

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 12th January 2017
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

- Present** Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, P Allcroft, S Bell, G Castle, P Edge, W Grisdale, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore, S Patience, A Shilton and M Swinbank.
- In attendance** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Chris Sayers, Deputy Chair of Alnwick Playhouse for update on the Alnwick Playhouse community hub negotiations and funding item (discussed in private).
- C16/128 Questions from the public**
None.
- C16/129 Apologies for absence**
Cllr. P Broom.
- C16/130 Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters.
Councillors Bell, Castle, Humphries and Shilton declare a non-pecuniary interest in Item 17. (private matter).
- C16/131 Request for a Dispensation**
Following guidance from Northumberland County Council, relating to declarations of interest when setting budgets and precepts, a form had been circulated prior to the meeting which the councillors present had signed requesting a dispensation to participate in full decisions relating to the setting of the 2017/18 Budget and Precept. Councillors acknowledge receipt of the requests and voted to grant the dispensation.
RESOLVED: To grant a dispensation to all Councillors to enable them to participate in full decisions relating to the setting of the 2017/18 Budget and Precept.
- C16/132 Minutes of the Last meeting**
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8th December 2016 were tabled for approval.
RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2016 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.
- C16/133 Matters Arising**
None.
- C16/134 Mayor's Report**
Councillor Symmonds thanked Councillors for attending the Civic Carol Service on December 14th in St Michael's Church. He also thanked the councillors who were unable to attend for their good wishes.
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. About 150 people attended and the collection raised £340 with an additional £150 donation being given by Pets at Home.

C16/135 County Council Matters

- a) **Feedback from North Area meeting on January 9th 2017** - The Town Clerk reported back from the meeting held at Longframlington:

Budget: NCC will have a £780m gross budget for 2017/18, the savings target set for 2017/18 will not be as extensive as NCC had thought and that NCC would need to save £6m in 2017/18. He added that NCC had invested £31m in housing.

Tall Ships: NCC had reported that the Tall Ship event had brought 400,000 visitors to the county and had added £13.5m to Northumberland's economy.

Active Northumberland: had done an equalisation of pricing across the county. They were also offering special initiatives to attract people to take part such as 13 months for the price of 12 and reduced rates for 14-21 year olds.

- b) **Feedback received from NCC since last meeting** – The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave further updates she had received from Graham Bucknall, North Area Highways Manager and Bob Hodgson, Northern Neighbourhood Services Manager.

Toilets - Greenwell Lane - thorough cleanse to take place. The same crews clean these toilets as well as the Shambles, team leader has been asked to monitor for any cleanliness differences. The Shambles – the toilets have significantly improved following the introduction of the late cleanse, NCC have started deep cleansing in all toilets and the Shambles will be done in December / January. Although advised that no further repair work would be undertaken NCC have since confirmed that NCC have ordered materials, fillers and paint etc. to carryout repairs.

Grass cutting – NCC have confirmed that prices will be held for 2017/18 but that T&PC's should be made aware that costs in 2018/19 will need to increase to enable NCC to recover their costs which are currently being calculated by senior staff.

Finger posts – NCC have confirmed that they are more than happy for the Town Council to take on the finger posts in the town. NCC have recently worked with Glanton Heritage Group to come up with a very cost effective solution and has suggested the Town Council speak to them.

Highways – NCC have asked for a list of missing / issues with signs which will be sent to NCC. Graham has confirmed that the 30 signs on Denwick Lane outside the Alnwick Garden had recently been cleaned but has reminded staff about the schedule for sign cleaning around Alnwick. Councillors were asked to send details of any additional issues with signage to the Assistant to the Town Clerk for sending on to NCC. NCC has also asked staff to look at the white lines on the bend at Willowburn Roundabout under the A1 which have never been reinstated.

Winter Preparations – following our request gritting routes have been adjusted along with footpath gritting schedules to include the area around the new high school.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

C16/136 Possible Changes to the Model Code of Conduct

The Town Clerk explained that NALC had suggested changes to the Code of Conduct. He outlined the main suggested changes as - councillors who are Town Council representatives with organisation and who cannot currently speak on items which relate to that organisation should be allowed to speak except where the interest is pecuniary (financial); councillors do not need to declare an interest in items on agenda's where the interest is non pecuniary (i.e. financial).

RESOLVED: To send the Town Council's agreement to the suggested changes to NALC by January 24th.

C16/137 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (8th December 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 8th December 2016 were agreed as a true record.

The Chair of the Planning Committee gave councillors a statement on the Town Council's position regarding the planning application at Willowburn. He explained that the proposal was counter to the Neighbourhood Plan, that he felt it would push businesses outside Alwick. He confirmed that the Town Council were opposed to the application and that Councillor G Mavin and County Councillor Cairns would speak at the relevant committee meeting.

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (15th December 2016) were tabled for approval. Councillor Grisdale (who chaired the meeting) explained that there was one change on the minutes that had been issued previously, regarding a grant application.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on 15th December 2016 as amended were agreed as a true record.

C16/138 2016/17 Budget Update, to agree the 2017/18 Budget and set the 2017/18 Precept

a) 2016/17 Budget Update

The Town Clerk issued the Income & Expenditure Account statement as at 31st December 2016. He advised councillors that the Expenditure was £210,501.36 and Income £301,581.44.

Councillor Swinbank thought the figure for the Willowburn Unit seemed high. The Town Clerk explained that the figure included contributions for other organisations which would be transferred to grants. The end of year figure would be £1,000.

Councillor Symmonds asked why the Town Team expenditure was higher than the previous year. The Town Clerk explained that this was due to the design, printing and distribution of a new town leaflet.

RESOLVED: To accept the 2016/17 budget update.

b) 2017/18 Budget

The Town Clerk advised that each committee had agreed its budget for 2017/18 as:

| Committee | Net expenditure |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Cemetery | £17,650 |
| Recreation & Amenities | £87,231 |
| Finance & Policy | £161,565 |
| Total | £266,356 |

The Town Clerk explained some of the main changes to the proposed committee budgets for 2017/18 were:

- The Cemetery budget requirement was £10,890 less than in 2016/17, mainly due to the saving from NNDR relief, the budget requirement for replacement machinery and an increased income anticipated from cemetery fees.
- The Recreation & Amenities Committee have budgeted to spend an additional £3,000 on replacement equipment in the town's toilets, £1,150 to support local town events, £3,500 to provide a Town promotion tourism leaflet, £985 for floral

- planting and £2,000 allocated towards the cost of repairs to the war memorial.
- The Finance & Policy Committee budget includes an additional £5,000 for grants to local organisations, £4,000 towards May 2017 election costs, £7,000 for economic development activities with local businesses and £5,000 towards annual maintenance and replacement costs for the CCTV system due to be installed in Spring 2017.

In addition to these committee budgets the following adjustments were needed:

1. The Recreation & Amenities Committee recommended taking over ownership of the fingerpost signage in the Town, currently owned by NCC and in need of refurbishment and which NCC have agreed to. A refurbishment budget of £7,000 was suggested based upon a budget estimated received, (which needed to be added to the budget figures).
2. The Recreation & Amenities Committee budget included a Grass Cutting budget of £3,171 based upon a figure given by NCC (who the Town Council pay for this service). NCC had since confirmed that the cost will not be increased in 2017/18 and will be held at the 2016/17 figure of £1,953, reducing the budget by £1,218.
3. The 2017 election budget was initially set at £4,000 but 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 actual figure is known. In light of this it was suggested that the budget for 2017/18 be reduced to £2,000 and that if 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 activities and it was 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.

RESOLVED: To agree the budget for 2017/18 as £267,138.

c) Setting of the 2017/18 Precept

The Town Clerk advised that 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 had recommended reserves are not used to reduce the precept in 2017/18.

The Finance and Policy Committee 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 in 2017/18 was likely to be close to the Northumberland Town Council average.

RESOLVED: To set the precept at £267,138 for 2017/18.

C16/139 Review of Constitution

The Town Clerk advised councillors that the meeting to review the constitution was March 7th at 7pm at the Mechanics Institute.

RESOLVED: To note the date of the constitution review meeting.

C16/140 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

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

RESOLVED: To receive the correspondence.

C16/141 Feedback from Alnwick Town Council Business Networking Event

The Project & Funding Officer advise councillor that around 66 people attended the event representing 47 businesses, Alnwick Town Council and ARCH.

The feedback on the night was very positive and questionnaires will be emailed to all businesses who attended. Two businesses have already spoken to ARCH to discuss grant applications. He advised that the businesses who were invited but did not attend would be contacted to ask what they would like included in future events.

