

Alnwick Town Team

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team meeting held on **Wednesday 7th March at 5.30pm** at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

Present: Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Mark Brassell (MB) (Alnwick Garden), (Chamber of Trade), Cllr. Gordon Castle (GC), Philip Angier (Local Living), David Lovie (DL) (Civic Society), Eileen Blakey (EB) (Alnwick in Bloom), Tim Kirton (TK) (Alnwick District Council)

It was noted that Elizabeth Jones had stepped down as Chair of Alnwick in Bloom and Eileen Blakey has succeeded her.

1. Apologies for absence

Carlo Biagioni

2. Minutes of the last meeting, held Wednesday 7th February 2018

Approved as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising

Town Crier: TK had spoken to the Clive Mattison of The Freeman; Clive had advised that whilst The Freeman had supplied badges, etc. his understanding was that the last Town Crier had been a self-appointed volunteer but had, sadly, since passed away. It was agreed that TK should draft a news item for publication in the Northumberland Gazette advising that the Town Team were looking into the possibility of a new volunteer Town Crier and inviting candidates to come forward to be interviewed by the Town Team. It was also agreed that neighbouring Town Criers be approached to invite to help with recruitment.

Questions to NCC: CB had been unable to raise questions about NCC repairs to Alnwick town centre footpaths, etc. at the NCC North Area Team meeting as questions had not been permitted.

4. The Great Exhibition of the North Alnwick days: August 11th and 12th

MB had attended the launch of this event at The Sage Gateshead. The anticipated additional footfall to the region is expected to be in the millions. The NCC Culture team are eager for a Northumberland celebration theme to be run through the summer at the various towns. Some events being arranged in Hexham and Berwick, while August 11th and 12th will be dedicated "Alnwick Days".

MB has established a partnership with the entertainment agency, "Magnetic North-East" for that weekend which will feature pipers and a Ceilidh on Saturday 11th but there are so far no events arranged for Sunday 12th, which is frustrating as there is £5,000 grant aid available to put into this. While there is a full programme arranged at The Alnwick Garden for Saturday 11th there is nothing arranged for the 12th except normal Garden opening.

PA advised that his two key Local Living staff members are unavailable for Sunday 12th which effectively prevents Local Living from being involved that day. PA suggested a food theme for the Sunday rather than music.

It was noted that the Playhouse will be closed as a venue on the 12th of August.

It was agreed that new ideas for the Sunday along with the necessary people to deliver these, need to be found immediately. MB would approach Magnetic North-East to see if they could also participate on

the 12th and would also approach Anne at the Music Festival to retain the canopy and PA system for any Sunday events.

Action: MB

GC advised that he may be able to offer funding for chairs from his Capital Projects Budget and thought Cllr. Robbie Moore might be able to do the same. It was also agreed that a dedicated project manager needs to be appointed for this event and Jonathan Park at The Halifax Bank was suggested as one possibility; it was agreed that Town Team members should forward names of potential project managers to TK who would in turn circulate these names to all other TT members.

Action: All

5. Suggestions from the Town Team for agreed areas of priority for work

Further to the last meeting no such suggestions had been received so far; the Chairman asked everyone to forward any such suggestions to TK as soon as possible.

Action: All

6. List of one-off projects in which all Town Team partners can participate and working party for these (David Taylor)

No report as David Taylor was not present at the meeting

7. Neighbourhood Plan Community Action Plan Priority TC CAP 1: Proposal for the Town Team to lead on delivery (Tim Kirton)

TK reported that Alnwick Town council had recently received correspondence from the Chamber of Trade and Local Living highlighting Neighbourhood Plan TC CAP 1 (“to foster an integrated approach to the stewardship and development of town centre assets”) and TC CAP 3 (“developing a whole year strategy for the formal and informal use of the Market Place and its surrounding assets”) as being important to encourage the economic vitality of the town centre. These CAPs are both contained in the early years of the Neighbourhood Plan and both the Chamber and Local Living are keen to play a part in implementing these.

TC CAP 1 is identified as being delivered in Year 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan, i.e. in 2018-2019 with a proposal in the NP that the Council should ask the Town Team, or another body as appropriate, to lead.

The Town Council is also setting up a dedicated Working Group looking to look at vacant premises, encourage occupation and use of vacant town centre properties, including the re-use of some properties as living units, which would complement TC CAPs 1 and 3.

Town Council officers feel there is a strong emerging town centre theme which could be given priority in 2018-19 and that it may make better use of resources to have the one Working Group which could then involve other interested stakeholders such as Town Team members and possibly smaller sub-group work if required.

Following brief discussion all Town Team members present endorsed the Town Council’s leadership of such a Working Group and offered their participation as stakeholders willing to be involved within their areas of expertise, knowledge and skill.

