



**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 24th January 2019
in the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, G Mavin, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds, G Watson, A Waton and L Wood-Mitchell.

In attendance: W Batey, Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer.

RA 18/35 Apologies

Cllrs. Grisdale and Harrington.

RA 18/36 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Edge, Patience and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6a) Play areas.

Councillor Watson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6b) Allotments.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk declared a pecuniary interest in Item 6c) Planters and Bollards.

RA 18/37 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

RA 18/28 REFILL SCHEME – a letter has been distributed by the Chamber of Trade to their members and we are awaiting responses.

RA 18/28 YOU'RE WELCOME SCHEME – The Town Clerk advised that that the ideal location to add to the scheme due to its location was The Playhouse. If this was not possible then The White Swan would be a potential alternative. He added that the scheme was mainly to offer toilet facilities when the public toilets were closed.

Councillor Patience reported that at The George, NCC's You're Welcome scheme location, the toilet doors were not closing properly. She also advised speaking to The Playhouse about them being part of the You're Welcome Scheme.

Councillor Swinbank asked if any changes were planned for the public toilet provision. The Town Clerk advised that Bob Hodgson, NCC Local Services Manager, had suggested that NCC would be undertaking some work on the Greenwell Lane toilets.

Councillor Symmonds advised that The White Swan had an open-door policy for people to use their toilet facilities but that access was not always easy due to the revolving doors.

RA 18/28 WORKING GROUPS (Communications) – the Town Clerk advised that the next meeting was on February 6th at 7pm at the Mechanics Institute and that all councillors would be invited to attend.

RA 18/29 BUDGET UPDATE (ASSETS AND SERVICES) Town Hall Lighting – the Town Clerk reported that he had visited the Town Hall to review the items paid for by the Town Council. These he confirmed are the 2 lights in the passageway between Fenkle Street and the Market Place and the fluorescent light on each face of the clock. He confirmed that Clive Mattison (Freemen) had asked for the lights in the passageway to be changed to lower energy ones at their expense. The Town Clerk advised that the fluorescent clock face lights could be reduced to 8watt.

Councillor Swinbank advised that it was cost effective to swap to LEP lights.

RA 18/29 BUDGET UPDATE (ASSETS AND SERVICES) Fingerposts – the Town Clerk reported that the new 'Council Offices' fingerpost had arrived and would be fitted shortly.

RA 18/29 BUDGET UPDATE (ASSETS AND SERVICES) Robertson's Pant – the Town Clerk reported that the water disconnection charge would be £97+VAT (for a temporary disconnection) and £136+VAT for a permanent disconnection. He advised that the quarterly charge was currently £42.

Councillor Broom thought that the water fountain could easily be reinstated and that this should be looked at as part of the restoration works.

Councillor Swinbank said he would recommend the temporary disconnection at £97.

Councillor Broom reported that water features in town centres were becoming more popular.

The Project & Funding Officer asked if there was a plumber who dealt with the water features at the Alwick Garden. Councillor Edge advised that a maintenance Engineer dealt with the water features.

RA 18/29 BUDGET UPDATE (ASSETS AND SERVICES) Zip Wire – the Town Clerk reported that the overall costs to reinstate it was £5k and that Councillors Castle and Moore had each committed £2k (having got special permission from NCC's Chief Executive), NCC had committed £500 leaving £500 for the Town Council to pay. He advised that the aim was to get the zip wire operational by Easter.

Councillor Swinbank reported that there were no NCC play areas in Alwick.

Councillor Patience asked who owned the MUGA area. The Town Clerk advised that it was owned by NCC. Councillor Patience reported that it was not used as it was in such a bad state of repair.

Councillor Swinbank asked that NCC be advised of the issue and asked to repair it.

Councillor Symmonds reported that NCC were spending millions on new sports centres elsewhere in the county. He felt that money was not being distributed fairly and that NCC be reminded that they needed to spend money on Lindisfarne Sports Centre.

RA 18/38

Budget Update 2018/19

2018/19 Budget The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure for 2018/19 as at 23rd January 2019 and highlighted the following:

EXPENDITURE

EVENTS:

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – over budget due to payment for the band.

GRANTS – all grant payment now made.

ASSETS & SERVICES:

WAGES/PAYE – on budget at 7 months.

DOG BINS/LITTER BINS – some budget left as some expenditure needs to be moved to the bike track expenditure.

SEATS – will be budget left as some expenditure will be moved to the bike track expenditure.

Councillor Swinbank asked how much was left in the seat budget. The Town Clerk advised that there would be budget remaining and this would probably be used to replace benches in some of the play areas. He asked councillors to send in suggestions for locations for new seats/benches.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget update.

RA 18/39 Town Centre Pavement Gritting Priorities

The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Castle had raised the issue of pavement gritting which the Town Clerk had met with Bill Pringle (BP), NCC to discuss. BP had confirmed that he would welcome a review of the routes with the Town Council. The Town Clerk had prepared a map showing the current primary and secondary gritting routes covered by NCC.

Councillor Swinbank felt that the priority pavements done should be routes to school and should focus on slopes.

Councillor Patience felt that the cobbles also needed to be a priority.

Councillor Broom asked if the decision about which routes get gritted was made locally or at County Hall.

Councillor Watson advised that more grit bins were needed around the town. The Town Clerk advised that there was a map of the location of all the grit bins on NCC's website.

Councillor Mavin asked why the town centre was the 1st priority rather than some of the slopes around the town.

Councillor Symmonds felt that a Working Group should be set up to look at the issue in more detail. Councillor Swinbank thought the issues could be taken to the Sustainable Transport Working Group. Councillor Symmonds said he was happy for this to be done.

Councillor Edge thought that Bill Pringle could be invited to a future meeting.

Councillor Symmonds felt that as there was new housing in Alnwick there was more revenue to do more in the town.

RESOLVED: To refer to the Sustainable Transport Working Group.

RA 18/40 Updates:

a) Play Areas

BULLFIELD COMMUNITY ORCHARD PLAY AREA – The Project & Funding Officer reported that the new play equipment had been installed by Infinite Playgrounds. The total cost was £18,370 which had come from the two County Councillors (£2k each) The Percy Family Fund (£3k), NCC's S106 Housing Developer Fund (£6,370) with the Town Council paying the balance of £5k from the £6,123 support which had been agreed. The Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard has requested that some of the remaining monies be used to purchase a picnic bench and some additional rubber matting.

GLOVERS GREEN PLAY AREA - The Town Clerk advised that new equipment was installed in the Community Orchard the single swing play area at Glovers Green needed to be reviewed. He recommended that local residents were consulted to get their views on whether the swing should be retained, repaired or removed.

Councillor Swinbank reported that the area was in a very bad state of repair and he suggested removing the brick surround and replacing the swing with new equipment and seats.

Councillor Swinbank asked if there was any further S106 monies available. The Project & Funding Officer advised that he would ask whether anything was available in 2019/20.

Councillor Patience felt that the swing area could be replaced with a sensory area with planting.

The Town Clerk advised that questionnaires would be distributed around the area to get residents' views.

Councillor Broom asked if, as some of the surrounding properties were managed by Homes for Northumberland, they could be asked if any money was available for improvement to local resident amenities.

SWANSFIELD PARK PLAY AREA – The Project & Funding Officer reported that the Wetpour under the main equipment and under the cone climber had been replaced at a cost of £6,784.

The Town Clerk reported that signs for all 12 play areas, including the Alnwick North Zip Wire and the new equipment at the and Bullfield Community Orchard had been ordered.

RESOLVED: i) To purchase a new picnic bench and purchase additional rubber safety matting for the Bullfield Community Orchard; ii) To undertake a consultation with local residents about Glovers Green swing area.

b) Allotments

RATTEN ROW - The Town Clerk reported that he had received a letter from Northumberland Estates advising that they proposed an increase in the annual rent to £1,500 from 2020. He advised that there was a meeting with the Estates in early February.

The Town Clerk reported that there were 7 or 8 vacant plots of which two were rentable with the others needing work before they could be let.

He reported that there were still some issues with leaks and that some asbestos sheets had been found buried on one plot. He also reported that an allotment holder had been using their allotment to burn wood from a property they are renovating which he had asked them to stop.

He felt that a walk around by the Allotment Working Group would be useful.

ST JAMES'S – The Town Clerk reported that most of the allotment rents had been paid. Five allotment holders had given up their plots and all had been taken up by other residents.

c) Town Planters and Bollards

BOLLARDS - The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that the 6 new bollards have arrived and are awaiting installation. NCC have confirmed it will take 3 days to install the bollards at a cost of £1789.24 which includes the cost of any traffic and pedestrian management they may have to do. Councillor Swinbank asked officers to check if NCC would pay for the work as part of the repair work to the cobbles.

PLANTERS – she reported that some of the 12 new planters installed on the Cobbles are a bit close together so the plan was to move at least 2 to another location in the town to sit alongside existing benches and bins.

The 12 old planters from the cobbles are in the Willowburn unit and 8 have been taken apart, cleaned and are being painted then used for the first part of the Ribbon of Trees project. As the name suggests this entails a ribbon of trees running from the bus station through the Market Place and down Greenwell Lane into Greenwell Road. She advised that several local organisations had agreed to contribute towards the Ribbon of Trees project costs.

The budgeted 6 new planters will go to the Market Place and the old planters (4 in Market Place and 4 in Fenkle Street) moved to other locations and used for more trees in the Ribbon of Trees.

d) Seats – the Town Clerk reported that there was some budget remaining and that a list of potential sites for new seats/benches sent out to councillors.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

RA 18/41

Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Wood-Mitchell reported that the traffic control rubber strip was broken on South Road.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell highlighted the importance of the High Street Fund Application.

Meeting closed at 8.59pm