

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017  
in Swansfield Park Primary School, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors P Broom (Chair), S Bell, P Edge, B Grisdale, M Harrington, G Mavin, S Patience, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

**In attendance:** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Katherine Williams (Swansfield Park Primary School) for Item 5. only.

**RA 16/39 Apologies**  
Councillors Shilton.

**RA 16/40 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillor Grisdale declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 Presentation by Katherine Williams on Swansfield Park Primary School's Growing up Naturally project and a pecuniary interest in Item 6b) Tourism leaflet.  
Councillors Edge, Patience and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6a) Play area works.

**RA 16/41 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda**  
RA 16/35 The Town Clerk advised that investigations into bringing Robertson's Fountain back into use as a drinking fountain were still to be researched.

**RA 16/42 Budget Update 2016/17**  
The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure as at 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017. He advised that expenditure was £13,273.31 for events, £9,877.56 for projects and £45,921.77 for assets & services. The Town Clerk noted the following:

**EXPENDITURE**

**EVENTS:**

Just awaiting cost of hiring the Northumberland Hall on Remembrance Day.

**PROJECTS:**

PETERS MILL BRIDGE – steelwork being progressed.

DOG / LITTER BINS – slightly overspent as needed to replace damaged bins.

LECTERN MAPS – cost of artwork and the three replacement maps has paid for by contributions from local businesses / organisations.

BULB / TREE PLANTING – trees have been ordered for Greenwell Road.

**ASSETS & SERVICES:**

WAGES - expenditure to month 11.

TOWN HALL LIGHTING / ROBERTSON'S FOUNTAIN – one more electricity bill to come in.

ROBERTSON'S FOUNTAIN / ALLOTMENTS – one more water bill to come in.

## **INCOME**

Currently £5,520.36 and made up of £4,602.50 from allotment rents and £917.86 insurance claim for damaged heritage seat.

Councillor Swinbank reported that there was still budget for some repairs to existing bus shelters. He also asked what progress had been made regarding the new bus shelters.

The Project & Funding Officer advised that he was talking to Northumberland Estates about the location of the bus shelter in Willowburn Avenue. He advised that NCC had been copied in to all correspondence about the bus shelter and that Richard McKenzie from NCC was to view the proposed three locations.

Councillor Harrington felt that Taylor Drive would be a better location of the bus shelter. The Town Clerk advised that Taylor Drive already had two bus shelters installed in readiness for use.

Councillor Broom explained that the new bus shelter was for pupils who use the scheduled bus services and not the school bus services.

Councillor Symmonds reported that he had seen a lot of pupils waiting at the bus stop past the industrial estate.

**RESOLVED: To accept the 2016/17 budget update.**

### **RA 16/43**

#### **Presentation by Katherine Williams – Growing up Naturally (proposed project based at Swansfield Park Primary School)**

Katherine William (KW) gave councillors an overview of the proposed project which would be based at Swansfield Park Primary School.

The idea of the project was to get pupils and local children, aged up to 11, outside and learn environmental skills. The aim is to add outdoor learning to the curriculum by:

- i. Celebrating & respecting our environment
- ii. Learning & playing outdoors
- iii. Experiencing nature everyday

The project has a number of sub aims including:

- a) Outdoor Learning Vision – structuring the curriculum to ensure pupils get to be outdoors
- b) New Alnwick Forest School – set up to give children “outdoor” activities. To date 2 Forest School leaders have been trained at the school
- c) Eco-build Natural Learning Hub – to help deliver out of school activities
- d) Play Rangers – to engage children / young people before issues arise
- e) Play Landscape – to create a new area outdoors from ‘natural’ materials
- f) Community Orchard – keen to support the Friends of Bullfield Orchard
- g) Green routes to school – using activities to engage pupils in the environment on their way home
- h) Swansfield Park – would like a water feature / wildlife habitat in a wet area
- i) Family Learning – to engage adults / families to take part in outdoor activities

The project also looks at planting to engage children in growing food.

Children are now coming into their classrooms from the outdoors rather than through other rooms.

Councillor Patience added that there would be baskets around the school containing 'incredible edibles'. KW explained that other container would be used for planting such as wellies and tyres.

Councillor Swinbank said he was very supportive of the project and asked if it would be used by other local schools. KW confirmed that was their long-term vision but had not had any conversation with other schools as yet.

Councillor Broom advised KW that NCC hold an endowment fund for Swansfield Park and that their involvement needed to be explored. He also reported that in Bishop Auckland wildflowers have been planted beyond the mowed areas. The Town Clerk advised that NCC could be contacted about the endowment.

Councillor Edge asked how much staff knew about growing fruit and vegetables. KW advised that they were all enthusiastic but was unsure of their skill levels.

Councillor Broom thanked KW for her presentation.

## **RA 16/44**

### **Updates on:**

#### **a) Play Area works**

The Project & Funding Officer reported that the Friends of Bullfield Community Orchard had met again and had moved the location of the proposed lay area slightly away from the houses. He explained that low level equipment was to be installed. He also confirmed that a field drain might need to be installed as the area was very boggy.

Councillor Patience reported that the Friends of Bullfield Orchard had contact Northumberland Estates to talk about the alteration to their lease for which there would be a cost.

Councillor G Mavin asked what type of lease it was and how long there was left to run on it. Councillor Patience advised that the lease was for 99 years and that the Town Council would have a sub-lease for the play area.

Councillor Harrington confirmed that the field used to be dry until the houses in Coopers Close had been built. He thought there might be an old field drain and suggested that old maps were looked at.

#### **b) Allotments**

ST JAMES'S The Town Clerk reported that there were currently 2 vacant plots (2 more having been let recently). The press release in the Gazette had generated interest from several people.

RATTEN ROW The Town Clerk reported that there were currently 4 vacant lots (including 2 which are overgrown). He advised that more allotments were rented out at present than ever before.

Replumbing of four allotments had been undertaken and a map drawn up to get a quote for a new water system.

Lease - the current lease is for 3 years but Northumberland Estates want this to go to annual lease. He advised that quotes will be obtained for the new water system then he would speak to Northumberland Estates again about the lease.

A contractor who will quote for the water system would also hire the Town Council a

digger if they choose to undertake the work themselves.

Cockerels – The Town Clerk confirmed that he had spoken to the complainant and would investigate further. He reminded councillors that delegated powers had been given to himself and the Chair of Recreation & Amenities to take decisions with regard to cockerels at Ratten Row. This could result in cockerels not being permitted on the site.

ST GEORGES Currently has 1 vacant plot.

**c) Lectern Maps**

The Project & Funding Officer advised that the three replacements had now been installed at Column Field, Market Place and the Barbican. The 4<sup>th</sup> (new) map will be on a single metal column and would cost around £1,000. A pre-application may be needed before a planning application submitted to NCC.

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had not had to pay for any of the work so far as this had been covered by contributions from businesses and organisations in the town. The Town Council budget will be used to pay for the 4<sup>th</sup> (new) map.

**RESOLVED: To submit a pre-app planning application to NCC for the new lectern stand / map.**

**d) Seat and bin replacements**

The Town Clerk reported that a new seat had been installed in Windsor Gardens and that there was another in stock waiting to be installed at a location identified from the annual inspection.

The Town Clerk reported that a new bin had been installed on St James's Estate but needed to be moved slightly. There is one bin in stock which will be installed shortly at Chapel Lands. He also reported that a new bin had been requested in Willowburn Avenue between Taylor Drive and McDonalds.

Councillor Harrington felt that more seats were needed in the Market Place.

Councillor Swinbank reported that the bins in the Community Orchard had been turned over and would need looking at.

Councillor Patience reported that the concrete seat in the Market Place was in need of repair. The Town Clerk advised that the Stephen Lunn would be contacted to ask about repairing it.

Councillor Patience also reported that there was a large amount of litter around Sainsbury's. Councillor Broom suggested contacting Northumberland Estates to request they undertake a litter pick and to request they mend the net.

Councillor Broom asked councillors to send ideas for locations of new seat to the Assistant to the Town Clerk.

Councillor Bell explained that there use to be a seat at The Pinfold.

**e) Tourism leaflet**

Councillor G Mavin reported that 50,000 new town leaflets had been printed. Six local attractions were each paying £100 towards the cost and had each been given 250 leaflets.

The leaflets had been handed out at the Tourism Fair on March 21<sup>st</sup> and he remainder distributed by NPD Distribution. He advised that he had asked them to also distribute

leaflets in the Scottish Borders.

He advised that the remainder of the budget allocated for the new leaflet may be spent on producing a translation of the leaflet which would be downloadable from the Town Council's website.

**f) Fingerpost signs**

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council take over responsibility for the fingerposts in April 2017. He explained that there were several different designs of fingerpost and whilst the fingers could be changed the posts were cemented into the ground so could not easily be changed

Councillor comments had included the need for fingers to the bus station.

Councillor Harrington asked how the fingers were attached to the columns. The Town Clerk explained that they were dropped over the column from the top then fixed into place with an alum key. One would be taken down for closer inspection on its construction.

Councillor Swinbank reminded councillors that the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan contained Community Action Plans (CAPs) about signage which should be reviewed.

Councillor Grisdale asked if the town quarter colours could be incorporated into any new design.

The Project & Funding Officer reported that councillor comments had indicated the need for a new fingerpost column at the bus station and that this would be included in any pre-app to NCC.

Councillor G Mavin asked if the current fingerposts were linked e.g. Castle to Bailiffgate Museum. The Town Clerk advised that at present they weren't.

The Project & Funding Officer also reported that comments had suggested including signage to the toilets.

Councillor G Mavin felt a map plotting the fingerposts would be helpful.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates**

**RA 16/45 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Edge reported that some of the external walls in Alnwick were very dirty including the end of Northumberland Hall. The Town Clerk advised that he reported this to NCC.

Councillor Patience reported words had been spray painted out at Willoughby's Park.

Councillor Patience reminded councillors and officers that an allotment working group meeting needed to be set up.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm