

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018  
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

**Present** Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, L Aynsley, P Broom, P Edge, A Fletcher, W Griddale, M Harrington, J Humphries, G Mavin, R Moore, S Patience, M Swinbank, G Watson, L Wearn and C Westendarp.

**In attendance** W Batey, Town Clerk & Chief Officer; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Councillor Cath Homer, NCC and 2 members of the public (Julie Henderson + 1 other).

**C17/176 Questions from the public**

Julie Henderson (JH) asked what the current state of play on the planning application for the Retail Park. Councillor Swinbank advised that it was NCC who make the decisions about planning applications. The Town Council make comments on applications which were on the NCC website. He advised that the Town Council had looked at the Retail Park application and had commented that the Retail Impact Study should be assessed independently which he understood NCC are commissioning. He reported that the revised plans for the site had been considered at the Planning Meeting earlier that evening.

Councillor Aynsley asked how shopkeepers would get involved in the Retail Impact Study. Councillor Symonds advised that the Impact Study was being commissioned by NCC and a public document would be produced. The planning decision would be made by NCC at a public meeting where people could speak for or against the scheme. He advised that if anyone was planning to speak they should ensure that their comments were concise as there is a time limit on people speaking.

Councillor Swinbank advised that he was aware of issue in the town centre and that any data should be submitted on-line.

The Town Clerk advised that there was no final date given yet for comments.

Councillor Moore advised JH that Alnwick were represented by two County councillors and that he was happy to meet with JH to discuss the issue.

Councillor Symmonds advised that JH would be notified of the link to the Planning Portal and the date for the NCC Planning Committee when the application would be discussed.

**C17/177 Apologies for absence**  
Cllr Castle, Cllr McDougall

**C17/178 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillor Moore declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters. Councillors Edge, Harrington and Symmonds declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 13. Mechanics Institute Draft Accounts 2017/18 and Budget 2018/19.

**C17/179 Update on the Great Exhibition of the North 2018 and Active Northumberland by Cllr Cath Homer, NCC**

Active Northumberland - Councillor Cath Homer (CH) reported that an independent review had been undertaken which had found some procedural issues including HR Terms and Conditions.

CH reported that staff had been very supportive during the review and that a report had been published on the issues relating to Active Northumberland.

CH reminded councillors that Active Northumberland run leisure provision across Northumberland and own some premises. She reported that no terms of engagement and that the lack of budgetary systems had resulted in pricing issues. She also reported that some ill-matched areas had been bought together including TICs and Libraries.

CH reported that a financial black hole had resulted in NCC having to allocate £2.6m to keep Active Northumberland going and it may result in more money being spent. CH reported that there had been some governance issues which had been dealt with, including replacing several board members and focusing on marketing and finance.

CH advised that an Operating Agreement was being drawn up focused on Sports Facilities only. Some policies had been rationalised to ensure better management of Active Northumberland. Regular reports would be going to the Audit Committee. Staff surveys are now showing a much better position and improved morale.

#### Councillor questions / comments

Councillor Allcroft thought that the issues sounded like mismanagement.

Councillor Broom felt that staff training was falling short. He advised that he had witnessed issues with hygiene standards at Alnwick Swimming Pool and the Learning Pool had been closed several times. CH advised that she would look into this matter.

Councillor Mavin had read the report and asked how many of the board were still in place. CH advised that two members of the board were still in place. She advised that much of the information had not made it to the board.

Councillor Mavin felt that communication was still a real issue especially in the libraries. CH advised that NCC had worked hard to resolve the issues.

Councillor Swinbank asked what the current structure of Active Northumberland was. CH advised that it was a Charitable Trust and this had benefits.

Councillor Patience felt it was a very comprehensive report but NCC should look at why safeguarding was raised as an issue. CH advised there had been cost cutting exercises. Councillor Patience asked if the scale of the money needed would be passed onto residents. CH advised that the money had already been allocated.

Great Exhibition of the North 2018 – Councillor Homer reported that this would be for 8 weeks from June 22<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and will celebrate the pioneer spirit of the North. There will be an emphasis on families and 3m visitors are expected, 50% of which are anticipated to visit other areas in the North East. There will be 3 areas with trails around Newcastle and Gateshead covering art, design and invention.

A Northumberland event is planned which will launch in Hexham and close in Berwick. Alnwick has been chosen as one of the towns to host events during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August. She advised that the budget for the events in Northumberland was not large. CH ended by saying that the event was about promoting Northumberland.

Councillor Symmonds advised that the Town Team had discussed the event and that councillors with suggestions should email them to the Project & Funding Officer.

#### **C17/180**

#### **Approve Minutes of the Last meeting**

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were agreed as a true record.**

**C17/181 Matters Arising including Office Accommodation and Car Parking**  
17/163 Office Accommodation Councillor Swinbank asked if there was an update on the new office. The Town Clerk advised that they were still awaiting Landlord's approval.

**C17/182 Mayor's Report**  
The Mayor advised that there was no Mayor's report this month as the weather had affected some of the planned activities.

**C17/183 Considering Masterplanning in Alnwick**  
The Town Clerk had circulated a report on Masterplanning for Alnwick. He explained that Masterplanning was for a building or area; he gave an example of masterplanning undertaken in Morpeth on County Council buildings and car parks.  
It is relevant to Alnwick as it links to the Neighbourhood Plan in which there are several potential NCC sites - old DCHS site, Duke's Middle School site, Lindisfarne school; and non NCC sites: Corn Exchange and Roxboro Place Car Park.  
He advised that Councillor Castle felt that all councillors be invited to the initial meeting. Councillor Moore felt that it would work in Alnwick as NCC would potentially get input into what to do with their properties in the town.  
Councillor Patience welcomed the openness but felt it was a bit prescriptive and should be more inclusive.  
Councillor Grisdale felt it needed to be engaging and more inclusive.  
Councillor Moore advised that the Morpeth model might not be an appropriate model for Alnwick.  
Councillor Swinbank supported the principle of Masterplanning in Alnwick and welcomed a more open approach.  
Councillor Moore advised that the initial meeting could define who would be involved.

**RESOLVED: i) The Town Council agrees to work with Northumberland County Council on a masterplan for key town sites, in support of the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan; ii) The first meeting should be convened as soon as possible, to which all councillors will be invited, and priority given to agreeing overall terms of reference and commencing discussions on the Lindisfarne School site.**

**C17/184 Community Action Proposals – Progress and Priorities for 2018/19**  
The Town Clerk summarised the Community Action Proposals (CAPs) – Progress and Priorities for 2018-19 document, which had been circulated to councillors, and which the Project & Funding had recorded progress for the CAPs prioritised for 2018. He advised that the Chamber of Trade and Local Living had requested that the Town Council focus on TCCAP1 (to foster an integrated approach to the stewardship and development of Town Centre assets) and TCCAP3 (to develop a whole year strategy for the formal and informal use of the Market Place and its surrounding assets in line with the findings of this Plan, including as appropriate parking arrangements). It was explained that this also fitted with the Town Council's desire to look at vacant town centre buildings

**RESOLVED: Town Centre CAPs and other actions to be taken forward by a Town Council working group, to which other interested stakeholders could be invited.**

**C17/186 Risk Management Register**

The Mayor reported that the Risk Management Register had been reviewed at the Finance & Policy meeting in February 2018.

The Town Clerk advised that following discussions, the document had been updated and circulated to councillor for approval by Full Council. He highlighted the additions and amendments which had been made. He explained that new columns had been added for the Likelihood (L) and Potential Impact (PI) of each risk. Progress on the previous year were in shown in red and new actions for 2018/19 added.

**RESOLVED: To approve the Risk Management Register.**

**C17/184 Asset Register**

The Town Clerk circulated the updated Asset Register 2017-18 to councillors. He explained that assets in orange had been removed during 2017-18 whilst those in green had been added to the register. All insurance values had been updated and appropriate new items added to the insurance policy.

**RESOLVED: To approve the 2017-18 Asset Register.**

**C17/188 Consideration of introduction of an Honorary Freeman / Honorary Freewoman Scheme**

The Town Clerk summarised the document circulated to councillors. He explained that the main focus of any potential scheme was to honour those who "rendered eminent service". He advised that anyone can make a nomination but unlike the Civic Awards each nomination would need to be discussed and agreed by the Full Council with each nomination receiving a  $\frac{2}{3}$ <sup>rd</sup> majority of votes.

His research of other schemes suggested each nominee to have rendered eminent service for some 20 years before being considered for the award.

Councillor Aynsley felt that 20 years was a long.

Councillor Allcroft agreed that 20 years was too long.

Councillor Watson thought that 10 years was a more suitable timescale.

Councillor Aynsley felt the scheme should not be time served at all.

Councillor Edge felt that the scheme had its own self check as each nominee had to be approved by  $\frac{2}{3}$ <sup>rd</sup> of the Full Council.

**RESOLVED: i) To introduce a Freeman/Freewoman Scheme; ii) To amend the nomination criteria to include a qualifying time period of 10 years and in exceptional circumstances that the Town Council may waive this time period.**

**C17/189 Mechanics Institute Draft Accounts 2017/18 and 2018/19 Budget**

The Town Clerk presented the draft accounts for the Mechanics Institute for the year 2017/18 (ended 14<sup>th</sup> January 2018). He explained that a management fee was now being charged by the Town Council and that room bookings by the Town Council were now being invoiced.

He advised that both usage had increased resulting in a £1.4k increase in turnover and £7,797 profit. He also explained the proposed budget and work plan for 2018-19.

Councillor Watson felt that the interest rate on the investment account seemed low which the Town Clerk advised he would look at this.

Councillor Wearn asked if there were any grants which the Mechanics Institute could apply for to help pay for some of the works and improvements identified. The Town Clerk advised he would look at this.

**RESOLVED: To approve the accounts for the Mechanics Institute for 2017-18 and the proposed works and expenditure for 2018-19.**

**C17/190 Council Investment Strategy and Investments**

The Town Clerk circulated the Alnwick Town Council investments policy (October 2015) document and explained that the Town Council currently had bonds with Santander and Lloyds. He explained that it had been previously agreed to invest £16k in Rathbone Ethical Bonds but in March 2017 it was agreed not to do this and he recommended that this remain the position for the time being. He explained that the investment bonds will both be maturing in the next month. As the new interest rates for various time periods were not yet known, he recommended that delegated power be given to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of Finance & Policy to reinvest with the same organisations.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council continue its Investment Strategy and gives delegated power to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of Finance & Policy to reinvest the Lloyds and Santander Investment Bonds, with these organisations.**

**C17/191 Updates from**

**a) County Council Matters** (Councillor Moore)

NCCs budget for 2018-19 – this had been agreed at the February 21<sup>st</sup> Full Council meeting and would be a 2.99% increase on 2017-18.

Post 16 Transport – there will be no charges from September 2018 but an administration charge would be made. Consultation was underway.

Pot-holes – councillors were asked to notify Councillor Moore of any bad potholes which had appeared as a result of the bad weather.

North Area Council meeting – next meeting in Berwick on March 22<sup>nd</sup>

County Councillor surgeries – Councillor Moore's next surgery was on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am.

**b) Business Forum** (Project & Funding Officer)

He reported that the Business Forum meeting on Tuesday February 20<sup>th</sup> was well attended by over 40 businesses. Guest speakers were Paul Ryan, Finance Director at Arcinova, and Sir John Hall who was interviewed by the Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Allcroft asked if a video or transcript of the meeting was available.

The Project & Funding Officer advised that the next meeting would be in May.

**RESOLVED: To receive the updates.**

**C17/192 Proposed Town Clean-up Day**

The Town Clerk advised that the date for the next clean-up day was proposed as Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup> between 10am and 12 noon. Councillor Wearn reported that the Alnmouth Road Resident Association would also be undertaking a clean-up on Saturday March 24<sup>th</sup>.

**RESOLVED: To agree Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup> as the Town Clean-up day.**

**C17/193 Minutes of Committees**

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (8<sup>th</sup> February 2018) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (15<sup>th</sup> February 2018) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were agreed as a true record.**

**C17/194 Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Action if any</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> Feb	NCC Local Plan call for housing & employment sites	To note
14 <sup>th</sup> Feb	NCC – Definitive Map & Statement of Public Rights of Way Consultation – deadline 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Considered by Planning Committee
16 <sup>th</sup> Feb	PINS - Confirmation of Rule 6 party status for Willowburn Public Inquiry	To note (i)
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Local Living/Chamber of Trade re Willowburn Retail and Community Action priorities for Town Centre	Clerk to respond
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Sport England – Offer of £20k to Bike Track project	To accept the offer
20 <sup>th</sup> Feb	NALC – enews	Circulated to councillors
20 <sup>th</sup> Feb	NCC - Post 16 Transport Consultation – deadline 2nd April	Considered by Planning Committee
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	NCC- Getabout Access Scheme details	Available from Clerk on request
27 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Local MP – anti-social behaviour at bus station	Clerk to respond
27 <sup>th</sup> Feb	NALC – enews	Circulated to councillors
28 <sup>th</sup> Feb	PINS – details of Willowburn Public Inquiry (17th July start and running for 6 days)	To note (ii)
28 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Chamber of Trade – re town centre and impact of proposed retail development	Clerk to respond

- (i) The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had been granted Rule Status with regard to the Willowburn Inquiry.
- (ii) The Town Clerk advised that the date for the Willowburn Inquiry would start on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and run for 6 days.

**RESOLVED: To receive the correspondence.**

**C17/195 Financial Matters**

**Payments**

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>DETAIL</b>
Davidson & Son	£3,000.00	£500.00	Christmas Lights Grant
Northumberland CC	£900.00	£0	Fenkle Street Office Rent
Northumberland CC	£1,146.00	£191.00	Installation of new Fingerposts
Northumberland CC	£4,421.01	£0	Extra Clean Toilets
Tim Kirton	£11.30*	£1.88	Refreshments Business Forum
The Real Taste of Northumberland	£130.00*	£0	Refreshments Business Forum
Scot JCB Ltd	£170.76	£27.46	Repair JCB oil leak
Northumberland CC	£175.00	£0	Chainsaw Training (I Hopper)
W R Batey	£88.65	£0	Mileage
J Pibworth	£57.60	£0	Mileage
NFU Mutual	£1,139.75	£0	Employer Pension Contribution, W R Batey Oct 2017 – Mar 2018
Standard Life	£179.87	£0	Employer Pension Contribution, J Pibworth Oct 2017 – Mar 2018
Tim Kirton	£61.20	£0	Mileage
Northumberland Estates	£75.00	£0	Ratten Row Allotment rent
Petty Cash	£115.75	£16.67	Fuel £100, mileage £15.75
South Road Tyres	£18.00	£3.00	Tyre repair
W R Batey	£588.98	£88.83	Printer inks and postage (£56)
Bill Grisdale	£66.67	£0	Tourism Leaflet changes
Local Living (NE) Ltd	£612.50	£0	Willowburn unit rent Q4
St James's Church Centre	£735	£0	Room Bookings
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£13,693.04</b>	<b>£828.84</b>	

In addition three local businesses are due to receive £250 each for the participating in the Your Welcome Scheme from October 2017 to April 2018. (Costa, The Blue Bell and The Queens Head). The payments were approved.

The following three grant payments were also approved:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Grant Award</b>
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Alnwick & District Triathlon Club	£100
Alnwick Parkrun	£250
Mental Health Matters	£500*

\* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure (Total £641.30).

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
BT	£57.56	£9.59	Phone Bill Cemetery paid Feb 28 <sup>th</sup>
BT	£38.28	£6.38	Phone Bill Fenkle Street paid Feb 22 <sup>nd</sup>
BT	£98.76	£16.46	Internet Fenkle Street paid Mar 4 <sup>th</sup>
Northumbrian Water	£28.09	£0	Water-Cemetery tap paid Mar 15
NEST	£582.08	£0	Employer pension scheme contributions for February
British Gas	£19.97	£0	Cemetery Lodge Gas Boiler Policy (Feb 15 <sup>th</sup> )
O Brien	£82.56	£13.76	Trade Waste - Cemetery (Mar 12 <sup>th</sup> )

**RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £15,293.04 and to note the direct debit payments of £907.30.**

**C17/196 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Swinbank reported that a planning application for the refurbishment of the Playhouse had now been received.

The public meeting closed at 9.18pm.

**C17/197 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS**

**Exclusion of the Public and Press**

The following resolution was moved and seconded, to exclude the public and press.

“That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act”. The item discussed was:

1. Approval of Private Minute of the Last Council meeting (8<sup>th</sup> February 2018)