

## Alnwick Town Team

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team meeting held at 6pm on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

**Present:** Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Mark Brassell (MB) (Alnwick Garden), David Lovie (DL) (Civic Society), Elizabeth Jones (EJ) (Alnwick in Bloom), Carlo Biagioni (CB) (Chamber of Trade), Philip Angier (Local Living), Tim Kirton (TK) (Alnwick District Council)

### **1. Apologies for absence**

None received.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting, held Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

These were approved as a true and correct record.

### **3. Matters Arising**

CB advised that a few Chamber of Trade members had expressed interest in the website for Alnwick similar to "More in Morpeth" which had been discussed at the last Town Team meeting; they had some concerns over costs which had been an initial £6,000 to £7,000 for set-up plus annual revenue costs, which in Morpeth had been largely met by the Sanderson Arcade. PA described the site as an "online Yellow Pages" and said he did not immediately see how it would help businesses; there are other sites which are well used. It was therefore agreed that the Town Team would take no further action at this time.

### **4. Updates**

#### ***a) Town Council (Tim Kirton)***

**Fingerpost signage and Lectern map:** All the fingers and the fingerposts and the Bondgate Within Map Lectern completed and ready for installation by NCC, which will probably be early in 2018.

**Business Forum Meeting, November 21<sup>st</sup>:** The most recent Business Forum meeting had been held on Tuesday November 21<sup>st</sup> with around 21 businesses attending. The four presentations centred on employability, apprenticeships, training, connection to superfast broadband and grants to enable businesses to obtain all these, and on the forthcoming likely requirement for all businesses UK wide to provide online tax returns on a regular basis. More information on each of these is available upon request to TK. The Forum meeting had gone well and feedback had been very positive. The next Forum meeting will be held on February 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### ***b) Alnwick in Bloom (Elizabeth Jones)***

EJ advised that Northumberland Women's Institute are considering a display featuring their Centenary logo at the Floral Clock site.

#### ***c) The Alnwick Garden (Mark Brassell)***

MB reported that the Lantern Parade had gone really well, with a similar number of attendees to last year's event, but far more businesses had been open and there had been much more going on in the Market Square this year. CB commented that the businesses open had been very busy that night.

MB also reported that Alnwick Garden had been voted "Best Romantic Wedding Venue in England" and had won Bronze at the North-East Tourism Awards.

The Alnwick Garden plans to review activities early in 2018.

***(d) County Council***

No report as Cllr. Castle had been unable to attend.

CB asked whether the Percy Tenantry Column floodlights which had not been operational for many years, could be switched on again. EJ said that she thought the lights were owned and operated by Northumberland Estates rather than NCC. TK to confirm whom the lights are owned and operated by.

**Action: TK**

In response to a question from EJ the Chairman reported his understanding that NCC and Alnwick Playhouse were edging their way towards an agreement as regards the Library and The Playhouse.

The Chairman reported that the Playhouse was holding an Open Morning with Management on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

EJ expressed concern that the Fire Escape at the back of The Playhouse was being cluttered up with leaves and could become slippery and therefore dangerous. TK to advise the Playhouse. **Action: TK**

***(e) Civic Society***

DL reported that all 2000 copies of the Heritage Heroes book had now been delivered and 350 of these had been distributed. A total of 100 days of volunteer input, worth a total of £20,000 has gone into the writing of the book, which says a lot for the Civic Society.

DL said the Civic Society is pleased to hear that the Town Council is reviewing projects, for example a project to create a local list of buildings of good quality.

DL reported that the "Civic Voice", the national body uniting Civic Societies, is undertaking an exercise called the Big Conservation Conversation Campaign and Alnwick Civic Society will send a representative to a London Conference about this in the New Year.

***(f) Chamber of Trade***

CB reported on a proposal by the Alnwick Garden Town Trust for a decorative arch, closely resembling that already in place at Barter Books, at the entrance to the Column Field, close to the War Memorial. CB circulated a drawing of the proposed arch and advised that most of the required £6,500 funding for it was already in place, mainly drawing finance raised from the Alnwick Garden Town Trust Gala event in February 2017. The proposed arch would be 4m wide and 3.5m tall. The existing walls have been checked and can take the weight of the proposed arch. An application for the necessary planning permission would be made in January 2018.

MB suggested undertaking a public consultation and community involvement exercise on a range of arch designs rather than committing to one now; CB to investigate this **(Action: CB)**

It was agreed that all Town Team members discuss the proposal with their organisations and report back to the next Town Team meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>. **Action: All**

***(g) Local Living/Alnwick Markets***

PA reported that the Christmas Market had enjoyed a good weekend, with kind weather. He estimated just under 11,000 people attended, which is about double a normal weekend figure. There was evidence that on Sunday people had spent more on high value goods.

The "Advent Calendar" had been really well received and had proved to be a nice way of getting the "keep it local" message across. PA felt that we are collectively getting better at pulling the Christmas offer together in Alnwick, with what is offered being good, of good quality and completely different to elsewhere and we can build on that.

MB agreed with this and advised that following a visit by him to Kew Gardens the Garden is looking into providing top quality traditional Christmas lighting next year.

The Chairman offered thanks and congratulations to everyone around the table and their colleagues who have worked hard to make everything delivered over the last few weeks such a success. Everyone had come together to make it a united effort with a very good atmosphere and it has been wonderful for the town.

**5. Any Other Urgent Business**

None

**6. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 5.30pm** at The Pavilion, Alnwick Garden.

The meeting closed at 6.37pm