

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 11th January 2018
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

- Present** Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, A Fletcher, J Humphries, G Mavin, R Moore, S Patience, M Swinbank, G Watson, L Wearn and C Westendarp.
- In attendance** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer.
- C17/140 Questions from the public**
None.
- C17/141 Apologies for absence**
Cllrs. Aynsley, Grisdale, Harrington and McDougall.
- C17/142 Declarations of Interest**
Councillors Castle and Moore declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters. Councillor Castle declared a pecuniary interest in Item 11. Proposed Loan to Alnwick Town Junior Football Club.
- C17/143 Request for Dispensation**
The Town Clerk circulated a Request for Dispensation form which all councillors present at the meeting signed except Councillor Edge who is not a resident of Alnwick.
- RESOLVED: To grant a dispensation to all Councillors to enable them to participate in full discussions relating to the setting of the 2018/19 Budget and Precept.**
- C17/144 Minutes of the Last meeting**
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 14th December 2017 were tabled for approval.
- RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2017 were agreed as a true record.**
- C17/145 Matters Arising**
None.
- C17/146 Mayor's Report**
The Mayor deferred his report due to the busy agenda.
- C17/147 Update on County Council Matters (Councillors Castle and Moore)**
Office Accommodation – Councillor Castle confirmed that accommodation was now available for the Town Council in the Greenwell Lane building. This was on the first floor which officers would access by pass. He confirmed that there would also be space for councillors to have small meetings.
- The Town Clerk advised that he had visited the proposed office in Greenwell Lane and that it was substantially bigger than the current office as it currently accommodated 7 people. He advised that NCC were due to give him the cost the following day and that this would be based on floor area usage. He also advised that the IT Systems including Broadband access could either be BT or NCC.
- Councillor Swinbank felt it was time to move as the officers need more space including for meetings.

RESOLVED: To agree the new office accommodation in NCC's Greenwell Lane building and to give delegated authority to the Town Clerk and Mayor to take the final decision after reviewing the costs.

Councillor Moore advised that the next North Area Council meetings were on January 25th and February 22nd when Electric Charging points will be in the agenda which Councillor Swinbank will present.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

C17/148 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (14th December 2017) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14th December 2017 were agreed as a true record.

C17/149 2017/18 budget update, 2018/19 budget and 2018/19 precept

a) 2017/18 budget update

The Town Clerk circulated the budget 2017/18 as at December 31st 2017. He advised that there were no concerns from the budget and commented on the following items of expenditure:

Playground Expenses - well below budget.

Grants and Subscriptions – over budget at £40,410.69 due to grants given to Gallery Youth and Alnwick Playhouse.

Projects – Toilet Cleaning / Refurbishment – no budget set so additional expenditure of £2,221.54.

Projects – Fingerposts – expenditure will be higher as two additional fingers have need to be ordered.

RESOLVED: To note the budget 2017/18 update.

b) 2018/19 budget

The Town Clerk advised that each of the Council's committees had approved the following recommended budgets for 2018/19 and explained the main changes:

BUDGET	MAIN CHANGES
Cemetery £19,260	Includes £3,000 less income in line with the actual 2017/18
Recreation & Amenities £111,965	Includes a 2 year replacement programme for the Town Centre planters; £6,000 for World War I commemoration; £7,500 towards the cost of refurbishment of Robertson's Fountain and a £2,500 increase in the Events budget
Finance & Policy £155,950	An additional £9,000 for grants to local organisations

There are also a number of budget lines are no longer needed and have been reduced accordingly. The total proposed budget for 2018/19 is £287,175.

RESOLVED: To approve the 2018/19 budget of £287,175.

c) 2018/19 precept

The Town Clerk advised that having agreed the budget the Council must then set the precept. At the Finance and Policy Committee on 7th December 2017, the

Committee considered the extent to which reserves should be used to support the 2018/19 budget and the Committee had recommended reserves are not used to reduce the precept in 2018/19.

The Finance and Policy Committee reviewed the Town Council precept for 2017/18 in comparison to other town councils in Northumberland. In 2017/18 the average Town Council precept for a Band D dwelling was £106.92, compared to £100.39 for Alnwick. The highest in the northern area was Morpeth at £113.38, whilst the overall highest was Choppington at £146.41.

A precept of £287,155 would be an increase of £20,037 and with the draft Council Tax Base of 2727.39 Band D equivalent dwellings the Town Council precept will increase to £105.29 for a Band D dwelling, equating to an annual increase of £4.90 (9.4p per week) and is a 4.9% increase. The new Band D town council precept in 2018/19 is likely to still be below the Northumberland Town Council average.

RESOLVED: To set the precept at £287,175 for 2018/19.

C17/150 Loan to Alnwick Town Junior Football Club (Councillor Castle left the meeting and Peter Hatley, Chairman of Alnwick Town Juniors, joined the meeting).

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the loan was to help fund a project by Alnwick Town Football Club Juniors to provide a full sized all weather floodlit artificial pitch, changing facilities, improved playing pitches and car parking at Greensfield, Alnwick. The facilities will also be available to the DCHS and the total cost of the project was just over £1million of which £450k has been secured from NCC and £400k was being secured from the Football Foundation.

He advised that in order to progress the project, Alnwick Town Juniors have asked Alnwick Town Council to lend them the remaining £190k and that the Town Council need to apply to the Secretary of State to borrow the £190,000 and this is to go towards the proposed Clubhouse and Changing Rooms (this part will be funded by the loan and NCC). In March 2017, the Council agreed the following resolution:

- i. That the Council agree, in principle, to apply to the Secretary of State to borrow £190,000 on behalf of Alnwick Town Junior Football Club to go towards their proposed Clubhouse and Changing Rooms at Greensfield.
- ii. The Council agree to undertake public consultation on the proposed project and on the Council's intention to borrow.
- iii. Prior to making the application to the Secretary of State, the Council require:
 - a) Written confirmation of the Service Level agreement with the Duchess's Community High School.
 - b) Written confirmation from the Duke of Northumberland to meet the first £6,333.50 of any default on loan repayments.
 - c) A copy of the signed lease and planning permission.
 - d) A loan agreement with the Football Club to be finalised including a requirement that the facilities (artificial pitch and clubhouse) be available for reasonable use by other clubs and sports (at the appropriate charge) when not in use by the club.
 - e) That the Alnwick Town Junior Football Club offer the Town Council a Trustee on the Board and agree to make financial information available to the Council on request, for the duration of the loan.
 - f) That Alnwick Town Junior Football Club undertakes some market testing to demonstrate that the estimates for pitch hire are viable and reasonable.

The Town Clerk gave the following update:

- a) Public consultation was undertaken after the October 2017 Council meeting. A press release inviting comments on the project and the Town Council's borrowing request. This appeared in the Gazette, had coverage on the Gazette's Facebook page and the Town Council's website.
The Gazette's Facebook page received 32 'likes' and 3 comments and the Town Council received 32 comments nearly all of which were supportive of the Town Council's proposals.
- b) Planning Permission was granted on 14th December 2017.
- c) The Lease is ready for signature, (a copy of the signed lease will be required for the loan application)
- d) The final Football Foundation panel meets on 18th Jan 2018 to hopefully agree funding of £409,000 (this will need to be approved before the loan application can be made).
- e) The financial commitment from the school and the timings for the school usage have been agreed between the school and the football club and the Service Level Agreement is being finalised.
- f) The Town Council has appointed Councillor Lisa Aynsley to be the Town Council representative on the Junior Football Club Board and she will be invited to future meetings.
- g) Extensive scrutiny of the Business Plan has been undertaken by the Football Foundation, to determine risks and the viability of the business case. They are satisfied with the details.
- h) The Town Council has requested written confirmation from Northumberland Estates regarding the loan repayment guarantee given to the Football Club by the Duke of Northumberland. This has already been confirmed to the Football Club.

Councillor questions:

Councillor Edge advised that the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan Policy ENV7 stated that planning applications for major developments should include landscaping and tree planting proposals to add to the distinctive character of the area. Peter Hately (PE) advised that he was quite happy to look at this but would need some help.

Councillor Symmonds felt that Councillor Edge could work with PE to give advice on planting on the site.

Councillor Swinbank advised PE that the Neighbourhood Plan sets out what the town needs and felt that the project needed to blend in more with its surroundings.

Councillor Symmonds thanked PE for his hard work on the project.

RESOLVED: a) To note the update b) to agree to seek Secretary of State approval to borrow £190,000, once the remaining requirements are addressed and c) give delegated authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, to finalise any remaining details required for the borrowing application.

Councillor Castle re-joined the meeting.

C17/151 Pharmacy Needs Assessment

The Town Clerk advised that NCC are undertaking a Pharmacy Needs Assessment (PNA) Consultation asking for the Town Council's comments by January 31st 2018, the end of

the consultation period. He advised that he would email the document to councillors asking for their comments and put together the Town Council's response.

RESOLVED: To submit the Town Councils response.

C17/152 Responding to the Car Alnwick Car Parking Study Findings

The Town Clerk gave a report following the meeting between the Car Parking Survey Consultants, 5 NCC officers, 8 Town Councillors and himself. He advised that a draft action plan had been put together following the meeting which was issued to councillors for review. He took councillors through the draft action plan.

Councillor Wearn agreed that signage was an issue.

Councillor Mavin felt that buses needed to have better routes.

Councillor Westendarp felt some of the actions could make more work for NCC's Enforcement Officers. Councillor Allcroft advised that Lynne Ryan (NCC) had said the actions would not cause any issues for Enforcement Officers.

Councillor Broom said that parking in the Market Place was still an issue. Councillor Moore advised that new signs were now in place.

Councillor Swinbank thanked the County Councillors for their involvement.

Councillors were asked to submit their comments to the Town Clerk by January 19th.

The Town Clerk advised that there was a meeting with other stakeholders on January 24th and that the Action Plan needed to be with NCC by January 31st.

RESOLVED: To agree that the Action Plan be sent to NCC by the Clerk incorporating any agreed amendments.

C17/153 Review of Constitution

The Town Clerk advised councillors that a Constitution annual review is required. The meeting to review the constitution is Tuesday February 27th at 7pm at the Mechanic's Institute and a report from this meeting will be given at the March or April Council meeting.

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

C17/154 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
Dec/Jan	Various thank you letters from grant recipients	Noted
14 th Dec	Confederation of Passenger Transport – request for Town Council to submit application for Coach Friendly Status for Alnwick	Officers to complete
21 st Dec	Highways England – details of A1 Willowburn Interchange works	Circulated to Councillors
29 th Dec	NCC – New date (25th Jan) for next North LAC meeting (start may be 3pm)	Noted
8 th Jan	Willowburn Trading Estate Planning Appeal (i)	To meet with NCC Officers

(i) The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had until 16th February 2018 to submit any further comments.

RESOLVED: To receive the correspondence.

C17/155 Financial Matters

a) Bank reconciliation

The Town Clerk advised that the Bank Reconciliation for Quarter 3 (to December 31st 2017) would be presented at the February meeting.

b) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
NCC	£9838.54	£4.17	Payroll November 2017
NCC	£9630.68	£4.17	Payroll December 2017
Viking Direct	£81.50	£13.58	Stationery
Chubb Fire & Security Ltd	£172.69	£28.78	Alarm contract
James McLean	£351.78	£45.31	Protective clothing and tools
Rix Petroleum	£615.83	£29.33	Gas oil
St James's Church Centre	£375.00	£0	Room bookings – council meetings
Information Commissioner	£35.00	£0	Data Protection Registration
J Pibworth	£145.80	£0	Mileage Sept - December
W R Batey	£142.20	£0	Mileage Sept - December
NCC	£656.40	£109.40	Stage for the Big Sing
James McLean	£9.60	£1.60	Materials - gloves
Petty Cash	£98.51	£16.42	Fuel for van
TOTAL	£22,153.53	£252.76	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure (Total £0).

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
BT	£34.50	£5.75	Phone Bill Fenkle Street paid Dec 22 nd
BT	£60.17	£10.03	Phone Bill Fenkle Street paid Dec 28 th
npower	£52.86	£2.52	Town hall Clock Paid Jan 10 th
NEST	£547.42	£0	Employer pension scheme contributions for December
British Gas	£19.97	£0	Gas Boiler Service/Safety certificate & HomeCare policy – Cemetery Lodge (Paid Dec 15 th)
O Brien	£82.56	£13.76	Trade Waste - Cemetery (Jan 14 th)
Northumbrian Water	£4390.38	£0	Ratten Row water supply and Robertson's Pant (5/6 months)
npower	£227.01	£10.81	Cemetery Chapel paid 19 Jan
npower	£36.94	£1.76	Cemetery store paid 19 th Jan

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £22,153.53 and to note the direct debit payments of £5,451.81.

C17/156 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Watson requested that a marker be installed in Alnwick Cemetery to mark William Davison's grave. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that he would research the views of Davison's religion about markers and add to the next agenda for discussion.

Councillor Castle advised that there may be a charge for road closure for some types of events in the future.

Councillor Wearn reported that the state of the bus station was a real issue.

Councillor Mavin thought that Alnwick needed to be included in the Northern Festival. Councillor Moore advised that Councillor Cath Holmer from NCC would be coming to Alnwick to discuss this with the Town Council.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.