

## Alnwick Town Team

Minutes of the meeting of Alnwick Town Team held at **5.30pm on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2018** at The Board Room, The Gardener's House, The Alnwick Garden.

**Present:** Eleanor Haisell (Programme Manager with the Skills Team, North of England LEP), Carlo Biagioni (Chamber of Trade), Trevor Jones (The Alnwick Garden), Elizabeth Jones, Eileen Blakey (Alnwick in Bloom), David Lovie (Civic Society), Tim Kirton, Cllr. George Mavin and Cllr. Geoff Watson (Alnwick Town Council).

### **1. Presentation on NELEP's "Live, Work, Stay" campaign by Eleanor Haisell, Programme Manager with the Skills Team, North of England LEP**

TK welcomed Eleanor Haisell to the meeting.

EH explained that the second phase of NELEP's "Live, Work, Stay" campaign would be starting early in 2019. The first phase, which had ended in March 2018, had been targeted at young graduates to promote graduate retention however the North-East is not one of the worst areas of the country at graduate retention with 80% of Northumbria's local graduates staying in the region; however, it is poor at graduate *attraction* from outside the area.

EH sad that there is a strong flow to London after graduation but those who do come to the North-East often do stay and it is these "stayers" who are promoting the North-East to the next intake of undergraduates, largely through social media campaigning through 46,000 twitter accounts which have so far generated 80,000 "hits".

Other groups have also been targeted by the "Live, Work, Stay" campaign through advertisements in the Business Daily and through targets in the North-East business community; EH circulated a handout containing case studies.

The Phase 1 "Live, Work, Stay" campaign has been successful in terms of its reach but the initial demand for university places, i.e. graduate *attraction*, has to be boosted.

The most significant issue about graduate attraction is jobs and the economy and NELEP, in Phase 2 of "Live, Work, Stay", want to target employers; rather than targeting peer to peer amongst graduates Phase 2 will target peer to peer amongst employers, with the aim of attracting graduates to the area. EH advised that this will be much more relevant to towns like Alnwick and the town's businesses, than Phase 1 was.

GM commented that there are three businesses in Alnwick currently looking to attract graduates;

1. Arcinova, which is expanding significantly and has so far recruited a substantial number of young new graduates and is managing to retain them but they will need more and are already going into local schools to encourage local young people to study.
2. Metrology, which again is looking to expand significantly in 2019

3. The medical profession, which has significant issues in attracting key medical staff to Northumberland, particular to the more remote market towns such as Alnwick and Berwick.

The Town Council and relevant Town Team members will work closely with NELEP to promote and deliver the second phase of “Live, Work, Say” in the town.

EH then explained “North-East Ambition”, a programme of activity that centres on linking businesses to schools by getting them to adopt, implement and achieve the Good Career Guidance benchmarks of high-quality careers education that improve students’ transition from school to work by preparing them for their next stage. A secondary school version has been running since last summer but NELEP is just about to launch a primary school version of North-East Ambition and would welcome establishing this within Alnwick primary schools. To enable this, NELEP has a network of Enterprise Advisors who are tasked with linking schools with employers. GM responded that Alnwick Town Council will be keen to get a local employer in Alnwick involved in this, along with the local schools and it was agreed that a meeting should be held early in the New Year between ATC and NELEP.

On behalf of the meeting, TK thanked EH for her attendance and presentation and said he looked forward to working with the LEP in the New Year to maximise these opportunities for Alnwick.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Chairman), Mark Brassell (The Alnwick Garden), Councillor Gordon Castle (NCC) and Philip Angier (Local Living).

## **3. Minutes of the last meeting, held on 5.30pm on November 7<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Approved as a true and correct record.

## **4. Matters Arising not on the agenda**

None

## **5. Investigation, with, for example, the Civic Society, History Society and Bailiffgate Museum, of the use of QR (“Quick Response”) codes in Alnwick to develop a mobile phone app.**

TK explained that this had been suggested as part of the Town Centre Action Plan process and investigation of it as a possibility, rather than a definite project, was an action point in that plan.

Those present expressed some feeling that QR codes were now “yesterday’s technology” which had been overtaken by alternatives such as “Location Services” found on smartphones and tablets. TK reported that Bailiffgate Museum had said they were open to further discussions but that they thought QR codes were “old hat”. DL said that there had been cases of QR code tiles being “pirated” to advertise completely different things.

It was agreed by the meeting that alternatives through Google should be looked at and the item discussed again in 2019.

## **6. Possible Appointment of an Alnwick Town Centre Manager**

TK said that consideration of the appointment of a Town Centre Manager to actively promote Alnwick Town Centre was another action point suggested under the Town Centre Action Plan and comments were invited on the principle of such an appointment and suggestions for potential funding.

GW said that before any proper consideration could be given to such an appointment the Town Centre Manager's duties, activities and responsibilities needed to be known. TK explained that determining what those duties, activities and responsibilities would be was part of this consultation process; what would Town Team members feel should be part of any TCM's role?

CB said that a Town Centre Manager would need to be able to unite town centre organisations and people and get them working together, encouraging them to participate in town centre activities. GW remarked that Mel Corn from Local Living appeared to be doing promotional work for the Town Centre already through social media.

TJ said there would be no interest from The Alnwick Garden in a Town Centre Manager appointment.

TK explained that appointment of a Town Centre Manager would require a total budget spread over three years of around £100,000 and whilst the Town Council might contribute to this it would be looking to key partners such as the County Council and Alnwick Chamber of Trade to also make significant contributions. CB advised that he had not yet consulted with CoT members over this but he would do so and come back to TK.

It was agreed that this item would be revisited once responses had been received on funding from the CoT and NCC.

## **7. Updates**

### ***a) County Council – Cllr. Gordon Castle***

No report as GC had given apologies for absence.

### ***b) Local Living***

No report as PA had given apologies for absence.

### ***c) Alnwick in Bloom - Eileen Blakey and Elizabeth Jones***

EJ to send written report to TK, who would circulate.

**d) Chamber of Trade – Carlo Biagioni**

CB reported on recent shoplifting activity in Alnwick Town Centre. The shop's and the town's CCTV systems had recorded the perpetrators and police action was pending. The Chamber of Trade is looking to set up an alert system to all shops via What's App in the event of shoplifters being detected in the town and The Alnwick Garden will be part of this.

CB reported that there would be a "Keep It Local" campaign in conjunction with the Northumberland Gazette in the run-up to Christmas.

CB advised that a new Turkish Barber Shop had opened in Market Street; DL advised that the plastic sheet fascia sign was contrary to regulations in a Conservation Area and the Civic Society would be acting to have the sign changed.

CB reported that another Burns Night Supper would be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> and tickets were available; the funding raised would go towards the provision of a sensory garden and disabled access at the Column Field, close to the hospital.

**e) Civic Society – David Lovie**

DL reported that the annual Civic Society "Any Questions" event had been held and had been very successful.

DL reported that the Alnwick Medical Group's PPG Chairman had offered a challenge to the Civic Society to find the heritage heroes of the future as the Society largely comprises older people. The Civic Society will take this up.

DL wants to explore a pilot with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to find budding new architects to work with schools.

DL reported that the Civic Society was starting work now – a year early – on the "Street Pride" campaign to reduce street signage.

DL reported that the Civic Society had been invited to send a representative to Invest in Alnwick meetings.

TK was asked to find out whether Janet at the Town Council has a list of payphones in Alnwick because they all need tidying and repainting.

**Action: TK**

**f) Alnwick Garden – Trevor Jones**

TJ reported that The Alnwick Garden had won a Gold Tourism Award and the meeting recorded its congratulations.

The Christmas Light Show would take place next week and tickets were selling well.

TJ reported that an estimated 5,000 people had attended the Lantern Parade however the town centre traders largely did not stay open for the event and it had also been noted that during the Christmas Market on the Sunday half the town centre shops were closed.

**e) Local Living/Alnwick Markets – Philip Angier**

No report as PA had submitted apologies for absence

**f) Town Council – Tim Kirton**

TK reported that very nearly all the funding had been secured for the Town Crier and recruitment could proceed early in 2019. Pledges so far have been made by the Town Team, The Alnwick Garden, Alnwick Town Council, The Freemen of Alnwick, Alnwick Lions and Alnwick Rotary

Alnwick Forum Community Engagement Event on Saturday 17th November 2018 had been very successful and the comments received were now being sifted.

A date was still awaited from the retail expert Bill Grimsey for his visit to the town (This was subsequently fixed for 2.30pm on Wednesday February 13<sup>th</sup> 2019 at the St. James Centre)

The next scheduled Alnwick Business Forum would take place on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at the St. James Centre from 5.30pm.

**8. Any other urgent business**

None

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

It was agreed that no meeting should take place in January as this will be shortly after Christmas and New Year so the next meeting will be held at 5.30pm on Wednesday February 6<sup>th</sup> 2019 at The Board Room at The Gardener's House, The Alnwick Garden.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm