

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018  
in the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, B Grisdale, A Fletcher, M Harrington, G Mavin, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds and G Watson.

**In attendance:** W Batey, Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Philip Angier, Local Living.

**RA 17/38 Apologies**

Cllr J McDougall.

**RA 17/39 Declarations of Interest**

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

**RA 17/40 Update on Alnwick Markets and Food Festivals (Philip Angier)**

Philip Angier (PA) reported that Local Living had started to renew the markets in 2015 and had taken over the Food Festival in 2016. In 2017 there had been increased footfall for all three feature weekend events in Alnwick (Taste of the North, Alnwick Food Festival and two-day Christmas Market). Footfall for Saturday markets had also remained good in high season.

2017 - PA reported that during the year there had been a reduction in both footfall and the number of traders for Thursday markets. With this reduction and increased operating costs Local Living ended the year £2-3k down.

2018 – PA advised that Local Living were planning to move the weekly market from Thursday to Friday. He also reported that their Markets Manager, Dawn Watts, had resigned so a replacement would need to be found. As a social enterprise Local Living relies on the voluntary input of directors and helpers and needed to take stock of their governance, operational and financial model during 2018.

Councillor questions/comments:

Councillor Mavin said he was in favour of moving the market from Thursday to Friday. He asked if Local Living had considered only operating markets from Easter through the high season and Christmas. PA advised that most street markets happen all year round and that traders rely on the income. Local Living also employ casual staff, so consideration would have to be given as to what would happen to them.

Councillor Grisdale said that social media was working well for the markets. He agreed with moving the market to Fridays and felt it was important to keep them going especially for fresh foods.

Councillor Swinbank reported that some markets are supported by NCC. PA advised that Local Living was run as a Social Enterprise and that there were benefits to this. He felt that a FOI request could be sent to NCC to request a list of NCC supported markets in Northumberland.

Councillor Broom said that the issue with not running markets all year round was that Local Living could lose some of their regular traders especially those selling food.

Councillor Symmonds felt that Alnwick must have a level playing field with other Towns in Northumberland.

**RESOLVED: i) To ask Councillor Castle for a list of the markets in Northumberland that NCC financially support;  
ii) To support moving the weekly market to Friday.**

**RA 17/41**

**Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda**

17/34 TREE / BULB PLANTING – Councillor Swinbank asked if there was an update on the fruit trees which Councillor Edge would plant. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised the trees had now arrived and that Councillor Edge would be collecting them over the Easter break.

17/36 Councillor Patience reported that she had been asked by a resident about extra grit bins. The Town Clerk advised that he had a meeting with NCC on April 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss grit bins and gritting routes.

Councillor Broom felt that there had been an excellent effort by NCC to keep roads and footpaths clear during the bad weather.

**RA 17/42**

**Budget Update 2017/18**

2017/18 – The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure for 2017/18 as at 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 and highlighted the following lines on the budget:

**EXPENDITURE**

**EVENTS:**

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS - grant now paid (£,2500).

MUSIC FESTIVAL RECEPTION – still awaiting invoice.

**PROJECTS:**

TOWN PROMOTION – town leaflets costs and income still to come.

PUBLIC TOILETS – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Your Welcome payments have been made.

TREE / BULB PLANTING – £306.27 for fruit trees to be planted around the town.

**ASSETS & SERVICES:**

WAGES/PAYE - will be slightly under budget at year end.

FINGERPOSTS – about £700 left in budget which could be used to paint some of the bollards in the town. NCC could be asked to repair some of the bollards before painting is done.

Councillor Swinbank reported that the woodwork on the stone bus shelters including the one on Alnmouth Road need staining.

Councillor Patience reported that Grannies were interested in being added to the You're Welcome Scheme.

Councillor Symmonds asked if access was a potential issue. Councillor Patience advised access was down the side of the building.

Councillor Mavin felt that additional businesses with disabled toilets should be found.

Councillor Broom asked Officers to undertake a check on Grannies including access and suitability.

Councillor Symmonds said he welcomed the idea of extending the scheme.

## **INCOME**

£5,356.53 made up of allotment rents (£4194.50, insurance refund £112.03 and fingerpost contribution £1,050).

**RESOLVED: To accept the 2017/18 budget update.**

**RA 17/43**

**Updates on:**

### **a) Play Area Works**

ALNWICK NORTH – The Town Clerk advised that the cost of the replacement basket swing including installation was £6k which included £500 delivery charge.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the insurance would cover the cost. The Town Clerk advised that it covered vandalism but not wear and tear which this was.

BULLFIELD COMMUNITY ORCHARD PLAY AREA - The Project & Funding Officer reported that all the legal work had been completed. He reported that Councillor Patience was putting together a grant application to the Community Foundation.

Councillor Swinbank reported that the area was very wet during winter which may need something done about it.

Councillor Harrington advised that the area use to be dry until Coopers Close was built.

### **b) Allotments**

The Project & Funding Officer reported that there had been a delay in installing the new water pipes due to the recent bad weather.

The Town Clerk reported that there are several vacant plots at Ratten Row and St James's and people on a waiting list who he is contacting. He also advised that the Alnwick Spring Show had agreed to put up information about the vacant allotments.

He advised that he had received three applications from people who want to keep bees on their allotment which needed Town Council approval. He felt that if they were experienced bee keepers, the location suits and the neighbouring allotment holders did not mind, then this should be approved.

Councillor Edge felt that people with no experience the most appropriate thing to do would be to organise a mentor from the Alnwick & District Beekeeping Association (ADBA).

Councillor Symmonds said he supported people who wanted to keep bees but that ADBA should visit to ensure that the proposed site was suitable for bees. He also felt that a suitable clause should be added to the Allotment Agreement.

Councillor Patience also felt that contact information for people who would deal with bee swarms could also be given in the Allotment Agreement.

### **c) Flagpole**

The Town Clerk advised that the planning application for a Civic Flagpole had been submitted to NCC.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the Town Council should canvas support for the application from local armed forces organisations.

#### **d) Memorials**

**WAR MEMORIAL** - Paul Foster will undertake the works when the weather improves in either late April or early May using a cherry picker. Quote from Warren Access for one day, including driver/operator is £360. The current budget is £4k so there is budget to pay for additional work that the Town Council might want Paul to do.

She suggested that another LBC planning application was submitted, based on the previous application, to cover any work that might need to be done over the next 3 years including re-waxing the War Memorial statues.

**RESOLVED: To accept the update.**

#### **HOTSPUR STATUE**

The three quotes for re-waxing the statue were reviewed and the quote from Graciela Ainsworth at £2,314.90 was selected as best value. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the current budget of £500 would need to be increased if the work is to be undertaken. All contractors suggested a more regular re-waxing in the future as this would reduce costs.

Weather needs to be warmer, so work would probably be done in May.

Councillor Harrington reported that he supported the proposal to have the statue re-waxed and to move budget from other budget lines.

Councillor Symmonds said he supported Councillor Harrington's proposal as the memorials needed to be looked after.

**RESOLVED: i) To accept the update, ii) To have the Hotspur Statue re-waxed and move budget between budget lines to cover the cost.**

#### **ROBERTSON'S PANT**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that she had met with Bryan Cavanagh, Water Regulations Officer from Northumbrian Water, who had inspected the Pant. He has advised that the main issue in bringing the water fountain back into use would be monitoring the water quality 6-7 a day plus nights. He applauded the Town Council but felt that at this stage it was not advisable to bring the drinking fountains back into use.

She advised that there was a scheme called the REFILL PROJECT which is already running in several places in the UK allowing people to fill up their water bottles for free. Whitbread have already signed up to the scheme meaning that free water is offered in all its 3,000 Costa Coffee outlets, including Alnwick, from March 2018. Stickers are put into windows (like the You're Welcome Scheme) advertising the fact.

She advised that she will speak to Northumbrian Water and report back at the next meeting how the Town Council can take this forward in Alnwick.

She also reported that she had received quotes for the Condition Survey on Robertson's Pant. These were reviewed and the quote from Adams Napier for £1,155 was selected as best value.

**RESOLVED: i) To accept the update; ii) To accept the quote from Adams Napier for £1,155 and have the Condition Survey undertaken.**

#### **RA 17/44**

#### **Winter Services**

The Town Clerk reported that he had arranged a meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup> with NCC Officers to discuss the location of grit bins and current gritting routes.

Councillor Swinbank asked if new developments automatically got grit bins and were included on gritting routes.

Councillor Broom advised asking NCC if developers could be asked to keep roads clear until they were adopted by NCC.

Councillor Harrington suggested promoting a 'help your neighbours' message.

**RA 17/45**

**Litter (Councillor Edge)**

Councillor Edge reported that although there were schemes such as Love Northumberland that raised awareness of litter more needed to be done. He suggested schemes such as cigarette bins used as voting bins or charity bins linked to donations when full.

He felt that another area of concern was the amount of litter thrown from cars. Alnwick Friends of the Earth were giving a report at the next North Area Council meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

He added that there was some enforcement in Northumberland, there had been 350 across Northumberland, including 10 in Alnwick.

Councillor Harrington felt that the lack of policing litter was a real issue.

Councillor Mavin agreed that businesses could be more pro-active about litter.

Councillor Patience advise that the area outside the Corn Exchange was now very tidy.

Councillor Edge felt that businesses should be legally obliged to clear their land. He felt that a marketing campaign would help with the current situation.

Councillor Patience felt that any litter issues should be reported to NCC.

Councillor Mavin felt that the Gazette could be asked to help with litter campaigns.

Councillor Swinbank suggested asking NCC what and where they currently litter pick.

Councillor Broom asked that councillors send any suggestions to the Assistant to the Town Clerk for discussion at the next meeting.

**RA 17/46**

**Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

Meeting closed at 9.07pm