

Alnwick Town Team Partner Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team held at 5pm on Tuesday April 19th 2016 at Bari Tea, Alnwick.

Present: Cllr. Bill Grisdale (Chairman), Bill Batey, David Lovie, Caroline Stewart, Cllr. Sue Patience, Elizabeth Jones (Alnwick in Bloom), Jonathan Park (Halifax Bank, Alnwick), Dave Campbell (Northumberland County Council), Carlo Biagioni (Chamber of Trade), Philip Angier, Tim Kirton, David Taylor.

1. Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Gordon Castle, Maureen Hornsby, Colin Barnes, Clive Mattison.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday March 1st 2016

Caroline Stewart advised that the minutes under Item 4 on page 2 should have read: "CS reported that her own trade had improved slightly during the gasworks, possibly due to the street's closure to vehicular traffic encouraging passing pedestrians. A recent meeting of the Castle Quarter traders indicated they would welcome a pedestrian priority area in Narrowgate."

With this amendment the minutes were approved as a true record.

3. Matters arising

Cllr. Sue Patience clarified with regard to Item 6 on page 3 of the minutes that money is needed for new boards at the Playhouse rather than work on the existing ones.

4. HM the Queen's 90th birthday commemoration

TK reported on the responses received to the proposal made at the last meeting for a "traffic free day" in Alnwick to enable parties, picnics, etc. in recognition of the Queen's birthday to take place on the closed streets. The overwhelming majority of Chamber of Trade responders were strongly against this idea, especially following the recent period of road closures caused by gas-main related road works around Narrowgate, Fenkle Street and Bondgate Within. There were suggestions to instead hold this event in the Market Place; Philip Angier confirmed that both he and Dawn would not be available that weekend to take part in a Market Place based event, although market stalls, etc. could be made available to others to arrange and supervise the event. TK advised that he was out of the country on holiday that weekend and would not be able to participate. Carlo Biagioni advised that two volunteers had come forward from the Chamber of Trade to participate in the event; it was recognised that this was insufficient to hold such an event.

Bill Batey advised that other events were being held to commemorate the Queen's 90th birthday over that weekend, including the installation of a new commemorative seat in Pottergate garden and of a new flagpole with a commemorative plaque at the foot of the Column Field subject to planning permission being confirmed.

Cllr. Sue Patience reminded the meeting that commemorative clean-up of Ratten Row allotments was also planned.

Bill Grisdale said that any event in the town centre would require at least ten people to deliver and that the two from the Chamber of Trade plus Alnwick Councillors would not be enough. BG also reminded the meeting that no budget for this commemoration exists beyond Alnwick Town Council's and that nobody has yet come forward with a firm idea for an event.

It was agreed that the Town Team will recognise the Queen's 90th birthday through the commemorative seat and flagpole but that the proposal to prepare the streets or the Market Place for street parties, etc. should not go ahead.

5. Budget update

BB reported that the Town Team has around £2,500 left to spend: Last August prices were received for the completion of the banner project including 4 banners to be mounted on the sides of Northumberland Hall and a further three wall-mounted banners in Narrowgate. The costs of these 7 banners would be £4,500 or, if purchased by the Town Council £3,800 as VAT would not be payable by the Council, both figures being more than the remaining budget.

BB suggested that instead of spending up to £2,884 on four banners (including installation) which would fade in 4 to 5 years and then need replacing, this money may be better spent on "permanent" signage which would last say 20 years.

Mark Brassell at Alnwick Garden could possibly make a cherry-picker available for the installation of the banners at Northumberland Hall which could result in a cost saving. The present scaffolding on Northumberland Hall could be useful in fitting the required brackets to the Hall to hold the banners but these brackets will require both planning permission and building consent and this may not be secured until June – the scaffolding around the Hall is due to be dismantled in June so time will be very tight. Dave Campbell warned of great pressure to get the Northumberland Hall scaffolding removed in time for the Taste of the North event on June 25th and 26th 2016.

It was agreed to do the banners on Narrowgate and apply for planning permission and building consent to finish the Northumberland Hall banners.

The Playhouse car park boards are also a potential call on the Town Team resource.

CLlr. Sue Patience advised that that boards in the bus station have been damaged so any additional funding for dealing with this would be welcomed.

Elizabeth Jones suggested using part of the remaining budget for new signage, which the town was lacking. BB advised that one new fingerpost would probably cost around £2,500, scooping the remaining budget. BB also advised that the Town Council Handyman will be undertaking painting of some of the existing finger posts this year (with NCC permission).

BB advised that he has spoken to the County Council regarding NCC Community Chest funding for the Town Team but to be eligible the Town Team would need to have a constitution and a bank account of its own: Alnwick Town Council is the Town Team's accountable body but the Town Council cannot itself apply for NCC Community Chest funding.