8. Updates:

a) Local Living/Alnwick Markets – Philip Angier

PA advised of two forthcoming events; the Tourism Fair at Willowburn Leisure Centre on March 13th and the Easter/Farmer's Markets on Good Friday and Easter Saturday, 30th and 31st of March for which there is good interest in both days from traders.

b) Civic Society – David Lovie

The Civic Society is progressing "Heritage Training" and DL will advise TK of the details for forwarding around the Town Team. Around 1200 of the 2000 "Heritage Heroes" books printed have been distributed. The Civic Society AGM will take place at 7.30pm on March 21st at the St. James Centre in Pottergate, this will include a feature on "Living in Alnwick in the 1930s".

c) Chamber of Trade

In the absence of CB, PA reported that the CoT AGM had been held; this was well attended and membership has been growing and new Committee members elected. The AGM featured much discussion around empty town centre properties and the proposed retail development next to Arcinova, which the CoT opposes and has sent additional letters of objection and a petition to County Hall. The CoT felt it should not idly watch further retail development take place on the edge of the town unless such development was in the town's best interests.

d) County Council – Cllr. Gordon Castle

GC advised that the planning application for retail in front of Arcinova is unlikely to come to NCC Planning Committee before May owing to an independent Impact Assessment taking place.

The NCC budget for the next two financial years has been passed.

The Alnwick Playhouse is now owned by NCC, NTC are moving into the Dovecote Centre in Amble. The planning application for works to Alnwick playhouse to form an NCC services "hub" has been submitted. The Playhouse will close for rebuilding in July or August of this year.

The Tourist Information Centre and the Library will move into the rebuilt Playhouse eventually; the Library will continue to operate at Green Batt until it moves into the re-opened Playhouse.

The new football pitch close to the new Duchess Community High School is now fully funded; there is nothing else in the North-East of England like it.

e) Alnwick in Bloom - Eileen Blakey

EB reported that AiB are starting on weeding and cleaning up at the bus station, Green Batt, and the Gardener's House where the hedge will be lowered to enable people to see into the garden, where the "butcher's bike" will be located.

EB welcomed any "muscle" for the cleaning up of the bus station on Town "Clean-Up Day" on Sunday, March 25th.

The first Northumberland in Bloom judging day will be Friday 13th of April.

f) Alnwick Garden – Mark Brassell

MB distributed copies of The Alnwick Garden's Summer 2018 Guide/event plan. The highlight of The Alnwick Garden's summer season will be on 28th June when the "Alnwick Giants" arrive. A Winter Guide will be issued in the summer, the first time The Alnwick Garden has produced two guides, for different seasons. The Alnwick Garden's Christmas offer will be ground-breaking this year and new jobs will be created as a result.

A new play structure, one of the largest in the world, is planned for underneath the Tree House and a planning application will be submitted shortly. Not all the funding is secured yet but MB is confident this will flow within the next 2 years.

The Garden is making major plans for Armistice Day including music in the Garden, the sounding of The Last Post, poppies, working with schools and local poets and the lighting of a beacon at dusk. All proceeds from the sale of The Alnwick Garden admission tickets on November 11th will go to Veterans' charities.

The Alnwick Garden is ensuring that Halloween and Armistice Day commemorations are completely separate.

It was agreed that MB and ATC need to liaise with regard to Remembrance Sunday as large events are proposed at Hexham in the afternoon. **Action: MB and ATC**

g) Town Council – Tim Kirton:

Town Clean-up Day: Confirmed as Sunday March 25th from 10am to 12 noon

Willowburn Industrial Estate – The Planning Appeal Public Inquiry will be heard at the St. James' Centre, Alnwick, from Tuesday 17th July for 6 working days. Alnwick Town Council has secured Rule 6 Status for the Inquiry.

Map lectern outside Your Move: The Market Street town map has been installed.

Bus Station meeting: This was scheduled for February 21st but was postponed as key staff at Arriva and Morrison's had advised, late, that they would not be able to attend. An alternative date of April 11th is awaiting confirmation.

Coach Friendly status: TK thanked MB for his vital input into the writing of this form which was now ready for submission to the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

Business Networking meeting February 20th; TK reported that this event had been very successful with over 40 Alnwick businesses attending and hearing presentations by Paul Ryan, Finance Director at Arcinova, and Sir John Hall, developer of the Metro Centre and President of Newcastle United FC.

9. Proposed meeting dates April 2018 – March 2019:

The dates listed on the agenda were agreed with the exception of January 9th, will be omitted, so the Town Team meetings over the next year will be on:

April 4th	August 1st	December 5th
May 2nd	September 5th	February 6th
June 6th	October 3rd	March 6th
July 4th	November 7th	

10. Any other urgent business

None

Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday April 4th 2017 at 5.30pm at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.