

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 25th May 2017
in the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, B Grisdale, M Harrington, 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 17/01 Apologies

Councillors Mavin and Patience.

RA 17/02 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Edge and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7b) Play area works.

RA 17/03 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

RA 16/35 The Town Clerk advised that investigations into bringing Robertson's Fountain back into use as a drinking fountain still needed to be done.

RA 17/04 Working Group Membership for 2017/18 (Current groups are Communication, Allotments and World War 1)

Communications - £4k in the budget from 2016/17.

Councillor Swinbank suggested that electronic signage could be looked at by group.

Councillor Symonds felt the group should look at whether the Town Council communicated with their electorate enough.

RESOLVED: Membership for 2017/18: Councillors Edge, Grisdale, Harrington and Swinbank.

Allotments – The Town Clerk reported that this group needed to look at each of the allotment sites to agree actions for each.

RESOLVED: Membership for 2017/18: Councillors Edge, Patience and Swinbank.

WWI – did not meet in 2016/17 although the Town Council organised a ceremony to make the centenary of the Battle of the Somme in July 2017 which the Mayor took part in. £500 in the budget carried forward from 2016/17 for tree / shrub planting.

Councillor Grisdale reported that the Alnwick Lions were taking over the area near Swansfield Park Primary School from the cut to The Avenue so might be able to help select a location for the planting.

Councillor Symmonds felt the group should look at areas other than just the Western Front. He also felt that a priority for the group was the civic flagpole in the town.

RESOLVED: Membership for 2017/18: Councillors Broom, Edge, Grisdale, Symmonds.

RA 17/05 Budget Update 2017/18

2016/17 - The Town Clerk gave an update on the expenditure figures for 2016/17. He advised that one invoice was still outstanding for the hire of Northumberland Hall on Remembrance Sunday. He reported that approximately £6,300 had been taken out of the Swansfield Park endowment in 2016/17.

He explained that the Town Council needed to decide what to do with the interest which was made on the endowment money.

2017/18 - The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure for 2017/18 as at 22nd May 2017. He advised that there was no expenditure at present for events or assets and services and £1,367.54 for projects.

He explained that there were several budget lines which had carry over budgets from 2016/17:

PROJECTS:

PETERS MILL BRIDGE – £500 added from 2016/17.

COMMUNICATION PROJECT – £4,000 added from 2016/17.

WWI ROSES / TREES – £500 added from 2016/17.

FLAG POLE PROJECT – £500 added from 2016/17.

ASSETS & SERVICES:

ALLOTMENT EXPENSES - £2,000 added from 2016/17.

HOTSPUR STATUE – £500 added from 2016/17.

PLAY AREA REPLACEMENTS – £10,500 added from 2016/17.

He also explained that £1,500 had been allocated to the Tour of Britain from Unallocated budget.

EXPENDITURE

EVENTS:

Just awaiting an invoice for the hire of the Northumberland Hall on Remembrance Day.

PROJECTS:

PUBLIC TOILETS – £1,367.34 expenditure was for new soap dispensers, hand driers and toilet roll holders.

ASSETS & SERVICES:

ROBERTSON'S FOUNTAIN – some repairs needed.

Councillor Swinbank asked if it was insured as the handrail and kerb had been hit by a vehicle. The Town Clerk advised that it wasn't insured. Councillor Symmonds asked if any of the new CCTV cameras would have picked up the accident. The Town Clerk advised that the White Swan cameras may have picked this up.

Councillor Broom wondered if NCC could put bollards up to stop this happening again.

PETER'S MILL BRIDGE PROJECT – Councillor Harrington reported that the steelwork fabrication was complete and that the next stage was to prepare the land.

INCOME

Currently £352 made up of allotment rents at St Georges and Cawledge.

RESOLVED: To accept the 2017/18 budget update.

RA 17/06

Tour of Britain

The Project & Funding Officer reported that the route was from Rothbury to Alnwick then down Clayport Bank, along Narrowgate and down The Peth. He explained that NCC hoped bikes would be painted yellow and red and put out on the route around Alnwick.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the town bunting would be put up for the event. The Town Clerk advised that it would and that the Town Council would look to make a payment to the Christmas Lights team to put up the bunting.

Councillor Harrington thought that it should be tied in with other events during the summer including the Music Festival. The Town Clerk advised that the bunting may need to be put up in different areas of the town due to the different Tour of Britain route. He added that there would be photographic and window dressing competitions.

RESOLVED: To put up the bunting in time to benefit the other events happening over the summer.

RA 17/07

Updates on:

a) Armed Forces Week

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that the Armed Forces week ceremonies would take place at Alwick Castle, as in 2016. The flag raising ceremony will be on Monday June 19th and the flag lowering ceremony on Saturday June 24th.

Councillor Grisdale asked if a new town crier was planned. Councillor Symmonds suggested asking the Freeman.

b) Play Area works

The Project & Funding Officer reported that seven quotes had been received for the new play area at Bullfield Community Orchard. The Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard had requested a small change to the preferred design which would be sent through shortly. He advised that NCC needed a letter from the original trustees of the Bullfield Community Orchard before approval would be given.

Councillor Broom asked what the cost of the play area would be. The Project and Funding Officer advised that the cost would be around £10k - £15k and that a grant would be looked at to cover this cost.

Councillor Broom asked if there would be a contribution from the Recreation & Amenities budget. The Town Clerk confirmed there would be some contribution.

Councillor Symmonds noted that on one of the quotes it said supervised play area. The Project & Funding Officer advised that it would be an unsupervised play area.

Councillor Harrington felt it was a good design and similar to play areas at Cragside.

Councillor Swinbank reported that the basket swing at Alwick North was broken. The Town Clerk advised that it cost around £2k to repair and that the damage was being caused by too many people using it at the same time.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the basket could be strengthened. The Town Clerk advised that he would ask the manufacturers. He also advised that he had received an email from some members of the lads group offering to raise funds for the repairs.

Councillor Symmonds felt that they should take up on their offer to help raise funds. The Town Clerk felt they could also be asked to design a notice about using the swing.

c) Allotments

ST GEORGES Have just served notice on one allotment holder who has not maintained their allotment. There is one allotment currently to let.

ST JAMES'S all allotments are now fully let.

RATTEN ROW currently 4 full and 1 ½ plot vacant with a couple of people on the waiting list.

Councillor Harrington asked about cockerels. The Town Clerk advised that there was still some issue with cockerels on the site which he would be reviewing regularly.

Councillor Gridale asked about the lease at Ratten Row. The Town Clerk advised that Northumberland Estates now want an annual lease.

Councillor Symmonds asked about accessibility on the allotment sites. The Town Clerk advised he would look for an area which might be suitable. Councillor Gridale said that other allotment sites might be more suitable than Ratten Row.

d) Lectern Maps and Fingerposts

The Project & Funding Officer reported that he had been advised by NCC Planning Officers that the fourth new lectern map would not need planning permission. He explained that the new lectern map and fingerposts would be ordered at the same time.

The Town Clerk reported that the fingerpost at Bailiffgate / Narrowgate had been repainted had been finished at a cost of £35 per finger. He added that the fingerpost at Pottergate / Narrowgate was more problematic as it had been damaged when new fingers had been previously added. He advised that would mean that two new fingerposts would be needed.

Councillor Broom asked if NCC would pay to have some of the other street furniture re-painted including the bollards around the town.

e) Seat and bin replacements

The Town Clerk reported that a new bin was yet to be installed at Chapel Lands.

Councillor Broom reported that a bin outside Morrisons needed replacing.

The Town Clerk reported that the timber seats in Column Field had been re-stained and that the some of the metal seats in the Market Place were being re-painted.

Councillor Broom asked if NCC could be asked to take down all the planning application notices around the town.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates

RA 17/08 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Harrington reported that there were large numbers of empty road works frames around town and asked if NCC could be asked to remove them.

Councillor Broom said the signs to The Maltings meaning The Malthouse Development were still confusing and had caused an ambulance to go to the wrong address.

Councillor Swinbank reported that there were still Ascent Homes signs around the town. He felt that as planning permission had not been requested an NCC Planning Officer be invited to a planning meeting to discuss the issue.

Councillor Edge reported that there still a lot of dirty and green walls around the town especially at the Shambles and by The George pub which also had broken glass and chewing gum.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm