

Alnwick Town Team

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team held at 5pm on Tuesday 30th May 2017 at The Cottage, Alnwick Garden.

Present: Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Cllr. Gordon Castle, Philip Angier (PA) (Local Living), David Lovie (DL) (Civic Society), Elizabeth Jones (EJ) (Alnwick in Bloom), Dave Campbell (DC) (Northumberland County Council), Mark Brassell (MB) (Alnwick Garden), Carlo Biagioni (CB) (Chamber of Trade), Tim Kirton (TK) (Alnwick Town Council).

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Tommy Mattison (Freemen of Alnwick)

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 25th April 2017

The minutes were approved as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising

Item 5e, items for the Alnwick promotional video: MB reported that he had not yet received any suggestions from Town Team members or the organisations they represent for events/specials offered by Alnwick businesses/attractions for inclusion in this video. MB needs these **by the end of June** to give the team enough time to create the video. This is an opportunity to showcase what is on offer in Alnwick to thousands of people.

Action: Town Team members to provide any information to MB by the end of June.

4. Updates

(a) The Alnwick Garden

MB reported that The Alnwick Garden's season was in full swing; attendance at the Garden in April had been "phenomenal" and numbers for May were up on last year.

The new "Adventure Golf" attraction would be operational within the next two to three weeks.

The skating rink will be back and will be bigger this year. The Christmas Market will be held in the car park.

Road Closure forms for the Lantern Parade had been prepared and were about to be submitted. This year the Lantern Parade will be used to kick-off the Festive Season, rather than finishing it as had been the case last year. CB said that more town centre traders will be open later in the evening for this year's Lantern Parade, which is on a Saturday.

The schools will still be off for the first week in January 2018 so the season should continue into that week.

A leaflet listing the year's events at The Alnwick Garden had been produced and copies were circulated to all present. There is a Twitter feed about this, for which Robson Green had done the voiceover at the end and all TT members were asked to share this and "like" it if they felt able.

b) County Council:

DC reported that following the recent election there is a new Administration at Northumberland County Council. Updates:

- The Alnwick Playhouse proposal is still on the cards and has not been dismissed and discussions are ongoing in a positive manner.
- The new fire station and Highways depot are now operational.
- Former Duchess High School: Demolition imminent if it has not already started.
- Lindisfarne School sports hall: A site visit with a surveyor had been held last Thursday, 25th May, to determine exactly what is there and what its condition is. Liaison is ongoing with the user groups. GC said that NCC has not spent the money that would be raised from the sale of the site, the school fields are not needed for housing and he had argued with NCC that they should remain undeveloped.
- In response to a question from PA, DC said he thinks Active Northumberland has responsibility for Alnwick Tourist Information Centre. GC advised that Alnwick Northumberland's management structure will be under review by the new NCC Administration.
- Following the election of the new NCC Administration DC is unsure of his ongoing status as Town Centre Champion for Alnwick and this could be his last meeting. DC expressed his thanks to the Town Team for their interest and support over his time as Champion. As Chairman of the Town Team AS expressed his thanks to DC for his work and role as NCC representative and Town Champion and expressed his hope that this would not be then end of DC's work with the Town Team.

Willowburn Industrial Estate Housing planning application: GC reported that this is due to be considered at the next meeting of NCC's Planning Committee on June 6th. GC is meeting with the NCC Head of Planning tomorrow (Wednesday 31st May) to request deferral of this application until after the Neighbourhood Plan referendum has been held on June 15th. If the application is considered on June 6th GC will not be able to vote on it but he will speak against the application. **(NOTE: The application was considered at the June 6th planning meeting but a decision was deferred pending a site visit)** PA advised that he has five minutes to speak at the meeting on June 6th and will argue that it would be wrong to pre-empt the Neighbourhood Plan referendum.

Local Area Councils: GC advised that the new NCC Administration has decided that there will be five local area councils with decision-making powers and devolved budgets, one of which will be a new North Northumberland Council which will include Alnwick along with Rothbury, Amble and Berwick and will have 13 councillors, mostly Conservative. The Council will be responsible for local planning decisions but not strategic planning decisions. GC will Chair this North Northumberland local area council; GC said he and the NCC Administration is determined to involve parish and town councils far more than previously and they will be involved in many matters.

(c) Chamber of Trade:

CB reported that the Chamber of Trade has secured an agreement with St. Michael's for the school field to be used for car parking during school holidays as required. Cars must vacate the field by 6pm. Appropriate signage and advertising of the facility now needs to be arranged.

DC advised that NCC need to be involved in this use of the school field for parking and that the Chamber of Trade would be responsible for restoring the field if it were to be churned up by vehicles in bad weather.

CB advised that improvements are being arranged at the Column Field including installation of a picnic table provided by The Alnwick Garden. A design for a new sensory garden is being drawn up by Clive Mattison; the hospital has said that they will look after the sensory garden; they have a 360-degree camera which covers the site.

Cherry blossom trees will be planted at the Column Field by the end of August. A seat below the column looking towards The Alnwick Garden will be provided by the Town Council and a plinth installed in front of this, explaining the view.

GC asked whether the Lion gates could be opened during the daytime and closed at night. EJ said that this was possible as a special event rather than every day. GC suggested that the Town Council Handyman could open and close the gates but this needed to be investigated with the Town Clerk.

(d) Local Living

PA reported that the Market's experiences on footfall so far this year reflect those of Alnwick Garden. The number of traders on the Market Place is up on last year. This has been due to the hard work of market staff.

The next big event will be the Taste of the North Festival on June 24th and 25th.

One of the casual Market Assistants has recently secured a job so there is now a vacancy and PA asked that news of this opportunity be circulated by TT members. The job requires a 4am start and basically consists of putting up stalls so applicants need to be able bodied and strong.

GC said that he had noted that Amble's Puffin Festival seems to involved Amble Town Centre Traders in a way which Alnwick's festivals don't do using a card which children can get stamped in different shops. He suggested that greater Alnwick shop involvement might be considered.

(e) Town Council:

TK reported:

- **CCTV:** Still awaiting a decision on the planning and listed building consent applications. Installation of recording and aerial equipment at the police station was not subject to either and so would be the first works.
- **Lectern maps:** The metal lectern for Bond gate Within will be procured at the same time and from the same supplier as the new fingerpost signage, to achieve discounted rates on purchase and delivery costs.

- **Fingerpost signs:** The fingerposts and column at Bailiffgate Corner have been restored and repainted and look superb. Where possible the remaining fingerposts and columns will be repainted in situ, over the next few weeks however the columns at Pottergate corner and outside Iceland/Boots the Optician/M&Co are both beyond repair and must be replaced with new, being ordered with the Bondgate Within map lectern. A total of 12 new fingers are also being ordered, 7 of which are being funded by The Alnwick Garden. In response to a question from EJ, TK advised that a new column and fingers at the bus station was possible but there are ambitions toward a wider project concerning a review of the bus station and its improvement
- **Willowburn Industrial Estate:** As was reported earlier in the meeting the planning application for housing at Willowburn will be considered by NCC's Planning Committee next Tuesday, June 6th and both the ATC representative and Local Living will be speaking to object to the application.
- **Neighbourhood Plan:** The referendum will definitely take place on Thursday June 15th 2017

7. Any Other Business

MB invited suggestions from all Town Team members as to the best time for the start of the Light Parade in November; a start-time of 6pm was agreed.

CB asked whether anything could be done to increase cleaning at the public toilets under Northumberland Hall. It was noted that ATC has funded the doubling of cleaning undertaken at the toilets, from once per day to twice. At present there is no provision for a further increase.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting and future meetings

A schedule of proposed meeting dates had been circulated by TK. There was broad agreement around the table that a change to Wednesdays for all future Town Team meetings would be welcomed, The next meeting of the Town Team would therefore be held on Wednesday 21st June 2017 at **5.30pm** at **The Board Room**, Alnwick Garden. **Action: TK to circulate a modified list of meeting dates for June 2017 to April 2018.**

It was also agreed that no TT meeting would take place in August 2017.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 6.45pm.