



**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on
Thursday 23rd May 2019
in the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, W Gridsdale, 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.

RA 19/01 Apologies

Councillor Wood-Mitchell.

RA 19/02 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Edge and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9a) Play areas.

Councillor Watson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9b) Allotments.

RA 19/03 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

None.

RA 19/04 Working Groups and Membership for 2019/2020

The Town Clerk advised that the communications Working Group had been moved to sit under the Finance & Policy Committee.

Councillor Broom reported that the last Chamber of Trade meeting had mentioned town wi-fi. The Town Clerk advised that he had spoken to Lisa Aynsley and asked for a 2 page summary to take to the Full Council meeting in June.

Councillor Mavin reported that the TIC website was very poor for events yet charged quite a high price. He suggested talking to the tourist attractions about this then speaking to the TIC.

He advised that the WWI Working Group had completed its remit so the remaining working group is the Allotments Working Group. Current membership is Councillors Edge, Patience and Swinbank. He asked if anyone else was interested in joining the working group. Councillor Watson said he would like to join the group.

RESOLVED: Councillors Edge, Patience, Swinbank and Watson to be appointed to the Allotment Working Group.

RA 19/05 Budget Update 2019/20

2019/2020 Budget The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure for 2018/19 as at 26th March 2019 noting that there was a little more expenditure to be added. He highlighted the following lines:

EXPENDITURE

EVENTS:

Only 3 payments made to date :

ALNWICK MARKETS – £500 grant paid.

THE SPRING SHOW - £200 grant paid.

NORTHUMBERLAND PRIDE - £1,000 grant paid out.

PROJECTS:

PUBLIC TOILETS – £845 payment to Initial.

Councillor Patience asked for an update on the Peter's Mill Bridge project. Councillor Harrington advised that the concrete base and metal frame we now in place and the millstone would be picked up from the cemetery shortly and installed.

ASSETS & SERVICES:

PLAYGROUND EXPENSES – £210 paid for Wetpour and £160 paid for signage.

DOG BINS / LITER BINS – no expenditure incurred but have taken delivery of 8 bins (£2,460).

SEATS – no expenditure incurred but have taken delivery of 4 seats (£3,440).

PLAY AREA REPLACEMENTS – £260 paid out for grass mats at Bullfield Community Orchard Play Area.

INCOME

No income has yet been received.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget update.

RA 19/06 Grant Application – Alnwick Music Festival

The Town Clerk explained that the budget in 2018/19 for the Music Festival was £4,800 (which included storage costs and stage installation) but that this budget was not used. The budget for 2019/20 is £650 allocated to the Music Festival (to cover storage costs) plus £4,150 in Unallocated for a potential event.

He advised that the 2019 Music Festival would be a three-day event on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Alnwick Garden and that the Music Festival Committee would use the reserves to fund. He explained that storage costs and other costs such as stage installation would be deducted from any grant agreed and the balance given to the Music Festival.

Councillor Patience said she wholeheartedly supported a grant to the Music Festival. She felt that the Committee had done a good job. She said that hopefully it will be a successful event but there wasn't a lot happening in the town centre.

Councillor Watson agreed that the event should be supported with a grant. He felt it was a make or break year for the Music Festival.

Councillor Harrington said it was disappointing that the proposed Music Festival was all happening at Alnwick Castle and Garden. He felt that the admission costs were high at £60 for a weekend ticket. He also felt that the Music Festival had quite a lot of money in the bank.

Councillor Edge felt it had been a great event in the past and was good to have an event at that time of year. He felt that the Town Council should support the event. He also felt that the free element of the Music Festival needed to be promoted.

Councillor Swinbank supported a grant and felt that the Town Council could put money into activities in the town centre.

Councillor Symmonds supported a grant and felt that the Committee had taken on board the need to link the festival at The Garden, to the town. He felt that leafleting needed to take place to bring people into the town centre.

Councillor Patience proposed a grant of £4,800 and felt that the town centre could be promoted at the festival.

RESOLVED: To allocate a grant of £4,800 to Alnwick Music Festival.

RA 19/07 High Street Fund (cleaning equipment) and proposed next clean-up date

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reminded councillors that Alnwick Town Council had received £4.5k from NCC as part of the High Street Community Clean Up Fund. She advised that the equipment had now been purchased and that in total £4,500.24 had been spent. She had completed NCC's feedback form which may result in further money being available in the future. Three types of equipment had been purchased – Litter Picking including 30 children's litter picking kits, 90 bag holders and 2,500 black sacks; General Tidying including brooms, wheelbarrows, shovels and a pavement sweeper; Gardening including hoes, shears, racks and a leaf blower.

She advised that an Equipment Loan form had been designed with the list and quantity of the available equipment. So far this had been sent out to Alnmouth Parish Council and Alnwick in Bloom, both of whom had requested to borrow equipment. She advised that she would send out to other local Parish Councils and advised that she would ask them to notify other local organisations and schools.

Councillor Swinbank agreed that local schools needed to be advised of the availability of the equipment and that a press release should be done about the first loan of the equipment. Councillor Griddale said he could send the information and loan form out to the local Heads Association.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that another clean-up day had been suggested to take place before the Northumbria in Bloom judging on July 16th. Councillor Broom suggested Sunday July 14th. He also felt that offering refreshments at the Youth Hostel, as last time, would be beneficial.

Councillor Harrington felt that the town was looking good at present.

Councillor Broom reported that there were weeds under some of the town centre seats and that the area around Wagonway Post Office was looking messy.

RA 19/08 Market Place bull ring location

The Town Clerk explained that Adrian Ions had contacted him suggesting that the existing ring from Bondgate Within was moved to the Market Place to the Bull Baiting Ring location which was not longer in place. He had also requested that the ring be covered over with Perspex to enable people to view it.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that she had taken images of the proposed ring and the empty bull baiting ring stone which she showed to councillors.

Councillor Swinbank felt the proposed location could be an issue and that NCC Highways should be spoken to in the first instance. The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that when she was taking the images of the stone in the Market Place she had felt that location might be too dangerous to reinstate due to the traffic.

Councillor Symmonds agreed that Highways should be consulted first and that maybe a brass plaque could be installed. The Assistant to the Town Clerk said that an addition to the existing lectern map might be a solution or a smaller sign installed in a safer location away from the stone itself.

Councillor Griddale felt that a sign with an image of the old bull baiting ring on it could be done.

Councillor Patience felt that the sign could be put in the wall making it easier and safer to read.

RESOLVED: To contact NCC Highways to discuss the Bull Baiting Ring.

RA 19/09 Updates:

a) Play Areas and Bike Track (including Glovers Green Swing)

ZIP WIRE ALNWICK NORTH – The Town Clerk reported the Town Council were still awaiting the legal transfer of the equipment.

BULLFIELD COMMUNITY ORCHARD PLAY AREA – The Project & Funding Officer reported that the new play area had officially opened on May 10th.

GLOVERS GREEN PLAY AREA - The Project & Funding Officer reported that questionnaires had gone out to local residents about the single swing, which was in a bad state of repair. 14 residents had responded, 7 in favour of removal, 6 in favour of it being retained and 1 in favour of it being removed then replaced. It retained the swing would need repainting and the Wetpour repaired. The surrounding walls are very rough and would also need attention.

He advised that a site meeting would be arranged with Bob Hodgson, NCC to discuss. The Town Council could remove the swing and ask NCC to repair the area. He advised that the area could be softened by adding trees.

Councillor Patience asked if any children were asked for their views. The Project & Funding Officer advised that children had not been asked specifically as the questionnaire had just been sent to the residents of Glovers Green.

Councillor Swinbank said that a compromise would be to take out the walls and hard landscaping, grassing the area and adding a new swing.

Councillor Watson asked if there had been any complaints about the area. The Town Clerk advised that there had only been complaints about bricks being removed.

Councillor Broom said he was always concerned about removing assets around the town. He felt that the existing swing should be replaced, another swing added, the Wetpour repaired and the area landscaped.

Councillor Patience supported Councillor Brooms proposal to improve the area.

Councillor Grisdale asked if there were grants available. The Town Clerk suggested talking to Bob Hodgson in the first instance to see what NCC could do.

