

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.15pm**

- Present** Cllrs A Symmonds, S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, M Harrington, J Humphries, R Moore, M Swinbank, A Waton, G Watson, L Wood-Mitchell and L Wearn.
- In attendance** W R Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk.
- C18/197 Minutes silence in memory of Councillor Charles Westendarp**  
Councillor Symmonds lead a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Charles Westendarp who died in hospital earlier in the day
- C18/198 Questions from the public**  
None.
- C18/199 Apologies for absence**  
Councillors Grisdale, Mavin and Patience.
- C18/200 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillors Castle and Moore declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters.
- C18/201 Minutes of the Last meeting (14<sup>th</sup> March 2019)**  
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were tabled for approval.
- RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019, with the agreed amendments, were agreed as a true record.**
- C18/202 Matters Arising**  
C18/192 Town Clean Up - the Town Clerk advised that the event had gone very well and that over 80 people had turned out to help.
- C18/203 Mayor's Report**  
Deputy Mayor Councillor Wearn reported that she had attended two events on behalf of the Mayor. The first was the prize giving at the Duchess Community High School at which a very accomplished young pianist had performed. On March 23<sup>rd</sup> she had attended a Drinks Reception at the occasion of the sashing of the Chief Marshal, hosted by The Berwick Riders Association at the Guildhall in Berwick.
- She advised that she would also be attending the Riding of the Bounds event also hosted by The Berwick Riders Association on May 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Councillor Symmonds advised that applications were now open for the 2018/19 Civic Awards. He reminded councillors that applications could be for Youth, Adult or Teams and encouraged them to think about nominating people and to encourage others to send in applications.
- Councillor Symmonds also reported that he would be attending the St George's Day event on April 27<sup>th</sup>. This would be hosted by the 5<sup>th</sup> Fusilier and would parade include a parade through the town.
- C18/204 Feedback on County Council matters**  
Councillor Castle reported that NCC will be raising the profile of showing racism the card. The present arrangements only promote this to 23 out of the 160 schools in Northumberland. He reported that there was a cross party agreement to improve this.

Councillor Moore reported that there is an NCC social media initiative to promote local businesses called "Discover Our Land". He advised that if councillors felt that any Alnwick businesses should be included they send the details to NCC.

Councillor Moore reported that the Alnwick Forum event on March 23<sup>rd</sup> had been very well attended.

He reported that parking at Alnmouth Station was being monitored and that a review would be done at the end of the year. Councillor Broom reported that the parking meters were difficult to see at night as they were not lit properly.

He reminded councillors that the North of Tyne Mayor elections were on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Councillor Castle advised that NCC's new Head of Planning would like to come and speak to the Planning Committee.

Councillor Allcroft asked when the development at Allerburn Gate would be started. Councillor Castle advised that he would ask NCC.

Councillor Castle advised that NCC were looking to build more new council houses across Northumberland. They were looking to build small numbers on small local sites and would welcome ideas for locations in Alnwick.

Councillor Castle advised that NCC had a dedicated officer who could talk to the Planning Committee.

## **C18/205 Constitution Review recommendations**

The Town Clerk gave a summary of the suggested changes made at the Constitution Review meeting. Councillors reviewed the following recommendations:

### 1. Number / Length of Meetings

The general view was that having Planning, Highways & Transportation the same night as Full Council was proving a very long night as 11 councillors attended both meetings. The recommendations were reviewed and the following was agreed.

**RESOLVED: i) To have Full Council as the only meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening of each month starting at 7.00pm; ii) To schedule Planning, Highways and Transport Committee meeting monthly on a separate Thursday night starting at 7pm; iii) To reduce Finance & Policy Committee meetings to four a year on a Thursday starting at 7pm and that grants are dealt with at the Autumn meeting; iv) To reduce the Cemetery Committee to four meetings a year on a Thursday starting at 6pm before the Finance & Policy Committee meetings; iv) To keep Recreation & Amenities Committee to six meetings a year on a Thursday starting at 7pm; v) To review the meeting arrangements after 6 months.**

### 2. Updating Committee Membership

**RESOLVED: i) To amend the Finance & Policy Committee membership to 12 councillors (7 councillors plus the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and Chairs of the Standing Committees); ii) That either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor should be on each Committee.**

### 3. Number of Councillors and Ward Boundaries

There was a recommendation to change the number of councillors and the ward boundaries. The Town Clerk advised that any boundary change would need to ask NCC to undertake a ward boundary review.

**RESOLVED: To keep the number of councillors at 18 and not to undertake a ward boundary review.**

4. Approving minutes

The Town Clerk advised that under the present arrangements minutes of Committee meetings are approved at the next Full Council meeting. This enables all councillors to see the minutes of all meetings, reasonably quickly. However, in this process minutes are not returned to the parent committee for approval. Councillors discussed the merits and otherwise of this.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk looks at the most appropriate solution and report back to the next meeting.**

5. Financial Regulations

There were a number of small changes suggested to this section which councillors approved. It was also recommended that the Town Council request a Credit Card

**RESOLVED: i) To increase Petty Cash float to £150; ii) To amend the wording to enable urgent payments to be made between meetings; iii) To look at obtaining a Town Council Credit Card and develop a process for on line banking then amend the Financial Regulations when these are in place.**

6. Typographical Changes

The Town Clerk advised that there were a small number of typographical errors which usually occurred when changes had been made in previous versions causing numbering consequence in another part of the document.

**RESOLVED: The Town Clerk to correct the typographical errors.**

**C18/206 Draft Council Vision, Mission and Objectives**

The Town Clerk explained that at the last meeting a draft vision and objectives and objectives were circulated for comments and a final draft circulated to councillors.

Councillor Swinbank commented that there was no mention of the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan in the document.

Councillor Castle commented that it didn't mention leisure and facilities and felt that this needed adding.

The Town Clerk advised that the next step would be to add SMART targets to the objectives.

**RESOLVED: To amend the document to include the comments made.**

**C18/207 High Street Community Clean Up Fund**

The Town Clerk reported that Northumberland County Council had awarded Alnwick Town Council, and 11 other town councils, a grant of £4,500 for High Street Clean-Up Activity. The funding is for community-led street and town centre cleans.

The grant can be used to purchase tools and equipment to help community groups tidy up and can include high visibility vests, litter pickers, shovels, brushes rakes, wheelbarrows, sacks and gloves; training, promotional material and support for community clean-up events.

The Town Clerk reported that he had accepted the funding on behalf of the Town Council and the money has now been received. The grant money must be spent by 29th April and a completed grant monitoring form submitted to NCC by 15th May. The

Town Clean up event on Sunday 24th March counts as our activity and items purchased for this can be paid for using the grant funding.

He explained the equipment list which had been prepared, in conjunction with several community groups, which was recommended to be purchased. The suggested list would mean that the Town Council has a supply of equipment for either future council or community organised clean-up events. He explained that the equipment could also be lent out to local schools and groups and that some of the equipment will be for children (i.e. small sizes).

He explained that Councillor Swinbank has suggested this could extend to neighbouring parishes who had not receive funding. Once purchased the availability of the equipment will be publicised and groups encouraged to organize clean up events.

Councillor Castle agreed with the suggestion to lend out to other parishes but felt that they should be asked to pay for any equipment which goes missing or was broken.

**RESOLVED: i) To purchase the suggested items; ii) To offer the equipment to surrounding parishes (those in the former Alnwick District Council area).**

**C18/208 Update on Community Action Proposals & Town Centre Working Action Plan**  
The Town Clerk issued an updated Community Proposals Action Plan and Town Centre Working Group Action Plan report and gave an update on actions.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates.**

**C18/209 Feedback form Alnwick Forum event on March 23rd**  
The Town Clerk reported that over 200 people had attended the consultation event on March 24<sup>th</sup>. He explained that as well as updates on Town projects a Town Council questionnaire had been issued. Any resulting actions would be taken to the relevant committees.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave an overview of the analysis of the 63 questionnaires completed at the event:

87.3% of respondents had a good or reasonable understanding of what the Town Council does.

41.3% of respondents had used the website of which 96.2% had found the information they were looking for.

90% of respondents would like to be kept up to date with what the Town Council is doing, of which:

63% would like to read updates in the local paper

43% would like to receive a regular newsletter

40% would like to read it on the Town Council's website

82.9% of respondents were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with how the Town Council operate.

88.9% of respondents felt it was important that the Town Council become carbon neutral by 2031.

There were also 10 people who were happy to volunteer.

**RESOLVED: To note the feedback.**

**C18/210 Minutes of Committees**  
Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (14<sup>th</sup> March 2019) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were agreed as a true record**

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (21<sup>st</sup> March 2019) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 were agreed as a true record.**

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (8<sup>th</sup> March 2019) were tabled for approval.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were agreed as a true record.**

**C18/211**

**Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Action if any</b>
Mar 20 <sup>th</sup> Mar 27 <sup>th</sup> Apr 22 <sup>nd</sup>	NALC e news	Available on request
Mar 12 <sup>th</sup>	Gordon Allen – Annual report of Being Active Matters (ATC gave £500 towards the project)	To Circulate and Finance & Policy Committee to consider
Mar 27 <sup>th</sup>	PKF Littlejohn – 2018/19 External audit arrangements	Accounts and annual return to be submitted by 1 <sup>st</sup> July
April 4 <sup>th</sup>	Northumberland Estates - proposing revised Ratten Row Allotment rent of £700 pa	To consider (a)

(a) The Town Clerk advised that he had received a letter from Northumberland Estates advising that, having reviewed the information provided by the Town Clerk at a meeting with the Estates in February, the annual rent for Ratten Row allotment site would be £750 from March 2020.

Councillor Edge said it was frustrating that it was a year by year license.

Councillor Waton asked if the necessary budget was included for this increase. The Town Clerk advised that allotment rents would be set in November 2019 for 2019/2020 and could be increased, if necessary, to cover the additional rent figure.

Councillor Waton asked if the site was protected as an allotment site. The Town Clerk advised that if the allotment site was taken back alternative sites would need to be found.

Councillor Swinbank thought that Northumberland Estates should be asked to review the rent again.

Councillor Allcroft asked if the rent was reviewed annually. The Town Clerk advised that Northumberland Estates reviewed the rent every five years.

Councillor Broom asked what the cost of the new water system had been. The Town Clerk advised that this had cost £12k.

Councillor Edge felt that allotments should be supported in Alnwick.

**RESOLVED: i) To receive the correspondence; ii) To write to Northumberland Estates stating how much money has been spent at Ratten Row and asking them to review the proposed rent again.**

**C18/212 Financial Matters**

**a) Payments**

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYABLE</b>	<b>VAT ELEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>2018/19 budget</b>			
NCC	£10,815.63	£4.17	Feb/March payroll (net)
Bill Grisdale Design	£100.00	£0	Town Guide Design work
Diamond Group	£45.66	£7.61	Photocopying
W R Batey	£23.28	£3.52	Refreshments – Away day
St James’s Church Centre	£950.50	£0	Room Bookings Committees / Council / Business Forum / Twinning
NPD Ltd	£1,635.60	£272.60	Visitor leaflet distribution
Town & Country Tree Surgeons Ltd	£2,700.00	£450.00	Tree works – cemetery 50% complete
South Road Tyres	£15.00	£2.50	Puncture repair
Potts	£2,047.00	£0	Visitor leaflet printing
James McLean	£391.76	£65.30	Town Clean Up equipment
Scot JCB Ltd	£339.20	£56.53	JCB mini digger service
W R Batey	£460.95	£66.66	Postage £61, Flymo Lawnmower £399.95
Streetscape	£252.00	£42.00	Wetpour
J Pibworth	£238.30	£29.57	Plants – Cemetery and town centre planters
NCC	£492.00	£82.00	Install points for new CCTV camera
NCC sign shop	£451.20	£75.20	Play area signs
Thomas Sheriff	£426.77	£71.12	Tractor service
Petty Cash	£80.00	£13.33	
Greenlay	£317.09	£52.85	Tractor service
M Weatheritt	£1,000.00	£0	Cemetery pointing
J Pibworth	£174.32	£51.17	St Georges flag £67.14; Top soil £80.64 + VAT on previous invoice £26.54
<b>2019/20 budget</b>			
NCC	£451.72	£0	NNDR – Cemetery Chapel
Infinite Playgrounds	£312.00	£52.00	Grass mats – Bullfield Play Area
JPI Media Publishing	£780.00	£130.00	Advertising two posts
ICCM	£95.00	£0	Annual Subscription
Bill Grisdale Design	£87.20	£0	Updating tourism leaflet
Initial	£1,024.80	£170.80	Toilets deep clean / eco breeze
Petty Cash	£20.00	£3.33	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£25,726.98</b>	<b>£1,237.47</b>	

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
BT	£31.96	£5.33	Phone Bills Cemetery (paid 28/3)
BT	£77.44	£0	Phone Bills Greenwell Lane. Please note we still have £142.26 credit on the account
NEST	£584.61	£0	Employer pension scheme contributions for March (paid 15/4)
British Gas	£22.55	£0	Gas HomeCare policy
npower	£59.29	£2.82	Town Hall Clock (paid 11/4)

**RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £25,726.98 and to note the direct debit payments of £775.85.**

**b) Bank Reconciliation / Bank Charges**

The Town Clerk advised that the bank reconciliation for March 2019 could not be undertaken as the bank statement had not yet arrived.

He also advised that a refund had been received for Bank Charges since December 2017, however charges would now apply. Moving to electronic banking would lower future charges.

**C18/213 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Watson reminded councillors that the Alnwick Spring Show was on April 14<sup>th</sup> at Willowburn Sports Centre. Sir John Hall would be presenting the prizes.

Councillor Edge reminded councillors that the North of Tyne Mayor Elections were on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and that Alnwick Friends of the Earth were holding hustings for the candidates on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at St James's Church Centre.

Councillor Castle advised that NCC's Community Chest fund was now open for 2019.

Councillor Symmonds thanked councillors and officers for the help and support during his time as Mayor. He had honoured to undertake the role and valued his time as Mayor.

The meeting closed at 9.21pm.