

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 25th April 2019
at the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors S Allcroft (Chair), G Castle, P Broom, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds, A Waton, G Watson and L Wearn.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

FP 18/45 Apologies

Councillor Grisdale, Humphries and Mavin.

FP 18/46 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters.

FP 18/47 Minutes of the last meeting - matters arising not on the agenda

FP18/38 Councillor Swinbank asked if there was any update on the bus station signage. The Town Clerk that this was being taken forward by the Town Council.

FP 18/48 Budget update 2018/19 & 2019/20

The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at April 24th 2019, advising that there was a new column at the far right of the sheet for the 2019/20 budget. He advised that the expenditure were all final figures apart from CCTV. He advised that there was an underspend of some £3k due to the original budgeted overlap of the existing and new Town Clerks which would now take place in 2019/20. He highlighted the following lines of expenditure:

Neighbourhood Plan / Community Action Plan / other council priorities – the final expenditure was for Clive Mattison's costs for the Willowburn Inquiry.

Willowburn Unit Rental – underbudget as Local Living have asked for a rent-free period for some of Quarter 3 and all of quarter 4 so this may reduce the final expenditure.

CCTV – invoice received for connection of new CCTV camera at The Playhouse and call outs to undertake repairs.

Misc/Contingency – expenditure for Town Council Away Day of £437.64.

He advised that some of the underspent budgets would be carried forward into 2019/20.

Council Van – additional fuel purchased.

INCOME – is above budget as it includes £5k towards the new bus shelter from Cussins.

Councillor Broom asked what the £585.50 paid out under CCTV was for. The Town Clerk advised that this was £410 plus VAT to NCC to install CCTV cameras on posts. He also advised that NCC pay for the electricity for CCTV cameras installed on lampposts.

Councillor Wearn asked if there was a standard charge made by other premises where CCTV cameras were installed. The Town Clerk advised that some did make a charge to the Town Council for electricity.

The Town Clerk reported that because the start of the maintenance contract had been moved back by 6 months there was no expenditure in 2018/19.

He explained that so far there had been a small amount of expenditure for 2019/20.

RESOLVED: To note the 2018/19 and 2019/20 budget updates.

FP 18/49 Grant Applications

The Town Clerk reported that there were two grant applications to be considered:

a) Loving Alnwick - the Town Clerk reminded councillors that had agreed to support the Alnwick guides project. He advised that he had spoken to Loving Alnwick who had explained that their volunteers did not want to wear uniforms.

He advised that trial sessions had taken place over the Easter weekend with 2 volunteers covering the morning and afternoon sessions. Loving Alnwick had recruited 9 volunteers with another 9 committed to help.

He advised that if the Town Council wanted to see Guides on weekdays then additional funding would be needed. This would enable more tokens refreshments at local outlets to be purchased and allow the scheme to expand.

Councillors Watson and Waton had volunteered to be Guides and had taken part in the trial over the Easter period and gave some feedback:

- i. Councillor Watson reported that it had been busy with lots of questions about parking. He felt that some people had not recognised the Guides so felt that a uniform might be helpful.
- ii. Councillor Waton reported that several people had asked where they could purchase get a parking disc and many seemed to be on their way out of town.
- iii. Councillor Watson reported that quite a few people were parking in Greenwell Lane and then visiting Alnwick Garden. He felt that Alnwick Garden could be asked to support the scheme.
- iv. Councillor Waton felt the scheme could be expensive to run and was not self-financing at present.

Councillor Symmonds felt it was a good scheme when it had operated in the past and supported the Town Council giving a grant for tokens. He added that he was disappointed that the volunteers did not want uniforms.

Councillor Swinbank advised that £500 would purchase 100 tokens and felt that an evaluation could take place at the end of the project.

Councillor Watson thought that the Chamber of Trade would have supported the project. He also felt that Alnwick Garden, Alnwick Castle and Barter Books could be asked to support it.

Councillor Patience asked why the Chamber of Trade had not been asked for funding.

Councillor Waton thought that the Town Council could asked for a review of the project fairly soon.

Councillor Castle suggested that the Town Council advise Loving Alnwick to talk to the Chamber of Trade about how they can support the project.

Councillor Wearn felt an evaluation was needed to work out potential future funding.

RESOLVED: To give a grant of £500 to Loving Alnwick towards tokens to expand the Alnwick guides volunteer project and request a project review at the end of the summer.

b) Mental Health Matters - the Town Clerk summarised the report from Gordon Allen on the Being Active Project.

The project is a three-year project funded by Sport England's Opportunity Fund and Northumberland County Council. It is led by Talking Matters and aims to recruit volunteers to help adults with mental health issues take up a sport or physical activity as part of their recovery. The project started in April 2018 and is delivered in two

areas of Northumberland on being Alnwick. Two volunteer co-ordinators have been recruited and to date 15 volunteers / potential volunteers have undergone face to face mental health awareness training.

He advised that the project had received £500 in 2017.

Councillor Patience commented that mental health problems were a massive issue.

Councillor Broom said he wholly supported the project.

Councillor Wearn felt it was a very important project which the Town Council should support.

Councillor Castle agreed that the project should be supported.

RESOLVED: To give a grant of £500 to Mental Health Matters for the Being Active Project and ask for details about how the project is accessed.

FP 18/50 Review of Insurance

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the current insurance schedule which had been issued to councillors. He explained that it was a 3-year agreement with Zurich which ran until 2021 and had separate policies for the Council vehicles.

Part C listed the items on an All Risk Insurance Policy which were covered at purchase price on a new for old basis. This list is reviewed annually and any new items purchased, over the value of £250, notified to Zurich and added to the schedule as itemised lines.

Part D covered insurance for money and included money in transit such as allotment rents and cemetery fees.

He explained that the Fidelity cover had been increased to £500k a couple of years ago and that personal accident cover was in place for councillors, staff and volunteers.

Councillor Patience asked if the bike track was covered on the public liability insurance. The Town Clerk advised that it was.

Councillor Swinbank asked if business continuity was included. The Town Clerk advised that it was including loss of business at £70k.

Councillor Patience asked why the new Bullfield Orchard play area was on a separate line and not included with the other play areas. The Town Clerk advised that it could be added with the other play areas but was on a separate line as it had been added to the insurance policy during the year.

RESOLVED: To note the insurance update.

FP 18/51 Review of Section 137 Expenditure

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that this was expenditure outside the Town Council's Powers and Duties. The amount the Town Council can spend is worked out per elector and in 2017/18 this was £7.86 giving a total available Section 137 amount of around £48k. In 2019/20 this figure will increase to £8.12 per elector.

He issued a list of Section 137 expenditure for 2018/19 and explained that the items included expenditure for Remembrance Sunday and other civic events, business forum and the Project & Funding Officer's economic development work.

The payment schedule issued for approval Full Council identifies S137 expenditure items. The total S137 expenditure for 2018/19 was £16,563.79.

RESOLVED: To note the Section 137 expenditure for 2018/19.

FP18/52 Carbon Neutral Commitment Update

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that she and the Town Clerk had completed two Carbon Footprints calculations using two different websites (Carbon Trust and Carbon Footprint), both of which have been used by a number of Town and Parish Councils around the country. She advised that they had also done the calculations for the Mechanics Institute.

CARBON TRUST – calculates using energy bill data (e.g. electricity / other fuel usage).
CARBON FOOTPRINT – calculates using data for buildings; flights; car & vans; vehicle fuel and bus & rail data.

The calculations were based on 2018 data but there are a couple of areas to note:

1. The Cemetery oil usage figure was based on delivery not actual usage
2. The Rob Fountain and THC figures used are probably slightly high as the bill used as the starting point was an estimate overstating the carbon footprint
3. The staff mileage figures do not include any home to work mileage as this is not usually included in carbon calculations
4. The Town Council's usage data for Greenwell Lane building is unknown at present

She advised that the next recommended step was to set a date for the 1st working group meeting and decide if interested residents will be invited to the meeting.

Councillor Swinbank said it was good start and felt that the community needed to be involved in the process. He felt that residents who were interested in being part of the Town Council's aim to be Carbon Neutral should be involved to share their experience and knowledge. He advised that offsetting was fraught with issues.

Councillor Waton felt that the carbon footprint audit didn't capture volunteer data such as room usage for meetings and travel to meetings which he felt should be looked at.

Councillor Allcroft advised that the parameters needed to be agreed first.

Councillor Waton felt that advisory groups needed to be used to help the Town Council achieve its aim of being carbon neutral.

Councillor Allcroft said that the Working Group should meet and felt that the first meeting should be just for councillors.

Councillor Swinbank felt that other people needed to be engaged as soon as needed.

The Working Group would be Councillors Allcroft, Broom, Castle, Waton and Wearn.

RESOLVED: To agree a date for the first Working Group meeting (Councillors Allcroft, Broom, Castle, Waton and Wearn).

FP18/53 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Broom asked if Defibrillator training had been arranged. The Town Clerk advised that he would follow this up. He added that he and the Assistant to the Town Clerk had undertaken training organised by NCC at the Greenwell Lane offices.

Meeting closed at 8.15pm