PA advised that either the Town Team could itself become constituted or alternatively it could partner a body which is already constituted; PA favours the latter option, with the Town Team partnering the Chamber of Trade.

PA reported Local Living's intention to apply for NCC Community Chest funding for further banners, mostly around the Market Place; these would be to very visibly publicise each Market Day in Alnwick. PA formally requested the (non-financial) support of the Town Team for this application. There was

unanimous agreement that a letter of support for this application should be provided by the Town Team.

ACTION: TK to work with PA on this letter.

BB advised the meeting that the total North Area budget for NCC Community Chest is £56,000 and this pot will probably be used by the second round in September 2016.

BG advised that £2,000 of Town Team finance will be spent on the reprint (10,000 copies) of the Town Trail leaflet; these will be sold at £1 and as 50% of the revenues made from the leaflet come back to the Town Team a potential £5,000 could be generated.

6. Updates:

(a) County Council – Dave Campbell

DC reminded all present of his role as “communicator” between NCC and Alnwick Town Team. DC stated that in-principle deals had been struck for NCC to acquire the Playhouse to become a services “hub” within the town; works to create the Playhouse Hub will start in May 2017 and last 3 to 4 months. NCC will consolidate the Tourist Information Centre, the Library and the NCC Front Office Desk at the new Playhouse Hub.

David Taylor enquired as to what consultation NCC had entered into with regard to the concentration of these NCC services on The Playhouse; DC replied that consultation had been internal with NCC departments, there had been no formal public consultation. DT expressed concern at this and stated that it was up to all on the Town Team to ensure such changes without consultation of the town should not become a trend. PA stated that the Neighbourhood Plan’s thinking on the town had not been taken into account in NCC’s decision to create a Playhouse Hub.

BG reminded the meeting that the present Library building is not NCC’s anyway and the landlord was actually advertising the building for sale. In addition, public consultation costs a lot of money at a time when NCC budgets have been severely cut.

DT said he recalled Paul Leo of NCC referring to a £2.1 million investment in Market towns at the March meeting of Alnwick Town Council and asked DC for an update on this. **ACTION: DC to investigate and report back.** BG stated that this was a reference to the Market Towns Initiative which would see the dissemination of jobs from County Hall to the various market towns including Alnwick and more on this would be announced later.

DC advised that works to Northumberland Hall were on time and the Hall will be open for business again to the local community in June 2016. NCC welcomes ideas for as many uses as possible for the refurbished Northumberland Hall.

The Shambles Tourist Information Centre will be vacated once the TIC has moved into the Playhouse and could be used for small business units; NCC is inviting discussions with people on this idea.

DC also said that NCC welcomed ideas as regards NCC public toilet provision in The Shambles; toilet provision could be concentrated on Greenwell Lane which would be heavily invested in while also further

developing the “You’re Welcome” community toilet programme. This could mean that The Shambles toilets could be used for something else. Alternatively, the Shambles toilets or the Greenwell Lane toilets could be improved and extended.

(b) Town Council

NCC have given notice that the present NCC fixed CCTV cameras in Alnwick (and throughout Northumberland) are to be replaced with a new system of NCC redeployable cameras. Alnwick Town Council is now investigating providing further CCTV cameras in Alnwick and will be holding discussions with the police on this. David Brassell invited the Town Council to inspect the Alnwick Garden’s CCTV system which works extremely well.

The three Alnwick Town “perspective” maps, installed in 2000 on lecterns at the Market Place, the Castle Barbican and at the Column Field are now 16 years old, have suffered weather damage and need replacing. The Town Council is in discussions with those organisations which are still in Alnwick and which funded the originals in 2000 about funding replacements in time for this summer.

The “You’re Welcome” public access community toilet scheme has been extended by the Town Council in Alnwick through the addition of The Queen’s Head and Blue Bell pubs and Costa Coffee in addition to the existing arrangement with The George pub. This was welcomed by the meeting.

c) Chamber of Trade

Carlo said that the Chamber of Trade intends to have a discussion with Grant Davey and Lorraine Dewison regarding the proposed relocation of the toilets in The Shambles. ***(This has subsequently been arranged for 6pm on May 10th at the St. James Centre and all members of the Town Team are invited to attend)*** The Chamber of Trade would welcome the installation of bunting just before the Queen’s birthday.

7. Any other business

Mark Brassell wishes to hold an informal “brainstorming” seminar, to which all the Town Team will be invited, regarding Halloween and Christmas 2016, including a repeat of the Lantern Parade. More information will be issued by MB as it becomes available.

Mark Brassell also advised the meeting that in commemoration of the 90th birthday of Her Majesty the Queen, the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland would be lighting a beacon at the Castle Barbican at 16.45 on Thursday 21st and everyone is invited to attend.

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Town Team will be held at **Bari Tea at 5pm on June 7th 2016.**

The meeting formally ended at 18.50 hrs.

Tim Kirton
April 26th 2016