Councillor Mavin felt that the area needed a seat.

Councillor Edge thought vegetation should be added to the area and the bricks softened.

ALNWICK BIKE TRACK - The Town Clerk reports that plans had been drawn up for the relocation of the car park and that the link road from Denwick Lane was due to be completed in June. He advised that the new Town Handyman, Syd Carr, was now in place and would spend about 1/3rd of his time working the bike track including using the new hover mower on the banks.

Councillor Swinbank asked who would be strimming the Bullfield Play Area. The Town Clerk advised that this would be done by the Town Council.

Councillor Swinbank advised that he had tried to put down the new grass matting but needed to wait for the ground to soften.

b) Allotments

ST JAMES'S – the Town Clerk reported that the site was now fully let.

RATTEN ROW - the Town Clerk reported that there were about 6 to let. There is a small amount of rent still to come in. The clean-up day still needs to be arranged.

There is an issue with the new water supply around the meter area and James McLean is meeting with Northumbrian water to discuss the matter.

ST GEORGE'S – the Town Clerk reported that there were 2 overgrown plots to let.

There are people on the waiting list who he was contacting so more allotment plots should be let.

Councillor Broom advised that he had spoken to the Town Clerk about bringing all due dates for rents the same for all sites.

Councillor Swinbank asked about the duck pond at Ratten Row. The Town Clerk advised that he was satisfied that the water supply was not being used excessively.

RESOLVED: To make the annual rent due date for Cawledge and St George's the same as Ratten Row and St James's.

c) Seats and Bins

Seats – The Town Clerk reported that four new seats (2 x Stanford heritage and 2 Phoenix) had been delivered. One heritage seat had replaced an old wooden seat opposite St Michaels' Church and the other is for stock. One Phoenix seat has been installed on Howling Lane and the other will replace the old wooden bench at the bottom Clayport Bank.

He advised that a request had been received for a seat at one of the bus stops on Willowburn Avenue.

Councillor Edge asked if benches could be rented for a year as part of the Narrowgate pedestrianisation scheme. The Town Clerk advised that benches could be purchased.

Councillor Swinbank asked if other bus stops could be considered for seats

Bins – The Town Clerk reported that 8 new bins (2 Brunel heritage, 2 Jubilee, 2 Chieftain, 2 Integra) had been delivered. The Integra was a new type of bin with additional bins specifically for cigarette ends and one will replace the bin at the end of Paikes Street and the other installed in Greenwell Lane. The bin near to Morrisons will also be replaced.

Councillor Broom asked if a bin could be put on a post in Lisburn Street.

Councillor Mavin advised that a bin was needed near the old fire station.

Councillor Watson reported that a lot of litter collected near the junction of St George's Crescent and Co-op and that a bin was needed.

d) NCC Grass Cutting

The Town Clerk reported that the slip roads and entrances in to Alnwick would no longer be cut by NCC 12 times a year (at the request of Highways England) and that Highways England would be cutting the areas themselves 8 times a year.

Councillor Harrington asked if the county councillors could get anything done about this.

Councillor Patience said that the areas needed cutting now as they were beginning to look untidy.

Councillor Symmonds suggested contacting Highways England to ask for their cutting schedule for 2019.

RESOLVED: i) To accept the updates; ii) To contact Highways England to request their grass cutting schedule for Alnwick.

RA 19/10 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Swinbank asked if the town bunting would be put up. The Town Clerk advised that this would be put on the next Full Council agenda.

Councillor Mavin reported that the car park at the old DCHS was not well used. He also reported that an NCC tipper truck had been dumping rubbish on the adjacent field.

Councillor Edge asked if the lights in the town hall clock had been looked at and changed. The Town Clerk advised that he would ask the new Town Handyman to do this.

Councillor Broom advised that the new Town Handyman would be looking at in Robertson's Fountain to see if he could get the fountain working again.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that the Hotspur Statue sign was now in place in Pottergate Gardens.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that all 8 trees in the first phase of the Ribbon of Trees Project were now in place. The Apple tree is now outside the Olive Branch café and has been under planted with herbs which the owners of the café have agreed to look after.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm