 14th and once the Town Council CCTV system is installed it is hoped that these cameras will connect to it. Until then the police will review the footage in consultation with Arriva.

The litterbins at the bus station are getting full to overflowing especially at weekends. Arriva have a programme of emptying them but this does not at present include Sunday when the bins are at their fullest.

Sergeant Wilmore-Greives finished by saying the police would welcome ideas from the Town Council.

Councillor questions / comments:

Councillor G Mavin said the bus station was seen as a hotspot by many residents in Alnwick and felt the meeting had been very useful. He also felt it would be helpful if the police could increase the number of patrols around the town. He felt that remodelling the site could be discussed with Morrison's, the site owners.

Councillor Symmonds thought it might be useful to take photographs of the litter problem at the bus station on a Sunday to show to Arriva. SWG advised that a review would be taking place in March 2017.

The Town Clerk advised that there were still Community Action Plans (CAPs) in the Neighbourhood Plan which focused on the bus station.

Councillor Holt explained that she travelled everywhere by bus, including on Sundays, and that she was aware of very young children, some as young as 8, using the bus station. They make a lot of noise and throw things at each other. Although they were not targeting bus users directly it could be intimidating.

Councillor Broom advised that he had notified the police of an incident where bottles were being thrown about the bus station. He felt it could be better if the bus station was an enclosed space, perhaps with a café and an area young people could use. SWG thought that a kiosk might be useful.

Councillor Holt said that many visitors to Alnwick make negative comments about the bus station. SWG advised that Morpeth bus station has security on site.

Councillor Moore asked if there were any issues with the area around the Summerseats as this had a bad reputation. SWG advised that she had not heard of anything.

Councillor Castle said he was aware of an issue with bottles being left around the area which were being collecting by a local resident.

Councillor Castle asked how anonymity was maintained for people. CF explained that only post codes were taken. He added that a community hub would be useful.

Councillor Cairns advised that she had been notified by a local resident that when people were dispersed from the bus station they congregated at Greenwell Lane.

Councillor Castle felt that, as the lease was coming to an end, it might be a good time to discuss the issues at the bus station with the owners.

C16/118 Minutes of the Last meeting

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10th November 2016 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2016 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

C16/119 Matters Arising

None.

C16/120 Mayor's Report

Councillor Symmonds thanked Councillors for attending the Remembrance Day Service on November 13th. He reported that he had also attended the switch on of the Alnwick Christmas Lights on November 18th.

ADVANCE NOTICE: Civic Carol Service

Service on Wednesday December 14th at 7.00pm at St Michael's Church. He advised that the Alnwick Stroke club was the chosen charity for the event and that he had asked them and four other local organisations to provide readers for the service.

C16/121 Resignation of Councillor Anne Shilton

The Mayor reported that having spoken to Councillor Shilton she had withdrawn her resignation. She had asked to come off the Planning Committee as work commitment sometimes made it difficult to attend the meetings.

C16/122 County Council Issues

a) Feedback on Joint meeting – The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave an update on the six-monthly meeting between Mayor and herself from the Town Council and Greg Gavin, Acting Head of Neighbourhood Services at NCC. This meeting focused on several areas some of which Greg could answer and some he took back to NCC for replies from the relevant managers.

1. Toilets - explained to Greg that ATC have added 3 new sites in the town to the 'Your Welcome' Scheme and are currently paying for an extra clean in the afternoon at both locations.

Greenwell Lane toilets – advised Greg that these are very dirty and are also in a very bad state of repair (e.g. rusty toilet roll holders) asked if there is there anything that can be done?

The Shambles – there were lots of issues earlier in the year but some of these have alleviated with better urinal flushing but they are still not great.

Greg advised that there were currently no plans to close either sets of toilets but that this would be reviewed in 2018/19. He also advised that no further repair work would be undertaken.

2. Grass cutting – Greg was advised that the Town Council currently pay for three additional grass cuts a year and have asked NCC to confirm the cost for these in 2017/18. This could be an area that gets future budget cuts which could impact on the number of cuts NCC will be able to do and could mean the Town Council will have to pay for more additional cuts.
3. Local depot –Greg was told that the Town Council gets very good support from Billy Pringle and his team at the local depot. Planting is always very good and this year helped Alnwick achieve a GOLD in Northumbria in Bloom and Best Town. They also react very quickly to issues e.g. when we had graffiti in the town.
4. Finger posts – advised Greg that they were in a very bad state of repair and some do not have any fingers left. As the Town Council already look after the rest of the street furniture (e.g. seats and bins) we asked if we could take over responsibility for the finger posts as well.

Councillor Broom advised councillors that a figure had been added into the Recreation & Amenities budget for 2017/18 to cover the cost of the fingerposts.

5. Play Equipment – we have asked NCC if they could use some of the endowment for Swansfield Park to provide play equipment for older children. We have since been advised that no money is available to purchase more play equipment.
6. Budget – we explained that we are currently preparing draft budgets for 2017/18 and wanted any update on potential NCC cuts. Greg advised that in 2017/18 NCC needed to save £8m and in 2018/19 this would rise to £20m.

Greg explained that the budget cuts would affect non-statutory services which for his department includes toilet facilities and grass cutting.

7. Highways – Greg was advised of missing signage on the roads (e.g. 30mph speed signs) and lots of very dirty road signs causing issues in the town including those in Denwick Lane. A copy of their cleaning schedule was also requested.
8. Planning – Greg was asked to give feedback to the Planning Department that the Town Council are very disappointed that, having discussed planning applications at length, they find works have been carried before planning permission is granted. Examples include the ice cream parlour and the Co-Op petrol station signage.
9. Elections – Greg was asked to confirm the potential financial implications for T&PCs if elections are called in 2017.
10. Youth Services - Greg was asked to confirm which T&PCs support Youth Services in the county. This is also an area which could be part of the NCC budget cuts.
11. Winter Preparations - Greg was asked to check if the gritting routes had been changed in light of the new location of the high school. Greg confirmed that he would check this and change them if they hadn't already been done. It has since been confirmed that the routes have been changed.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

C16/123 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (10th November 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 10th November 2016 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (17th November 2016) were tabled for approval. Councillor Humphries also asked councillors to approve the recommendation in the minutes of the new cemetery fees for 2017/18 with one small correction on Natural Burial fee which will include a memorial stone and shrub.

Councillor Humphries also advised that the fees for Alnwick Cemetery were in line with other cemeteries.

Councillor G Mavin explained that, in a radio item, it had mentioned that the Government were requesting cemeteries consider free child burials. He was pleased to confirm that Alnwick Cemetery had offered free child burials for some time.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on 17th November 2016 were agreed as a true record and that the new cemetery fees for 2017/18 be approved.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (24th November 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee held on 24th November 2016 were agreed as a true record.

C16/124 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
15 Nov	NALC enews	Available from Clerk on request
22 Nov		

29 Nov	Includes item on National Civic Day – 17 th June 2017	
17 Nov	Newton on the Moor & Swarland Parish Council – requesting a rethink of parish meetings with NCC. They would like to see it broader than just local services. They would also like Alnwick Town Council to be involved in their parish cluster meetings, (this is in addition to our own meeting).	Discussed *
30 Nov	Resident – request for extra bins from St James Estate through Willowburn Avenue now that new school is open.	Officers to undertake a review
2 Dec	Invitation to Gallery Youth AGM	Noted
5 Dec	National Initiative – Tidy Britain weekend	Noted

* The Town Clerk advised that the current system T&PCs with over £500k precept would have quarterly meetings with NCC, those with precepts of between £100 and £500, including groups of small councils, would have six monthly meetings with NCC and those with under £100k precept would have an annual meeting with NCC. He suggested that the item be tabled at the next Full Council and that the relevant information be circulated to councillors.

