

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 13th June 2019
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 6.30m**

Present Cllrs L Wearn, G Castle, M Harrington, J Humphries, G Mavin, R Moore, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds, A Waton and G Watson.

In attendance W Batey, Town Clerk & Chief Officer; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; James Matthewson and David Patterson from Alnwick Alive.

C19/25 Questions from the public

Sam Frost (SF), a resident from Greensfield Avenue, raised the issue that there were no child friendly parking spaces in any of the car parks in Alnwick. She felt that there needed to be wider parking spaces to enable parents more space to get children in and out of the car.

Councillor Castle advised that he had not been made aware of the issues before. He advised that he would look into the issue and would like the Town Council's support.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the whole issue needed addressing and suggested the Town Council wrote a letter to NCC.

Councillor Moore thought that there were some locations where this would be possible.

SF explained that in some locations, such as Fenkle Street, parking spaces were not marked out at all.

Councillor Mavin supported the need for some wider spaces.

Councillor Swinbank advised there was a Planning, Highways & Transport meeting the following week and this issue could be added to the agenda. He advised that this had not been raised before as an issue. He wondered felt that it would be important to work out it might be enforced by NCC. He advised SF that Alnwick Town Council have an on-going review of the Car Park Action Plan with NCC so this issue could also be raised then.

Councillor Patience said she was embarrassed that she had not noticed the issue before and fully supported looking at the issue quickly.

Councillor Wearn said that she hoped that SF was reassured that the Town Council would take the issue forward.

C19/26 Apologies for absence

Cllr Allcroft, Aynsley, Broom, Edge, Grisdale and Wood-Mitchell.

C19/27 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Castle and Moore declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters. Councillor Castle also declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Private Item.

C19/28 Presentation by James Matthewson, Alnwick Alive

James Matthewson (JM) from Alnwick Alive Northumberland gave a presentation on the Real Living Wage.

JM said that he was saddened by the recent death of Councillor Westendarp who had been very active supporter of some of the projects JM had been involved with.

JM explained that the Real Living Wage campaign had been started by a group of people under 30. He issued a report, a list of businesses already accredited in Alnwick, and explained how the Real Living Wage compared to the current minimum statutory wages:

	The Minimum Wage	National Living Wage	Real Living Wage
What is it?	£7.70	£8.21	£9.00
Is it the Law?	Statutory	Statutory	Voluntary
Age group?	Aged 21+	Aged 25+	Aged 18+
How is it set?	Negotiated Settlement based on recommendations from businesses and trade unions	A % of medium earnings, currently at 55%, it aims to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020	Calculation made according to the cost of living, based on a basket of household goods and services
London weighting?	No	No	Yes higher rate (£10.55)

JM advised that their campaign was to improve wage levels for individuals and accrediting businesses as Living Wage employers.

JM advised that in a Living Wage Foundation survey of employers who were accredited:

86% said it has improved the reputation of the business

75% said it had increased motivation and retention rates of employees

64% said it had helped differentiate from others in their industry

58% said it had improved relations between managers and staff

JM advised that he would like the Town Council to lead by example. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council were already paying above the Real Living Wage to all their employees.

JM advised that towns and cities can be accredited as a Real Living Wage town/city and that Alnwick could be accredited if the Town Council and a few key employers were accredited (e.g. NHS). So far there are only 3 Living Wage towns in the UK.

JM handed out leaflets which are displayed in the windows of accredited businesses along with a list of businesses already accredited in Alnwick.

Councillor questions and comments:

Councillor Castle reported that Alnwick Youth Hostel pay the Real Living Wage.

Councillor Swinbank felt the best way forward was to refer the item to the Finance & Policy Committee where it could be discussed further. He also asked how many businesses would need to sign up to get Alnwick accredited Alnwick as a Real Living Wage Town. JM advised that there was no set number.

Councillor Symmonds asked if there was a cost for accreditation. JM advised that there was no cost for accreditation.

Councillor Humphries asked if a businesses needed to have a minimum number of employees before they could be accredited. JM advised that there wasn't and that any business could be accredited.

Councillor Harrington said that people cherished their salary information and that some people might be concerned that other people would find out how much they earn. JM said that the accreditation process was with the employers and that salary information was not usually shared.

C19/29

Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported that she had made a Town Twinning visit to Voerde between May 16th and 19th. Further details would be given under item 10.

She also reported that she had been to the official Northumberland Pride Launch event on May 26th at The White Swan Hotel. The committee had invited sponsors, supporters, and the local community to meet the committee and learn more about the event. She reported that she had enjoyed the event and had learnt a lot about the planned events.

C19/30

Minutes of the Last meeting (9th May 2019)

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th May 2019 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2019 were agreed as a true record.

C19/31

Matters Arising

None.

C19/32

Accounts 2018/19 a) Internal Audit report, b) Accounts and Accounting Statement, c) Mechanics Institute Accounts

a) Internal Audit report

The Town Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor's report had been received and had not raised any issues. The report did contain a comment about cash in the office and in transit where he had found 4 instances of cash between £500 and £750 being banked which was allotments rents and cemetery fees. Whilst this was not a massive risk he advised that more timely visits to the bank could be done.

He advised that at present the insurance covers the following:

- in the office held by a member of staff £5,000
- in the office locked in a safe/strong room £5,000
- in the office locked in a desk £ 500

The insurer has no provision to increase the £500 any further.

Councillor Castle asked if a safe would help the problem.

Councillor Symmonds suggested that the night safe at the bank be used on the few occasions where it is needed.

Councillor Castle said he was concerned about staff security if people found out that money was being carried at set times.

Councillor Mavin asked if NCC had a safe at Greenwell Lane.

Councillor Swinbank asked if some people could pay by BACS. The Town Clerk advised that most of the Ratten Row allotment rents were paid by cash as some people did not have bank accounts.

RESOLVED: To note and accept the Internal Audit report.

b) Accounts and Accounting Statement

The Town Clerk issued a revised version of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2018/19 and advised that there were minor changes to Section 2 from the draft version of the return issued at the last Full Council meeting.

He also issued the Balance Sheet as at March 31st 2019.

RESOLVED: To approve the Final Accounts and Accounting Statements for 2018/19 and submit to the External Auditor.

c) Mechanics Institute Accounts

The Town Clerk reported that the independent examination of the Mechanics Institute Accounts had been undertaken and no issues had been raised.

RESOLVED: To note the completion of the independent examination of the Mechanics Institute Accounts.

C19/33

Update from the County Councillors

Councillor Moore reported that NCC had allocated £1.2m for refurbishment of the Lindisfarne School site. He added that the green space on the site would remain as green space.

Councillor Castle advised that the 1958 part of the school would be demolished and may be replaced with a smaller leisure structure.

Councillor Wearn asked if housing was planned for the site. Councillor Castle advised that there were no plans for housing.

Councillor Waton asked when the Alnwick Forum will report back to the Town Council as at the moment information was first appearing in the Gazette. The latest news had been reported in the Gazette before it had been to NCC Cabinet. He asked if the Town Council could be copied in on any press releases issued by NCC.

Councillor Swinbank advised that the Alnwick Forum meetings were confidential.

Councillor Castle added that the Alnwick Forum did not make final decisions.

Councillor Patience said there was a timing issue as meeting dates do not always line up.

Councillor Wearn suggested that Alnwick Forum feedback was a standing agenda item for the next 3 months then the process be reviewed.

Councillor Waton asked if there was any update about the sports hall. The Town Clerk advised that there had been one user group meeting and another planned shortly.

Councillor Moore reported that NCC's Draft Local Plan had been submitted to government.

Councillor Moore reported that the Tour of Britain was coming through Alnwick.

Councillor Moore reported that the old cricket pitch / recreation field at the back of Barrasdale would be improved to form a new football pitch and paths.

Councillor Castle reported that bad weather had held back road repairs slightly.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

C19/34

Report on Visit to Voerde – 40th Anniversary of Town Twinning

The Mayor reported that along with the Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk a visit had been made to Voerde to mark the 40th anniversary of the Twinning Charter being signed. She advised that they had had a very productive visit and had been made very welcome. Voerde has many of the same issues as Alnwick. They had recently received a government grant of £3.6million towards the £4million cost of a new sports facility.

She reported that there was an exhibition in the Voerde Town Hall about the town twinning with Alnwick and that there is a stained glass window depicting the coat of arms of both towns. The phone box gifted by Alnwick District Council has pride of place in the town hall.

She had given a speech which they had had translated for the event. The Town Clerk added that there had been around 160 people at the event and that the whole process

had been very efficient. He added that Voerde are very keen to continue the town twinning.

Councillor Wearn proposed to invite a small civic party to visit Alnwick before August 2020.

Councillor Symmonds thanked the Mayor for her report and said that he felt the twin town visits were an important part of the Town Council's business. He supported the proposal for a civic visit by Voerde and thanked the delegation.

