

## Alnwick Town Team

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team meeting held on **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April at 5.30pm** at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

**Present:** Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Carlo Biagioni and David Taylor (Chamber of Trade), Trevor Jones (The Alnwick Garden), 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)

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Mark Brassell (The Alnwick Garden)

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Trevor Jones of the Alnwick Garden who was substituting for Mark Brassell who was on holiday.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting, held Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

Approved as a true and correct record.

### **3. Matters Arising**

TK apologised that he had not been able to pursue the Town Crier news item for publication in the Northumberland Gazette owing to urgent other work relating to the forthcoming public inquiry, etc. This would be pursued.

CB asked if Arch could become involved in the future of Alnwick bus station; GC thought this extremely unlikely as the bus station is owned by Morrison's and leased and managed by Arriva so it was not something Arch, with its economic development and business development remit, would normally get involved with. AS reminded the Town Team that a bus station meeting with Arriva and Morrison's is scheduled for next Wednesday, April 11th. AS was aware that bins at the bus station were not being properly emptied and this is being pursued with NCC by Bill Batey.

### **4. The Great Exhibition of the North Alnwick days: August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>**

TK said he had not received any nominations or suggestions for a potential project manager for August 12th, as had been invited from all at the last meeting. However, Jo Potts the Alnwick Playhouse Manager has arranged for two performances by The Globe Theatre Company on that date. The Globe are a world class company and certainly will be a fantastic draw for people in Newcastle to travel up to Alnwick for the weekend. Wendy Scott at NCC, who is co-ordinating The Great Exhibition events in Northumberland, has already been updated on this.

Jo had hoped to look at outdoor performances either at the market square or Castle and in light of the Playhouse building development working in partnership with the Castle would have been a good opportunity and the Globe agreed, however due to the Castle's busy summer schedule it was not possible. The logistics of how The Playhouse could charge for tickets for seating in the Market Square was difficult; voluntary donations were suggested by TT members but it was appreciated this might be difficult to enforce and needed to raise over £20 per head. Jo has therefore advised that the performances will therefore take place within Alnwick Playhouse, working around the alterations works. The Globe event with full details can be seen at:

<https://www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk/events/1/cat/page-2>

Jonathon Justice is also looking into extending the Music Festival into Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August. It was agreed by the TT that TK should ask Jonathon whether he would be willing to project manage the 12<sup>th</sup> events.

**Action: TK**

AS advised that a Festival Scottish piper will perform on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> August.

GC said that he would approach Robert Brooks who runs a professional battle re-enactment group, for possible Market Place activity.

**Action: GC**

It was noted that if the weather for events over that weekend was poor then events could possibly be held in Northumberland Hall, although it was recognised that acoustics there are not very good.

PA advised that the opening weekend of the Great Exhibition coincides with the Taste of the North launch in Alnwick which offers opportunities for ticketing publicity.

**5. List of one-off projects in which all Town Team partners can participate and working party for these (paper circulated)**

TK had previously circulated DT and CB's paper listing potential projects and his responses (in blue) to all TT members. Comments from TT members were invited.

Bollard repainting was identified as a simple project which a large group of volunteers from all interested parties could get involved with; this project could also be widened to take in repainting of the signage in the Market Place and the railings in the town. The Chamber of Trade members present were asked to trawl their membership to see whom would participate in this and TK was asked to identify a potential date or dates (weather dependent).

**Action: CB, DT, TK**

Several of the other projects suggested such as passageway illumination and repainting required the permission of landowners and CB and DT said they would contact these owners. TK also pointed out that electrical installations might also require planning permission and Listed Buildings Consent. GC said he would approach Kevin Thompson over the Corn Exchange clock and steps.

**Action: GC**

As regards the final request to give pedestrian priority in Narrowgate, GC gave a short history of the proposals for remodelling Narrowgate and stated that in the past local traders and vociferous members of the Chamber of Trade had stopped design work by objecting to pedestrian prioritisation proposals; ATC and NCC will not take these proposals any further if the CoT continues to object to them because they must have the support of businesses. GC asked that the CoT email GC and The Mayor asking for this design work to be picked up by NCC, citing health and safety issues around pedestrian/traffic conflicts.

**Action: CB**

It was agreed that the Town Team hereby requests that GC speak Richard McKenzie at NCC about this and possibly request that an NCC Highway Engineer attend a future TT meeting.

**Action: GC**

## **6. Updates:**

### **a) *Alnwick Garden – Mark Brassell***

No report as MB is away on holiday

### **b) *Alnwick in Bloom - Eileen Blakey***

Northumbria in Bloom judging takes place next Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> April. Lloyd's Bank are doing a "Make a Difference Day" in connection with this. AiB will approach The Alnwick Garden with a request for compost, shortly.

### **c) *Chamber of Trade - Carlo Biagioni and David Taylor***

- a) CB advised that the Alnwick Food Guide is now available (copies were circulated) and has been well received.
- b) The CoT are proposing to produce a "Shopping Guide" for Alnwick with a full list of shops by type; there are 71 retail businesses in Alnwick town centre and it is felt that Alnwick town centre needs to sell itself like a single department store. CB said that the CoT are building an "Alnwick Shopping" website.
- c) DT is currently undertaking a survey on empty shops: The CoT are proposing that posters be put up in Alnwick's empty shop windows to fill these up.
- d) There is also a need to identify the types of shops which Alnwick does NOT have, with a view to filling these gaps by attracting investment by similar shops elsewhere to open a shop in Alnwick.
- e) DL suggested an Alnwick Retail Fair similar to its Tourism Fair to promote the area and show an increasing market to sell things.  
AS said that the ATC Town Centre Working Group will be interested in these ideas.
- f) CB circulated designs received from DCHS students for the proposed arch into the Column Field

### **d) *Civic Society – David Lovie***

175 copies of the Heritage Heroes book were distributed at the Tourism Fair. The Civic Society is still offering talks on how the book was produced and approaches are invited from all organisations.

The Civic Society is looking in detail at the Community Action Proposals (CAPs) within the Neighbourhood Plan for which it would have an input; there are about 15 years of projects the Society could be involved in.

### **e) *Local Living/Alnwick Markets – Philip Angier***

PA reported a good Tourism Fair. The month of March is best forgotten because of the bad weather but the Good Friday and Easter Saturday markets were successful in spite of that. Dawn Watts has stepped down as Market Manager and the vacancy is now being advertised.

The mid-week market will be moved from Thursday to Friday from the 13<sup>th</sup> and footfall will be monitored.

### **f) *County Council – Cllr. Gordon Castle***

GC recommended to DL that the Civic Society might wish to reconsider reissuing their excellent Shopfront Paintwork Guide for Alnwick produced some ten years ago.

**g) Town Council – Tim Kirton**

- a) TK reminded everyone that the inaugural meeting of the Town Council's Town Centre Working Group would take place at 6.30pm on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April at the Mechanics' Institute and that all TT members are invited to attend.
- b) The first meeting of an Alnwick Master Planning Group would be held on 17<sup>th</sup> April; this Group will deal only with planning future use of land and property owned by the Town and County Councils and is not open to the Town Team members.
- c) The next Alnwick Bus Station meeting with Arriva and Morrison's will be held on Wednesday April 11<sup>th</sup>; this has been rearranged from February's meeting which was postponed at the request of Morrison's. The Chamber of Trade and Alnwick in Bloom are attending the bus station meeting.
- d) Willowburn Industrial Estate: Alnwick Town Council has briefed a QC to represent the Council at the Public Inquiry to be held in July to hear the appeal by Northern Commercial and Harris and Sheldon against refusal of permission for housing last year.
- e) Northern Commercial and Harris and Sheldon have submitted a second application for the site which excludes the old County Council depot site and proposes up to 100 houses rather than 125. TK reported that more businesses have objected to this new application than objected to the original application last year. The new application is now being considered by NCC.

**7 Any other urgent business**

None

**8 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**5.30pm on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018, Alnwick Garden Pavilion**

The meeting ended at 6.58pm