

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 13th October 2016
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

Present Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, P Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, W Grisdale, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, K Moore, S Patience and M Swinbank.

In attendance W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk, Tim Kirton, Project & Funding Officer and Dave Campbell, NCC Town Champion for Alnwick, Stephen Bell and Carlo Biagioni, Alnwick Chamber of Trade.

C16/77 Questions from the public
None.

C16/78 Apologies for absence
Cllrs. Bell and Shilton.

C16/79 Declarations of Interest
Councillors Castle and Symmonds declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 14. Feedback from Town Team and Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters.

C16/80 Consultation on Proposed Parking Restrictions Changes
Stephen Bell, of Bell & Sons, Bondgate Within, Alnwick gave feedback about the proposals for the parking restrictions on Bondgate Within.

He felt that the current layout with yellow lines was confusing and many drivers were getting parking tickets. All the businesses, except Grieves Grindle, were in favour of herringbone parking up to Julie's Flowers. The businesses felt that, whilst planters would be nice, there were already planters in the area and that new planters would need to be kept tidy. He added that with the additional houses being built south of the town there would be more shoppers so more parking would be needed. He explained that the cycle racks in the town already were not used.

Councillor comments:

Councillor S Allcroft said that as it was had enough to get the existing planters maintained she was in favour of more parking.

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had been asked to pay for the additional planters.

Councillor G Mavin was in favour of more parking spaces as he felt the bike racks would be detrimental to the wagon way.

Councillor Swinbank agreed the current situation was an issue but was in favour of more cycle racks. He felt that these could increase footfall in the town.

Councillor Edge said that Alnwick is a very historic town and this could be a good location for an information panel about the Bondgate Tower. He didn't feel Alnwick needed more parking and that the changes should enhance the town.

Councillor Broom agreed with Mr Bell about the parking which was very limited at present. He felt that the old wagon way would still be there if the yellow lines were removed.

Councillor Castle felt that both points of view were valid but that businesses needed to be supported. Many people visit Alnwick all day which puts pressure on the short term parking. He added that there was rarely any free parking spaces in the town and said that he supported drivers and businesses.

Councillor Patience supported the option for more parking spaces but felt that everything was being looked at piecemeal and that she would like more discussion about giving Alnwick a pedestrian area.

Councillors voted 11 for extra parking spaces and 2 for the planters and cycle racks.

RESOLVED: To notify NCC of the Town Council's support for Option 2 for more parking spaces.

C16/81 Presentation from Dave Campbell, NCC Town Champion for Alnwick

Dave gave an update on developments in Alnwick:

Lionheart Depot – progressing to plan and will be opened by March 2017. NCC Highways Department will move to the new site, along with the Fire Station.

Willowburn Depot – the Highways Agency will still use the site.

Alnwick Playhouse – NCC had met with the Trustees and were working on a workable space compromise agreement. Plans for the redevelopment are due in two weeks' time.

Northumberland Hall – open day been held and enquiries are coming in and there are already two wedding bookings.

Fire Station – now for sale with a closing date of November 4th.

Alnwick Library – now been sold.

Allerburn House – a public consultation event had taken place and planning application has been submitted.

The Shambles toilets – NCC are still looking for affordable solutions.

Councillors questions:

Councillor Moore said he had received comments about the poor layout of the kitchen in the Northumberland Hall. DC advised that this was being looked at.

Councillor Humphries said he had been asked questions about Clayport Street. DC advised that the building had been sold and that planning application had been submitted but had subsequently withdrawn.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the affordable housing previously proposed for the existing Fire Station site would still be applicable for this site. Councillor Castle advised that an affordable housing level of 15% applies to developments of over 10 houses. Councillor Cairns added that the situation had changed as NCC was no longer in a position to build houses on their own sites including Chapel Lands.

Councillor G Mavin asked if there was any update on the deallocation of Willowburn Trading Estate. DC advised that discussions were taking place but had no update at the moment.

Councillor Castle added that the issue was not settled as the site had not been identified for housing in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Broom said he was aware that the new owners of the Clayport Street building were having problems as it was a Listed Building.

Councillor Cairns asked about the social services building in Bailiffgate. DC advised that there was still part of the lease left so NCC would still occupy.

Councillor Holt asked if there was a list of the people being relocate to the Playhouse building. DC advised that he would get the list to the Town Council.

Councillor Castle confirmed that he was an NCC member of the Playhouse Board and that progress had been made.

DC confirmed that the Library and the Tourist Information centre would definitely be moving to the Playhouse.

Councillor Edge said he had been at the Northumberland Hall and felt that there weren't enough ovens. He asked if there was any more proposed spending such as green space outside to make the stone/concrete border more attractive. DC advised that the Town Team meeting it had been suggested that entrance needed tidying and his would be looked at.

C16/82 Minutes of the Last meeting

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8th September 2016 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2016 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

C16/83 Matters Arising

None.

C16/84 Mayor's Report

September 18th attended the Battle of Britain Service of Commemoration at St Michael's Church. Always a moving service it was well attended and there were lots of medals on parade.

October 1st attended a Coffee Morning in Aid of Alnwick Infirmary League Friends 60th Anniversary in the newly refurbished Northumberland Hall.

October 10th along with Town Council Officers and members of the Cemetery Committee attended Alnwick Cemetery as the Bishop of Newcastle, The Reverend Christine Hardman, consecrated the extension to the current cemetery. She was accompanied by the Diocese Registrar, Revd Canon Paul Scott and church wardens from St Michael's church and other local clergy. The ceremony started with everyone, led by the church wardens and the Bishop, making a circuit of the area to be consecrated whilst Psalms were read. This was followed by the legal part of the ceremony and ended with the Bishop making the sign of the cross with her staff within the new area to signify its importance.

The Mayor highlighted that the Cemetery opened in 1856 with the first burial on October 7th 1856 and that there are 18,634 people now buried in the Cemetery. That's an incredible number and is over twice the current number of residents in Alnwick and Denwick put together.

ADVANCE NOTICE: Civic Carol Service 2016

Wednesday December 14th 2016 at St Michael's Church, Alnwick.

The Mayor's chosen charity for this year is the Alnwick Stroke Club and the theme of the service will be 'serving Alnwick'. Representatives of Lions, Rotary, Round Table and Inner Wheel have been asked to do a reading.

C16/85 Remembrance Sunday

The Mayor reminded councillors that the Remembrance Service and Parade would be held on November 13th at St Paul's RC Church followed by a march to the War Memorial where wreaths would be laid. He invited councillors to the service and march.

C16/86 Annual Return and Accounts

The Town Clerk explained that feedback had now been received from the External Auditors, the audit had been completed and that nothing had been reported as an issue.

RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Return & Accounts for 2015/16.

C16/87 Consultation on Council Tax referendum proposals for local councils

The Town Clerk explained that a consultation document had been received from NCC which he had issued to councillors. The document concerned the government capping rises in precepts which would affect some T&PCs in Northumberland. He explained that T&PCs had been requested to give their response by October 28th and that he had drafted replies to the 4 questions asked.

Councillor Castle felt the answers were correct and supported them completely.

Councillor Swinbank asked how taking on additional services might affect the Town Council's position. The Town Clerk advised that the proposals made allowances if services were taken on from NCC.

RESOLVED: To agree the proposed response and submit.

C16/88 Proposed Removal of Phone Boxes

The Town Clerk explained that BT had proposed closure of two phone boxes in Alnwick at Wagonway Post Office (121 calls in the last 12 months) and West Acres (70 calls in the last 12 months). The phone box at Alnmouth Station was also highlighted for closure (120 calls in the last 12 months).

Councillor Moore felt that the phone box at Wagonway Post Office was needed.

Councillor Castle thought that if there was a poor mobile phone signal at West Acres then the phone box should be kept.

Councillor Swinbank asked if NCC provided money to support phone boxes.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council could wait until the 2nd stage when more comments had been received.

Councillor Holt felt that both boxes should be kept as they have been used so are important to some people.

Councillor Humphries felt that if they are being used they should be kept.

Councillor Swinbank felt that if any of the calls made were 999 then the phone boxes were needed. He also felt that they could be needed for the new school.

Councillor S Mavin felt they were important as some children were not allowed mobile phones.

RESOLVED: To submit comments to NCC outlining that Alnwick Town Council want to retain the phone boxes at West Acres and Wagonway Post Office in Alnwick plus the one at Alnmouth Station.

C16/89**LTP Priorities**

Councillor Swinbank advised councillors that an updated LTP document had been reviewed by the Planning Committee and had recommended it for approval at this meeting. He explained that the Town Council's LTP priorities had been sent to NCC in August 2016 but that at a meeting with NCC officers they had requested a different format. He explained that the LTP list had been updated and that 3 specific actions had now been highlighted within the document:

1. The Cobbles;
2. Victoria Road/Wagonway Pedestrian Crossing;
3. Weavers Way pavement extension

RESOLVED: (i) To submit the revised LTP priority list to NCC; (ii) To ask Margaret Robinson to the next Full Council meeting to give an update on transport plans in Alnwick.

