



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 13th August 2020 via Zoom at 6.30m

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

In attendance P Hatley, Town Clerk & Chief Officer; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer.

C20/21 Questions from the public

The Town Clerk advised that Clive Mattison (CM) had submitted a question (in several parts) which he read out. For clarity when referring to the Lindisfarne Gym it means the old brick gym on the right as you enter the Lindisfarne site.

1. Was the Lindisfarne Gym included in any consultation process associated with the Lindisfarne site as I don't recall any direct consultation with our user group assuming the Gym was included in the consultation process then should we not have been made fully aware of all findings and proposals?
2. Please advise as to the value and split of section 106 monies spent against sporting facilities in the town (Alnwick) over the last ten years? Also advise as to the amount of section 106 monies received over the same period and the proportion of the overall monies received spent on sporting facility's elsewhere.
3. Can the council please share their thoughts as to the provision of sporting facilities in the town do they feel the provision meets the needs of the town, this question is to include the provision and retention of open green spaces.
4. Can the Town Council raise with county prior to any agreements being finalized that NCC advise the financial considerations / costs and legal terms that will be incurred by the / any prospective tenant / owner for the Gym, we ask such that men's keep fit can consider making an equal / alternative offer for the building.

Councillor Watson felt that, as there was a lot of detail in the questions, a written response would be the best way to deal with it.

Councillor Castle advised that the gym was currently being stripped for asbestos and he was not sure how usable it would be after the works are completed. He advised that there had been a drop-in session in 2019 for gym users and that NCC were trying to find an alternative location.

Councillor Castle advised that CM should request the Section 106 details under the Freedom of Information request to NCC.

Councillor Wearn felt that the Town Council should write to NCC, that the matter be discussed at the Alnwick Forum and a holding letter be written to CM.

C20/22 Apologies for absence

None.

C20/23 Declarations of Interest

None.

C20/24 Approval of the Minutes of the Last meeting (9th July 2020)

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th July 2020 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2020 were agreed as a true record.

C20/25 Matters Arising

None.

C20/26 Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported that she had not had any official civic duties in the past month. She had attended 2 virtual meetings of the Retail and Town Centre Working Group which had produced several useful actions.

She also reported that a virtual Music Festival had taken place, some of which she had hosted, and that it had gone very well.

C20/27 Updates

a) County Council issues

Councillor Castle read out a statement regarding the suspension of NCC's Chief Executive, Daljit Lally (DL).

Councillor Patience asked who people could make comments to in the absence of the suspension of the Chief Executive. Councillor Castle advised that they should write to the acting Chief Executive.

Councillor Swinbank asked who would take responsibility for COVID in DL's absence. Councillor Castle advised that Kelly Angus would be taking on this responsibility.

Councillor Grisdale asked if DL was still in post with Northumbria Healthcare Trust. Councillor said she was as there she had 2 linked contracts. Councillor Wearn confirmed that the news reports had said that DJ was still employed by the NHS

Councillor Castle also reported that the Government Policy for business premises wanting to put furniture outside their premises had now been received by NCC> He explained that the businesses needed to apply to NCC for a licence and that applications were being dealt with on a 7 day turnaround. The permission granted would last until September 2021.

Councillor Swinbank asked if individual businesses were applying. Councillor Castle said that they were but that NCC would not be able to notify Town & Parish Councils (T&Ps) about applications or approvals but that T&Ps could log into the NCC website to view these.

Councillor Castle advised that there would be a vintage motorcycle event in the Market Place on August 31st between 10am and 4pm. NCC would need an Event Notification Form which the Town Council would submit.

RESOLVED: To receive the update.

C20/28 Town Councillor matters

a) TPO request – Councillor Allcroft

Councillor Allcroft reported that she had received a request from residents in Allernburn Lea to ask the Town Council if they would submit a TPO request for the remaining trees in the Allernburn House site. She explained that many of the trees on the site had already been removed.

Councillor Swinbank advised that a request had been made in 2017 to place a Group TPO of the trees on the site.

He said he was fully supportive of the request and suggested that this request be chased up with NCC with a request that it be reactivated if currently dormant.

Councillor Watson said he was fully supportive of the request.

RESOLVED: To contact NCC's Tree Officer to ask for an update on the status of the TPO request made in 2017 and to request this be reactivated if dormant

b) Additional seating – Councillor Harrington

Councillor Harrington explained that Alnwick had an increased number of visitors but that there was insufficient outdoor seating in the town centre and requested that the Town Council purchase 5 new heritage seats. 2 would be placed under the fish market end of Northumberland Hall, 2 outside the old TIC Building and one at the bottom of the cobbles opposite Northumberland Hall.

Councillor Harrington explained that additional seating (picnic benches) were put out on market days.

Councillor Patience said she was in favour of additional seating but was a little concerned about sets on the roadside.

The Town Clerk advised that NCC Highways were happy with the proposed locations of the seats. He explained that the supplier had confirmed there was a 3 week lead time.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell asked if the new seats would be cleaned. The Town Clerk advised that they would be.

Councillor Watson said he supported Councillor Harrington's request.

The Town Clerk advised that the Council Priorities budget would need to be used to purchase the seats as there was only £2k in the Recreation & Amenities budget for seats.

RESOLVED: To order and install 5 heritage seats in the town centre.

c) COVID safe Town Centre measures – Councillor Swinbank

Councillor Swinbank explained that the Sustainable Travel Working Group had discussed possible actions to make the town centre safer for residents and visitors.

He explained that earlier in the summer NCC had implemented some social distancing measures including signage and limited pavement widening in readiness for businesses and shops re-opening. Whilst in the early days when the town was very quiet these measures seemed sufficient, but with more people staying in the UK this summer, Northumberland and Alnwick are very busy so the group feel that these measures need to be upgraded to increase space for social distancing.

These actions would show that the Town and County Councils were taking a proactive positive approach showing everyone using the town centre that they are trying hard to protect our community and local economy.

Four suggested measures to increase social distancing were agreed:

1. Temporarily mark off the Wagonway at the top of the cobbles (from Carlo's to Turnbull's) to increase pedestrian passing space - perhaps with small cones
2. Temporarily mark off the car parking spaces in front of George F White to increase pavement width - cars could still park lengthways – perhaps with small cones
3. Temporary 20mph speed limit for the town centre, to keep pedestrians safer when they are having to step onto parts of the roadway where the pavement is narrow - temporary signage
4. Install the cycle racks approved originally for the town centre in safe locations (NCC have emailed regarding additional cycle rack provision)

RESOLVED: To send the request for further measures to increase social distancing in Alnwick to Paul Jones at NCC.

Councillor Grisdale and Patience left the meeting.

C20/29 Accounts / Budgets

a) Internal Audit Report 2019/20

The Town Clerk reported that the Internal Audit Report had been received and that no issues had been identified. The auditor had reported that he had found 2 minor discrepancies at the Cemetery and advised that the asset valuation method needed standardising so that the net cost of items, prior to any discounts, was used.

RESOLVED: To note and accept the Internal Audit report.

b) Accounts and Accounting Statement

The Town Clerk had circulated the final version of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/20 and advised that Section 1 and 2 were final versions which would be submitted to the external auditor.

He also issued the Balance Sheet as at March 31st 2020.

RESOLVED: To approve the Final Accounts and Accounting Statements for 2019/20 and submit to the External Auditor.

c) Budget Carry Forward 2020-21

The Town Clerk explained that in previous years there had been some large amounts of carry forward taken into the next year's budgets. He suggested that only budgets for particular projects and key initiatives be carried forward. The Cemetery committee had reviewed their budget and were recommending a carry forward figure of £9.5k (Grounds £4,5k, New area £5k).

He took councillors through the recommendations for the other budgets:

Finance & Policy budget £36k c'fwd (Council Priorities £28k, CCTV £8k)

Recreation & Amenities budget £21,300 (WWI bench £6,450, Allotments £3k, New Planters £1,500, Stage Parts £4,000, Capital works £6,350).

Councillor Swinbank thought it was very important that a budget for communications was carried forward. The Town Clerk advised that there was sufficient budget in Council Priorities to cover any expenditure for communications.

Councillor Waton asked what would happen to the budget which was not carried forward. The Town Clerk advised this it would be kept in reserves.

Councillor Waton asked if it could be used if needed. The Town Clerk advised that it could.

RESOLVED To approve a carry forward budget figure of £66,800 (£9,500 for Cemetery; £36,000 for Finance & Policy and £21,300 for Recreation and Amenities).

C20/30 Website Tender update

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that, prior to the COVID outbreak, a tender document had been issued for the development of the Town Council's website. He advised that he had reissued the tender to all those who responded to the last request.

He asked councillors who was interested in joining the assessment panel for the website tenders. Councillors Waton, Humphries and Waton expressed an interest. Councillors also felt that with his experience Councillor Griddale be invited to be part of the panel.

The Town Clerk also recommended that a small contingency amount of say 10% be added to the original budget of £5k.

Councillor Waton explained that static websites are useless so knowing how the website would be kept up to date was an important part of the tender process.

RESOLVED: i) To approve a budget of £5k with authorisation for the Town Clerk to add an extra 10% to this figure if needed; ii) To set up an assessment panel for the tenders consisting Councillors Watson, Humphries, Waton, Grisdale and Town Clerk.

C20/31 To receive the Minutes of the Committees

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting (6th August 2020) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on 6th August 2020 were received.

C20/32 Committee Vacancies

The Town Clerk explained that there are a number of committee vacancies and that Councillor Lyford had expressed an interest in joining the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Lyford to the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee.

C20/33 Correspondence

The Town Clerk advised that correspondence had been received from Local Living advising that they had been dissolved with Companies House.

C20/34 Financial Matters

a) Payments

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
Depothire Ltd	£792.00	£132.00	Skip hire
South Road Tyres	£24.00	£4.00	New tyre
Wybone Limited	£2,282.36	£380.39	New planters
W L Straughan & Son Ltd	£528.00	£88.00	Dolomite and gravel
Northumberland Estates	£58.39	£9.73	Fencing supplies
Michael Gray Signs	£255.60	£42.60	Painting fingerposts and gold paint
Rural Services Partnership	£156.00	£26.00	Annual subscription
James McLean	£597.22	£99.54	Materials and tools
Protector Group	£468.00	£78.00	CCTV Call out charges
Syd Carr	£250.00	£0	Sanitizer box construction
Syd Carr	£73.35	£0	Mileage
NCC	£11,405.99	£5.00	July payroll
NCC	£22,795.35	£10.00	Apr and May payroll
Zurich Insurance	£6,301.22	£0.00	Annual Insurance Premium
Chubb	£235.75	£39.29	Annual Fire Equipment checks
TOTAL	£23,427.88	£914.55	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:

British Gas (June)	£25.63	£0.00	Maintenance contract Cemetery Lodge
BT (June)	£114.29	£19.05	Phone / broadband charges Greenwell Lane / Cemetery
Biffa (June)	£149.64	£24.94	Trade Waste Collection
Corona Energy (June)	£125.96	£6.00	Electricity
Wave	£1115.10	£0.00	Water (allotments. Cem and Rob Foun)
Bank Charges	£16.70	£0.00	Bank charges (May/June)
TOTAL	£1547.32	£49.99	

RESOLVED: To note the payments made under powers of urgency of £23,427.88 and note the direct debit payments of £1547.32.

b) Accounting Systems

The Town Clerk advised that an accounting software system, specifically written for local authorities, was being trialled on a 3 month basis and if suitable it should make the accounting processes more effective.

c) Internet Banking

The Town Clerk advised that he was still awaiting authority from the bank to access the bank accounts on-line

C20/35

Any Other Urgent Business

- i) Councillor Broom asked why the urinals in the Shambles male toilets had been barred off. Councillor Castle advise that this had been done in all toilets and had ben done by NCC following a risk assessment. He asked Councillor Broom to send him an email which he would forward onto Paul Soderquest.

Councillor Broom felt that the health & safety of urinals was better than sit down toilets. Councillor Wearn asked if Councillor Castle would check with NCC.

Councillor Waton said that not every policy is a sensible one.

- ii) Councillor Allcroft explained that there were government broadband grants available. The Project & Funding Officer advised that the grants would be used in 3 to 4 areas nationally including Northumberland and were for rural houses and businesses with a broadband speed of less than 100mb per second. They are asking for registrations of interest, by September 30th, for government funding towards gigabyte capable broadband.

Councillor thought the details should go to the paper and be put in the Town Council's website. Councillor Watson advised that this had already been done.

Councillor Wearn advised that the more people who register the more likely it was to find an interested provider.

The Town Clerk advised that social media could be used to publicise the scheme and that the COVID-19 page could be used initially.

- iii) Councillor Castle reported that as the TIC was not open at present he and Councillor Harrington had talked about a pop-up service in the Market Place which he would update the Town Council on at a later date.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell explained that the Project & Funding Officer had contacted her about the Town Guides being involved but she felt that, as this was not an essential service and the safety of volunteers was paramount, they would

be unable to help. She also advised that a decision was taken in March not to continue with the Town Guide programme or to produce a Good Food Guide for 2020. She offered to email her volunteers to get their thoughts.

Councillor Wearn felt that there was more discussion needed and asked Councillors Castle and Harrington to give an update to Full Council at a future meeting.

- iv) Councillor Wearn reported that the developers have put in a tarmacked road in Peter's Mill Lane and are putting in 7 car parking spaces for the show homes which encroaches into the 15-metre buffer zone.

Councillor Swinbank advised that this could be discussed in more detail at the next Planning Committee.

Councillor Castle advised that the only way to involve NCC was through the Enforcement Officer.

Councillor Swinbank said that if a site visit takes place he was happy to attend.

The public meeting closed at 8.29pm.