

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

- Present** Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, P Allcroft, S Bell, P Broom, G Castle, W Grisdale, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore, S Patience and M Swinbank.
- In attendance** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Claire and Mike Telfer and Mike Breeze, Alnwick Harriers (for Item 7).
- C16/186 Questions from the public**  
None.
- C16/187 Apologies for absence**  
Cllrs Edge and Shilton.
- C16/188 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters and In Private Item 2.  
Councillors Grisdale and Patience declared a pecuniary interest In Private Item 2. (Gallery Youth).
- C16/189 Closure of the Alnwick Middle Schools and Redevelopment of these sites (Claire & Mike Telfer and Gareth Breeze, Alnwick Harriers)**  
The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had been notified by NCC's Strategic Estates that the Lindisfarne Middle School "will be demolished this summer after the end of the school year. At the current time, there are no plans for the school site following demolition".  
He explained that he had had further contact with NCC and asked three questions:  
Is the Lindisfarne Sports Hall to be retained? – NCC replied that all the buildings on the site will be demolished.  
What is the date for demolition? NCC have confirmed this will be September 2017.  
Will organisations still be able to use the site in the interim? NCC confirmed that not during demolition however possible afterwards but only until such time as the school site (ie, the playing fields and school building 'footprint) is disposed.  
Claire Telfer (CT) explained that Alnwick Harriers had spoken to other sports groups who use the facilities at the school and none of them had been contacted by NCC. She confirmed that an on-line petition had been set up. She advised that they felt there had not been any strategic planning or consultation by NCC and wondered how this could be a way to do business. She felt it was unlikely that a future site all the groups could be found in such a short period of time. She felt that NCC just wanted the site for more housing.  
She confirmed that there was no access to sports facilities at DCHS. She also confirmed that every single slot at Lindisfarne was used and there also a waiting list for facilities. She said that the groups needed a short term plan and raised three questions with the Town Council.  
Can demolition be stopped until consultation takes place?

Can Councillors assist in finding out why the site needs to be levelled straight away?  
Can the Town Council support groups to keep the facilities open until a replacement can be found?

Gareth Breeze explained that NCC have a list of all the usage and that the facilities were needed by some groups to keep their sports accreditation.

Councillor Castle advised that he could not disagree with anything that Claire had said and felt that it had been disappointingly managed by NCC. He had been told that suitable facilities would be found although he did not see the need to demolish the sports hall. He was also concerned that this was contrary to the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan which had been to NCC for comment and approval. He felt that an alternative place must be put in place and that NCC were not aware of just how many people use the sports hall and facilities.

Councillor Castle added that Government Planning guidelines did not allow for the demolition of sports facilities.

Councillor Symmonds advised that it was civic vandalism and that the Town Council were outraged and would invite someone from NCC to the next Full Council meeting.

Councillor Broom asked if the decision was made by politicians or officers. Councillor Castle advised that Lindisfarne was owned by NCC but the issue had not been to committee and no discussions had taken place with county councillors.

Councillor Patience explained that she had helped to develop the Community Facilities section of the Neighbourhood Plan (Policy CF1 Protecting community facilities and CF5 redevelopment of Lindisfarne and Dukes Middle School) and would welcome the chance for the Town Council to talk to NCC.

Councillor S Allcroft asked who the right person from NCC would be. Councillor Castle advised that this should either be Steve Mason, Chief Executive or a Senior Strategic Estates Officer.

Councillor Swinbank asked if a planning application has been made. Councillor Castle advised that he was not aware of one.

Councillor Holt felt that community health was important to everyone so needed the right facilities to support it.

**RESOLVED: To invite NCC (Steve Mason or a senior Strategic Estates Officer) to the May Full Council meeting and ask that the demolition of the whole site be put on hold until discussions had taken place with the Town Council.**

**C16/190 Minutes of the Last meeting**

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.**

**C16/191 Matters Arising**

Councillor G Mavin asked about the bus shelter at Willoughby's Bank. The Town Clerk reported that this had been discussed at the Planning Committee and that, from the data obtained from the bus companies, very few people make use of either bus stop. There is a condition for the developer to provide a bus shelter at the location but the

Town Council will ask if the money can be used for a bus shelter elsewhere in the town or used to provide additional seats and bins around the area.

**C16/192 Mayor's Report**

Councillor Symmonds reported that he had attended the funeral of Frank Williams, who had been Mayor of Alnwick in 1983. He had passed on the Town Council's condolences to the family. He had known Frank for many years in his time as a teacher and head teacher in Rothbury.

He had attended the Alnwick Spring Show which had been very colourful and a thoroughly good family day out. He had presented prizes including some any to children who had taken part.

He also attended the Tourism Fair at Willowburn Sports Centre and had been overwhelmed by the displays especially those promoting good local food and drink. He advised that he looked forward to an events being held in the future to promote Alnwick businesses and engage young people.

**C16/193 Minutes of Committees**

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (9<sup>th</sup> March 2017) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (16<sup>th</sup> March 2017) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 were agreed as a true record.**

**C16/194 Council Vacancies**

The Town Clerk reported that following the election process 12 councillors were unopposed and will form the new council in May leaving 6 vacancies

He reminded councillors that previously they had favoured a co-option procedure in which interested individuals submitted, in writing, why they would like to become a councillor. He advised that a press release to attract applicants would be written and sent to the Gazette and posted on the Town Council website.

He advised that councillors needed to decide if the vacancies should be advertised as soon as possible for letters of interest to be submitted with a deadline in time for them to be considered at the May Full Council meeting or alternatively more time could be given for applications and decisions taken at the June meeting.

Councillor S Allcroft asked if there was enough time to do this in May.

Councillor Broom asked if that meant there had been no new candidates for the council. The Town Clerk confirmed that was the case.

Councillor Symmonds said he had been surprised at the amount of work the Town Council and each of the committees had achieved in the past year. He felt that this should be used for potential applicants.

Councillor Humphries asked if the vacancies would be posted in the town noticeboard. The Town Clerk confirmed they would and that briefing sessions would be held for potential applicants.

Councillor S Mavin advised that this should be a soft approach and should include what it's like to be a Town Councillor.

Councillor Gridale reported that numbers of submissions to Town & Parish Councils had been low across the county. He added that with more and more being done by T&PCs the job of councillor was becoming a more complicated one.

Councillor Swinbank felt that 2-3 current councillors could be asked to give their views. He also felt that May was a bit tight to get good candidates.

Councillor S Allcroft explained that councillors could talk informally to potential applicants about what they get out of being a Town Councillor.

Councillor Patience felt it was important that all new councillor received training.

Councillor Castle commented that Alnwick was a non-political council and seen as a good model.

Councillor Symmonds suggested the applications were reviewed at the May meeting.

Councillor Gridale asked if the Town Council had too many councillors. The Town Clerk advised that there would need to be a review by the Electoral Commission before this could be changed. Councillor Holt felt that the Town Council should not be smaller as the community will grow,

**RESOLVED: To progress the co-option process for May.**

**C16/195**

**Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Action if any</b>
17 <sup>th</sup> March	NCC – LOVE Northumberland Awards	To note
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	NCC – Alnwick North MUGA Lights to be inspected and repaired	To note
14 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> 28 <sup>th</sup> 30 <sup>th</sup> March	NALC enews	Circulated to Councillors
4 <sup>th</sup> April	NALC Training Programme 2017	To circulate to Councillors
6 <sup>th</sup> April	NCC – reinstatement of Book Banks including Denwick Lane and the Alnwick HWRC	To note
13 <sup>th</sup> April	Northumberland County Council Town & Parish Council Liaison Group meeting minutes	Available form Town Clerk

**RESOLVED: To receive the correspondence.**

**C16/196 Constitution Review**

The Town Clerk reported that the Constitution Working Group had met in March and that a number of recommendations were made covering:

Scope of Committees; Spokesperson for the council; Timescales for Mayor & Deputy Mayor appointments; Section 30 – (Freedom of Information Act 2000); Section 33 - Allegations of Breach of the Code of Conduct; Outside Bodies Liabilities; Requirements for estimates and Working Groups.