C16/90**Community Forum**

Councillor G Mavin had circulated a briefing document to councillors prior to the meeting. He explained that the idea of a Community Forum was to provide an efficient and effective two-way flow of communication on a broad range of issues in Alnwick between the Town Council and the principle community organisations and festival organisers. The proposal he had put forward was that the Town Council would initiate a new Community Forum to meet once a year, made up of representatives which reflect the breadth of town life.

Councillor S Allcroft agreed with the idea of a Community Forum.

Councillor Swinbank said he agreed in principle but had concerns that the proposal had a longlist of people and that thought needed to be given about what the attendees would get from the event/meeting. He added that the principle was good but felt the mechanism needed further discussion.

Councillor Symmonds suggested that it could be discussed further by a sub group.

Councillor Castle said that it could not just be a talking shop and that the details should go to the Finance & Policy meeting for further discussion.

RESOLVED: To accept the principle of a Community Forum and defer to the Finance & Policy committee.

C16/91**Updates on:****a) Neighbourhood Plan**

The Town Clerk advised that the Neighbourhood Plan had been signed off by NCC Officers and was going to Cabinet for agreement. It would then go to referendum in January 2017.

b) Town Team

The Town Clerk advised that at the Town Team meeting in September members had finalised the Constitution. He advised that the minutes and the Constitution would be circulated to councillors.

RESOLVED: To receive the updates.

C16/92**Minutes of Committees**

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee Meeting (8th September 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 8th September 2016 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (15th September 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on 15th September 2016 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (22nd September 2016) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation Amenities Committee held on 22nd September 2016 were agreed as a true record.

C16/93

Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
10 th Sept	Friends of Alnmouth Station – request for grant	To be considered by Finance Committee
14 th Sept & 27 th Sept	NALC enews	Available from Clerk on request
14 th Sept	NCC – launch of new app 'My Street Northumberland' available to download and use to report issues	Noted
15 th Sept	NALC – consultation on capping proposals	See agenda item
19 th Sept	Time Kommune – Letter of thanks and invitation to visit Norway 26 th – 28 th May 2017	Considered – Mayor to determine response
4 th Oct	NCC – Local services liaison meetings – frequency of meeting – ATC offered a six month meeting	Noted

RESOLVED: (i) To accept the correspondence; (ii) The Mayor to respond to the invitation from Time Kommune.

C16/94

Feedback on Town & Parish Council Conference

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk had attended the conference that afternoon and Councillor Symmonds gave verbal feedback.

He felt that the session by ARCH was very useful but that the rest of the conference was not so useful for the Town Council. He explained that T&PCs were asked to review the list of non-statutory services delivered by NCC and consider which they would consider taking over from NCC. He felt that any decision would be made too late and would affect T&PCs when trying to set their precepts.

Councillor G Mavin thought it would be useful to have a list of all services from Paul Jones at NCC.

RESOLVED: To note the feedback.

C16/95 Financial Matters a) Mid Year Accounts & Bank Reconciliation

The Town Clerk issued the Income and Expenditure update and bank reconciliation. He advised that the Income was about at the same level as last year. On the Bank reconciliation he advised there were four unrepresented cheques.

RESOLVED: To note the accounts and bank reconciliation.

Financial Matters b) Petty Cash

The Town Clerk explained that the petty cash float at the Cemetery was £56.66. He suggested that due to the need to buy petrol for the council van that this be increased to £100.

RESOLVED: To increase the petty cash float at the Cemetery to £100.

Financial Matters c) Staff Pension Scheme

Approval had been given at the Full Council meeting in June 2016 for the Town Council to enrol its employees in the NEST pension scheme. The Town Clerk and Assistant to the Town Clerk had opted out of the NEST scheme as they have existing pension schemes which the Town Council pay into. Three employees are members of the new council scheme and the first statutory payment have been made and applied from its staging date of August 1st 2016. Now the scheme is set up, payments to cover the period from the start of their employment up to auto enrolment need to be made as previously agreed, this amounted to £3,805.03 for the three employees.

RESOLVED: To note the commencement of the Town Council's workplace pension scheme and approve payment totalling £3,805.03.

