

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
in the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, B Grisdale, M Harrington, G Mavin, J McDougall, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

**In attendance:** J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer.

**RA 17/09 Apologies**

Councillors Patience and Watson.

**RA 17/10 Declarations of Interest**

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

**RA 17/11 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda**

RA 17/03 The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that she had undertaken some research on Robertson's Pant. The fountain is made of sandstone and polished pink granite and is the only Pant in Alnwick connected to the water mains supply enabling drinking fountains to be part of the construction.

She explained that whilst examining the structure had noted that there is severe delamination to some areas of the stonework, especially that at ground level. This would certainly need repairing or conserving and as a Listed II structure would need NCC Conservation approval.

She advised that the pant had two drinking fountains on the right and left sides as well as a drinking trough which would have been used for horses. She explained that she would contact local plumbers to ask them to inspect the pant and give an estimate of costs involved in replacing the lead pipework and making the drinking fountains operational. She felt that the water needed to be tested to ensure it is drinking quality.

The pant was last restored in 1986 and re-started in 2013, after having been switched off for 15 years following complaints that passers-by were splashed in windy weather. She reported that the Listing entry had noted that the pant was basically sound but had given suggestions for improvement:

- Would benefit from cleaning - particularly the polished granite and sandstone.
- Light should be kept operational.
- Fountain could be operational on special occasions.
- Drinking spouts made operational as they are already on a mains water supply.
- Pant could be spot lit.
- Wiring and associated fixings could be concealed.

She reported that Keep Britain Tidy found that many people spend money on expensive and environmentally unfriendly plastic bottles of water with fewer than half being recycled, meaning that 16 million bottles are binned every day in Britain.

Their report had noted that many people buy bottled water because of a dearth of public water fountains and taps. Water fountains used to be common but in recent years fears about hygiene have seen them vanish from public streets, parks and buildings. The report also noted that being able to top up water bottles from a drinking fountain or tap would encourage people to stay healthy while reducing the amount of litter on the streets.

The Drinking Fountain Association is a charity that safeguards the UK's Drinking Fountains and funds the installation of new drinking fountains around the world so a grant may be available to help with the costs of the restoration.

Councillor Harrington felt that he would like to see an assessment of the works needed.

Councillor Mavin advised that an assessment of the water standard was needed.

Councillor Harrington advised that Northumbrian Water would test the water quality.

**RESOLVED: To undertake further research on Robertson's Pant to bring the drinking fountains back into use.**

RA 17/03 The Project & Funding Officer reported that the first bikes had gone to Gallery Youth to be decorated for the Tour of Britain.

**RA 17/12**

**Budget Update 2017/18**

2017/18 – The Assistant to the Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure for 2017/18 as at 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and highlighted the following lines on the budget:

**EXPENDITURE**

**EVENTS:**

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY - Invoice for the hire of the Northumberland Hall on Remembrance Day 2016 has arrived and will be paid out of the 2017/18 budget.

ARMED FORCES WEEK – Both invoices for refreshments received. £143.75 spent out of £200 budget.

MUSIC FESTIVAL – Payment of £3,148 made for outside seating which will be taken off their grant for 2017.

TASTE OF THE NORTH - £400 paid to Local Living so budget for 2017/18 now spent.

**PROJECTS:**

PETER'S MILL BRIDGE PROJECT – Councillor Harrington reported that the cost of Peter's Mill bridge project may be slightly more than the original budget figure. Councillors agreed to review the budget at the next meeting.

TOWN PROMOTION – £3,500 budget for 2017/18. Councillor Mavin requested an additional £200 to produce Dutch and Chinese town leaflets for the website. Councillor agreed to increase the budget to £3,700.

PUBLIC TOILETS – Expenditure at £2,221.54 with 2<sup>nd</sup> bill received from Initial Washrooms.

**ASSETS & SERVICES:**

WAGES – A quarter of the budget has been allocated as no bill yet received from NCC.

PLAYGROUND EXPENSES - £465 payment for annual ROSPA inspections. £1,474.17 spent on parts and new basket swing for Swansfield Park which will come out of the endowment.

ROBERTSON'S FOUNTAIN – 1<sup>st</sup> quarter bill from Npower for £57.00. Some potential repairs identified which will need increased budget as current budget only covers the electricity charges.

BUS SHELTERS – this budget is for repairs and not the two new bus shelters which have been installed in Willowburn Avenue and outside St Paul’s school. She reported that there were an additional 4 new bus shelters which had been installed in Taylor Drive which are likely to become the Town Council’s responsibility and budgets would need increasing to cover potential repairs to these.

SEATS - £402.84 expenditure is for painting the ornate seats in the Market Place.

WAR MEMORIAL – budget will need to be increased to cover the cost of the work being done in September 2017. Cost of scaffolding will be at least £2,400 and other work may be identified whilst the agreed work to the column is undertaken. Councillors agreed to increase the budget to £4,000.

### **INCOME**

Currently £417 made up of allotment rents.

**RESOLVED: i) To accept the 2017/18 budget update; To add review budget to next agenda; iii) To increase the budget figure for Town Promotion to £3,700 and publicise the new leaflet with the Gazette; iv) To increase the budget for the War Memorial to £4,000.**

## **RA 17/13**

### **Updates on:**

#### **a) Play Area works**

The Project & Funding Officer reported that the preferred design was from Infinite Designs and that a date for an on-site meeting was being arranged to make modifications to the design. Bullfield Community Orchard are in the process of surrendering the old lease and taking out a new one.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that some of the youngsters in Alnwick North were raising money for additional play equipment.

Councillor McDougall thought that the young people should be asked what they wanted as play equipment.

#### **b) Allotments**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave an update:

St James’s all 50 plots let. All rents paid for 2017/18.

St Georges 12 plots let, 1 overgrown plot to let. £53 rent owing from new allotment holders.

Cawledge all 3 plots let. All rents paid for 2017/18.

Ratten Row 69 plots let (2 plots let recently). 5 plots available (4 full / 1 half). £201 rent owing at Ratten Row and one allotment holder who owes £107 and has not paid agreed schedule has been served notice.

Councillor Mavin asked if Local Living could allocate a small stall for allotment holders to sell their produce. The Assistant to the Town Clerk felt that there may be some environmental issues with this.

#### **c) Fingerposts**

The Project & Funding Officer reported the new fingerposts were being produced by Furnitubes. He explained that their foundry is moving so delivery would be in early September. Five of the existing fingerposts have been repainted.

He also reported that he had notified the police of the vandalism to the Alnwick sign

just past the Castle on The Peth which had been caused by people shooting at it.

**d) Seat and bins replacements**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave an update:

Seats – no new seats ordered this year. The 2017/18 budget includes cost of repairs and painting of existing seats and the expenditure so far has been used to paint 3 of the ornate seats in market place.

She reported that she had met with Stephen Lunn, the blacksmith who made the ornate seats in the Market Place, and he has agreed to repair the double blue dragon seat at cost so this will use some of this budget. He will also happy to re-spray the other sets when they next need painting.

Bins – one in stock bin installed at Willowburn Avenue (on Homebase side).

5 new bins have been ordered at a cost of £1867.97 including a new bin for Barrasdale.

Councillor Broom asked if a dog bin could be installed at Lisburn St / Percy St junction.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates**

**RA 17/14**

**Feedback from Working Groups**

- a) **Communications Working Group** - Councillor Harrington gave an update from the meeting.

The Terms of Reference had been defined as "To improve communication with residents; visitors and councillors" using notice boards, website, signage, town leaflets and maps to deliver the terms of reference.

The Working Group had identified 7 actions:

<b>Notice Boards</b> – Investigate electronic systems and prices. Ask NCC what they propose to do at the TIC when it moves to the Playhouse.
<b>Website</b> – Get three quotes to make the website more responsive.
<b>Website</b> – Send Google analytics data to all councillors.
<b>Social Media</b> – Research Alwick Matters being set up for information only.
<b>Social Media</b> – Ask Avril Bowden to deliver a Social Media session to officers and councillors.
<b>Newsletters</b> – Investigate sending newsletters out through The Cryer.
<b>General</b> – Look at what other Town Councils are doing regarding communications.

He advised that the date of the next meeting is September 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm.

- b) **WWI** – The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that the Working Group had reviewed the existing suggestion list and discussed additional actions that could be undertaken.

The Terms of Reference were defined: To identify actions to commemorate the significant events and people of World War 1 relating to Alwick.

The Working Group had identified 6 actions:

**Installation of a Civic Flag Pole** - a priority to get a civic flagpole installed before November 2018 to properly mark the end of WWI and enabling local Armed Forces groups to march through the town to the flagpole

**Poppies / cornflowers planted along each of the roads leading into the town.**

**Area of remembrance planted with wildflowers in each park and the cemetery** – creating a natural landscape area for wildlife. Could get local school children to plant bulbs.

**Bronze poppies add to the War Memorial** – perhaps at the feet of each figure.

**New WWI commemorative bench designed by Stephen Lunn and installed in Column Field.**

**Laying a commemoration stone made of natural material in the cemetery to the fallen of WWI with generic text** – install in WWI area of the cemetery where no headstones exist.

She also reported that the groups wished to identify the activities which other local groups were undertaking during the 2018 and would arrange meeting with the appropriate people before meeting again.

**RESOLVED: To note the updates.**

**RA 17/15**

**Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Mavin asked if NCC could provide an update on the situation with the library moving to the Playhouse for a future agenda along with any update on other moves.

Councillor Mavin reported that the Duke had not given permission to McDonalds to put a path for school children to use to access their site.

Councillor Mavin reported that the Keep Clear lettering was missing on the road opposite Iceland.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm