

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 31st January 2013 in the
Council Chamber, Clayport Street Alnwick at 7.00pm.**

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

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

RA 12/35. Apologies: Cllr S Walton.

RA 12/36. Declaration of Interests

None.

RA 12/37. Budget Update for 2012/13

A copy of the Committee budget as at 31st January 2013 was circulated and discussed line by line. This showed expenditure to be £25,022. Significant expenditure will occur later in the year, on for example grass cutting, planting and the website. The likely outturn for the year was estimated to be close to £48,000 against a budget of £51,436.

RESOLVED: The budget update be received.

RA 12/38. Consideration of criteria for events

At the last meeting Councillor Farrar had produced draft criteria to help the Committee assess grants for events in the town. Councillor Farrar had agreed to make suggested changes and he tabled a revised document for consideration. Councillors discussed the criteria and agreed that they should be used as a guide when consideration is given to future funding for local events.

RESOLVED: The guidance criteria for events be approved for future use.

RA 12/39. Allotments Update

a) Ratten Row

Two current sites have been given up and hopefully will be relet next week. Still long term vacant sites to deal with.

b) St George's and Cawledge View

NCC have confirmed that the proposed transfer target date to the Town Council is 1st February, although this may slip slightly. It was reported that the allotments working group had met and looked at the possible allotment division at St George's and were looking at an appropriate tenancy agreement and how to manage the waiting list and lettings. Given that some allotments would be hopefully ready to let prior to the next committee meeting, it was agreed to delegate the finalisation of the tenancy agreement to the working group. Possible rent levels had also been discussed by the allotments working group and a proposal made to charge £25 for a full plot and £15 for a half plot, with effect from 1st April. Any occupation prior to 1st April would be free, given the need to dig over the allotments.

c) St James's

All allotments were now let and rents paid. Four allotments had been given up in December and new tenants had been found from the waiting list.

RESOLVED: To delegate the finalisation and approval of the St George's and Cawledge View allotment tenancy agreement to the allotment working group.

RECOMMENDED: That the 2013/14 rent levels for St George's and Cawledge View allotments be £25 for a full allotment and £15 for a half plot, with effect from 1st April.

RA 12/40. Play Area Update

The clerk reported that most of the play area questionnaires had been delivered to the dwellings in Cawledge View and Glovers Green; the remainder would be delivered over the next week. The closing date was 28th February. A reply box had also been placed at the Victoria Road Co-op. The County Council had still not undertaken works to the zip wire at Alnwick North, this work was required prior to transfer to the Town Council. It was also reported that a decision was still awaited about the possible transfer of the Swansfield Park play area to the Town Council. Councillor Roberts raised a drainage problem in the south west corner of the park which was resulting in water running down towards the car park. It was agreed to take this up with both Northumberland County Council and Northumbrian Water to check for any leaking water pipes.

RESOLVED: The update be received.

RA 12/41. Website and Notice Board Update

Councillor Grisdale and the clerk outlined that initial designs from Colin Harris were anticipated in the next few days. In relation to the proposed notice board, a response was still awaited from the Northumberland County Council Conservation Officer.

RESOLVED: To note the current position.

RA 12/42. Any Other Urgent Business

- a) Councillor Roberts raised the proposal for a seat to be installed near the bus stop at Oaky Balks. This has been considered by the Council in October and a decision needed to be finalised. The clerk indicated the space was limited for the installation of a seat in that area and a better solution may be to try to position a simple bench next to the wall or on the grass. He agreed to find out a cost based upon the cost of recently installed benches in Lesbury, but thought this would be modest. The Committee were supportive of this proposal being brought before the next Council meeting to progress.

RECOMMENDED: That the Council agree to a suitably located bench being located in an appropriate area next to the Oaky Balks Bus Stop.

- b) Councillor Moore told the Committee that he understood that representatives from the Byrne Band in Norway were visiting Alnwick in 2013 and the Town Council may be asked to support a civic reception. The Clerk confirmed that there was funding in the 2013/14 budget for town twinning and requested that the organisers of the event write to the Town Council with details.
- c) Councillor Farrar enquired about the date of the agreed meeting to discuss the possibility of Alnwick becoming a festival town. A date of 27th February was earmarked.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm