

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 24th July 2014  
in the Committee Room, Clayport Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors S Patience (Chairman), P Broom, C Goodfellow, M Harrington, P Holt, G Mavin, S Mavin, A Shilton and M Swinbank

**In attendance:** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Administration Assistant

**RA 14/08 Apologies**

Councillors D Farrar, R Roberts and A Symmonds

**RA 14/09 Declarations of Interest**

None

**RA 14/10 Budget Update 2014/15**

The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure as at 24th July 2014. This showed expenditure of £610 on events, £0 on projects and £13,327 on assets & services. Income was reported at £40 at this stage. Each section was discussed noting the following:

EXPENDITURE

Alnwick In Bloom has asked for a proportion of their grant (normally paid in June or July) less the cost of the watering of the hanging baskets that the Town Council will pay (£18 x approximately 55 baskets).

TOWN PROMOTION - this is the Town Council's contribution for a leaflet reprint.

ASSETS & SERVICES

WAGES - £936 is for the Cemetery Superintendent and Cemetery Assistant based on the % of time they spend on work at the allotments.

PLAYGROUND - slightly above the budget as repairs were needed to the swing at Barresdale. Some of the costs can be taken from the Swansfield Park endowment.

Councillor questions and comments:

Councillor G Mavin suggested that a schedule be prepared for a leaflet reprint so it gets done this financial year. Town Clerk explained that several people had offered money towards the costs of reprinting but not quite enough to get it done. The tourism association had not offered any money at this stage.

Councillor Patience explained that the Town Trail leaflets will be reprinted highlighting heritage and culture. Town Clerk explained that a meeting about six months ago had discussed the current leaflets including 3 town maps, town trail and visitor information / guide leaflet. NCC were organising a leaflet but this was not completed however, they have paid the Town Council £500 towards the costs of the leaflet reprint.

Councillor S Mavin said that Morpeth have a good leaflet that lists events by season but has no advertising.

Councillor Goodfellow explained that there was also a WWI leaflet available for Alnwick which was very good.

Councillor Broom asked if the Town Council could get examples of other town leaflets

to look at. Town Clerk to get examples of other town leaflets.

Councillor Patience suggested that a discussion about the town leaflet was added to the next Town Team meeting. Town Clerk to get item added to next agenda.

Councillor Shilton suggested that an ideal time to have the leaflet ready would be the Tourism Fair next year.

**RESOLVED: To receive the update and budget figures.**

#### **RA 14/11 Working Group Updates**

**WWI** (Councillors Broom, Goodfellow, Holt, S Mavin and Symmonds) - The sub group had presented a suggestion list at the last committee meeting. Some of the items identified for 2014/15 have been moved to the Cemetery Committee and the work to the War Memorial bench has been completed at a cost of £80. If the WMT grant application is successful this will take all the unallocated budget of £4,500 in this financial year. The group plan to meet in September (once the WMT outcome is known) to review the suggestion list with the aim of presenting further suggestions for 2014/15, if needed. They will present their recommendations for actions in 2015/16, with anticipated costs, so that they can be included in the budget discussions at the Nov 2014 Recreation & Amenities meeting.

**Magna Carta** (Councillors Grisdale and Shilton) - The sub group has changed from Councillors Farrar and Symmonds. A meeting took place in June with Chris Hunwick and Catherine Neil from Alnwick Castle and Diana Webber from Warkworth History Society. The group reviewed the objectives of the Magna Carta Barons group; noted planned activities and discussed suggestions for events / activities in Alnwick and Warkworth. It was a really useful meeting as it gave ATC an overview as to what other people were planning in relation to Magna Carta 800th anniversary.

The Town Council are purchasing a copy of the Magna Carta at £180. Notes from the June meeting are available.

**Events (New working group)** - Councillors Broom, S Mavin, G Mavin and Patience (plus any other councillors who want to be involved).

