



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 10th December 2020 via Zoom at 6.30m

- Present** Cllrs L Wearn, S Allcroft, L Aynsley, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, B Grisdale, J Humphries, M Harrington, J Lyford, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds, 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.
- C20/87 Questions from the public**
None.
- C20/88 Apologies for absence**
None
- C20/89 Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in all County Council matters.
- C20/90 Approval of the Minutes of the Last meeting (12th November 2020)**
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 12th November 2020 were tabled for approval.
RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2020 were agreed as a true record.
- C20/91 Matters Arising**
None.
- C20/92 Mayor's Report**
The Mayor reported that she had attended the Alnwick Garden Light Trail which she ad enjoyed. She thanked the Alnwick Garden Director, Mark Brassell, for extending the light show into the town centre.
She had also been interviewed by the Gazette about the shops re-opening in Alnwick.
- C20/93 Updates**
a) County Council issues
Councillor Castle reported that he had sent out regular updates to all Town Councillors from the Leader and Chief Executive of NCC. He explained that the current tier which Northumberland was in would be reviewed on December 16th.
Councillor Aynsley felt it was in very poor taste that NCC staff had been given an extra 3 days holiday and asked who had made this decision. Councillor Castle advised that the decision would have been made by the Chief Executive and that he was not aware of any members being involved. He advised that Councillor Aynsley should contact the Chief Executive directly if she wished to register her comments.
Councillor Grisdale asked if Councillor Castle had been one of the County Councillors who had signed the open letter expressing serious concerns about the Government's proposed planning reforms. Councillor Castle advise that, as a matter of principle, and, although he had been sympathetic to the concerns raised but had not signed the letter.
b) Advisory Groups
i. Sustainable Travel
Councillor Swinbank reported that the group were working on a proposal for the Alnwick Greenway landowners.

ii. Retail and Town Centre

Councillor Harrington reported that additional Christmas Lights had been installed around the town centre. He also advised that the group had discussed Enterprise Hubs. They also felt that there needed to be a centralised diary for the Town Centre to put on the website. There were also plans to have better links with the Aln Valley Railway and the town during the summer of 2021.

iii. Environmental

Councillor Watson advised there was nothing to report apart from on-going work regarding Thomas Percy wood.

iv. Housing, Economy and Employment

Councillor Patience reported that the research for the housing need feasibility study (young people) had gone as far as it could without FOI requests. The next meeting would be on January 20th when the report would be discussed further.

Councillor Wearn reported that she had received a request for a full Alnwick Partnership meeting which she had asked the Town Clerk to organise. The Town Clerk advised that he would set up the meeting in the new year.

Councillor Lyford advised that she had spoken to the Project & Funding Officer about getting more businesses involved in the advisory group.

Councillor Swinbank felt that the Alnwick Partnership needed to meet on a regular basis.

Councillor Patience felt there should be more community involvement in the advisory groups.

Councillor Wearn thanked everyone involved in the advisory groups for their input.

Councillor Patience asked that councillors were emailed when people were appointed to advisory groups.

RESOLVED: To note the updates.

C20/94

CCTV (Inspector Swan joined the meeting)

The Town Clerk explained that the police had asked the Town Council to purchase additional cameras in a number of locations across the town.

Inspector Swan began by saying that the current CCTV system had been invaluable. It had helped with several arrests and had also been useful in helping with missing people.

He felt it was difficult to quantify the exact number of crimes which hadn't taken place in the town as a result of the CCTV cameras. The request for additional cameras was based on the new town demographic including the new retail park at the south of town.

Inspector Swan was disconnected from the meeting and was unable to re-join.

Councillor questions:

Councillor Allcroft asked how many cameras had been requested and whether the police had any funding to help with purchasing them. The Town Clerk advised that 6 additional cameras had been requested. The Project & Funding Officer advised that the police had no funding to help with the cost of the new cameras which was about £1,000 a camera.

Councillor Patience explained that she had safe guarding issues with cameras in play areas. She also wondered why cameras had been requested in Lagny Street/ Dispensary Street.

Councillor Aynsley asked why the retail park couldn't provide their own CCTV cameras.

Councillor Castle thought that the request from the police should be supported.

Councillor Patience said the Town Council needed to think about the issue and not just agree with the police/

Councillor Castle said that CCTV had been proved to be effective, and he supported the request for additional cameras, some of the locations might not be right.

Councillor Wearn said it had not totally proven that CCTV works.

Councillor Swinbank felt the budget was less of an issue than the proposed camera locations and asked if any residents had been consulted about the recommended camera at Barrasdale/Community Centre. He felt it was important to define the scope of the Town Council's CCTV system and if six additional cameras were installed each year the whole town would end up with cameras.

Councillor Humphries felt that CCTV was a preventative measure then perhaps more signage would help.

Councillor Harrington felt that more policing was needed in the town.

The Project & Funding Officer explained that there was CCTV signage. He felt that CCTV could be added to planning approval for any retail parks. He felt that the main issue area remained the bus station as the police have problems getting access to the footage.

The Town Clerk advised that Inspector Swan be asked to the Full Council meeting in January.

Councillor Broom explained that when the Town Council originally installed its CCTV system they had taken advice from the police. He felt that the issue at the retail park was anti-social behaviour with cars speeding around the retail park.

Councillor Symmonds felt that any decision should be deferred until January.

Councillor Edge wondered if CCTV was a deterrent could dummy cameras could be used.

RESOLVED: To add CCTV to January Full Council agenda and ask the police to make a formal request for money for additional CCTV cameras.

C20/95 On-Line Banking – Changes to Standing Orders

The Town Clerk advised that to enable the Town Council to make on-line payments some changes were needed to the Constitution and that at the Finance & Policy meeting on December 3rd these had been reviewed and agreed and were now being recommended to Full Council for approval.

Councillor Humphries asked if wages could be paid by Standing Order. The Town Clerk advised that they couldn't as the amount were different each month.

Councillor Broom asked if the wages could be added to the list of payments authorised to me made by direct debit. The Town Clerk advised that he would like to recommend that the Constitution was changed to say that all additional direct debits would be approved by Full Council.

RESOLVED: To approve the changes to the relevant Standing Order sections of the Constitution to enable on-line payments to be made.

C20/96 Vaccination Programme – Financial Support

The Town Clerk explained that he had been contacted by the Alnwick Medical Group (AMG) about the funding for the works needed at Alnwick Cricket Club to enable the premises to be used for COVID vaccinations.

Councillor Wearn explained that the original request had come from the PCN.

The Town Clerk advised that AMG were asking for £1,500.

Councillor Allcroft said the Town Council should support the request.

Councillor Swinbank said that he supported anything that would enable to vaccinations to be done locally.

Councillor Castle said there were important targets to meet and he supported the request.

Councillor Symmonds advised that the government said that they would provide money.

RESOLVED: To approve the spend of £1,5000 for the works to enable COVID vaccinations to take place at Alnwick Cricket Club.

C20/97

Broadband

The Town Clerk advised that there had been limited response to the initial questionnaires which had been distributed with about 70 replies. One idea was a community scheme in specific areas of town. He explained that one of the issues with the current Open Reach scheme was that residents have to sign a one-year contract which meant they incurred penalties with their existing broadband provider. Another issue was that the current voucher runs out on March 31st 2021 so time was fairly short.

Councillor Allcroft asked how much officer time it would take to look at the alternative potential suppliers. The Town Clerk advised that this would be fairly quick but that quotes could be slow coming in. He advised that the Town Council could let residents know about any local broadband schemes available to them.

Councillor Swinbank said he as not sure how self-focused residents would be.

Councillor Harrington felt that as the initial resident contact had been very low the Town Council must assume that the rest are happy with their broadband supplier. He did not think there was enough interest to allocate more staff time but that schemes could be promoted to residents to take forward themselves.

Councillor Patience suggested that the matter should be taken on by an Advisory Group or the Communication Working Group.

Councillor Harrington said that, due to the poor feedback, he couldn't support the matter.

The Town Clerk said he understood Councillor Allcroft's issue but that the matter should be taken forward by a residents group which the Town Council could support.

Councillor Allcroft felt that if broadband was improved it would attract more businesses to the town.

The Town Clerk suggested that the topic went to the Housing, Employment & Economy Advisory Group.

Councillor Watson asked Councillor Aynsley for her view as the Chair of the Chamber of Trade. Councillor Aynsley advised that most businesses did not have broadband issues.

RESOLVED: i) To discuss at the next Housing, Employment and Economy Advisory Group, ii) To develop an information sheet for resident groups to select potential broadband schemes.

C20/98

External Audit

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had received the external audit for 2019/20 had now been completed and the report from PKF Littlejohn had not identified any issues.

RESOLVED: To note the completed External Audit.

C20/99 To receive the Minutes of the Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport (19th November 2020) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport held on 19th November 2020 were received.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (26th November 2020) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on 26th November 2020 were received.

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (3rd December 2020) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2020 were received.

C20/100 a) Payments

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAILS
Strive Digital	£5,310.00	£864.00	Payment for new website
Glasdon	£1,529.64	£254.94	New seats (3)
Northumberland County Council	£2,700.00	£0.00	Rent for Greenwell Lane
James N McLean	£295.85	£49.31	Materials and tools
Team Valley Web Design	£600.00	£100.00	Annual hosting and support
Alnwick Young People's Association	£385.00	£0.00	Match funding for Housing Needs Feasibility Study
Depot Hire	£1,260.00	£210.00	Skip hire (3)
R L Smith & Sons Ltd	£378.00	£63.00	Skip hire
Royal Mail	£119.40	£19.90	Response services licence
J Pibworth	£954.06	£90.34	Floral tribute for VJ Day, Stamps, new flags, hand sanitiser, subscription Rural Partnership
Thomas Sheriff & Co Ltd	£137.83	£22.97	Tractor repairs ad parts
PKF Littlejohn LLP	£1,560	£260.00	External audit fee
W L Straughan & Son Ltd	£576.00	£96.00	Dolomite for bike track
Northumberland County Council	£13,560.82	£5.00	Salary payment for Oct 2020
Northumberland County Council	£11,591.28	£5.00	Salary payment for Nov 2020
Lynda Wearn	£1,000	£0	Mayor's Allowance
Royal British Legion	£250	£0	Donation for Remembrance Day
	£42,207.88	£2,040.46	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure

The Town Clerk reported that the following Covid support payments had been made:
 Alnwick Food Bank £500
 Community @NE66 £500
 Alnmouth Parish Council £500
 Lesbury Parish Council £500

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
Barclays Bank	£21.75	£0.00	Bank charges for Aug-Sept
BT	£125.90	£20.98	Phone (Cem / Greenwell Lane (Sept))
British Gas	28.08	£0.00	Gas contract Cemetery Lodge
Biffa Waste	119.71	19.95	Trade waste Aug
Corona Energy	43.03	2.05	Electricity charges Sept
Barclays Bank	£22.05	£0.00	Bank charges for Sept-Oct
BT	£129.98	£21.66	Phone (Cemetery / Greenwell Lane (Oct))
British Gas	28.08	£0.00	Gas contract Cemetery Lodge
Biffa Waste	119.71	19.95	Trade waste Sept
Corona Energy	51.01	2.05	Electricity charges Oct
	£689.30	£86.64	

RESOLVED: i) To approve the payments £42,207.88 and note the direct debit payments of £689.30, ii) To approve two additional monthly Direct Debits (Northumberland County Council and Diamond Business Group); iii) To note the Covid support payments of £2000.

C20/101 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Castle reported that NCC Cabinet had officially approved the £950k for the development of the new car park in Alnwick.

Councillor Watson explained that 2022 was the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and although it was some time away asked if it could be added to January's agenda.

Councillor Grisdale asked who owned the land at Pottergate Gardens. Councillor Castle advised that it was NCC owned.

Councillor Broom asked if an agenda item could be added to discuss the use of the council van as he had received several notifications from residents about it being in a number of places around town.

Councillor Patience advised that it could be that work was being undertaken at one of the Town Council's assets. Councillor Broom advised that it have been in locations where there were no Town Council assets.

Councillor Wearn asked Councillor Broom to discuss the matter with the Town Clerk. Councillor Lyford asked if there had been sufficient resident requests for an election for the council vacancy. The Town Clerk advised that the deadline was the end of that week and he would chase NCC.

The public meeting closed at 7.58pm.