RESOLVED: To accept the correspondence.

C16/125 Update on Neighbourhood Plan

The Town Clerk explained that new regulations had been in place since October 2016 which will affect the Neighbourhood Plan. This states that where changes have been made following independent examination, new consultation must be undertaken. This is now running and will end on January 13th 2017 after which a referendum can take place and this would probably be the end of February 2017.

Councillor G Mavin asked if the Neighbourhood Plan could be approved before NCC's revised Core Strategy. The Town Clerk advised that it could.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

C16/126 Financial Matters

a) NDDR

The Town Clerk advised councillors that the Town Council had applied for Small Business Rate Relief for Alnwick Cemetery and that the application had been successful. The Cemetery has a new rateable value of £10,500. The Rate Relief has been backdated giving a total refund of £17,005.84 of which £2,662 relates to 2016/17. The Cemetery Committee recommended that the pre 2016/17 amount of £14,343.84 be ring-fenced to purchase new equipment and that it is held in reserve until replacements are needed.

RESOLVED: To ringfence £14,343.84 to purchase replacement machinery in the Cemetery.

b) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
HMRC	£3,388.77	£0.00	Tax/NI payment for November
Wages Account	£8,000.00	£0.00	Transfer for December
Glasdon	£711.98	£118.66	2 new litter bins
NCC	£489.85	£0	Final payment for Housing Need Survey (Total cost £4,825.47)
Warcup Solicitors	£1,259.04	£0	Payment for compensation for agricultural tenancy loss required under Bike Track lease (Paid 17 th Nov)
NCC	£900.00	£0	Office rent 13 th Nov – 12 th May 2017
Cityscape Maps	£240.00	£40.00	Use of artwork for Lectern maps
W R Batey	£125.97	£1.33	£33 postage, MacAfee security software for office £79.99, £5 Cycle track lease declaration (at Adam Douglas), £7.98 receipt book
Local Living	£612.50	£0	Willowburn unit rental Oct – Dec 2016
Team Valley Web Design	£600.00	£100.00	Website Hosting Dec 2016 – Nov 2017
NCC	£569.50	£94.92	Charge for erection of stage
Petty Cash	£70.00	£11.67	Cemetery petty cash -fuel
Diamond Group	£59.40	£9.90	Photocopier quarterly contract
Northumbria in Bloom	£200.00	£0	Alnwick entry fee
Scot JCB	£407.06	£67.84	Mini digger service
Castle Heating & Plumbing	£54.00	£0	Allotment water repair

Local Resident	£470.00	£0	Cemetery refund
TOTAL	£18,158.07	£444.32	

The Town Clerk advised councillors that earlier in the year the Town council had agreed to pay 3 local businesses (Costa on Bondgate Within, the Queens Head on Market Street and the Blue Bell on Clayport Street) £500 each to make their toilet facilities available to the public as part of the Your Welcome Scheme in Alnwick. The 2nd half payment (£250) is now due.

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that in 2015 Local Living had submitted a bid to the Leader Programme to revitalise the Market Place. The Town Council had pledged £1,000 of funding towards the project and, as the bid has been successful, the Town Council's contribution is now due.

The following payments were now paid by direct debit and were reported for information:			
BT	£55.70	£9.28	Phone Bills Cemetery paid Nov 26 th
BT	£54.42	£9.07	Phone Bill Fenkle Street paid Nov 26 th
BT	£86.40	£14.40	Quarterly Broadband Charge paid Nov 29 th
NEST	£339.77	£0	Employer Pension Scheme contributions for November (paid 15 th December)

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £18,158.07, ii) To approve payments of £250 to Costa, the Queen's Head and the Blue Bell for the 2nd payment of the Your Welcome Scheme, iii) To approve a payment of £1,000 to Local Living towards the Market Revitalise project, iv) To note the direct debit payments of £536.29

C16/127 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm.