

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 28th March 2013 in the
Council Chamber, Clayport Street Alnwick at 7.00pm.**

Present: Cllrs S Patience (Chairman), S Allcroft, D Farrar, B Grisdale, K Moore, R Roberts and A Symmonds.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk.

RA 12/43. Apologies: Cllrs J Bell and M Harrington

RA 12/44. Declaration of Interests

Non-pecuniary interests were declared by Councillors Patience, Allcroft, Moore, Farrar and Roberts in relation to agenda item 7 (request from Alnwick in Bloom regarding watering of tubs).

RA 12/45. Budget Update for 2012/13

A copy of the Committee budget as at March 27th 2013 was circulated and discussed line by line. This showed expenditure to be £34,427. The likely outturn for the year was estimated to be close to £37,000 against a budget of £51,436. Some underspend was likely in relation to the water supply at Ratten Row and the completion of the website, it was suggested that these items together with the £500 budget for Peter's Mill be transferred to 2013/14.

RESOLVED: The budget update be received.

RA 12/46. Play Area Consultation Results

Results had now been received for the play area consultations at Glovers Green, Tanners Garth and Cawledge View. The results for each play area were summarized and discussed. Whilst the response levels were low, the picture that was given for each play area was that they were frequently used, residents would like to see them retained as they are or upgraded and the target group was small children (under 11 years of age). A number of comments were received about the need to replace seats and also to remove much of the concrete and brick infrastructure. Budget provision had been made in 2013/14 of £10,000 for the upgrading of play areas. Councillors recognised that all play areas could not be done at once and suggested that a 2 year rolling programme be agreed. It was suggested that in 2013/14 the most westerly play area at Glovers Green and the Cawledge View play area be tackled first. Given that the paving and brickwork belong to the County Council, it was suggested that they be consulted regarding the works to see what assistance could be given. The clerk agreed to prepare a design brief for each of the two play areas and obtain competitive quotes for the works.

RESOLVED: The play area consultation results be noted, a design brief be prepared and competitive quotes be obtained for upgrading the most westerly play area at Glovers Green and the play area at Cawledge View.

RA 12/47. Swansfield Park

The Council on 11th April had referred the matter of the possible transfer of Swansfield Park to this Committee for further consideration. The Clerk informed the Committee he had asked the County Council for more information and clarification regarding the car park, lighting and the right of way, but as yet no response had been received. The County Council had identified a possible solution to the drainage problem in the south west corner and they were hoping to be able to undertake this. Councillors felt that the transfer decision should not be rushed and a proper dialogue should take place on the outstanding issues. Given that other parks around the county were to be transferred, it was suggested that this could be discussed at a future county/parish meeting and also discussed with NALC.

RESOLVED: To receive the update and to consider again following consultation with NALC and other parish/town councils who may also be involved in park transfers.

RA 12/48. Consideration of Condition of Public Toilets in Alnwick

This agenda item was referred to the Committee by the Council on 11th April 2013. Councillors felt the condition of the toilets left a lot to be desired and felt improvements were necessary. In the first instance they felt it appropriate to ask the County Council for details of the cleaning schedule, any improvement proposals, the budget and details of the operation of 'Your Welcome' scheme in Alnwick. They also felt that feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire would also help. When this information was received then suggestions could be made

RESOLVED: To seek further information from Northumberland County Council and obtain the results from the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire.

RA 12/49. Request from Alnwick in Bloom regarding watering of tubs.

Alnwick in Bloom had recently agreed to purchase 12 new tubs which were to be planted in partnership with Friends of the Earth. Alnwick in Bloom had approached the County Council regarding the watering of these tubs and a quote of £216 had been given. Alnwick in Bloom wished the Town Council to take on this responsibility. Whilst the point was made that this would have better considered as part of the initial decision about proceeding with the tubs, councillors were in favour of the Town Council meeting the cost.

RESOLVED: The Town Council agree to pay up to £216 for the watering of the tubs.

RA 12/50. Allotments Update

a) Ratten Row

A broad estimate had been received for the renewal of the water supply (price per linear metre); a site meeting was required to identify the actual pipe runs and firm up.

b) St George's

Clean up works were still ongoing, the clerk circulated photographs, further chipping works had been carried out that day. It was hoped that by the end of April consideration could be given to letting the allotments. An electronic version of the allotment agreement had been produced and this needed to be reviewed prior to letting. This would be reviewed by Councillors Allcroft, Patience and Fararr together with the clerk and in particular clauses updated and the agreement put into plain English.

RESOLVED: That the update be received

RA 12/51. Website and Notice Board Update

Councillor Grisdale and the clerk explained that a further update of the website design had just been received, this incorporated previous changes requested. In relation to the proposed notice board, a response was still awaited from the Northumberland County Council Conservation Officer. The clerk would again chase up, but it may be necessary to proceed with a planning application

RESOLVED: To note the current position.

RA 12/52. Any Other Urgent Business

a) The clerk informed the committee that he had received 3 requests for new dog bins from the County Council. These were discussed in turn. It was agreed to purchase a bin for the footpath between South Road and the Cornhill Estate, (a suitable position to be found near to the old railway line) and to the Battlements near to East View. Councillors

were not convinced of the need in relation to the request for a bin near to Ravenslaw Court and suggested monitoring by the dog warden and more stickers, would help in the first instance.

RESOLVED: to agree to provide new dog bins near to the old railway line between South Road and Cornhill Estate and near to East View on the Battlements.

- b) The condition of the lane/archway from the betting shop on Market Street to St Michael's Lane was highlighted and it was agreed to raise this with Northumberland County Council.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm