

Alnwick Town Team Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team held at 5pm on Tuesday August 9th 2016 at the Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

Present: Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Bill Batey, Cllr. Gordon Castle, Mark Brassell (Alnwick Garden), Philip Angier (Local Living), Tim Kirton, David Taylor (substituting for Carlo Biagioni, Chamber of Trade).

1. Apologies for absence:

Caroline Stewart (Castle Quarter Traders), Sue Patience (Gallery Youth), Elizabeth Jones (Alnwick in Bloom), Dave Campbell (Northumberland County Council), Carlo Biagioni (Chamber of Trade), David Lovie (Civic Society).

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday June 7th 2016

Agreed as a true and correct record.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising which were not covered by the agenda.

4. Budget Update

In view of the need for BB to leave to attend other meetings the Chairman brought forward Item 5, "Budget Update".

BB circulated an updated "Town Trail" leaflet; this had been prepared by the Town Team and 10,000 copies had been printed for circulation. BB also circulated the "Discover Alnwick" leaflet which had been designed by Cllr. George Mavin and of which 3,000 had been printed. Feedback indicates that these have gone well and stocks are beginning to get short. There is a need to decide whether to do a similar leaflet next year and if so, suggestions for the content of this are welcomed from the Town Team membership. The TIC has suggested that the next "Discover Alnwick" leaflet should include a town map. Distribution for these leaflets has mainly been to sites a car journey's distance away, i.e. mainly in County Durham, North Yorkshire and Cumbria.

Action: Town Team members to offer suggestions to the Town Council for any changes to the content of the "Discover Alnwick" leaflet, if repeated next year.

BB circulated the Town Team budget sheet and advised that £7,200.48 of the £10,000 Town Team budget had been spent, with £2,534.72 remaining.

As regards the proposed banners on Northumberland Hall, BB advised that he has a pre-planning discussion with Northumberland County Council (NCC Conservation Area Officer, Annette Reeves). The banners would need Listed Building Consent, an application for which would not cost anything to submit, but NCC are relaxed about having banners on Northumberland Hall provided that any fixtures and fitting penetrate the mortar and not the stone of the building and that the banners do not look too "fussy".

The proposed banners would be 600mm wide and 6.5m long, single-sided on 600 gram PVC and the idea would be to promote the “Quarter” rather than Northumberland Hall itself. Whilst the existing Bondgate banners had faded somewhat those on Northumberland Hall would be in the shade so should be less prone to blanching by the sun.

The numbers and symmetry of the pillars and the numbers of downpipes on Northumberland Hall requires that we have either 2 or 4 banners on the market-facing side; it would not be possible to have 3. It is therefore proposed to hang four banners along the full length of the market-facing side. The cost of the banners has been quoted by Harrison’s as £2,844; there is only £2,534 left in the budget at present. We have to put £200 up front with Harrison’s (for the survey) and if we proceed with the purchase and installation of the banners this £200 would then be taken off the final price which would then be £2,644 so the banners can just about be afforded.

BB reminded those present that at the last two meetings of the Town Team Sue Patience had pushed for Town Team funding to create new arts boards in the Bus Station; two of the existing boards have now been damaged.

GC said that the Town Team is committed to the “Quarters” concept so we should proceed with the banners. DT reported that Chamber of Trade representative Carlo Biagioni had said he would wish the banners to proceed.

It was agreed unanimously by those present to proceed with the purchase and installation of the four banners, subject to Listed Building Consent being approved.

Action: BB to put a note of this proposal around all members of the Town Team and provided there was no strong objection, the banners will go ahead.

BB reminded the meeting that the purchase and installation of the four banners will utilise the Town Team budget: However, there is an underspend on the Town Team’s “Training” budget which could be used towards the banners and as a contribution towards the bus station boards.

Action: It was agreed that the uncommitted money in the Town Team’s “Training” budget be used towards the banners and as a contribution towards the replacement of the bus station boards.

GC advised that Arriva have said that they will do more to tackle antisocial behaviour in the bus station and that the County Council’s Environmental Team are to target the bus station for littering.

5. Town Team Constitution, Terms of Reference and Future Direction

At the last Town Team meeting on June 7th it had reported that as the Town Team does not have a constitution or bank account it is unable to apply for funding and grants, and with the near exhaustion of its’ original £10k funding the Town Team will need, if it wishes to go forward and raise more funds, to draw up such a constitution. A briefing paper on such a constitution, with nine fundamental questions for Town Team members, was circulated at the last meeting on June 7th and comments were then invited to be sent to TK.

TK presented a paper which had been circulated to all Town Team members earlier in the day, which listed all the responses received to those nine questions from June 7th, followed by TK's suggestions as to how the Town team may wish to proceed in light of these responses.

TK also reported that research had also been undertaken into the constitutions of other Town Teams in similar towns, specifically in Crediton and Ivybridge in Devon and in Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire, and references to these were made in this report.

The Chairman advised all those present that as so many Town Team members were absent from this meeting owing to holiday and other commitments, the decisions of the members present here would be forwarded, through the minutes, to all Town Team members in order for a final decision to be made at the next Town Team meeting as to whether these proposals for the Constitution should be adopted.

