

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 10th January 2019
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

- Present** Cllrs A Symmonds, L Aynsley, S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, B Grisdale, M Harrington, R Moore, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Waton, G Watson, L Wearn.
- In attendance** W R Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Sergeant Sharon Wilmore-Greaves, Northumbria Police; Ian Mcrae, Gallery Youth.
- C18/142 A minute's silence in memory of former Councillor Ritchie Waddell**
The Mayor led a minute's silence in memory of former councillor Ritchie Waddell.
- C18/143 Questions from the public**
None.
- C18/144 Apologies for absence**
Councillors Humphries, Mavin, Westendarp and Wood-Mitchell.
- C18/145 Declarations of Interest**
Councillors Castle and Moore declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters. Councillors Patience and Grisdale declared a pecuniary interest in Item 7. Alnwick Bike Track update.
- C18/146 Request for a 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 2019/20 Budget and Precept.**
- C18/147 Update on Police matters - Sergeant Sharon Wilmore-Greaves (SWG)**
Sergeant Wilmore-Greaves reported that there had been a slight increase in the number of offences from 2017/18 to 2018/19.
- She advised that there had been a number of police operations had been in place in the run up to Christmas one of which focusing on theft from small businesses & shops.
- SWG reported that there had also been an evening operation focusing on safeguarding of adults which had been run in conjunction with Trading Standards staff targeting underage drinking which she was pleased to report had only been found in 1 out of the 10 locations visited.
- SWG gave an update on the serious offence which had taken place in Alnwick before Christmas. She advised that the two men concerned were in court in January.
- In the Alnwick area - crimes had dropped by 2%; burglaries had increased before Christmas; drunk and disorderly offences were up slightly and anti-social behaviour offences were down. She added that the amount of anti-social behaviour in the town centre had dropped since the bike track had opened.
- Councillor Symmonds asked if the CCTV system was useful. SWG advised that the CCTV system had been helpful as evidence in a number of convictions including assaults.

The Town Clerk reported that additional cameras had been ordered including two number plate recognition (NPR) cameras.

SWG finished by reporting that there would be changes to Northumbria Police and that she would provide an update be at a later date.

C18/148

Alnwick Bike Track Project

Ian McRae (IM) from Gallery Youth reported that the bike track had been open since August and that it was staffed by Gallery Youth on some evenings. It was well used and usually had between 70 and 100 people using it each day. He reported that there had been very good feedback from users, dog walkers and parents.

He advised that Gallery Youth appreciated the help they had received from the two County Councillors and the Town Clerk.

Councillor Allcroft reported that the riders she had encountered on the Fisher Lane paths had been very well behaved.

Councillor Castle explained that the bike track had not been easy to get done and, although it had taken a number of years to complete, it had been very worthwhile.

Councillors Grisdale and Patience left the meeting.

The Town Clerk issued a report which included income and expenditure information for the bike track. He explained that Table 1 in the report gave details of the income received so far which was £100k and that a further £8k was expected the following week. Table 2 listed the expenditure which so far amounted to £127,025.89 (including VAT) with a small amount of expenditure still to be done. He reminded councillors that the Town Council had allocated up to £10k towards the project.

He advised that the conditions attached to the Sport England grant were that the Town Council keep the lease on the bike track site for a minimum of 7 years and that the Town Council confirm they have set up a sinking fund for future repairs / maintenance.

He advised that the site inspections, litter picking and repairs were being undertaken by the Town Council and that the costs were about £3k a year.

Councillor Swinbank asked the county councillors if they could ask if there was an opportunity to get the Windy Edge developer to put money into the sinking fund.

Councillor Harrington asked if Gallery Youth were looking at making any income from the facility. Councillor Symmonds advised that the Town Council had agreed to cover the cost of the repairs and maintenance for 3 years.

Councillor Waton supported Councillor Harrington's comments and felt that the future funding of the bike track needed to be thought about.

Councillor Castle advised that there would be a 'Friends of Alnwick Bike Track' set up to look at possible future funding.

Councillor Swinbank felt that undertaking repairs and maintenance should be kept in-house.

Councillor Wearn thought that the focus at this stage should be on the next 3 years.

RESOLVED: i) To pay £2,646.62 due to Gallery Youth from the grants received; ii) That the Town Council place £10k earmarked for that project, and not used, into a Sinking Fund for future repairs and maintenance; iii) That in the event of the Town Council agree to the appointment of an additional part time employee, that the Town Council agree to undertake maintenance work

for the next 3 years, with funding from the sinking fund, then review the situation.

Councillors Grisdale and Patience re-joined the meeting.

C18/149 Minutes of the Last meeting (13th December 2018)

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13th December 2018 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2018 were agreed as a true record.

C18/150 Matters Arising

18/132 Councillor Wood-Mitchell had advised the Town Clerk that Investing in Alnwick had decided to fill the vacancy left by Councillor Moore with business advisor. The Project & Funding Officer would therefore remain as the Town Council's representative on Investing in Alnwick.

C18/151 Mayor's Report

Councillor Symmonds reported the main events attended since the December meeting:

On Monday December 17th the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Wearn attended an event in Morpeth; organised by NCC's Civic Head, Councillor Jeff Watson; celebrating 100 years of Women getting the vote.

He reminded councillors of two events for their diaries

Mayor's Quiz Night – January 18th anyone who would like to take part should let know Jill Clark know they would like to take part should do so. Starts at 7pm with supper provided and costs £8 per person with teams of up to 6 people.

Burns Night – Alnwick Garden Trust are holding a Burns Night Supper in Northumberland Hall on January 25th from 6.30pm to 12.30am. Tickets cost £20 for adults for a traditional super as well as ceilidh and raffle. (Children's tickets are £5).

C18/152 Update on County Council matters

Councillor Castle reported that the safety audit at St Paul's, South Road was being done. He also reported that he and Councillor Moore had allocated money towards the zip wire at Alnwick North. The Town Clerk confirmed that the two county councillors had each allocated £2k and Northumberland County Council had allocated £500.

Councillor Castle also reported that money had been allocated for work on the crossing areas on the Cobbles which had scored very well in the LTP process.

Councillor Moore reported that a vote had been taken on January 9th at NCC for the Core Strategy / Local Plan to go to the next stage. He advised that the plan focused on:

- sustainable growth in the economic climate
- a good mix of housing with more council housing, community led housing schemes and elderly housing, but not on green belt

He added that the housing targets had been tapered across the county.

The formal consultation runs from January 30th to March 13th with 23 drop-in sessions taking place across the county.

He also reported that there Trans Pennine Express were holding a consultation about extending journeys through Northumberland (Alnmouth, Berwick and Morpeth) and Edinburgh.

Councillor reported that Northumberland County Council would set the 2019/20 budget at the end of February.

He advised that the next North Northumberland Area Council was on January 24th at which Peter Jackson would outline NCC's budget for 2019/20.

He advised that a user group was being set up for Lindisfarne Sports Hall.

Councillor Patience asked if the quotas for housing were flexible. Councillor Moore advised that the overall housing figure was 17,700 each settlement would have its own numbers.

Councillor Grisdale asked if there had been a change in policy regarding council housing. Councillor Castle confirmed that there had.

Councillor Grisdale asked about the reintroduction of parking charges. Councillor advised that there would only be reintroduced if recommended by the Town Council.

Councillor Grisdale asked when the dualling of the A1 would take place. Councillor Moore advised that surveys were currently being undertaken.

Councillor Swinbank asked if Ascent Homes had claimed costs for their appeal regarding Allerburn House planning application. Councillor Moore advise that he was not sure.

Councillor Swinbank asked for clarification if council tax payers paid for the appeal.

Councillor Wearn asked where the data for the social and affordable housing come from. Councillor Castle advised that this would come from housing needs surveys.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

C18/153 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (13th December 2018) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 13th December 2018 were agreed as a true record.

C18/154 2018/19 budget update, agree the 2019/20 budget and set the 2019/20 precept

a) 2018/19 budget update

The Town Clerk circulated the Income and Expenditure account for 2018/19 as at December 31st 2018. He advised that Income was £425,581.69 and Expenditure was £320,812.44.

RESOLVED: To note the budget 2018/19 update.

b) 2018/19 budget

The Town Clerk advised that each of the Council's committees had approved the following recommended budgets for 2019/20 and explained the main changes, these are as follows:

Cemetery	£ 19,300
Recreation & Amenities	£110,155
Finance & Policy	£177,130
TOTAL	£306,585

Cemetery Committee are budgeting £2,000 less income. This reduced figure is likely to be higher than the actual 2018/19 income.

Recreation and Amenities Committee are budgeting for an increased budget of £4,145 towards events. The majority of this will be given as grants to outside bodies. A two-year replacement programme for the Town Centre planters was agreed last year and in the second year (2019/20), the proposed expenditure is

£3,720. There is also £3,500 budgeted for the painting of some of the Town Centre lighting columns.

Finance & Policy Committee are budgeting an additional £5,000 for grants to local organisations (making £30,000 available). The budget for office accommodation has increased following the move to Greenwell Lane making the 2019/20 budget £11,800. The Neighbourhood Plan/Council priorities budget is also increased by £10,000 to £20,000 and with the estimated carry forward from 2018/19 added the overall budget will be £34,750 for 2019/20. It is also recommended that £12,000 is allocated from this budget to pay for the appointment of a part-time operative (2.5 days a week) to work alongside the current town handyman.

RESOLVED: To approve the 2019/20 budget of £306,585.

c) 2019/20 precept

The Town Clerk advised that having agreed the budget the Council must then set the precept. At the Finance and Policy Committee on 6th December 2018, the Committee considered the extent to which reserves should be used to support the 2019/20 budget and, in line with the reserves policy, recommended that reserves are not used to reduce the precept in 2019/20.

The Finance and Policy Committee also reviewed the Town Council precept for 2018/19 in comparison to other town councils in Northumberland. In 2018/19 the average Town Council precept for a Band D dwelling was £106.34, compared to £105.29 for Alnwick. The highest in the northern area was Morpeth at £115.65, whilst the overall highest was Newbiggin at £158.77.

A precept of £306,585 would be an increase of £19,410 and with the draft 2019/20 Council Tax Base of 2799.49 Band D equivalent dwellings, the Town Council precept would increase to £109.91 for a Band D dwelling, equating to an annual increase of £4.62 (8.9p per week) which is a 4.4% increase. The new Alnwick Band D town council precept in 2019/20 is likely to be around or slightly higher than the Northumberland Town Council average.

RESOLVED: To set the precept at £306,585 for 2019/20.

C18/155

Councillor Matter – Communication (raised by Councillor Wearn)

Councillor Wearn proposed that a Working Group be set up to put together a Town Council Communications Strategy.

RESOLVED: To organise a Communications Working Group meeting and invite all councillors to attend.

C18/156

Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action
Dec/Jan	Various thank you letters from grant recipients	To note
13 th Dec	Northumberland Estates – Proposed Rent increase Ratten Row allotments from March 2020	Officers to discuss with NE
17 th Dec	Lesbury Parish Council – details of Consultation arrangements for their Neighbourhood Plan	Available from the Clerk
19 th Dec	NALC enews	Available from the Clerk

RESOLVED: To receive the correspondence.

RESOLVED: To suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue beyond 9.30pm.

C18/157 Financial Matters

Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL PAYABLE	VAT ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Northumberland County Council	£2,343.60	£390.60	3 additional grass cuts
Northumberland County Council	£433.40	£72.23	Stage Costs Xmas Lights/Lantern Parade
Northumberland County Council	£123.66	£20.61	Tree clearance Bullfield Orchard.
James McLean	£9,000	£1,500	Interim Payment – new allotment water supply Ratten Row
W L Straughan	£7,599.04	£1,266.51	Bike Track - Planting
W R Batey	£174.37	£9.56	£37.37 key cabinet for office, £137 Planning Fee Bike Track Variation
Northumberland County Council	£124.00*	£0	Northumberland Hall – Remembrance Sunday
Greenfingers Services Ltd	£193.20	£32.20	Bike Track Fence Wire
Information Commissioner	£40.00	£0	Data Protection Registration Fee
Petty Cash	£120.00	£20.00	Fuel - van
Infinite Playgrounds	£11,022.00	£1,837.00	1 st payment Bullfield Orchard play area
St James Church Centre	£255.00	£0	Room booking
J Pibworth	£184.00	£0	Mileage
T Kirton	£33.75	£0	Mileage
Alnwick in Bloom Grant	£982.25	£0	Balance on grant
T Kirton	£158.77	£0	Train tickets
TOTAL	£32,787.04	£5,148.71	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure (Total £106.51).

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:

BT	£268.93	£44.62	Phone Bill Fenkle St. paid 22nd Dec – includes connection charge for new office
BT	£28.99	£4.83	Phone Bill Cemetery paid 28th Dec
npower	£55.51	£2.64	Town Hall Clock paid 10th Jan

British Gas	£22.55	£0	Gas HomeCare policy – Cemetery Lodge Paid 15/12 £19.97)
NEST	£602.68	£0	Employer pension scheme contributions for Dec.
O Brien	£89.18	£14.86	Trade Waste - Cemetery (30th Jan)

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £32,787.04 and note the direct debit payments of £3,103.53.

C18/158 Any Other Urgent Business

The Project & Funding Officer reported that an additional Business Forum event was taking place on February 13th at 2pm at which Bill Grimsey will speak.

The Project & Funding Officer also reported that the new play equipment had now been installed at the Bullfield Community Orchard. He advised that this had mainly been paid for by grants and contributions from Alnwick's two County Councillors.

Councillor Patience asked if an external facilitator could be engaged for the Town Council's Away Day.

The meeting closed at 9.37pm.