Councillor G Mavin added that it was evident that there were a lot of skills and experience around Alnwick.

Councillor Patience asked if the DCHS had attended. The Project & Funding Officer advised that they hadn't but that Pathfinder North East, one of the organisations working with the school had.

RESOLVED: To receive the update.

C16/142 Financial Matters**a) Bank Reconciliation**

The Town Clerk issued Quarter 3 (September 1st to December 1st 2016) bank reconciliation sheet. He advised that this sheet showed the checks made to ensure the Cash Book and Bank Statements reconciled.

RESOLVED: To accept the bank reconciliation.

a) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

| PAYEE | TOTAL | VAT | DETAIL |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| HMRC | £3,367.38 | £0.00 | Tax/NI payment for December |
| Wages Account | £7,000.00 | £0.00 | Transfer to Wages account for December |
| St James Church Centre | £225.00 | £0.00 | Room Bookings |
| Peter Nyssen | £89.20 | £14.97 | Bulbs |
| J Farmer | £143.97 | £0.00 | Allotment water repairs |
| Azure Charitable Enterprises | £80.64* | £0.00 | Carol Service Order of Service |
| Chubb Fire & Security Ltd | £169.31 | £28.22 | Security contract Cemetery |
| Viking | £45.05 | £7.51 | Stationery |
| Azure Charitable Enterprises | £76.91 | £12.83 | Council Christmas Cards |
| W R Batey | £75.00* | £0.00 | 3 x £25 vouchers (Remembrance Sunday) |
| NCC | £492.13 | £82.02 | Stage costs for Lantern Parade |
| South Road Tyres | £93.00 | £15.50 | Tractor tyre repairs |
| Mole Country Stores | £23.99 | £4.00 | Protective clothing |
| Bill Grisdale Design | £405.00 | £0.00 | Lectern Map design work |
| Information Commissioner | £35.00 | £0.00 | Data Protection Registration |
| Viking | £64.73 | £10.73 | Event name badges |
| St James Church Centre | £40.00 | £0.00 | Room hire |
| J Pibworth | £17.70* | £2.45 | Refreshments for Civic Carol Service |
| James McLean | £296.29 | £49.38 | Tools, Chainsaw repairs |
| Glasdon | £1080.93 | £180.15 | Replacement seat |
| TOTAL | £13,821.23 | £407.76 | |

* indicates Local Government Act 1972 S137 expenditure

| | | | |
|---|----------|---------|--|
| The following payments were now paid by direct debit and were reported for information: | | | |
| BT | £51.26 | £8.54 | Phone Bills Fenkle St (paid 26 th Dec) |
| BT | £47.18 | £7.86 | Phone Bill Fenkle Street (paid 28 th Dec) |
| Northumbrian Water | £451.80 | £0 | Water rates for Fenkle Street (paid 1 st Dec) |
| NEST | £540.40 | £0 | Employer Pension Scheme contributions for December (paid 28 th Dec) |
| Northumbrian Water | £3120.47 | £498.45 | Water bills for Allotments, Cemetery (2), Robertson's Fountain (paid Jan) |
| npower | £346.30 | £16.49 | Cemetery (2), Robertson's Fountain, Town Hall Clock (paid Jan) |

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the following grants were approved by the Finance & Policy Committee on 15th December 2016:

| | |
|--|---|
| Alnwick and District Playhouse Trust | £1,400 |
| Bailiffgate Museum | £1,400 |
| Northumbrian CAB – Alnwick Office | £1,400 |
| Hospice Care North Northumberland | £1400 * |
| Alnwick & District Sports Council | £300 |
| Alnwick Hockey Club | £300 |
| Alnwick Cricket Club | £300 |
| Alnwick Scout Group | £300 |
| Northumberland (Masters) Open Water Swimming Club Alnwick) | £200 (must be used for Alnwick schools) |
| Northumberland Health Walks | £200 (must be used for walks in and around) |
| Weavers Court | £200 (on hold awaiting answers from Weavers Court) |
| 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)

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £13,655.59 and to note the direct debits of £4,557.41 , 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 authorise grant payments of £11,100.

C16/143 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The public meeting closed at 8.25pm.

C15/144 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEM

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The following resolution was moved and seconded, to exclude the public and press.

"That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act". The item discussed was:

An update on the Alnwick Playhouse community hub negotiations and funding.