

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 14th March 2019
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

Present Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, B Grisdale, M Harrington, G Castle, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Patience, M Swinbank, G Watson, L Wood-Mitchell and L Wearn.

In attendance W R Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Mike Turner (MT), Julie Parkinson (JP) (NCC Alnwick Forum).

C18/177 Questions from the public
None.

C18/178 Apologies for absence
Councillors Aynsley, Moore, Waton and Westendarp.

C18/179 Declarations of Interest
Councillors Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters.
Councillors Symmonds and Allcroft (Allerburn Lea road humps).

C18/180 Presentation regarding the Alnwick Forum and an update on the March Consultation Event

Mike Turner (Head of Property, NCC) and Julie Parkinson (Senior Surveyor in the NCC Estates Team) explained that Alnwick Forum is a partnership between ATC and NCC focussed on the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan and a vibrant economy whilst protecting Alnwick's quality environment. The Forum is also a conduit for proposals for strategic sites in Alnwick, including the bus station and the vacant Towergate retail units.

The Forum is looking to collaborate with all local community development organisations with the prime focus being on strategic regeneration projects and has been focussed so far on NCC sites in and around Alnwick. These key sites include:

- a) Alnwick Playhouse - the Forum has recently received a presentation on the future of the library at this location.
- b) The former High School site - will be a temporary car park which will be monitored through the summer prior to a permanent solution for the site.
- c) Lindisfarne Middle School and Sports Hall - a working group of interested parties has been set up to look at a Community Asset Transfer.
- d) Willowburn former NCC depot.
- e) Narrowgate - there will be a full pedestrianisation trial this summer lasting a year.
- f) Alnwick bus station - NCC is providing financial and other support for a feasibility study and is currently undertaking preparatory work for this
- g) Northumberland Hall - a Community Asset Transfer might be appropriate.
- h) Vacant property in Alnwick - the Town Council's Projects and Funding Officer undertakes twice yearly surveys.

A public consultation/engagement event was held on many of the above proposed projects at the above sites at Northumberland Hall on November 17th last year and a follow-up event is scheduled for Saturday March 23rd. Julie Parkinson asked that as many people as possible attend this event. She added that a presentation at DCHS the previous week had enabled her to obtain young peoples' perspectives on the bus station and other matters.

The Alnwick Forum will, from this point, address two further key issues:

- How the Forum moves towards a regeneration role rather than just key property sites.
- How the Forum links to other stakeholder groups in Alnwick which will be discussed at the April Forum meeting.

Councillor questions:

Councillor Castle asked about the Cobbles. MT advised that the issue of the Cobbles had been mentioned with the Forum.

Councillor Castle said that the Local Transport Plan had £20,000 allocated to Alnwick with a further £180,000 committed and that improvement works would start this year. The Town Clerk reported that NCC and ATC officers will work together to come up with an appropriate design and a decision on the type of cobbles to be used.

Councillor Broom asked about the implications on traffic of the Narrowgate pedestrianisation trials and expressed concern about the risks to pedestrians of large articulated vehicles reversing at the end of Narrowgate. JP said that consultation with traders had started but that traders or anyone with concerns should attend the Consultation event on March 24th to meet with NCC Highways representatives.

Councillors welcomed the decision not to relocate NCC Customer Services to the Playhouse. It was suggested that the TIC in the Shambles under Northumberland Hall be used as start-up business space. MT advised that was a possibility.

The Mayor thanked Mike Turner and Julie Parkinson for their valuable update and wished them well with future work.

RESOLVED: ATC's Projects and Funding Officer to continue to provide verbal feedback to the Town Council on the Forum's work after each Forum meeting.

C18/181 Bus Station Feasibility Study

The Project & Funding Officer reported that, following two years of discussions between ATC, NCC, Morrison's and Arriva which had achieved some cosmetic improvements, NCC Strategic Estates is now seeking to engage with Morrison's Board to take forward discussions regarding more substantial work towards improving/replacing the bus station. The intention is to produce a written plan then undertake a feasibility study to be able to respond quickly to future funding opportunities. The cost of a feasibility study is estimated at £20,000 with NCC likely to contribute £15,000 towards this.

RESOLVED: The Town Council agree to making a contribution of up to £5,000 towards the feasibility study, provided that Morrison's and Arriva demonstrate that they are prepared to consider acceptable long-term solutions.

C18/182 Minutes of the Last meeting (14th February 2019)

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 14th February 2019 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2019, with the agreed amendments, were agreed as a true record.

C18/183 Matters Arising

C18/167 The Town Clerk advised that the Lindisfarne Sports Centre User Group meeting has been arranged for April 3rd.

C18/176 Councillor Swinbank asked if there was an update on footpath gritting. The Town Clerk advised that he had not yet received any feedback from Bob Hodgson.

C18/184 Mayor's Report

Councillor Symmonds reported that since the February meeting he had attended the Alnwick and District Sports awards ceremony He said that sport was an example of where Alnwick punches well above its weight. The Mayor is considering Civic Awards for several retiring sports people in the town.

C18/185 Feedback on County Council matters

Councillor Castle reported that NCC's Local Transport Plan has funding for work on the Cobbles during this financial year and that £50,000 is allocated for Market Street works.

He advise that NCC's Community Chest is available again and, although there is no limit to the amount requested, projects over £5,000 are seldom funded. He will forward the deadlines for Community Chest applications to the Town Clerk for circulation.

Complaints about dog-fouling are well down this year and dog-owners who pay "on-the-spot" fines cannot be "named and shamed". This is a condition of them accepting the penalty.

Councillor Broom expressed concern that surface repairs following gas and water repairs were not lasting as they should. Councillor Castle advised that surfaces must be repaired to at least the standard that they were before excavation or they must be done again.

Councillor Aynsley joined the meeting at 8.07 pm

C18/186 Feedback on the Away Day, including draft Council Vision and Objectives

A report was circulated to councillors; the Town Clerk explained that this included a 5-year "Vision", four 3-year long objectives and a list of 1-year priority actions.

The Town Clerk will also send out this report electronically.

RESOLVED: That comments on the Draft Vision and Objectives be forwarded to the Town Clerk by Friday 5th April, with a view to approving a final version at the April Council meeting.

C18/187 New Chief Officer and Town Clerk recruitment

The Town Clerk circulated a paper, including the recruitment timetable, terms and conditions, job description and person specification. It is proposed that the Town Clerk will compare candidates' application forms against all the essential and desirable criteria for the post and then will take the Interview Panel through his initial assessment to enable a shortlist to be drawn-up. The proposed Interview Panel comprised of The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and all the Committee Chairs.

If for any reason a Chair of Committee is unable to participate in the above process the appropriate Vice-Chair will be invited to take their place on the Panel.

At this stage a method of involving other councillors in the interview process has not been finalised.

The actual interview process is proposed to be day-long and may involve scenario-based tasks followed by a formal interview for each candidate.

Councillor Aynsley asked if members of the Interview Panel would be provided with a standard set of questions and scoring criteria. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Interview Panel would have a standard set of questions and scoring criteria for the interviews themselves and would then independently assess candidates' responses to the questions.

Councillor Broom felt that he might not be as experienced as some non-Chairs to interview candidates. Councillor Castle suggested that training could be provided to councillors if they feel it necessary.

Councillor Mavin felt that it was important that Committee Chairs did participate.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell said she felt the Panel needs to be highly skilled and experienced.

Councillor Patience asked that the make up of future interview panels is reviewed to give opportunities to other councillors.

RESOLVED: To approve the job description, person spec., recruitment timetable and interview panel, to enable the post to be advertised later this month.

C18/188 Risk Management Register

The Town Clerk circulated the updated Assessment of Risks which had been considered at the February Finance and Policy Committee meeting.

RESOLVED that the Risk Management Register be approved.

C18/189 Asset Register

The Town Clerk circulated the updated Asset Register. Three assets had been removed following their replacement by new, these being the part-exchanged tractor, the old office photocopier and one bin.

Councillor Broom asked if the Town Council has a new for old policy for assets. The Town Clerk confirmed that it did for assets included in the all risks schedule on the insurance policy.

RESOLVED: That the updated Asset Register be approved.

C18/190 Council Investment Strategy and Investments

The Town Clerk reported that both investment bonds, with Lloyds and Santander, will mature in the next two months and it is recommended that the Council reinvests with the same banks. In order to be fully transparent, it is proposed that this investment information is placed on the Town Council's website.

Councillor Watson asked if any research had been undertaken this year into investments with other banks. The Town Clerk reported that no research had been undertaken this year because switching from one bank to another is a difficult process and can be costly.

RESOLVED: That the Council continues with its Investment Strategy and gives delegated power to the Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee to reinvest the Lloyds and Santander Investment Bonds with those organisations.

C18/191 Constitution Review Meeting

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the annual constitution review meeting would take place at 7pm on Tuesday 26th March at the Mechanics Institute. Comments are invited from any councillors who are unable to attend.

RESOLVED: To note the meeting date.

C18/192 Proposed Town Clean-Up Day

The Town Clerk reported that the amount of people who had confirmed that they would participate was very encouraging and included a number of organisations who had received Town Council grants. Councillor Swinbank suggested offering light

refreshments to participants; Councillor Grisdale suggested that the Youth Hostel could supply these.

RESOLVED: To receive the update.

C18/193

Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (14th February 2019) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14th February 2019 were agreed as a true record

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (28th February 2019) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 28th February 2019 were agreed as a true record.

C18/194

Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
Feb 18	Sakura Cherry Tree Project – update and request for more details, Alnwick to receive trees in Nov 2020	Project & Funding Officer to respond
Feb 21	Petition to NCC asking for removal of speed humps on Allerburn Lea. NCC asking for Town Council views	To consider (see below) (i)
Feb 24	Health Watch Northumberland survey – note closing date 14th March	Councillor Moore circulated to councillors
Feb 27	Hexham Town Councillor asking for details of our carbon footprint/carbon neutral proposals	Responded & details passed to Councillor Swinbank
Feb 27	MS Society – looking for volunteers	Poster for Notice Board
Mar 11	James Matthewson - Alnwick Alive information and request to brief Council	Clerk to invite

(i) Councillors Symmonds and Allcroft left the meeting.