**RESOLVED: To agree the list of changes to the Constitution as contained in the agenda papers.**

**C16/197 11<sup>th</sup> May Planning Committee Meeting and Draft dates for meetings 2017/18**

The Town Clerk explained that the scheduled Planning Committee meeting on 11th May 2017 (immediately before the Annual meeting), would either be rescheduled or cancelled as the new Planning Committee will not have been appointed until the Full Council meeting which follow it.

Councillor Swinbank felt that planning applications could be dealt with by email.

The Town Clerk had distributed a draft schedule of Full Council and Committee meeting dates for 2017/18 for consideration.

**RESOLVED: i) To recommend the meeting dates for 2017/18 to the Full Council meeting in May; ii) to cancel the May Planning Committee and deal with any interim planning applications by email.**

**C16/198 Annual Audit arrangements**

The Town Clerk explained that he had received the key dates from the external auditor:

Make accounts available to public	12 <sup>th</sup> June to 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2017
Submission of Annual Return	By 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
Completion of Audit	By 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2017

He advised councillors that the annual return and final accounts will be presented to councillors at the Full Council meeting on 11th May. These will then be sent to the internal auditor.

Any feedback from the internal auditor will be given at the June meeting, prior to submission to the external auditor.

As the Council has income and expenditure greater than £200,000 an interim review is required and an interim review questionnaire will need to be completed.

Last year seven recommendations were made by the internal auditor, these are listed below together with the action taken (in red):

1. Payment Authorisation Block system for invoices be introduced – **Implemented.**
2. Independent checks by members are regularly conducted - **Implemented.**
3. Payments which are not "invoice driven" should have a pro forma invoice, incorporating a payment authorisation block - **Implemented.**
4. Payroll system, whilst effective, is time consuming and involved. The County Council provide a payroll service to parish councils for a nominal sum of £2 per month and I recommend that this option be pursued - **A quote has been requested from NCC, if this is to be implemented the appropriate time to do so, is in April 2017 – the start of the new financial year. NCC undertake payroll services for about 60 companies**

including 10+ T&PCs. There would be a set up cost of £250 and a charge of £50 per year per employee.

5. The Town Clerk and Members undertake an annual review of Financial Regulations in light of local conditions of supply and flexibility needed to operate quickly in the interests of the community - **Undertaken as part of the Constitution review – see agenda item 11.**

6. Cash held by officers exceeds insurance limit - **Procedures reviewed for allotment rent collection which was the one occasion referred to.**

7. Bank Reconciliation Statements are reported to the Council together with updated revenue accounts which are reported quarterly - **Reported to Council quarterly in 2016/17.**

Councillor S Allcroft felt the Town Council should proceed with the payroll being done by NCC.

**RESOLVED: i) To note the Annual Audit timetable, ii) To proceed with NCC undertaking the payroll function from April 2017.**

**C16/199 Update from:**

**a) Alnwick Town Team**

The Project & Funding Officer reported that at the last Town Team meeting in March several issues had been discussed:

Parking - the Chamber of Trade raised the issue of car parking in Alnwick.

Lectern maps – a photograph of some of the sponsors was planned for the Gazette. He confirmed that the preferred location for the 4<sup>th</sup> lectern map was on Bondgate Within outside Your Move.

Councillor Patience asked if there was any update on the banners for the Northumberland Hall. The Town Clerk advised that an application was to be submitted.

Councillor Moore thought the lectern maps were a good idea.

Councillor G Mavin asked if the Town Champion could come and speak at a Full Council meeting.

**b) Neighbourhood Plan Update & Community Action Plan Priorities**

Neighbourhood Plan - The Town Clerk reported that the last consultation was with regard to the modifications made by the Inspector and was not a consultation on the whole Neighbourhood Plan. As part of the process NCC received a letter from WYG stating that they had issues with the Neighbourhood Plan regarding Willowburn Industrial Estate.

He explained that the last consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan did not include the area highlighted in their letter as this had not been amended in the Inspector's Report so their letter did not address any new areas. NCC have asked for the Town Council's comments and have said that, although the letter is a valid consultation response, it does not raise any new issues relevant to the latest consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor S Allcroft felt that the Town Council should proceed as previously agreed and disregard the letter.

**RESOLVED: i) To note the Town Team and Neighbourhood Plan updates, ii) To notify NCC that the Town Council do not wish to further modify the Neighbourhood Plan in light of the WYG consultation response.**

**C16/200 Financial Matters**

**a) Payments**

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>DETAIL</b>
<b>2016/17 Budget</b>			
Potts	£1,780.00	£0.00	Tourism Leaflet Printing Paid 15/3
D Orange	£350.00	£0.00	Tree Survey Cemetery Paid 29/3
HMRC	£3,615.83	£0.00	Tax/NI March Paid 29/3
St James Church Centre	£225.00	£0.00	Room Bookings
Town & Country Tree Surgeons Ltd	£3,738.00	£623.00	Tree Works Cemetery
Bart Endean	£360.00	£60.00	Marker stones for natural burial area
Weasdale Nurseries	£405.67	£67.62	New trees - Cemetery
Weasdale Nurseries	£306.96	£40.89	New trees – Greenwell Lane
Tim Kirton	£8.70	£0.00	Postage
Bill Grisdale Design	£450.00	£0.00	Design work Tourism leaflet
J Pibworth	£10.77	£1.80	Cemetery materials
Streetscape	£764.40	£127.40	Wetpour repair kits
NPD Ltd	£1,560.00	£260.00	Tourism Leaflet Distribution
Depothire	£312.00	£52.00	Skip - allotments
ABC Cleaning (Andrew Carr)	£620.00	£0.00	Cleaning seats, bins, play areas
South Road Tyres	£30.00	£5.00	Tyre repair
Royal Mail	£1.40	£0.23	Postal responses
Petty Cash	£20	£3.33	Fuel
Bill Grisdale Design	£144.80	£0	Printing and installing new lectern maps
<b>2017/18 Budget</b>			
Wages Account	£7,000	£0.00	
Initial	£1,641.05	£273.51	2 new hand driers, 8 toilet roll holders and 6 soap dispensers for Alnwick toilets
Arch	£10.58*	£0.0	Insurance, Unit 5 St Thomas Close
ICCM	£90.00	£0.0	Annual Subscription

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£23,445.16</b>	<b>£1,514.78</b>	
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\* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure (Total £10.58)

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
BT	£52.90	£8.82	Cemetery Office Phone
npower	£191.31	£9.11	Town Hall Clock, Robertson's Fountain
BT	£34.20	£5.70	Fenkle Street Office Phone
Northumbrian water	£1,243.95	£0.00	Water Bills Cemetery (2) Allotments and Robertson's Fountain
npower	£334.64	£51.74	Cemetery Store and Cemetery Chapel
NEST	£535.46	£0.00	Pension contributions

**RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £23,445.16 and to note the direct debit payments of £2,392.46.**

**b) Investments**

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council has a one year Deposit Bond with Santander. Following discussions with the Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee this was reinvested for a further 12 months.

**RESOLVED: To endorse the decision to reinvest with Santander for a further 12 months.**

**c) Bank reconciliation**

The Town Clerk tabled the Bank Reconciliation sheet for 2016/17 Quarter 4. He advised that there were currently 10 unbanked cheques.

**RESOLVED: To approve the Bank Reconciliation for 2016/17 Quarter 4.**

**C16/201 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Holt said that it had been a privilege to work with Councillors and Officers and that everyone should be proud of the way that the Town Council operates.

Councillor Symmonds thanked the councillors who were retiring thanking each of them for their work and support of the Town Council over the years.

The public meeting closed at 8.45pm.

**C16/202 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS**

**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 items discussed were:

**Approval of the Full Council Private minutes from March 9<sup>th</sup> 2017**  
**Matters Arising from previous minutes**  
**Renuit Furniture Project**