

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 14th December 2017
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

Present Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, A Fletcher, B Gridale, M Harrington, J Humphries, G Mavin, 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.

C17/126 Questions from the public

None.

C17/127 Apologies for absence

Cllrs. Broom, McDougall and Moore.

C17/128 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters and Councillor Patience declared a pecuniary and Councillor Westendarp declared a non-pecuniary in Item 9. Alnwick Bike Track Update. Councillor Patience advised that she would like to stay and answer any councillor questions before leaving the meeting.

C17/129 Minutes of the Last meeting

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th November 2017 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2017 were agreed as a true record.

C17/130 Matters Arising

C17/114 Change name from Tony Smith to Terry Smith.

C17/121 Most councillor priorities now received so Working Groups will be set up in the new year.

C17/131 Mayor's Report

The Mayor gave his report to councillors.

Remembrance Sunday was on November 13th at St Paul's Church with almost 600 people attending the service and 450 parading to the War Memorial. Once again we were fortunate to have the Band of the Regiment of Fusiliers playing and were this year joined by members of HMS Northumberland including their Commanding Officer. They certainly made a fine addition to the Remembrance Sunday activities.

Blue Plaque unveiling for William Davison was on November 16th at Specsavers and we were joined by around 20 people including representatives of the organisations who had provided financial support.

The following day was the highly anticipated Christmas Lights switch on in the Market Place and the Duchess of Northumberland and a child turned on the Christmas Lights. Local food suppliers were giving out samples of their produce.

On November 29th he attended the At Home at the invitation of NCC's Civic Head. Held at County Hall there was a good turnout with stalls in the foyer who gave a donation to MacMillan Cancer Support.

The previous night had been the annual Civic Carol Service at St Michael's Church which was supported once again by the Bailiffgate Singers and also St Paul's School choir.

Around 150 people attended and £300 was collected during the service for the Alnwick Talking Newspapers, the Mayor's Charity for this year. The Mayor thanked councillors for supporting the event and said he was particularly pleased that his wife Iris was able to join him for the event.

C17/132 Update on County Council Matters (Councillors Castle)

Playhouse deal completed and signed. He confirmed that the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and the Library will move into the building. Timescale is unclear as planning permission will be needed. He advised that the Library would stay at its current location for as long as possible.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Library and TIC would be the same size when they move into The Playhouse building. Councillor Castle advised that both would be smaller and that the TIC would no longer sell goods.

Office Accommodation is now available for the Town Council to use in Greenwell Lane building. There is furniture which can also be used. This would enable Town Council and County Council functions to be in the same location and would give NCC Members and Town Councillors accommodation to hold meetings.

Councillor Patience asked when this would be available from. Councillor Castle advised that as yet a date had not been agreed.

Councillor Patience asked if the accommodation would be used to hold surgeries. Councillor Castle confirmed that it could be but would need to be booked.

Councillor Edge asked if NCC Local Services had been cut back. Councillor Castle advised that services had not been reduced but had been moved to other locations.

Parking Survey had been completed and there will be a 24-hour limit in all car parks.

Councillor Mavin advised that once this was confirmed the town leaflets would need to be reprinted.

The Town Clerk advised that a letter had been received to organise date for feedback meeting on parking survey.

Councillor Swinbank reported that enforcement of parking limits in the Market Place was not happening. Councillor Symmonds advise that cars were parking in designated loading bays. Councillor Castle advised reporting the matter to Ruth Bendell at NCC.

Councillor Patience felt that the loading bays needed better signage. Councillor Castle advised that as it was part of the Conservation Area smaller signs had been needed.

Councillor Swinbank asked if Beware Children signs could be put up on Taylor Drive.

Councillor Watson advised asking the police to patrol Taylor Drive.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

C17/133 2018/19 Precept Timetable

The Town Clerk advised that NCC have set a deadline for the submission of the 2018/19 precept information as 29th January 2018. The Town Council will look to agree its budget and set its precept on 11th January 2018. The Indicative Council Tax Base (Band D equivalents) for 2018/19 for Alnwick is 2727.39, which is an increase of 66.33.

RESOLVED: To note the timetable.

C17/134 Alnwick Bike Track project update

The Town Clerk reported that planning permission had been gained in 2015 and that Gallery Youth and Groundworks would develop the site and manage the bike track. Alnwick Town Council have also gained a 20 year licence for the site at £100 a year.

He advise that the development costs would be £109k and that £89.5k had been secure so far. An application to Sport England had reached the 2nd stage of assessment but Alnwick Town Council had now been asked to be the applicant, as they were for the SUEZ application.

He advised that he had reviewed the lease and that the Town Council can break the lease with 12 months' notice but that Sport England would like assurances that, if they offer funding, they would not break the lease for a minimum period of 7 years.

He advised that the Town Council have not put any money into the project so could contribute to the costs if there is a shortfall in funding. The Finance & Policy budget has £25k unallocated and the Recreation & Amenities budget £14k unallocated.

Councillor Wearn felt that the footpaths and cycle paths were not adequate on the proposed Windy Edge housing site. The Town Clerk advised that the safety of users of the bike track was included in the council's comments.

Councillor Wearn asked that as the project started 8 years ago was there still interest in it. Councillor Patience advised that young people in the town were still interested in having a bike track.

Councillor Harrington reported that there was a similar facility in Kelso.

Councillor Swinbank asked if Gallery Youth had a plan for managing the site. Councillor Patience advised that this needed to be discussed with the Town Council.

Councillor Humphries asked if there was any shelter on the site. Councillor Patience advised that there was an old shed on site which could be used or replaced.

Councillor Patience left the meeting whilst the lease and possible funding was considered.

RESOLVED: To agree that Alnwick Town Council become the applicant for the Sport England application and agree, that in the event funding is given, not to break the lease for a minimum of 7 years.

The Town Clerk asked councillors to consider allocating a budget to the project up to specified amount in case all the funding is not able to be secured.

Councillor Swinbank wondered what would happen if the Town Council allocated funds to the project then the infrastructure was ripped out for the housing development.

Councillor Castle felt that the Town Council should support the project with a budget of £10-£15k and that he would allocated some funding when his new NCC budget was released in April 2018.

RESOLVED: To allocate up to £10k to the project to be used if all the required funding is not secured.

Councillor Mavin said he had concerns that the current Town Council were committing a future Town Council to provide funding to remedial works to reinstate the site.

Councillor Allcroft felt that it was a useful project as there was money in the budget which could be used to support it.

Councillor Wearn supported the project but wondered if there would be enough funding. The Town Clerk advised that the costs had recently been reviewed and updated.

Councillor Fletcher asked when the outcome of the application to Sport England would be known.

Councillor Watson said he supported the project 100%.

C17/135 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (9th November 2017) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 9th November 2017 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (16th November 2017) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on 16th November 2017 were agreed as a true record.

The Chair of the Cemetery Committee proposed the recommendation of the Cemetery Fees for 2018/19 (Minute CEM 17/24).

RESOLVED: To approve the Cemetery Fees for 2018/19.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (23rd November 2017) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 23rd November 2017 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (7th December 2017) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 7th December 2017 were agreed as a true record.

C17/136 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
16 th and 21 st Nov	NALC -enews	Circulated to Councillors
22 nd Nov	SAAA- notification of external auditor for 2017/18 – PKF Littlejohn LLP, Canary Wharf, London; Scale of Fees likely to be £800+Vat	To note
23 rd Nov	NCC – Parking Studies update – reports likely to be with Town Council by end of year, Meeting to be arranged early in the New Year	To note
28 th Nov	Age UK – information on volunteer roles	Available from the clerk on request. Copy on Notice Board
30 th Nov	NCC – Alnwick Moor Railway Bridge Strengthening works (on B6341), looking for views on timing (ii)	Considered
30 th Nov	NCC- Pharmacy Needs Assessment Consultation – runs until 31st Jan 2018 (i)	To be circulated for comments
6 th Dec	North Tourism Fairs – Willowburn event will be on Thursday 13th March 2018	To note

- (i) The Town Clerk asked that comments were sent to him by January 9th and would be included on the next Full Council agenda.
- (ii) The Town Clerk asked councillors for their views on the timing of the proposed closure. Councillor agreed October 2018.

RESOLVED: i) To receive the correspondence, ii) notify NCC that October 2018 was the preferred date for the bridge strengthening works.

C17/137 Update from a) Town Team and b) Recent Business Forum

Councillor Castle left meeting due to a declaration of interest in item 12a).

a) Town Team The Project & Funding Officer gave feedback from the last Town Team meeting held on 6th December.

The Christmas lights switch-on and Lantern Parade both very successful with attendee numbers for the Lantern Parade comparable to last year. More shops were open this year and there was much more going on in Market Place.

Christmas Market days were very successful with 11,000 visitors, double the normal weekend figure.

There are proposals for a Column Field Arch which is close to securing all finance, for which planning permission will be needed. There has been a request for the Tenantry Column Lights to be switched on.

Alnwick Garden won Bronze in the North East Tourism Awards.

Chamber of Trade will be producing a food and drink guide for Alnwick.

Councillor Allcroft felt that it would be better to spend the money on the pathways in Column Field rather than an arch.

b) Recent Business Forum The Project & Funding Officer reported The most recent Business Forum meeting, the fourth this year, was held on 21st November, around 32 people attended, including representatives of about 20 businesses.

There have been a wide range of presentations so far on funding for training, apprenticeships, superfast broadband in Alnwick and the forthcoming requirement for businesses to submit online tax returns.

Meetings have been well received and businesses have found them worthwhile and there have been many follow ups between presenters and Alnwick businesses.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 20th February 2018 when Paul Ryan of Arcinova will be speaking and to which all councillors are invited.

The Town Council will be issuing questionnaires to the businesses who have attended the Business Forums to ask for their feedback on the content and format of the meetings including requests for future topics.

There are also plans to issue a business newsletter.

C17/138 Financial Matters

a) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
Stuart Murray	£413.00	£0	Painting of Cemetery Chapel

T Kirton	£49.98	£8.33	Paint for Cemetery Chapel
Northumbria in Bloom	£200.00	£0	In Bloom entry fee
NCC	£9735.30	£0	Payroll- Oct
NCC	£9892.20	£0	Payroll - Aug
NCC	£463.58	£77.26	Staging for Xmas Lights switch on/Lantern parade.
C Bowden	£500.00	£0	Renewal of Cemetery Chapel wall panels £450 and Gate repair £50
Fife Plant Hire	£224.40	£37.40	Cemetery - materials
St James's Church Centre	£91.00	£0	Room Hire – Business Forum
Electratest (UK) Ltd	£110.94	£18.49	PAT testing Cemetery and Fenkle St Office
Blackshaws	£209.00	£34.83	Van Service
The Farm Cakery	£95.00	£0	Refreshments Business Forum and Blue Plaque
Diamond Business Systems	£59.40	£9.90	Photocopier Service Charge
Local Living	£612.50	£0	Willowburn Unit rent (Q3)
J Pibworth	£15.00	£2.50	Refreshments Blue Plaque
W R Batey	£192.04*	£19.50	Refreshments Civic Carol service - £42.07*, Cemetery Chapel Paint £74.97, £75* (3 x £25 gift vouchers for helpers on Remembrance Sunday
Team Valley Web Design	£600.00	£100.00	Website Hosting & support Dec 17 – Nov 18
Andrew Carr	£60.00	£0	Bus Shelter Cleaning
NCC	£90.00	£0	Hire Northumberland Hall for Erasmus reception
James McLean	£173.99	£29.00	Tools, Mower/Saw repairs
Azure Charitable Enterprises	£117.50	£0	Copies of Neighbourhood Plan
J Pibworth	£17.93*	£2.99	Refreshments for Civic Carol Service
Azure Charitable Enterprises	£191.23*	£17.04	Christmas Cards (102.23) and Civic Carol Service Orders of Service (£89)*
TOTAL	£24,113.99	£357.24	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure (Total £224).

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
BT	£50.58	£8.43	Phone Bills Cemetery paid Nov 28th
BT	£34.20	£5.70	Phone Bill Fenkle Street to pay Nov 22nd
BT	£87.29	£14.55	Quarterly Broadband Charge paid 1st Dec.

NEST	£573.26	£0	Employer pension scheme contributions for November (paid 15th December)
British Gas	£40.00	£0	Gas Boiler Service/Safety certificate & HomeCare policy – Cemetery Lodge (Paid 16/10 £20.03, Paid 15/11 £19.97)
O Brien	£103.20	£17.20	Trade Waste - Cemetery (14th Dec)
Northumbrian Water	£110.29	£0	Robertson's Fountain

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £24,113.99 and to note the direct debit payments of £998.82.

b) Grants

The Town Clerk reported that at the Finance & Policy meeting on December 7th 2017 grant payments were agreed to local organisations of £17,000. The following grants were awarded with some grants conditional on further information.

Bailiffgate Museum £1,600
Northumbrian CAB – Alnwick Office £1,600
HospiceCare North Northumberland £1,600
Alnwick & District Sports Council £300
Alnwick Medical Group £250
Alnwick Dolphins £250
Mind and Soul £250
Alnwick Health Walks £250
Lionheart Radio & Media CIC £700
Bailiffgate Singers £250
Alnwick Music Society £250
MyLife Productions £250
Northumberland Touring Theatre Company £250
Alnwick Stroke Club £250
Alnwick Arthritis Care £250
Community@NE66 £600
Aspire to Believe £300
STARS Learning Ltd £300
MIND (Tyneside and Northumberland) £400
Mighty Oaks £400
Abbeyfield House £250
Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard £250
Alnwick Garden Trust £250
Northumberland Credit Union £400
Lionhearts (Blyth Star Enterprises Limited) £250
Western Front Association £300

The Town Clerk also advised that funding for the Alnwick Playhouse was also discussed at the Finance & Policy Committee. He reminded councillors that in January 2017 the Town Council had agreed a 4 year funding package starting in 2017/18, this was based upon the new arrangements at the Playhouse including the formation of a Community Hub. This arrangement is taking longer to finalise than was envisaged, the Policy and Finance Committee agreed grant aid for the

Playhouse in 2017/18 of up to £5,000 (£2,500 immediately and another £2,500 in later in the year subject to there being a need). He advised that the Full Council needed to agree that the four year funding package would now commence in 2018/19.

RESOLVED: To authorise the grant payments and agree that the four year funding package for the Alwick Playhouse previously agreed in January 2017, now commences in the 2018/19 financial year.

C17/139 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Swinbank asked what the consultation exercise taking place in Morpeth was about and asked if something similar was planned for Alwick. The Town Clerk advised that he would make enquires about this.

The meeting closed at 8.53pm.