The petition to NCC asking for the removal of the Allerburn Lea speed humps was signed by around one third of Allerburn Lea residents. Councillor Castle explained that the humps were not requested by NCC but created by the contractor when the estate was built.

Councillor Humphries left the meeting at 8.58pm.

RESOLVED: That the Allerburn Lea speed humps should be retained.

Councillors Symmonds and Allcroft re-joined the meeting.

The Projects and Funding Officer reported that it was not yet known how many Sakura Cherry Trees would be delivered to Alnwick but all will be of the Tai Haku species, which is white. The precise locations of the planting is dependent on how

many are received with the priority sites being the Column Field, the A1/Willowburn Avenue junction and Taylor Drive from the Willowburn Avenue roundabout up to the School. It is proposed that appropriate cultural ceremonies and celebrations are arranged for the planting which will take place in November 2020.

Following a discussion the Town Clerk reported that Alnwick Alive would be invited to attend a meeting of the Council, within the next two months.

RESOLVED: To receive the correspondence.

C18/195 Financial Matters

a) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL PAYABLE	VAT ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
NCC	£31,039.05	£15	Payroll Nov – Jan (paid 19/2)
Davidson & Son	£5,400.00	£900	Christmas Lights grant (paid 8/3)
The Alnwick Garden	£185.00	£30.83	Plants
Edward Walker	£140.00	£0	Tree works – cemetery
Royal Mail	£1.97	£0.33	Pre-paid postage
James N McLean	£286.83	£47.81	Tools and Equipment
Northumberland Tree Surveys Ltd	£650.00	£0	Cemetery Tree Survey
Diamond Business Systems	£31.16	£5.19	Photocopying
Petty Cash	£100.00	£13.33	Fuel and cemetery lodge chimney sweep
Community Action Northumberland	£350.00	£0	Facilitation of Away Day
Grannies	£80.00	£0	Away Day Refreshments
Northumberland Estates	£75.00	£0	Allotment Rent – Ratten Row
NFU Mutual	£1,193.04	£0	W R Batey Pension contribution Oct - March
Standard Life	£513.31	£0	J Pibworth Pension contribution Oct - March
J Pibworth	£145.80	£0	Mileage Jan – March
T Kirton	£32.40	£0	Mileage Jan – March
W R Batey	£210.60	£0	Mileage Oct – March
J Pibworth	£421.23	£8.30	Plants, Soil, Planting materials

Local Living	£200.00	£0	Balance on 18/19 Grant – Food Festivals/Alnwick Markets
W R Batey	£96.89	£15.96	Paint for Planters an War Memorial £37, refreshments £8.90
C Bowden	£1,000.00	£0	Cemetery Pointing
Furnitubes	£180.00	£30.00	New finger post
Syd Carr	£200.00	£0	Drain cleaning at cemetery
Clive Mattison	£375.44	£43.82	Willowburn Inquiry plans
A Carr	£300.00	£0	Pressure washing
TOTAL	£43,127.72	£1,110.57	

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
BT	£30.35	£5.06	Phone Bills Cemetery (paid 28/2)
NEST	£572.43	£0	Employer pension scheme contributions for November (paid 15/2)
British Gas	£22.55	£0	Gas HomeCare policy
Biffa	£89.18	£14.86	Trade Waste - Cemetery (paid 30/3)
Wave	£93.14	£0	Water - Cemetery Lodge. Store and Tap (paid 14/3)
Wave	£19.07	£0	Water - Cemetery Tap (paid 14/3)
Wave	£630.84	£0	Allotments (paid 2/4)
Wave	£41.74	£0	Robertson's Fountain (paid 1/3)
Npower	£55.51	£2.64	Town Hall Clock (paid 10/1)
Npower	£45.06	£2.15	Robertson's Fountain (paid 16/1)
npower	£126.15	£6.01	Cemetery Chapel (paid 23/1)

The Town Council also agreed to pay the final 2018/19 instalments for the You're Welcome Scheme. (£250 each to the Queens Head Hotel, Blue Bell and Costa Foundation).

An invoice had been received by the Easer Market from Local Living. It was agreed to pay this in April, before the next Council meeting.

The Town Clerk outlined that Barclays Bank were now charging bank charges and deduction had been made for the account by direct debit. This had been taken up with the bank as it appeared that the notice of this charge had not been given.

The Finance and Policy Committee on 28th February agreed the following grant payment: This payment will need to be authorised.

Organisation	Grant Award
Alnwick & District Triathlon Club	£100

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £42,004.53 and to note the direct debit payments of £1,726.02.

b) Bank Reconciliation

The Town Clerk issued the bank reconciliation for February 28th 2019. He reported that the cash book expenditure and bank balances had been balanced. He reported that there were 12 unpresented cheques amounting to £48,000 but this included the cheque for the NCC Payroll.

RESOLVED: To approve the bank reconciliation as at 28th February 2019.

C18/196 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 9.17pm.