



## Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020, at 6.30pm

**Present:** Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Edge, W Gridsdale, M Harrington, J Lyford, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds, G Watson and L Wood-Mitchell.

**In attendance:** P Hatley, Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer and Councillor L Wearn.

**RA 20/13 Apologies**

None.

**RA 20/14 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Patience Item 8 (Bike Track Management), Councillors Swinbank and Watson Item 11b) (Allotments).

**RA 20/15 Approval of minutes of last meeting (24<sup>th</sup> September 2020)**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were approved as a true record.

**RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

**RA 20/16 Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

Councillor Patience said that the breakdown of funding for the bike track was not accurate:

ATC had applied for the funding because it is the site's leaseholder. The Town Council had agreed to maintain the bike track for three years.

Only £1,500 of the funding was charitable with the remainder coming from S.106 funding, trust funds, NCC Community Chest and Sport England so the phrase "charitable funding" should be replaced with "grant funding".

**RA 20/17 Bike Track Management**

The Town Clerk had investigated this and spoken with Ian MacRae at Gallery Youth: It was agreed that the Town Council, as the grant bidder and leaseholder, should be formally responsible for the Bike Track however there is also a proposal for a "Friends of the Bike Track" group.

Councillor Patience requested that the Bike Track Steering Group, which used to meet every second month, be revived next year. This would require a replacement for the late Councillor Westendarp be appointed to that group. It was agreed that Councillor Watson would succeed CW.

**RA 20/18 Water – St. George's allotments**

The Projects and Funding Officer had produced a report, circulated prior to the meeting.

The Council had consulted on mains water provision some three years previously with St. George's allotment holders, who had declined the offer of mains water provision; at that time, many allotment holders lived in properties adjacent and therefore were easily able to obtain water from their homes. Since then several allotments had changed hands and so the provision of mains water was again being investigated.

Northumbrian Water had advised that a metered connection would need to be installed from the nearest existing main to a point just inside the allotment access gate. This would cost approximately £1,500 however they would need to undertake a proper investigation or provide an official quote for which the Town Council needs to submit an application form and fee of £138.

There were two options for water provision beyond the allotment gate; a single, centrally located standpipe or individual, metered standpipes in each of the thirteen allotments. Either could be installed by the Council's manual staff. A tap in each allotment would enable present and future tenants to choose whether they wish to use mains water and would, through individual metering, deter water wastage, however there may be an administrative burden in reading meters and billing individual allotment holders.

**RESOLVED: i) To pay £138 to Northumbrian Water to undertake an investigation and provide an official quote ii) To further investigate mains water installation subject to (a) consulting with the St. George's tenants and (b) considering alternatives such as rainwater harvesting and the provision of the required storage tank for this.**

#### **RA 20/19 Digital Town Trails**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Councillor Symmonds suggested that grant funding could be sought towards the App, possibly through an external body such as the Civic Society or the Mechanic's Institute.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell advised that Investing in Alnwick (IIA) had also been investigating a town app but this would be specifically aimed at young families so it would not conflict with that proposed by Councillor Harrington. There was discussion around the possibilities of combining the two App proposals however both Councillor Harrington and Wood-Mitchell wished to keep the two App proposals separate. Councillor Wood-Mitchell advised that, Investing in Alnwick were willing to work together but as the apps were aimed at different audiences and would run on different platforms they wished to apply for their own App's grant funding.

The Town Clerk advised that if the costs of the App project exceed £5,000, three quotations will need to be obtained for its provision.

**RESOLVED The Projects and Funding Officer to investigate grant funding for the App proposed by Councillor Harrington.**

#### **RA 20/20 Play Equipment for Older Children/Inclusive Play Equipment**

A report had been previously circulated. Through Councillor Broom, Councillor Watson had suggested the need for additional play equipment for Alnwick specifically aimed at older children of around 13 to 16 years. There is also currently no inclusive equipment in Alnwick play parks for use by children with special needs or who use wheelchairs.

It is proposed that the young users of the play equipment be involved in this project to identify the most suitable equipment. Approaches have been made to the Duchess Community High School, Barndale House School and community groups and the responses so far had been very positive. The active participation by the community would also be important to any applications for National Lottery and other community-based funding. There is a need to manage expectations and delivery of new equipment may have to be phased over several years.

Councillor Swinbank advised that there should be S106 funding from recent planning applications for housing available and should be sought to part fund this provision.

Councillor Lyford felt that a play style garden for autistic children would also be useful.

Councillor Patience felt that a sensory garden could be installed for them and felt that this should be treated as a separate project so should look for separate grant funding.

**RESOLVED To note the report.**

**RA 20/21 Former Lindisfarne School Gym**

Councillor Harrington reported that the building has now closed leaving several groups with nowhere to use. Spoken to several people who had thought they would get a replacement venue.

He advised that he had spoken to NCC and that a free asset transfer could be done to the Town Council. He proposed that the Town Council undertook a feasibility study.

He explained that there were many sports who do not have a suitable venue.

Councillor Symmonds felt that a feasibility study was needed to look t a range of items including hearing, lighting and staffing costs. He thought that the gym would be very expensive to run.

Councillor Patience asked someone who went to the Alnwick Forum if the building was to be demolished. Councillor Harrington advised that the gym was not planned to be demolished or refurbished.

Councillor Swinbank felt it should be discussed at the Alnwick Forum to ascertain the status of the building.

Councillor Watson explained that the on-going costs could be substantial and that the Town Council should not commit themselves to a costly asset without detailed costings.

Councillor Broom thought that the building could be used for a range of activities and thought that it could be useful to have.

Councillor Wearn advised that Mike Turner from NCC managed the Lindisfarne site and also chaired the Alnwick Forum meetings. She also felt that this could be covered as part on an Alnwick Forum Private item on the Full Council agenda.

**RESOLVED To undertake a feasibility study on Lindisfarne gym to be bought to Full Council for further discussion.**

Councillor Wearn left the meeting.

**RA 20/22 Budget Update 2020/21**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk had circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure for 2020/21 as October 31<sup>st</sup> 2020:

EXPENDITURE

EVENTS - Total payments made £16,200 against a budget of £25,950.

PROJECTS - Total payments made £5,142 against a budget of £18.100.

ASSETS & SERVICES - Total payments made £32,462.83 against a budget of £97,150.  
Main variance lines were

INCOME – Total income for 2020/21 was £525 (allotment rents) against a budget of £5,000.

Councillor Watson felt that the additional grass cuts in October could be cancelled as he felt they were not needed. He also felt that the some of the edges of the grassed areas could be left uncut. Councillor Edge agreed that this would be a good idea and that spraying should not be done as much and that both of these would encourage wildlife.

Councillor Patience asked if an invoice for the dolomite at the bike track had been done.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that an invoice had been sent to Cussins.

**RESOLVED: To receive the budget update for 2020/21.**

Councillor Symmonds left the meeting.

**RA 20/23 Allotment Fees 2021/22**

The Town Clerk advised that in the light of the effects of Covid this year, allotment fees would not be increased for 2021/22

**RESOLVED That allotment fees are not increased for 2021/22.**

**RA 20/24 Budget 2021/22**

The Town Clerk proposed, in view of the effects of Covid in 2020 that the budget for 2021/22 should not be increased from this year's budget level; this would be consistent with the budgets set by the Cemetery Committee.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the NCC budget cuts were known. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had not received any information as yet.

**RESOLVED: That the Recreation and Amenities Committee budget for 2021/22 be recommended to Full Council at the same level as 2020/21.**

Councillor Wood-Mitchell left the meeting.

**RA 20/25 Updates:**

**a) Play Areas** - The Project & Funding Officer gave an update:

**Community Orchard:** Replacements for the missing rope and anchor points for the triangular climber have been sourced and should be supplied and installed before the end of the year.

**b) Allotments** - The Project and Funding Officer gave an update:

**Ratten Row** – One more allotment has been re-let since the last report.

A letter has been received from a Ratten Row tenant thanking the Council for its work in tidying up the Ratten Row allotments over the last month.

It has so far proved impossible to find a firm in or relatively close to Alnwick to undertake the soil analysis at Ratten Row and the search is being extended into the Scottish Borders. An approach will be made to local farmers' organisations.

**c) Street Furniture** – The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave an update:

**Bins:** the dog bin from Column Field will be moved to replace the one removed from Peter's Mill lane bus stop and a Heritage bin will be installed in Column Field. 6 new bins will be ordered shortly.

**Seats:** 3 new seats have been delivered and will be installed shortly at The Oaks Roundabout, Clayport Bank and the bottom of Denwick Lane. All wooden benches will be checked and those in poor condition will be replaced or repaired and the others stained.

Councillor Watson asked if a seat could be installed at Meadow Riggs.

Councillor Swinbank asked if a replacement bin could be installed near Swansfield Park.

Councillor Edge asked if additional bins could be installed in Taylor Drive.

Councillor Patience asked if a bin could be installed near the Denwick Lane entrance to the Pastures

Councillor Edge asked if an 'everyone welcome' sign could be installed in Pottergate Gardens. He also asked if there was an update from Alnwick in Bloom. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that she had the Chairman's Annual Report she could circulate.

**d) Bike Track**

No further update.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates.**

**RA 20/25 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Lyford asked if, in light of the closure of some current facilities, alternative community facilities had been mapped by NCC.

Meeting closed at 9.03pm