PA said that whilst he agreed with the sentiment of the Town Team being a deliverer of projects rather than a mere "talking shop", the value of the dialogue should not be dismissed as he has learned a lot from the Town Team's general discussions. This was agreed by all present. MB stated that the Town Team can achieve a lot anyway without having funding.

The suggestion of widening membership very substantially but reducing the numbers of meetings to two or four per year did not find any support from those present.

MB said that to get things done the Town Team needs to be small and meeting monthly, with "Away Days" for anything substantially more. MB further stated that a meeting every two months or less frequently would mean that events could be missed, for example arrangements for the Garden's Halloween event proposed for October (see below) would not be reported in detail if the Town team does not meet in September.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial if the Town Team could have its own dedicated page on the ATC website which includes a reference to the fact that any member of the Town Team can approach the Town Team Chairman on behalf of an outside body, thus making possible representation by the wider town.

Action: The Town Council to consider setting up a dedicated Town Team Page on their website.

The members of the Town Team present then considered all the responses received and agreed the following to recommend to the entire Town Team membership:

- 1) That the Town Team should carry on
- 2) That the Town Team identifies itself and ensures it is identified by others as an effective deliverer of projects and change
- 3) That the Town Team adopts a short, simple and general Vision statement of "Improving Alnwick Town Together" so that it is free to pursue opportunities which may be unforeseen without fear of being restricted.
- 4) That the objectives of Alnwick Town Team are:

- “To ensure that the town, its major attractions and stakeholders work together to encourage visitors to explore all areas, not least with the target of repeat visits.”
 - “To seek diversification in employment opportunities, with emphasis on Alnwick’s unique qualities to attract clean non-location specific industries.”
 - “To protect and emphasise the strengths of the town centre as a shopping and social centre.”
 - “To understand that Alnwick’s architectural and social heritage is essential to its prosperity and needs to be cared for accordingly.”
 - “To encourage local authorities to adopt and support proposals produced by the team.”
 - “To identify and source necessary capital and revenue funding.”
- 5) That the Town Team should be constituted
 - 6) That the Town Team continues with its original core team of NCC, ATC, the Chamber of Trade, Northumberland Estates, Local Living, the Freemen of Alnwick, the Civic Society, Alnwick Castle and Garden, and up to 3 representatives from community groups which, if they are not specifically named in the constitution, allows for the greatest flexibility in participation, particularly on an ad hoc basis.
 - 7) That substitutes should be allowed in the event that the usual representative is unable to attend a meeting.
 - 8) That there is one vote per representative body on the Town Team
 - 9) That Town Team meetings will be held monthly but with the flexibility to omit the August meeting or to increase the number of meetings generally as Town Team workload, commitments, deadlines and members’ availability require/allow
 - 10) That all Town Team meetings will be held in private but with invitations to other bodies to attend the Town Team meeting if required and at the discretion of the Chair.
 - 11) That ATC continues as the Town Team Accountable Body for the time being
 - 12) That any changes to the Constitution are agreed by a majority of the membership at any meeting.

Action: That the paper presented by TK to this meeting be modified to reflect the changes suggested above and then be circulated to all members of the Town Team with a view to further discussion and finalisation at the September Town Team meeting.

6. Updates:

(a) County Council:

Dave Campbell had submitted apologies for absence for this meeting so no NCC update was reported.

(b) Town Council:

TK advised that a third quote had been received for the manufacture and installation of the Town Centre Lectern maps and this was lower than those previously received and was for four maps (as was originally the case) rather than the three quoted for by the first two firms.

Confirmation was awaited of this quote but this was expected shortly after which manufacture and installation should proceed.

TK also advised that progress had been made with obtaining a recommended technical specification for the new Town CCTV cameras; this would be discussed and finalised with the Police in the next few weeks before consultation with town centre traders and, as soon as possible, invitations to quote for supply and installation. MB suggested a walk around the town to see whether any businesses are covering "dark" areas. GC suggested that NPR (number plate recognition) are sited at key locations where cars will pass in the town.

c) Chamber of Trade

Carlo Biagioni had submitted apologies for absence so there was no report from the Chamber.

(d) Local Living/Alnwick Markets

GC said that there have been complaints from traders that the Music Festival had affected town centre business, mainly because the road closure signs had deterred pedestrians from walking down certain shopping streets. GC proposed a protocol being established with NCC Highways for signage and its wording. PA said that the road closure signs' wording needs to be "softened".

PA also suggested that after the Food Festival is over, Local Living should attend the next ATC Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting to talk around Taste North; he further suggested that representatives of other festivals and events including the Music Festival should also attend this meeting.

AS confirmed that there will be a Music Festival held in 2017.

Action: GC to email AS on the signage protocols issue.

Action: ATC to consider inviting Local Living, the Music Festival and other representatives of festivals to attend the next appropriate R & A Committee, as suggested above.

7. Any other business

MB reported that Alnwick Garden will be holding a Halloween Festival during October's half-term week; there will be lots happening and MB welcomed the participation of the whole of Alnwick. More details will be reported at the next Town Team meeting.

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Town Team will be held at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden, at **5pm on 20th September 2016.**

This meeting formally ended at 18.45 hrs.