

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 26th January 2017
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors P Broom (Chair), S Bell, P Edge, G Mavin, S Patience
M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town
Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer.

RA 16/33 Apologies

Councillors B Grisdale and M Harrington.

RA 16/34 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Edge, Patience and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in
Item 5a) Play area works.

RA 16/35 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

RA 16/27 The Town Clerk advised that no progress had yet been made on the
investigations for Robertson's Fountain

RA 16/36 Budget Update 2016/17

The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee
Income and Expenditure as at 23rd January 2017. He advised that expenditure
was £13,273.31 for events, £8,386.48 for projects and £42,398.54 for assets &
services. The Town Clerk noted the following:

EXPENDITURE

EVENTS:

All expenditure is included except cost of hiring the Northumberland Hall on
Remembrance Day.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the cost of the Northumberland Hall was higher
since the refurbishment work. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that
she thought it was the same.

PROJECTS:

PETERS MILL BRIDGE - Councillor Harrington is working on the fabrication for
the mill stones for Peter's Mill Bridge which should cost around £350.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the project would have signage. The Town Clerk
advised that there was a sign which fits inside the centre of the mill stone.

COMMUNICATION PROJECT – £4k left in the budget.

TOWN CLEAN UP – booked for March 5th.

FLAG POLE PROJECT – needs to be reconsidered following discussions with
NCC Planning Officers.

BULB / TREE PLANTING – daffodils have been planted at Meadow Riggs and

crocuses in Greenwell Lane.

ASSETS & SERVICES:

TOWN HALL LIGHTING – expenditure as at quarter 3. Will be below budget.

ROBERTSON'S FOUNTAIN - expenditure as at quarter 3. Will be below budget.

SEATS – expenditure includes cost of replacement seat for Hotspur Tower which was covered by insurance. Still around £1,500 in the budget.

WAR MEMORIAL – quotes for works needed will be bought to the next committee meeting.

PLAY AREA REPLACEMENTS – new gate for Allerburn Lea play area still to be bought. Some works at Swansfield Park will be funded out of the endowment.

INCOME

Mostly from allotment rents and is currently £3963.50. Should exceed budgeted figure by the end of the year.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the Your Welcome signage should be different languages. The Town Clerk advised that the signs on the toilet doors showing the locations of the Your Welcome businesses were the most important ones.

Councillor Patience asked if the toilet door signs could also be in braille.

Councillor G Mavin felt that the business signs could also be in different languages such as French and Chinese.

Councillor Edge thought that the TIC could be asked what languages they get asked for.

The Town Clerk advised that the signs for the Your Welcome businesses could be redesigned.

RESOLVED: To accept the 2016/17 budget update.

RA 16/37 Updates on:

a) Play Area works

The Project & Funding Officer reported that the Friends of Bullfield Community Orchard had agreed to a play area in the orchard. The lease is still to be amended to allow an assignment before this can go ahead. The Town Clerk reminded councillors that there if the questionnaire come back in favour of a new play area there would be cost to have this done.

A questionnaire has been distributed to the properties that either front or back onto the proposed play area site to be returned by February 6th. So far two have been received both positive.

Councillor Broom asked what type of equipment the play area would have. Councillor Patience advised that it would be wooden equipment. The Project & Funding Officer added that Friends of Bullfield Community Orchard had given some examples as to the type of equipment that might be installed. The Town Clerk confirmed that ideas for the layout would be presented at the next committee meeting.

Councillor Symmonds asked if the Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard could apply for NCC Community Chest funding. The Town Clerk advised that an application for an Awards for All grant was being considered.

b) Allotments

RATTEN ROW The Town Clerk reported that there had been three leaks at Ratten Town since the last meeting and that three allotments had been re-plumbed as part of the last repairs. He also advised that there was a real assortment of pipework and that he had a contractor who would be interested in quoting for new pipe works.

He also advised that some clearing work had taken place and that the soil had been separated from the waste and respreads on the site.

The new allotments that were formed have all been let and there are currently 5 free allotments on the site.

Noise from cockerels – NCC had a number of complaints about the noise and the Town Council wrote to four allotment holders who were known to have cockerels. They have had a new complaint and have asked the Town Council to look at this again. The allotment agreement states that no poultry or livestock can be kept overnight without the Town Council's permission. The Town Clerk had spoken to one of the allotment holders who has a cockerel who confirmed that he had acted on the letter he had received and was now keeping his cockerel locked up in the dark overnight. He also confirmed that he had received information that there was a cockerel in the garden of a property in Barresdale. He confirmed that he would check with NCC about what they will be doing next which could be to serve a noise nuisance notice on the relevant allotment holders or the Town Council. He advised that the Town Council may need to say no cockerels at Ratten Row and ask the owners to remove them.

Councillor Patience felt it would helpful to ask find out what other allotment sites do regarding cockerels.

Councillor G Mavin said he was disappointed that the Allotment Holders Association had not gone forward at Ratten Row and asked if an of the other sites would undertake to do this. The Town Clerk confirmed that the allotment holders at St James's would probably be keen.

Councillor G Mavin asked who used the Community Allotment. Councillor Patience advised that Gallery Youth and the Guides currently used the plot.

Councillor Patience asked if a letter could be written about the state of the road leading to Ratten Row allotments. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would write to Northumberland Estates.

RESOLVED: To delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Recreation & Amenities, to take decisions with regard to cockerels at Ratten Row.

c) Lectern Maps

The Project & Funding Officer advised that the replacements had been agreed and that money had been pledged from several businesses in Alnwick. He reminded councillors that a location needs to be agreed or the fourth new lectern map and that there were potentially three locations:

- I. close to the fingerpost outside Iceland
- II. on the cobbles close to Robertson's Fountain
- III. on the footpath outside Your Move on Bondgate Within.

He explained that the lectern probably needed to be mounted on a single metal column matching the fingerposts. He advised that quotes would be bought to the March meeting.

The Town Clerk added that a budget of £1k had been allocated and that the cost of the other three lectern maps would be covered by the contribution from local organisations and businesses.

Councillor Patience asked if planning permission would be needed. The Town Clerk said this needed to be investigated.

Councillor Shilton thought the entrance to the Market Place would be a suitable location. The Town Clerk advised that this was outside the Quarter and the new location should be between Bondgate Tower and Baileys.

Councillor Bell felt that the site outside Your Move was less cluttered.

Councillor Swinbank thought that it was important it was somewhere where it wouldn't get hit.

Councillor Edge asked if it would be outside Your Move on the pavement. The Town Clerk advised that it was a wide pavement. He added that the Project & Funding Officer would talk to an NCC Planning Officer.

d) Seat and bin replacements

BINS - The Town Clerk reported that six new bins had been installed in 2016/17 (2 in Taylor Drive, 2 at the Community Orchard and 2 at Roxboro Place Car Park). He advised that he had been asked for an additional bin to be located between Aldi and St James's estate. He confirmed that there was money in the budget to purchase this and another bin. Councillor Swinbank asked if this could be for Chapel Lands. The Town Clerk confirmed it could.

Councillor G Mavin reported that one of the bins at Roxboro Place Car Park had not been emptied since being replaced. He also reported that the area around the Corn Exchange was very untidy. The Town Clerk advised that he had spoken to NCC and it had now been emptied. Councillor Swinbank felt that the area could be targeted during the Town Tidy in March.

SEATS - The Town Clerk reported that a Heritage seat had been re-sited at Bailiffgate and that the Heritage seat damaged in the accident had been replaced. The two seats at Allerburn Lea play area had also been replaced.

He explained that the residents of Robert Adam Court had decided that they did not want a bench as it would cause disturbance.

He advised that the annual inspection of seats and benches would take place the following week which would highlight those needing replacing or repairing. He advised that two seats were being ordered, one as a replacement in Windsor Gardens and one to replace a seat identified during the inspection.

Councillor Edge advised that the seat near the Golf Course in Hope House Lane was in a bad state of repair. The Town Clerk advised that this would be looked at as part of the inspection.

e) Tourism leaflet

Councillor G Mavin reported that he had costs for designing and printing a new town leaflet. The budget was £3.5k and the costs to print 40,000 leaflets was £2,998. He explained that an additional £600 would cover everything else that was needed. He had been to the 6 major venues in the town for a contribution of £100 towards the leaflet and had so far had 5 had said yes.

He had also spoken to Eclipse Translation about producing a downloadable Mandarin version for the Town Council's website and that more on-line version in other languages would be useful.

Councillor Swinbank asked what the deadline for production was. Councillor G Mavin advised that the tourism fair was on March 21st and the leaflets would be available for this.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

f) Fingerpost signs

The Project & Funding Officer explained that the Town Council would be taking over responsibility for the fingerposts in the town from April 1st 2017. He had circulated a list of all the current fingerposts and asked councillors for their comments.

Councillor Shilton asked if the URC had paid for their fingerpost. The Town Clerk advised that Alnwick District Council had organised the original fingerposts and that all organisations on them had paid to be on them. He added that some of the fingerposts were out of date and that this was a good time to review them. He advised that the budget allocated for 2017/18 would include one new fingerpost with three fingers. He explained the costs would be:

- I. New fingers - £195
- II. Column - £700
- III. Cleaning existing fingers - £75 each

Councillor Swinbank thought that as it had originally been a collaboration between the District Council and businesses the Town Council could ask for contributions towards the cost of new fingers or cleaning existing ones. He felt that the Town Council should fund fingers with public signage e.g. toilets.

Councillor Broom commented that most of the signs were for brown sign organisations.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the Town Council should only pay for community fingers and that tight control was needed.

Councillor Patience asked how many fingers could be on each fingerpost. The Town Clerk advised that this was dependent on the height of the fingerpost but that most had between three and six.

Councillor Patience felt that an audit of organisations would be helpful.

Councillor Broom thought organisations / businesses currently on the fingerposts should be told that the Town Council were taking control of them and asked if they want to be part of the project.

Councillor Symmonds said that there should not be too many signs.

Councillor Edge felt it needed to be looked at carefully as some of the attractions were the reason people came to Alnwick.

Councillor Patience felt it would be advisable to check what was in the Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED: To send any comments to the Project & Funding Officer by February 6th.

g) Website activity

The Assistant to the Town Clerk issued a sheet showing website statistics for 2015 and 2016. She reported that during 2016 the Town Council's website had 15,273 visits and 27,169 pages viewed which was an increase on the 2015 figure of 7,560 visit and 12,368 pages.

Of the visitors 469 had gone directly to the site, 3,672 used a search engine, 472 came as referrals from another website and 46 came through social media.

The highest hits on the site were:

QUARTER 1 – 54 on January 12th and 33 on March 30th; QUARTER 2 – 83 on May 26th, 61 on April 4th and 73 on June 17th; QUARTER 3 - 80 on July 30th, 64 on Aug 3rd, 65 on Aug 15th, 64 on Sept 5th; QUARTER 4 – 58 on October 24th, 234 on November 13th (Remembrance Sunday), 195 on November 18th (Christmas Lights) and 156 on December 3rd (Christmas Market).

The report included the 17 most visited areas on the website. The 7 with over 500 visits were Parking in Alnwick with 5024 visits, Events with 4261 visits, Your Councillors with 942 visits, Agendas & Minutes with 933 visits, Alnwick Cemetery with 637 visits and Play areas with 633 visits.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates

RA 16/38 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Town Tidy up day would be publicised. The Town Clerk confirmed it would.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm