



The Council Offices, Greenwell Lane,
Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1HB

Your Ref:

Our Ref: FC/4/2019

Clerk to Council

Bill Batey

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Dear Councillor

5th April 2019

The next meeting of the Council will be held on **Thursday 11th April 2019** in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at **7.15pm**. You are hereby requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

Bill Batey
Clerk to Town Council

Agenda

1. Questions from the Public
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Last Meeting (14th March 2019)
5. Matters Arising
6. Mayor's Report
7. Feedback on County Council matters
8. Constitution Review Recommendations
9. Draft Council Vision and Objectives
10. High Streets Community Clean Up Fund
11. Update on Community Action Proposals & Town Centre Working Group Action Plan
12. Feedback from the Alnwick Forum event on March 23rd
13. Minutes of the Committees
 - a) Planning, Highways & Transport Committee Meeting (14th March 2019)
 - b) Cemetery Committee (21st March 2019)
 - c) Recreation & Amenities Committee (28th March 2019)
14. Correspondence
15. Financial Matters – a) Payments and b) Bank Charges and Bank Reconciliation
16. Any Other Urgent Business

Declarations of Interest

To receive disclosures of pecuniary interests from Councillors, on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware, during the course of the meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it.

Agenda item 6**Mayor's Report**

An update on the mayor's diary will be given at the meeting.

Agenda item 7**Update on County Council matters.**

Councillors Castle and Moore will update the Town Council on County Council matters.

Recommendation: To note the update**Agenda item 8****Constitution Review Recommendations**

Following the meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group, the following issues were raised, and recommendations made:

1. Number/Length of Meetings

The general view was that having The Planning, Highways and Transport Committee ahead of the Council Meeting is proving to be a long night – 11 Councillors are on both (Typically overall length 3 – 3.5 hours without a break). This was not seen as beneficial to having good council meetings, as often much of the business towards the end is rushed. The Planning agenda is often lengthy and it rare to finish before 7.10 and in some cases business is cut short because of the Council meeting following. In an ideal situation, a 15 minute gap between meetings would assist the changeover, meet & greet visitors and distribution of papers etc. Various solutions were considered by the Working Group.

The recommendations are:

- a) to have the Council meeting as the only meeting on that evening (2nd Thursday of the month as now), starting at 7pm
- b) to schedule the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee monthly on a separate night, (Starting at 7pm?). The 3rd Thursday in the month is suggested.
- c) to reduce the Cemetery committee to four meetings a year from six , (the four meetings to be held at 6pm prior to a Planning Committee).
- d) To ask the Clerk to review the number of Finance & Policy Committee meetings and Recreation and Amenities meetings to see if 6 meetings per year were actually required. The Clerk has reviewed this, noting that meetings of both these committees were quarterly until 2014/15.
 - a. It is suggest that a) the Finance and Policy could be reduced back to quarterly meetings, starting at 7pm (to assist the distribution of business it is however suggested that the consideration of grants is moved from December to September) and,
 - b. The Recreation & Amenities Committee remains at 6 meetings (Starting at 7pm).

Overall, this proposal would see the total number of Thursdays with Council/Committee meetings increasing from 30 to 34, but Council business should run more smoothly.

2. Updating the Committee Membership (Constitution page 3)

The Membership details need to be updated to reflect the current arrangements: i.e.-

- a) The Finance and Policy Committee membership is 12 (7 councillors plus the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and Chairs of the Standing Committees)
- b) Either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor should be on each committee.

These were previously agreed but not reflected in the document.

3. Number of Councillors and Ward Boundaries

This was discussed at the Working Group and there was a view from some that we may have too many Town Councillors. Furthermore it was suggested that maybe it was time to review the ward boundaries, particularly in the light of increasing housing developments and a review could also consider it was still appropriate to have 3 wards.

Alnwick Town Council has 18 Councillors, there are many examples of other town councils having less Amble 9, Ponteland 12, Hexham 14, Morpeth 15, Prudhoe 15, Blyth 16, Berwick 16, but Ashington has 18 like us.

It is not a matter for the Town Council to change the number of Councillors or wards/ward boundaries. This can only be brought about through community governance review which would need to be undertaken by the County Council.

It is recommended that the Clerk undertakes further research into the process, criteria etc. and reports back to Council, so it can decide if it wishes to request a review.

4. Approving Minutes

Under the present arrangements the Council approves all Committee minutes, the advantage of this is that they are seen reasonably quickly by all councillors, particularly those not at these meeting. As those not at the meeting are unable to give a view as to the minutes being a true record, it would be appropriate for those not present to abstain. Provided the majority of those voting approve the minutes then they are approved, even if this is only a small number. The alternative is for all minutes to go back to the committee at its next meeting for approval. After being approved they could then be circulated to all councillors and/or put on a council agenda for information.

It is recommended that Councillors consider if they wish to change the current arrangements, and if changes are made, then the Constitution will need to be amended.

5. Financial Regulations

It is suggested that the following changes are made:

- a) **Increasing the Petty cash float to £150**
- b) **Inserting wording to enable a payment to be made between meetings in the event that it is considered urgent to do so.**

It is also recommended that:

- a) the Council looks obtains a Council Credit card, and
 b) develops a process for on line banking,
 when these are in place, the Financial Regulations will need to be amended.

6. Typographical Changes

In the constitution, there are a small number of typographical issues which need to be addressed. These often arise from making a change, which then have a numbering consequence for another part of the document.

Recommendation: That the Clerk makes these changes.

Agenda item 9

Draft Council Vision and Objectives

At the last Council meeting a draft vision and objectives were circulated for comments. Councillors were given until 5th April to submit any comments. A final draft will be circulated for consideration.

Recommendation: to approve the Council Vision & Objectives.

Agenda item 10

High Streets Community Clean Up Fund

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has awarded a grant to Northumberland CC for High Street Clean-Up Activity. NCC has awarded £4,500 of this money to Alnwick Town Council and also a similar amount to 11 other Town Councils.

The funding is for working with community groups to undertake community-led street and town centre cleans.

The grant, which is most welcome, is able to fund tools and equipment to help community groups to tidy up including high visibility vests, litter pickers, shovels, brushes rakes, wheelbarrows sacks and gloves; training, promotional material and support for community clean-up events.

The Town Clerk has accepted the funding on behalf of the Council and the money has now been received. Activity must be complete by 29th April and our completed grant monitoring form submitted by 15th May. Our Community Clean up event which took place on Sunday 24th March counts as our activity.

The suggestion is that the Council builds up a good supply of equipment for future council organised or community organised clean-up events. This to also include local schools. Equipment would then be loaned out to groups. Councillor Swinbank has suggested that this could extend to neighbouring parishes who did not receive any funding. Councillors and Community Groups have made suggestions for the type of equipment to purchase and officers have compiled a list which will meet the budget and includes 100 litter pickers, 600 pairs of gloves, 5,000 black sacks, 30 waste bag holders, 100 hi-viz vests as well as brushes, shovels rakes, wheelbarrows, leaf grabs, gardening tools, first aid kits, a manual pavement sweeper

and a leaf blower. Some of the equipment will be bought for children (i.e. small sizes). The Council did spend £185.50 on equipment for the recent clean up and this can be funded out of the £4,500

Once purchased the availability of equipment will be publicised and groups encouraged to organize their events.

Recommendation: For the Council to agree to the proposals including offering to lend equipment to surrounding parish councils and their volunteer groups.

Agenda item 11

Update on Community Action Proposals & Town Centre Working Group Action Plan

A separate report will be issued. This report outlines progress on the Neighbourhood Plan Community Action Proposals (CAP's) and the Town Centre Working Group Action Plan. Recommendations will be made for consideration.

Agenda item 12

Feedback from the Alnwick Forum event on March 23rd

Feedback on the update event on 23rd March will be given, along with a summary of the results of the Council's consultation survey.

Recommendation: To consider the feedback

Agenda item 14

Correspondence

The following correspondence has been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
20/3 27/3 22/4	NALC e news	Available on request
12 th March	Gordon Allan – Annual report of Being Active Matters (ATC gave £500 towards the project) and a request for £500 in 19/20	To Circulate and Finance & Policy Committee to consider
27 th March	PKF Littlejohn – 2018/19 External audit arrangements	Accounts and annual return to be submitted & published by 1 st July
4 th April	Northumberland Estates – proposing revised Ratten Row Allotment rent of £700pa	To consider

Recommendation: That the correspondence received be considered.

Agenda item 15**Financial Matters a) Payments**

The following payments are due (as at 5th April 2019); this list will be updated at the meeting, if necessary.

PAYEE	TOTAL PAYABLE	VAT ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
2018/19 budget			
NCC	£21,215.98	£8.34	Feb/March payroll
Bill Gridale Design	£100	£0	Town Guide Design work
Diamond Group	£45.66	£7.61	Photocopying
W R Batey	£25.44	£3.52	Refreshments – Away Day- £25.44,
St James's Church Centre	£950.50	£0	Room Bookings Committees/ Council/Business Forum/Twinning
NPD Ltd	£1,635.60	£272.60	Visitor Leaflet distribution
Town & Country Tree Surgeons Ltd	£2,700	£450	Tree Works – cemetery 50% complete
South Road Tyres	£15	£2.50	Puncture Repair
Potts	£2,047	£0	Visitor Leaflet printing
James McLean	£222.60	£37.10	Town Clean up equipment
Scot JCB Ltd	£339.20	£56.53	JCB mini digger Service
J Pibworth	£238.30	£29.57	Plants – Cemetery and Planters
NCC	£492	£82	Install points for new CCTV camera
Play area signs	£451.20	£75.20	Play area signs
2019/20 budget			
NCC	£451.72		NNDR – Cemetery Chapel
Infinite Playgrounds	£312	£52	Grass Mats – Bullfield Play area
WR Batey	£394.29	£66.66	Postage £61, Flymo Lawnmower - £333.29
JPI Media Publishing	£780	£130	Advertising two posts
ICCM	£95.00	£0	Annual Subscription
Initial	£1,024.80	170.80	Toilets deep clean/ eco breeze
TOTAL	£33,536.29	£1,444.43	

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and are reported for information			
BT	£31.96	£5.33	Phone Bills Cemetery (paid 28/3)
BT	£77.44	£0	Phone Bill Greenwell Lane . Please note we still have a £143.26 credit on the account
NEST	£584.61	£0	Employer & employee pension scheme cont. March (paid 15/4)
British Gas	£22.55	£0	Gas HomeCare policy
Npower	£59.29	£2.82	Town Hall Clock (paid 11/4)

Recommendation: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £33,536.29 and to note the direct debit payments of £775.85.

b) Bank Charges and Bank Reconciliation

At the last meeting the Town Clerk outlined that Bank Charges had been charged by Barclays based upon our transactions. This started in January although the Council had not received any notice. Barclays have now agreed to refund the Bank charges in Jan/Feb and March which would have amounted over £140. However they will apply in April onwards. The change comes about as the Town Council does more than £100,000 worth of business in a year, so is therefore caught by the new bank charge policy. The charges will reduce slightly if we introduce electronic payments or pay more by direct debit.

The latest bank reconciliation will be circulated for approval