The Town Clerk advised that this was the first civic visit made to Voerde since Alnwick Town Council took over town twinning.

Councillor Moore said that the link between schools in each town was really important. Councillor Wearn advised that this still took place but on quite a small scale.

RESOLVED: To accept the update and invite a civic delegation from Voerde to visit Alnwick in 2020.

C19/35

Updates on a) Armed Forces Week, b) Narrowgate Pedestrianisation including request for bunting, c) Heritage Action Zone Funding, d) Alnwick Town Junior Football Club Loan and e) NCC Feasibility study for Seasonal Park & Ride Scheme

a) Armed Forces Week

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that Alnwick Town Council were marking Armed Forces Week and that the flag ceremonies would take place at the civic flagpole in Column Field. The flag raising ceremony would be on Monday June 24th at 11.00am and the flag lowering on Saturday June 29th at 4.00pm.

Both ceremonies include a short address and prayers and will be officiated by Canon Revd Paul Scott, from St Michael's Church and Padre David Haslam from RAF Boulmer.

b) Narrowgate Pedestrianisation including request for bunting

The Town Clerk that the pedestrianisation of Narrowgate would take place from July 17th. He reported that the Chamber of Trade had asked if the town bunting could be put up. He suggested a budget of £1,000 be set but should get this done for less.

Councillor Moore said he would ask NCC about a cherrypicker for the bunting.

Councillor Humphries asked how long the bunting would be up for and if it could be a permanent fixture/ The Town Clerk advised that the bunting need to be taken down when the Christmas lights were put up.

Councillor Harrington felt that the bunting and fixings would need to be designed properly if they are to be a permanent fixture.

Councillor Castle suggested that this went to the Recreation & Amenities Committee.

RESOLVED: To put the bunting up and allocate up to £1k towards the cost.

c) Heritage Action Zone Funding

The Project & Funding Officer reported that a meeting had taken place with NCC Officers and Alnwick Civic Society to discuss any opportunities for Alnwick. He advised that unfortunately Alnwick did not meet the criteria set for the funding.

d) Alnwick Town Junior Football Club Loan

The Town Clerk reported that the Planning Permission for the site was still outstanding but was expected to be given soon and that work was due to start on the site in mid to late July.

He reported that he had asked NCC to release the loan to the Town Council and was finalising the loan documents which included payment terms. He advised that the Town Council's first repayment would be due either in September 2019 or April 2020 and would be taken out of the precept payment. Alnwick Town Junior Football Club (ATJFC) had requested that their repayments be at the same time as the Town Council's repayment to NCC.

He suggested that staged payments be made to ATJFC:

Confirmed start date	£30k
Phase 1 completed	£30k
Phase 2 completed	£65k
On completion of works	£65k

e) NCC Feasibility study for Seasonal Park & Ride Scheme

The Town Clerk reported that NCC feasibility study, which was an action in the Car Park Action Plan, had been completed and a report produced. This had been issued to councillors with the agenda.

He summarised the report advising that the main costs were the buses which would cost around £300 per day per bus. Alnwick would need two buses so the total cost would be £600 per day. The conclusion in the report was that unless the buses were free and parking charges were reintroduced in Alnwick, a park and ride scheme was not commercially viable.

RESOLVED: To receive the updates.

C19/36

To Receive the Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (9th May 2019) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 9th May were received.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (23rd May 2019) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 23rd May 2019 were received.

C19/37

Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

Date	Detail	Action if any
7 th May	Climate Action Northumberland – request for Town Council to support the petition submitted to ask NC to declare a Climate Emergency and to pursue a goal to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2030.	To consider (a)
18 th May	Civic Voices – Announcement of High Street Heritage funding.	Update on the agenda
22 nd May	NALC news.	To circulate
28 th May	DCHS – request for funding to assist DCHS at national final of Magistrates Court Mock	To consider (b)

	Trial Competition at the Royal Courts if Justice on 15 th June.	
30 th May	Alnwick Markets – Thursday markets to resume on 13 th June.	To note
6 th June	NCC – Northumberland Local Plan, submitted to independent examination.	To note

- a) The Town Clerk reported that NCC had already approved a statement of intent for Climate Change so he suggested that the Town Council write to NCC to support the petition.

Councillor Patience asked if the Town Council could comment on NCC's statement of intent.

Councillor Moore advised that comments could be sent to him to forward to NCC. He would also find out if there was a formal process for comments.

Councillor Harrington felt that NCC could have chosen smaller actions to have a bigger impact such as installing sensor lights in all their buildings.

- b) The Town Clerk explained that a small amount had been requested to support the DCHS team in the Mock Court Trials in London. He suggested £200 be given from the grants budget and any money not used be used to help fund public speaking competitions.

Councillor Symmonds proposed giving £250 to DCHS.

RESOLVED: i) To receive the correspondence; ii) To write to NCC supporting the petition from CAN; iii) To give £250 to DCHS from the grants budget.

C19/38

Financial Matters

a) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
Viking	£187.00	£31.17	Stationery
Glasdon	£7,080.79	£1,180.13	4 new seats, 8 new bins
Team Valley Webdesign	£172.80	£28.80	SSL Certificate for Website
W R Batey	£689.22	£22.45	Flights (3) for Twinning visit £564.46, Refreshments Civic Awards £28.75, Twinning Gifts £36.97+ £5.98 + £53.06
Chubb	£88.16	£14.69	Cemetery Fire Equipment Contract
Grannies	£60.00	£0	Refreshments Civic Awards
Paul Wood	£504.00*	£84.00	Peters Mill Millstone Base and fix steel work
Mole Country Stores	£190.96	£31.82	Equipment from Town Clean Up fund
Royal Mail	£7.92	£1.32	Response Service returns

J Pibworth (PD Quick)	£45.00	£7.50	Twinning Civic Gift for Voerde
Fife Plant Hire	£131.52	£21.92	Building Materials
Chris Bowden	£40.00	£0	Erect Harry Hotspur Sign
St James Church Centre	£362.50	£0	Room bookings - £150 Council Meetings, £62.50 Civic Awards, £150 Town Clerk Interviews
Thomas Sheriff & Co Ltd	£185.34	£30.89	Tractor light switch replacement
Thomas Fattorini Ltd	£40.02	£6.67	New collarettes for Mayors Chain
J Ainsworth	£450.00	£0	Internal Audit Fee
Diamond Group Ltd	£45.97	£7.66	Photocopying May
Chubb	£30.00	£5.00	Security System Work Cemetery
NCC	£5,400	£0	Office Rent March – Sept 2019
South Road Tyres	£18.00	£3.00	Headlamp Bulb replacement
Petty Cash	£119.99	£15.00	Safety Trousers, fuel
J Pibworth	£167.86	£27.98	Alnwick Flag
Syd Carr	£300	£0	Works to Robertson's Fountain
Streetscape	£624.00	£104.00	Wetpour
NCC	£50.57	£8.43	Relocation of planters
ROSPA	£739.80	£123.30	Play Area Inspections
James McLean	£264.04	£27.68	Safety clothing and equipment, materials
DCHS	£250.00	£0	Grant for mock trial court
TOTAL	£18,245.46	£1,783.41	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure (Total £504.00).

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
Wave	£108.18	£0	Water – Cemetery Lodge (paid 12/6)
Wave	£18.75	£0	Water – Cemetery Tap (paid 12/6)
BT	£77.75	£12.96	Greenwell Lane (this account now has a credit of £136.13)
BT	£32.47	£5.41	Cemetery Office (paid 28/5)
NEST	£621.55	£0	Pension payments May 2019
Biffa	£122.88	£20.48	Cemetery Trade Waste May (paid 30 th June)
British Gas	£22.50	£0	Cemetery Lodge - Homecare Policy
Wave	£975.96	£0	Water – allotments (paid 21/6)
Wave	£42.90	£0	Water – Robertson's Fountain (paid 21/6)

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £18,245.46, including the £250 grant to DCHS, and to note the direct debit payments of £2,022.94.

a) Bank Reconciliation

The Town Clerk issued the bank reconciliation for May 31st 2019. He reported that the cash book expenditure and bank balances had been balanced. He reported that there were 3 unpresented cheques amounting to £741.97.

RESOLVED: To approve the bank reconciliation as at 31st May 2019.

C19/39 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Wearn reported that cars were speeding across the Lion Bridge and that the 30mph sign at Walkergate needed to be the other side of the bridge. Councillor Moore advised that he would take the matter up with NCC.

Councillor Watson asked if there could be paving stones put under the new Hotspur Stature sign in Pottergate. Councillor Castle advised that this would be new work so the Town Council would need to pay for this.

The public meeting closed at 8.37pm.

C19/40 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The following resolution was moved and seconded, to exclude the public and press.

“That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act”. The items discussed were:

1. Approve the Private Minutes of the Last Meeting (9th May 2019)