Financial Matters – d) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
HMRC	£3,358.51	£0.00	Tax/NI payment for September
Wages Account	£8,000.00	£0.00	For wages & pension contributions for Oct 16
James N McLean	£20.00	£3.33	Stihl Stonesaw hire
Zurich Municipal	£395.11	£0.00	Van insurance
National Pen Ltd	£372.00	£62.00	395 Council Pens (civic gifts)
CBS World	£12.59	£2.10	Window Envelopes
Bill Grisdale Design	£1,155.00	£0.00	Neighbourhood Plan – Final amendments/design of document
Streetscape Ltd	£3,600.00	£600.00	Renewed Play area gates – Swansfield Park

C Bowden	£1,300.00	£0.00	Fencing and gates for new cemetery burial area and timber framework for memorial plaques for natural burial area
CBS World	£102.00	£17.00	500 Freepost envelopes
NCC	£4,742.01	£0.00	Additional evening cleanse of Alnwick public conveniences (April - Sept 16)
Fife Plant Hire	£162.60	£27.10	Sand, cement and paving slabs
Northumberland Estates	£300.60	£50.10	Castle/Garden visits and refreshments – town twinning visit
Blackett-Ord Conservation Ltd	£900.00	£150.00	War Memorial stability survey
Marmax	£1,047.60	£174.60	3 new seats (1 cemetery, 2 play areas)
St James's Church Centre	£150.00	£0.00	Room Bookings
Royal British Legion Poppy appeal	£19.00	£0.00	Poppy Wreath – Remembrance Sunday
W R Batey	£644.47	£107.41	£76.87 refreshments Town Twinning, £567.60 Printer Cartridges
Bristol Street Motors	£11,579.00	£1,882.33	New Council Van (Nissan NV200)
BDO	£960.00	£160	External Audit fee
Bart Endean	£615.60	£102.60	Boundary stones for cemetery
James McClean	£87.92	£14.65	Materials
The Oaks	£127.50	£25.50	Refreshments cemetery consecration
Mole Countrystore	£4.99	£0.00	Grass seed
J Farmer	£84.00	£0.00	Repair tap at allotment
Petty Cash	£98.37	£9.17	Fuel £55.03, remainder required to make balance to £100. (see b above)
Pension Contribution	£3,805.03	£0.00	(see c above)
J Pibworth	£103.25	£0.00	Hedgehog box/natural wood preservative
Mayor's Allowance	£1000.00	£0.00	Annual allowance 2016/17
TOTAL	£44,747.15	£3,387.89	

In addition the County Council had invoiced the Council for £1,224.63 for the final payment towards the Housing Needs Study to replace an invoice paid in August for £1,714.48 which was incorrect (the money has be credited to the Town Council).

Payments for events this year were also due. Alnwick in Bloom were paid £1,475 on 6th October and after deduction of storage costs at Willowburn and any other agreed expenditure the following payments were due:

- Alnwick International Music Festival £2,399.14 (grant of £5,650 minus stage/stalls erection costs (NCC & ATC), the net cost of new internal stage and Willowburn storage costs).
- Alnwick Spring Show £200 (grant of £500 less £300 Willowburn storage cost).

The Town Clerk also advised councillors that in previous years the payment to the Royal British Legion for the poppy wreath also included a donation and asked if this would be done again this year. Councillors agreed to increase the payment to the British Legion to £50.

The following payments were now paid by direct debit and were reported for information:			
BT	£44.39	£7.40	Phone Bills Cemetery
BT	£42.04	£7.01	Phone Bill Fenkle Street
Northumbrian Water	£1,208.88	£0	Water Bills, (cemetery 2, Robertson's Fountain and Allotments)
npower	£119.56	£5.68	Robertson's Fountain and Town Hall Clock
Staff Pension Employer Payments	£680.33	£0	For August & Sept

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £50,076.92 and ii) To note the direct debit payments of £2,095.20.

C16/96 Estate Designs to facilitate bus services – Councillor G Mavin

Councillor G Mavin highlighted to the Council, problems with some estate designs, particularly cul-de-sacs which then make it difficult for residents to access bus services. He proposed that the matter is raised with County Council planners.

RESOLVED: To write to NCC to request that new estate design reflects bus service requirements and that if necessary bus gates are included.

C16/97 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Cairns advised that she had spoken to Martin Robinson at the Aln Valley Railway who had advised that he wanted the bike track progressed and would like to talk to the Town Council.

The meeting closed at 9.23pm.