

Alnwick Town Team

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team held at 5pm on 19th July 2017 at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

Present: Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Mark Brassell (MB) (Alnwick Garden), Cllr. Gordon Castle (GC), David Lovie (DL) (Civic Society), Elizabeth Jones (EJ) (Alnwick in Bloom), David Taylor (Chamber of Trade), Tim Kirton (ATC)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dave Campbell (DC) (Northumberland County Council), Philip Angier (PA), (Local Living) and Carlo Biagioni (CB) (Chamber of Trade), in whose place David Taylor (DT) was attending.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 21st June 2017

EJ commented that although she had not been able to attend the last meeting in June she had submitted a report which did not appear to have been read out at that June meeting. That aside, the minutes were approved as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising

EJ read out her report which should have been presented at the June meeting:

- Alnwick in Bloom's annual school painting competition presentation was scheduled to be held at the Alnwick Garden Pavilion on July 6th at 6.30pm.
- Northumbria in Bloom judges would arrive on 13th July to assess the town (not just the floral displays) - a day long inspection.
- A new high had been achieved for hanging baskets sold to traders this year; 99 were sold compared to 65 three years ago.

4. Updates

a) Town Council (Tim Kirton)

Willowburn Industrial Estate: The planning application for housing on parts of Willowburn had been unanimously refused at the July 4th NCC Planning Committee. GC reported that NCC had withdrawn from the application.

A meeting was now being sought with all the freehold land owners at Willowburn to determine a way forward for the site. A separate meeting was also being arranged with representatives of Lord James Percy, owner of the former Alnmaritec site within the Willowburn Estate, which had been part of the planning application.

GC suggested that a hotel such as a Premier Inn would be an appropriate business development at this site; AS said there is a French model of hotels located on industrial estates which might be considered appropriate for the site.

CCTV: Installation currently under way and completion and switch-on expected by July 28th.

Fingerpost signage: Repainting of existing signs essentially complete, delivery awaited of two new fingerpost signs for Narrowgate and Bondgate Within outside Boots the Optician/Iceland, and the new map lectern for outside Your Move.

Market Place: TK reported that at the ATC meeting last Thursday, July 13th, the police had suggested the closure of Alnwick Market Place to motor cars between 6pm and 6am; this was in response to ongoing complaints from the public of car-borne anti-social behaviour and general nuisance in the market place including handbrake turns and revving of engines at unsocial hours.

The police would prefer closure to be effected with rising bollards in the road access ways into and out of the Market Place, which would automatically rise at 6pm and fall at 6am the following morning, or at alternate times on Market days or when special functions such as the Music Festival were being held. Appropriate “smart” technology would be required to cause the bollards to fall when an emergency vehicle approached them.

The Police agreed that this would not solve the problem of car-borne anti-social behaviour in Alnwick but it would move it away from the Market Place, enabling better use of the Market Place as an evening venue for entertainment and leisure.

The Market Place is owned and managed by Northumberland County Council; rising bollards would be expensive and more than one would be needed at each location, both of which were quite wide.

GC advised that the Road Traffic Order covering the Market Place ends at 6pm each day and that NCC funding would be most unlikely.

AS said that the bollards proposal was a non-starter owing to high cost and to the fact that evening access was always likely to be needed, for example for rear access to the Co-op funeral premises. “Boy-racers” are all over Alnwick, not just the Market Place, and this is a policing matter.

The Town Team’s official stance is therefore that it is not strongly supportive of bollards but rather car-borne anti- social behaviour is a policing matter and the new town CCTV system should be used to enforce this.

b) Alnwick Garden (Mark Brassell)

- The Crazy Golf is now open, positive feedback so far.
- Everything set-up for the Light Parade in November
- MB has received information for the town’s promotional video from Philip Angier but no other responses were received.
- Alnwick Garden has won the Gold Award in the “Large Tourist Attraction of The Year” section of the Northumberland Tourism Awards
- There are double digit increases for the year so far in terms of visitor numbers, 25% up on July to date.

(c) County Council (Gordon Castle)

- Lindisfarne School and sports hall: There will be no houses built at this site. The sports hall will be kept and managed by Active Northumberland. The fields will be used by Swansfield Park School and will not be built on.
- The newer part of the Lindisfarne School building is now occupied by Adult Education. There remains a question mark over the pre-war elements of the site.
- User groups would have to cover maintenance costs, though initially charges would be held at existing rates

(d) Chamber of Trade (David Taylor)

- The Column Field picnic table is being installed and will be bolted to a foundation in the ground.

- It is proposed that four trees in heritage planters will be located in the Market Place but funding for these may be difficult and the CoT is looking for sponsorship. EJ advised that these heritage planters will be £400+ VAT apiece.

(e) Local Living/Alnwick Markets

No report owing to PA's absence.

5. Any Other Business

AS advised that he is looking to source 250 seats, suitable for outdoor use, for the Music festival on 29th July – 5th August, as the usual provider cannot supply this time. MB advised that he may have some available. GC advised that Lindisfarne Middle School also has a great deal of seating available. **Action: AS, MB and GC to liaise.**

DL reported that funding has been secured for the "Alnwick Heroes" publication and a press release will be issued once the HLF approval letter is received.

GC reported that the Gallery Youth Project has secured three years of core funding from the National Lottery.

AS said the Windy Edge planning application is out for consultation, with an event being held today (19th) between 3pm and 7pm at Willowburn Sports Centre.

EJ advised that the Northumberland in Bloom award results will be announced on Thursday 13th September and Alnwick in Bloom's Annual Presentation Ceremony will take place on Thursday 21st September for in Alnwick Garden's Events Room.

TK reminded the meeting that the next ATC Business Forum will be held on Tuesday August 22nd 2017 when the guest speakers will be the local MP, Anne-Marie Trevelyan who will take questions from businesses, and Cllr. Gordon Castle who will explain the new North Northumberland Local Area Council and how relevant this will be to local businesses. TK extended an invitation to this event to all TT members and asked members to pass on this invitation to any other Alnwick Businesses. **Action: All.**

TK advised the meeting that Northumberland Estates has announced a proposal for the development of two substantial new retail units, for both food and non-food use, at the southern edge of Alnwick, on the green site between the frontage of Arcinova and Willowburn Avenue. No planning application has yet been submitted but an exhibition of the broad proposals was held at the Cricket Club on Thursday, 13th July. (More on this can be seen at <http://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/90-jobs-planned-in-retail-park-bid-1-8633671>) It was suggested that this proposal be discussed at the next meeting of the Town Team.

6. Date and Time of Next Meeting

There is no Town Team meeting in August. The next Town Team meeting will therefore be held on Wednesday 13th September 2017 at 5.00pm (**please note this earlier time than usual**) at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden, after which Town Team members will be invited to visit the Garden's new Crazy Golf facility.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm