

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 13th October 2011 in the Council Chamber, Clayport Street Alnwick at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs A Symmonds (Mayor), G Watson (Deputy Mayor), S Allcroft, E Blakey, J Bell, G Castle, K Gray, W Grisdale, M Harrington, B Hewison, K Moore, S Patience, R Roberts, B Thompson, J Thompson, S Walton.

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

Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

C11/129. Apologies: Cllrs G Knox and R Waddell.

C11/130. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Castle and Allcroft declared a personal & prejudicial interest in item 9 (ACDT). Councillors Hewison and J Thompson declared personal & prejudicial interests in item 13a (funding request). Councillors Patience & Grisdale declared a personal and prejudicial interest in items 13b (funding request). Councillors Blakey and Allcroft declared a personal & prejudicial interest in item 11 (relating to planting) and Councillor Castle declared a personal interest for any county council matters.

C11/131. Defibrillators in Telephone Boxes

Lynsey McCabe and Adel Young from the Community Resuscitation Development Team for the North East Ambulance Service HNS Trust, gave a presentation to the council about a scheme for placing defibrillators in telephone boxes. A scheme was being proposed utilising decommissioned BT phone boxes, one of the proposed sites was in Cedar Grove Alnwick. Under the scheme, NEAS defibrillator equipment will be placed in a locked cabinet in the phone box and will be able to be accessed by a member of the public once they are given a security code. BT provide the cabinet and pay for the first 7 years electricity costs. A local organisation, such as a local council, takes responsibility for the phone box, then pays the electricity costs estimated at £35 per year after year 7 and is required to do regular checks of the equipment. Members discussed the scheme including the benefits of defibrillators, potential vandalism and hoax calls. Lynsey and Adel were thanked for their presentation and the Council agreed to consider the scheme further at their next meeting.

RESOLVED: To consider the scheme further at the next council meeting.

C11/132. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (8th September 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2011 were agreed as a true record.

These were agreed and duly signed by the Mayor.

C11/133. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

Councillor Castle updated members on the results of the Windsor Gardens speed cushion consultations. There was a poor response to the consultation and officers have recommended that the cushions remain.

C11/134. Mayor's Report

The Mayor's report for the period 8th September to 10th October had been circulated with the agenda. He reminded members of the Remembrance Sunday Service on 13th November and the Carol Service on Monday 19th December.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

C11/135. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of the following committees were tabled for approval:

- a) Planning, Highways and Transport Committee (8th September 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Highways and Transport Committees held on 8th September were agreed as a true record.

- b) Finance and Policy Committee (15th September 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance and Policy Committees held on 15th September were agreed as a true record.

Recommendations were considered regarding expenditure not included in budgets and the approval of the Annual Return.

RESOLVED: That any expenditure outside a Committee budget should be referred to the Chairman of the Finance and Policy Committee and a decision made at full Council.

RESOLVED: To approve and accept the 2010/11 Annual Return and agree to review the level of Fidelity Guarantee annually, as part of the budget setting process.

- c) Cemetery Committee (22nd September 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on 22nd September were agreed as a true record with Councillor Blakey being added to the list of apologies.

- d) Recreation & Amenities Committee (22nd September 2011)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 22nd September were agreed as a true record.

A recommendation was considered regarding Ratten Row allotments. The Committee had recommended that the allotments be returned to Northumberland Estates and they could then deal directly with the allotment holders. It was proposed that this matter be referred back to the Allotment Working Group to enable further discussions to be held with the allotment holders and Northumberland Estates.

RESOLVED: The Ratten Row allotments be referred back to the allotments working group to enable Northumberland Estates, the allotment holders and the Town Council to discuss the lease arrangements further.

C11/136. To consider the implications for the Council following Alnwick Community Development Trust going into administration.

A separate report had been produced which addressed the issues for the Council to consider. The items listed in the report were considered in turn. The Mayor and Clerk had met with the Administrator regarding a number of assets. It had been suggested that the Town Council take on the ownership and responsibility of the following assets

- a) The Hotspur Statue

Members discussed this and whilst some were in favour, others felt there were unknown costs to the council and questioned if local people would be supportive of such a transfer.

RESOLVED: That the Council does not take on the ownership and responsibility of the Hotspur Statue.

- b) 2 Marquees and a gazebo used for events
- c) Seats in the Market Place (4)
- d) The Town Map display cases (8)
- e) The Electrical Stanchions (2) used for events in the market place.

These assets were discussed individually and generally members were supportive of the transfer. Questions were asked about the marquees which may not be serviceable and future storage, which will need to be considered.

RESOLVED: That the Council take on the ownership and responsibility of the two marquees and gazebo, the seats in the Market Place, the Town Map display cases and the electrical stanchions and agree to pay £200 for the electrical stanchions.

It was noted that the Big Tree plant was now to be progressed by Groundwork (North East).

The clerk outlined that the Town Council had entered into a Partnership with the ACDT to jointly provide an Alnwick community forum called the Alnwick Community Partnership, chaired by the Mayor. There were currently 10 agreed priority projects and a steering group had been appointed to manage these priorities. One of the priorities is the production of the area development plan. The partnership established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to manage this process. This is chaired by the Mayor and now has 12 representatives, details of membership were contained in the report. Members were supportive of the partnership and felt it was important that it continued.

RESOLVED: That the Community Partnership should continue with the Town Council as the lead organisation and that membership and reporting mechanisms be reviewed.

Members were supportive of looking at options on how to replace the Trust, once the administrator had completed his work.

RESOLVED: At the appropriate time discussions should be held between the Town Council and Northumberland County Council to consider future Trust options for the Town.

It was also reported that Councillor Castle has purchased the Trust projector from the administrator for £100 plus vat. He had wished to secure this asset for the benefit of the town and acted quickly to safeguard it. He had requested that the Town Council purchase it from him at the same price and make it available for a similar purpose, loaning it out to councillors for official use or community groups, perhaps with a small charge. The clerk confirmed that the administrator had indicated that the value was reasonable.

RESOLVED: To purchase the projector from Councillor Castle for £100 plus vat.

C11/137. Neighbourhood Plan Update

Members were updated on the action taken to-date by the steering group. This included the inclusion of the Parish of Denwick in the plan area, a list of topic areas for the plan with some possible lead people and undertaking initial public awareness raising for the plan. Attention was drawn to the draft Terms of Reference for the neighbourhood plan steering group.

RESOLVED: That the Council endorses the actions taken to date and agrees the draft terms of reference for the steering group.

Members also considered a request from Peter Biggers from Argyle Planning Ltd to meet the costs of his fees for completing the successful front runner bid. This work had been commissioned by the Alnwick Community Development Trust and had been completed in July. However because the Trust was now in administration he may not now get paid. Members were mindful that the administrator had not yet completed his work and that the initial contract had been with the Trust but also that the Town Council were benefitting from the successful application.

RESOLVED: To reconsider the request from Mr Biggers after the administrator had completed his work.

C11/138. Proposed transfer of services from Northumberland County Council.

Following discussions last year, the County Council had now written to the Council outlining its proposals for 2012/13. A copy of the information had been emailed or posted to councillors. The Mayor attended a meeting with the County Council on Monday 10th October regarding this issue. Members considered the main transfer areas of bus shelters, seats and litter bins together with the optional service areas of additional grass cutting and planting. The transfers would have significant budget implications for the council, particularly if replacement programmes had to be considered. Members were surprised at the likely cost of the planting and also felt that give the arrival of the Olympic torch in Alnwick next June, they had hoped the county council would be willing to ensure the route was well planted, without having to rely on the town council. The clerk also highlighted proposals to charge for certain parish council election costs for regular elections, but no costs were currently available. It was agreed that a full response be considered for the next meeting along with comments on the revised draft Northumberland Charter, which had just been issued.

RESOLVED: A further report be received at the next meeting regarding the proposals.

C11/139. Festival Coordinator Update

The clerk gave an update on the timetable for the appointment of a festival coordinator and interviews were planned for the afternoon of October 28th. He recommended that the selection process should involve a panel of four. The Mayor and Cllr Roberts had already been involved in the process and it was suggested that they should continue to be involved. It was also suggested that the remaining two selection panel places be taken up by a councillor and also a member of the festival committee. Councillor Gray volunteered to assist and Councillor Blakey volunteered to be a reserve.

RESOLVED: The selection panel be composed of The Mayor, Councillor Roberts, Councillor Gray and a member of the festival committee. Councillor Blakey to be the reserve member.

C11/140. Requests for grant assistance

An application was received for a contribution towards the new Halloween Festival running between 28th Oct and 31st Oct in Alnwick. This is being run by the Alnwick Tourism Association and the Alnwick Chamber of Trade. The request was for a grant of £300 towards the running costs of the festival.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £300 towards the Halloween Festival.

A request had initially been made for a contribution of £1,000 towards the running costs of the Celebrating Youth Event 2011. This event takes place on October 29th and will be for 12-20 year olds. The bid was made on behalf of the Alnwick Area Youth Work Forum. Councillor Patience advised the Council that the funding had now been obtained for the event, and asked the Council to consider making the provision of a contingency budget if possible. Having declared an interest at the start of the meeting, she then left the room.

RESOLVED: To make a £500 contingency provision for the Youth Event.

C11/141. Correspondence

The clerk reported that the following correspondence has been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
12/9	Alnwick in Bloom – Letter of Thanks from Alnwick in Bloom for additional grant	noted
14/9	St Cloud letter of thanks for welcome & recognition at last council meeting	noted
16/9	NCC- North Area Development Team colocation of Berwick & Alnwick teams to Allerburn House	noted
21/9	Boundary Commission – Review of Parliamentary Constituencies	Available from the clerk, comments by 5 th December
22/9	Copy of 'Boulmer Lookout' magazine	Available from the Clerk on request
27/9	Northumberland Estates – copy of Heads of terms for Cycle Track	Referred to Recreation & Amenities Committee
30/9	NCC Joint meeting of parish/town council and NCC – 10 th October	Mayor & Clerk attended

RESOLVED: That the correspondence received be noted.

C11/141. Financial Matters – Payments

The clerk reported that the following invoices had been received for payment:

Inland Revenue	£992.97	Tax and NI (Sept)
Wages Account	£4000	Transfer to wages account
Northumbrian Water	£85.11	Water Bill Cemetery (Paid 20/9)
Northumbrian Water	£915.35	Water Rates cemetery and water bill Robertson's Fountain & Ratten Row (Paid 7/10)
Aon Limited	£362.47	Additional Insurance Premium (Paid 20/9)
Thompson Business Equipment	£44.06	Wage Books
BDO LLP	£660	External Audit Fee
WR Batey	£235.57	Printer Cartridges (£200.40), postage (£26.68), stapler (£8.49)
Fife Plant Hire	£135.96	Building Materials
npower	£79.40	Bill for Town Hall Clock

Petty Cash	£36.43	Petrol, postage, files, wasp nest powder
CBS World	£43.05	Photocopying
npower	£33.39	Bill for Robertson's Fountain
James McLean Ltd	£12.00	Safety Boots
TOTAL	7,635.76	

The following payments are now paid by direct debit and were reported for information		
BT	£89.69	Phone bills cemetery and cemetery lodge Paid 28 th September

The 2012 Allotment Rents were considered. The current allotment rents are Ratten Row full plot - £25 and half plot £15, and St James's - full plot £15 and half plot £9. The allotment working group had recommended the following rents for 2012.

Ratten Row – (with water supply) full plot £35 and half plot £25;

(without water supply) full plot £30 and half plot £20;

St James -full plot £25 and half plot £15. (plots at St James do not have their own water supply).

A budget statement for the 6 months ending on 30th September was circulated by the clerk and explained.

RESOLVED: a) To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £7,635.76 and to note the direct debit payments of £89.69. b) To agree the 2012 allotment rents as outlined above and c) to note the current budget position.

C11/142. Councillor Issues

a) **Councillor Castle – the condition of footpaths in the town.**

Councillor Castle outlined his concern about the condition of footpaths in the town and suggested that an inspection should be arranged involving an officer from County Highways and members of the Town Council. Councillors were supportive of the principle.

RESOLVED: That a footpath inspection date be agreed with an officer from County Highways and councillors be invited to attend.

b) **Councillor Blakey – the condition of the lime trees on the cobbles.**

Councillor Blakey highlighted the poor condition of the lime trees in Bondgate Within, she was in discussion with County Council officers about these.

C11/143. Any Other Business

a) Councillor Grisdale asked about any winter weather plans that the council may have in place. It was agreed to consider this at the next meeting.

b) Councillor Patience spoke about her attendance at the Alnwick in Bloom awards and how she had received the Silver Gilt certificate on behalf of the Council. Members were full of praise for the efforts of those involved.

c) Councillor Hewison felt that a discussion was needed regarding pedestrian priority for Narrowgate. It was agreed that this would be placed on the next agenda.

C11/144. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED: That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The following item was considered:

C11/145. Mechanics Institute

The meeting closed at 9.47 p.m.