

Alnwick Town Team

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team held at 5pm on Tuesday, November 29th 2016 at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

Present: Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Philip Angier (PA) (Local Living), Mark Brassell (MB) (Alnwick Garden), Tommy Mattison (TM) (Freemen of Alnwick), Carlo Biagioni (CB) (Chamber of Trade), Elizabeth Jones (EJ) (Alnwick in Bloom), Tim Kirton (TK) (Alnwick Town Council)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Tommy Mattison who was attending his first meeting as a representative of the Freemen of Alnwick.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Gordon Castle (GC) and Dave Campbell (DC) (Northumberland County Council).

2. Minutes of the last meeting, Tuesday October 25th 2016

These were approved as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising

The Chairman reported that, because of new regulations introduced in October 2016, the Neighbourhood Plan referendum was now likely to be delayed to February 2017.

TK reported progress on arrangements for the Alnwick Lantern Parade scheduled for December 18th: The application for a rolling road closure had been completed and submitted and approval from the County Council was awaited but no problems were anticipated. PA said that it would be fine for the event to use the Local Living public address system which could be collected by the Garden after the weekend of December 3rd/4th. PA would brief the Garden staff on its use.

CB asked whether the Town Team could do anything about the messy state of the bus station. The Chairman replied that he had recently had a conversation with the manager of Morrison's which owns the land on which the bus station stands but the structure itself is owned and managed by Arriva who arrange for regular cleansing, although not at weekends.

4. Feedback on the Halloween Festival and an update on the Lantern Parade on December 18th

MB advised that the Halloween Festival events at the Garden had been a success.

MB advised that a special events manager would be employed to deliver the Lantern Parade on December 18th. The Parade would begin from The Garden at 17.15 hours and, led by "Spark", would progress via the Greenwell Lane entrance, Hotspur Tower, Bondgate Within, Fenkle Street and into Market Place where "Spark" would entertain on the stage.

The Chairman advised that the Town Council would be meeting the costs of erecting and breaking down the stage at the Lantern Parade.

TK reported that unfortunately it had not proved possible for the “Big Sing” event to be held on the same day.

CB asked whether it would be possible for a town map to be situated within Alnwick Garden itself sometime in the future. **ACTION: MB to investigate.**

5. Updates

Town Council:

TK reported that designs for the Town Centre Lectern Maps had been finalised and circulated quarter-sized samples of these, for which there was general approval from the meeting.

TK reported that the locations for the new CCTV system had been virtually finalised and the Town Council would go out to quotes shortly with a view to installing the system early in the New Year.

Chamber of Trade:

CB expressed concern on behalf of the Chamber of Trade at the proposed relocation of the Tourist Information Centre to Alnwick Playhouse, outside Bondgate Within and therefore outside the Town Centre and its shops. Visitor parking at the Playhouse TIC will also be difficult during the peak summer period. There is a wider concern in the Chamber that a range of Council services are moving out of the Town Centre with a possible consequential effect on town centre vitality.

PA advised that five weeks previously he had met with Lorraine Dennison, the MD of Active Northumberland which now runs the TICs, and had emphasised his belief that the Alnwick TIC needs to be retained within its current building. Lorraine had taken that comment on board and promised that the person within Active Northumberland who is in charge of the TICs would be in touch, although to date PA had not received any further communication.

CB asked if there would be any consultation on the proposed move of the TIC to The Playhouse. The Chairman said he thought this was unlikely; a report had been made to the Town Council by the vice-Chair of the Playhouse Trust but there was no certainty as to the move as yet and there is actually now a new architect working on the project. There is very little room to accommodate the Library, the TIC and everyone else: Indeed, it may prove impossible to fit all the proposed services into the Playhouse but the Library is a priority as they must vacate their present building which has been sold by the Landlord, Northumberland Estates.

CB reported that the Chamber of Trade is looking to organise another Gala Dinner. Similar to that held almost a year ago, to raise money for the “Alnwick – The Garden Town” project. It is likely that this will be held on Saturday 18th February at the White Swan Hotel. The dress code will be “smart casual”. In response to a question from TK, CB confirmed that the money raised from this would be for the wider “Alnwick – The Garden Town” project rather than just for the Canadian Expo proposal.

Local Living/Markets

PA reported that the Christmas Market leaflets were being distributed from this weekend in tandem with Small Business Saturday. The Farmer's Market will take place on 23rd December, this will be the last market of the season.

PA reported that Local Living has won EU Leader funding for a Town Centre Marketing and Promotions Officer and as a result Mel has been appointed as a more permanent member of LL staff. The Leader award will also fund the purchase of a pre-owned van which will enable the return of the present rented van and will make the Local Living project much more sustainable.

MB asked PA to monitor Market visitor numbers whilst the ice rink is in place at Alnwick Garden. PA said that Alnwick Market does well at weekends but does lose customers when the Garden has its own market on.

The Chairman reported that Alnwick Town Council has pledged further support to the Alnwick Market.

The Chairman asked that congratulations to PA and Local Living for winning the Leader grant be recorded.

6. Any Other Business

MB reported that the "sleepout" he took part in in October had raised £7,000 for participating charities and £500 of that money raised is being contributed to community projects within Alnwick. MB asked the Town Team for suggestions by the next Town team meeting as to which community projects within Alnwick should benefit from this £500. The Chairman suggested that we should particularly consider the smaller charities to whom the money raised would make a big difference, rather than the larger charities.

EJ expressed concern at the state of the plant containers on the cobbles. The Chairman said he was not aware of any budget to tackle this at present but in the future a maintenance budget should be built in.

CB asked for clarification on the roles and work of the Town Council Handyman. The Chairman advised that this staff member works full-time but his time is divided between two jobs, one as the Handyman and the other as Cemetery gravedigger. He works under the direction of the Town Clerk and his work as Handyman includes inspections and any necessary maintenance and repairs of all the town's playgrounds, allotments, and all other town council responsibilities such as benches, litter bins, painting and some repairs to finger posts, ATC signage and other street furniture. There will be further attention to ATC street furniture in the spring of 2017. CB requested that there be improvements to town centre bollards.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Hotspur Statue will be rewaxed shortly, this work to be undertaken by the statue's original sculptor.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 17th January 2017 at 5pm at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

The Chairman wished everyone a pleasant Christmas and hoped that all organisations would prosper in the New Year.