Meeting to be arranged and all councillors invited. Councillor Harrington felt that if events are targeted for a specific cause they work well. He gave Rothbury as an example who had held a vintage day and raised £11k.

**Allotments** - Councillors Farrar, Harrington, Patience and Roberts.

Councillor Patience explained that the sub group does a lot of work outside of formal meetings including sorting out issues at allotments items such as access issues.

**Communications** - Councillors Broom, Farrar, G Mavin and Swinbank

Councillor G Mavin asked if it would be advisable to have verbal feedback from working groups to the Recreation & Amenities Committee. but written feedback to Full Council.

**General comments** - Councillor Patience felt it was advisable if someone from each sub group organised the meetings for each sub group and co-ordinated the meetings.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates.**

#### **RA 14/12 Condition of Town Centre including Oaks Roundabout Flowerbed**

Oaks Roundabout Flowerbed - The Town Clerk updated on the history of the planting at the roundabout. Alnwick Town Council had not want annuals and asked for shrubs to be planted instead. ATC had not liked the planting and had asked for the bed to be grassed over but NCC have planted annuals (marigolds and geraniums) this year.

Councillor Patience explained to the committee that Alnwick Friends if the Earth had

offered to plant 'bee friendly' annuals in Spring and Autumn. They would plant some shrubs so there was all year round interest. The Oaks have offered to sponsor the bed. She wondered if the Town Council handyman could maintain the bed. ATC would also need to pay NCC to have it watered.

Councillor Holt felt that the roundabout was a significant place in the town but felt that it needed remodelling as there was not enough work done to keep it looking nice especially for those entering the town by bus.

Councillor G Mavin asked that the Town Council check that any planting did not obscure the view for drivers approaching the roundabout.

**RESOLVED: Town Council to work with Friends of the Earth, Alnwick in Bloom and NCC to produce plans for a seasonal feature for the roundabout flowerbed.**

Councillor Broom thought the town was looking very untidy especially with weeds. Although NCC had bought in a machine to clean the pavements the bus station was a real mess and there were still no bins in place. Town Clerk said that the Town Handyman had almost finished his survey of bins so we could look to rearrange some locations.

Councillor Patience felt the Town Council should write to Arriva about the bus station. Town Clerk advised he would do this.

Councillor Holt felt that there was an awful mess outside Morrisons and wondered if they did any tidying outside the store? The Town Clerk will write and ask.

Councillor Harrington felt that someone should be able to enforce litter offences. Councillor Goodfellow asked if NCC Enforcement Officers gave out fines? Town Clerk said we could find out if they do.

Councillor Broom said that the NCC operatives do work hard to try to tidy town and the bus station was tidied as part of the town clean up in April.

Councillor Goodfellow felt that shop owners should be more responsible for the area outside their premises including the pavement. Councillor Swinbank felt retailers should be encouraged to tidy up more.

Councillor G Mavin asked if the Town Council could contact the Chamber of Trade to ask their members to co-operate and that Councillor Broom give an update on the issue at the Full Council meeting in August. He also felt NCC should spray weed-killer earlier in the year or that it was done twice a year. Town Clerk to enquire with NCC.

Councillor Patience suggested that another town clean-up day be held in September.

Councillor Broom asked if someone could be taken on for a few hours per week to tidy the town centre, especially weeding. Town Clerk explained that the Town Council can do street cleaning and tidying but not really their responsibility. Councillor G Mavin suggested contacting NCC first to say we need them to do more. Councillor Harrington felt the Town Council needed someone who could react quickly and come and tidy up as and when needed. Councillor Patience asked if the Town Council could ask Arriva to pay towards someone to tidy the town including outside the bus station.

**RESOLVED: To organise another town clean up in September.**

#### **RA 14/13 Suggestion for Flag Pole in Column Field**

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that Councillor Moore had asked them to consider putting a flag pole at the bottom of Column Field. The flag pole on the Northumberland Hall was far from ideal as it detracted from the solemnness of such occasions as the beginning and end of Armed Forces week.

Councillor G Mavin was not sure how many people would see it in Column Field. Councillor Broom asked if a temporary flag pole could be fitted where the Christmas tree goes in the market square.

Councillor Harrington said he could see a flag pole in Column Field with a number of different flags flying during the year. He would like to propose the Town Council look at the costs of flag poles and where it might go within the town.

Councillor Shilton thought the flag on the flagpole outside NCC building in Fenkle Street was in an awful state and needed looking at. Councillor Goodfellow felt that the whole area outside Fenkle Street was really messy.

**RESOLVED: To explore the costs of a flag pole and where it might be located within the town.**

**RA 14/14**

**Updates:**

**a) Allotments**

ST JAMES'S - The Town Clerk explained that Mr Bell who neighboured St James's allotment site had been notified of the committee's decision about the proposed parking area. There has also been some theft of some potatoes and there a minor dispute about a hedge.

ST GEORGE'S - One issue with an untidy allotment. it is hoped it will be tidied soon.

RATTEN ROW - Still one new allotment to let. Couple of thefts including chickens, chairs and dustbin. Water supply is still to be connected as they had been let down twice by the contractor. There is also a little bit of fly tipping.

**b) Public Conveniences**

Work started on Monday July 21st so it is hoped that this will be finished soon. Councillors would like to see a breakdown of work. Town Clerk to ask Terry Garnick for itemised schedule of work and costs.

**c) Play area**

The Town Clerk informed councillors that there had been some damage or vandalism to the scramble net at Swansfield Park.

**d) Memorial Schemes**

The Administration Assistant gave an update on the memorial scheme. Memorial benches will be offered in both the cemetery (as part of the new cemetery area) and in parks / green spaces. To give people a choice both recycled and wooden benches are proposed. Recycled - obviously to lessened the environmental impact but also because they work out as a cheaper option for people. Wood is a more traditional material but tends to be more expensive. Local companies have been asked for prices and once these are all received an update will be sent to councillors for feedback at the September committee meeting.

**e) Website and Notice Board**

Notice Board

The Administration Assistant told the Committee that the Conservation Officer had confirmed support of the proposal. She had spoken to the Planning Officer who had confirmed that as long as the application did not need to go to the Secretary of State (which all NCC' own applications have to) she should hopefully make a decision by the next Full Council meeting.

Website

The Administration Assistant issued the website stats (as at July 22nd 2014). Page views had significantly increased and the referral sites have also increased. An

analysis of the search words used was issued and to be used by the Communication Working Group to ensure Search Engine Optimisation. We had three enquiries through the Contact Us page, using the tick boxes; these were for Allotments, Events and an Other query about the work to the War Memorial.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates.**

**RA 14/15 Any Matters for next joint NCC/Town Council meeting**

1. **Oaks Roundabout Flowerbed** - To discuss a planting scheme for a seasonal feature for the flowerbed
2. **Town untidiness:**
  - Bins - To agree which bin to swap out for additional bin at bus station.
  - Enforcement - Ask about NCC Enforcement Officers give out fines for litter / bags of rubbish.
  - Weedkiller - Ask NCC for the weed-killer to be sprayed earlier in the year or done again.
  - General tidying - Discuss additional street cleaning and tidying or to pay for someone else to do it.
3. **Town flag poles:**

Ask about logistics of putting a flag pole at the bottom of Column Field or a temporary flag pole to be fitted where the Christmas tree goes in the market square. The flag on the flagpole outside NCC building in Fenkle Street is in an awful state.
4. **Public Conveniences:**

NCC to provide Town Council with itemised schedule of work and costs.

**RESOLVED: To add items to agenda of next joint NCC / Town Council in September.**

**RA 14/16 Any Other Business**

The Committee were advised that Morpeth are getting parking disc dispensers. The Town Clerk advised the committee that Alnwick will be getting two dispensers but did not know where they will be located.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm