

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 8th October 2020 via Zoom at 6.30m**

Present Cllrs L Wearn, S Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, B Grisdale, J Humphries, M Harrington, 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.

C20/52 Questions from the public

None.

C20/53 Apologies for absence

Councillor Lyford will be late.

C20/54 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Broom and Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 18b) Payments. Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in all County Council matters.

C20/55 Sgt Sharon Wilmore-Greaves (SWG) – Police Update

Covid - as part of their response to Covid Northumbria Police has set up a Covid task force. Officers come together and have been tasked with dealing with Covid incidents. They also patrol the town centre and visit shops and other premises.

Rural Crime - the police had set up Operation Hawkeye to deal with rural crime including livestock and vehicle theft.

Engagement Van - an engagement van once a month in Alnwick based next to the Market Place. The next visit would be on October 15th between 3 and 5pm when the Police & Crime Commissioner would be attending.

Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – the current one includes no drinking in Alnwick and had been looked at about 3 years ago. It was expanded to include outlying villages. A copy had been sent to the Town Council and she advised that it would be helpful if the Town Council could write to support it.

Councillor questions/comments:

Councillor Harrington asked for the police's view on drinking outside during Covid. SWG advised that Pavement Licences had been issued and as long as people sat in the licenced areas that was ok but could not walk about as that would be a breach.

Councillor Broom asked about the upturn in Anti-Social Behaviour especially speeding around town. SWG advised that the police had run an operation in August / September and had visited people and warned them about the possible issue. People had also been stopped and warned in the town centre and insurance documents checked for change of vehicle. She added that the issue was that they needed to be caught in the act of aggressive breaking and loud noise.

Councillor Swinbank advised SWG that the Town Council had identified one of their Local Transport Priorities as a 20mph speed limit in town and asked SWG for her views. SWG advised that although she did think it would help to reduce the anti-social behaviour but, as there was no legislation, it could not be enforced. Councillor Swinbank explained that it had been looked at from a pedestrian safety angle.

Councillor Castle reported that the 20mph zone in the town centre was being signed off by Northumberland County Council as part of the Covid actions.

C20/56 Approval of the Minutes of the Last meeting (10th September 2020)
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10th September 2020 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2020 were agreed as a true record.

C20/57 Matters Arising
None.

C20/58 Mayor's Report
The Mayor reported that she had attended the opening of the Beech Tree House and reported that the building was very impressive with each of the 3 floors in Beech Tree House is dedicated to a different type of care according to residents' needs. General, Bariatric and Dementia.

C20/59 Updates

a) County Council issues

Councillor Castle reported that NCC were awaiting further announcements and guidance regarding Covid. There had been 14 cases in the last week in Alnwick and Alnwick Hospital had been closed to new admissions. He advised councillors to refer to NCC's website for further information.

Councillor Castle reported that Local Area Councils were operating again and that Planning meetings would only deal with 3 planning applications at each meeting.

Councillor Swinbank asked how members of the public ask questions. Councillor Castle advised that the process was currently being developed but he thought that people would be asked to submit their questions before the meeting.

b) Alnwick Forum

The Town Clerk reported that there was a conflict with NCC about the level of information accessible to the public but that the list of accessible items was currently being agreed.

MSP - have been granted money for a feasibility study.

The Cobbles – 3 designs had been shared by NCC. One had been excluded and the other two were being worked as detailed designs.

Bus Station – current design did not currently meet the criteria for funding but that NCC were looking for other possible funds but this was uncertain due to Covid.

Councillor Waton asked why regeneration wasn't put in the specification for the feasibility study. He felt that NCC needed to be more forward thinking beyond Covid when a new bus station will be needed. Councillor Castle said that he thought the Town Council had been involved in developing the Terms of Reference for the feasibility study. He added that it was difficult as NCC were being asked to fund the new bus station on private land.

Councillor Wearn agreed that it was short sighted of NCC as it could be key in the future.

Councillor Symmonds felt that there should be more information available from the Forum as councillors were not member so the public so he would like to see the system improved. He added that feedback from the forum could be done as an In Private item.

Councillor Lyford joined the meeting.

Lindisfarne Gym - The Town Clerk advised that Clive Mattison had requested a meeting with Councillor Castle and himself to discuss the matter

The Town Clerk advised that there could be Forum items could be categorised as i) Public items, ii) To be shared with Town Councillors and iii) Private items.

Councillor Watson said he was disappointed that NCC had decided not to take the bus station development forward. He added that Morpeth and Hexham both had new modern bus stations and felt it was never going to be the right time to do the project.

Councillor Castle advised that Hexham bus station had been NCC funded, Morpeth bus station had been funded by private organisations.

Councillor Patience said she was disappointed and asked if it could be looked at again.

Councillor Castle advised that it didn't mean that it would never be developed but that it couldn't be done at this moment as there was no regeneration in the proposal.

RESOLVED: To receive the updates.

Councillor Waton left the meeting.

C20/60 Town Councillor matters:

a. Digital Town Trails – Councillor Harrington

Councillor Harrington reported that the Town Centre Advisory Group had discussed Digital Town Trails which Corbridge already have. Civic Society, who are unable to do their usual town tours, are very interested in supporting. The digital trail would identify 10-15 points of interest around the town and would connect to maps showing where you are in the town. The cost would be between £2.5k and £3k.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell felt it could have been submitted as a grant application.

Councillor Harrington advised that he was asking the Town Council if it was an idea worth progressing.

The Town Clerk said it was important that Advisory Group potential actions come to Full Council as the funding would come from Council Priorities budget.

Councillor Swinbank said that the Town Council had talked about the use of digital technology and asked if the request should go to Recreation & Amenities.

Councillor Watson thought it was good idea and that councillors could be sent a link to digital trails of other towns then go to Recreation & Amenities committee to approve the spend.

Councillor Symmonds said he would support Councillor Harrington's proposal.

Councillor Patience felt that any recommendations from Advisory Groups should be allowed to come to Full Council for approval.

The Town Clerk advised that the issue was that the Alnwick Partnership had not met due to Covid. He recommended that the Alnwick Partnership's Terms of Reference be changed to allow Advisory Groups to bring funding requests to Full Council as actions from the Advisory Groups need to be able to be progressed.

RESOLVED: To note the update, review the example digital town trail and review at November's Full Council meeting.

C20/61 Mechanics Institute Final Accounts 2019/20

The Town Clerk presented the final accounts for the Mechanics Institute. He advised that at the year-end (January 14th 2020) income was £16,200 and expenditure £15,800. He reported that the current account had £31,900 and the savings account £31,300.

He advised that a £10k Covid grant had been received and that there was a new school group using the building during the day every day.

RESOLVED: To approve the Mechanics Institute final accounts for 2019/20 and submit to the Charities Commission.

C20/62 Covid19 Support

Councillor Wearn reported that during the first lockdown the Town Council had supported vulnerable residents and that this maybe needed again. The Town Council continue to support 12 of the most vulnerable residents with help with prescriptions. She felt that the Town Council should be ready to support residents if this was needed.

Councillor Broom reported that he had spoken to a number of elderly residents who were lonely and would like telephone calls.

The Town Clerk advised that there the type of support could be different next time. NCC have a network set up so the Town Council would be able to access this.

Councillor Patience asked if any Covid paperwork relating to residents should be destroyed. Councillor Harrington advised that this should be destroyed as the Town Council can hold data under its data protection policy.

RESOLVED: i) To give delegated authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Mayor, to agree arrangements for future Covid support; ii) To destroy any Covid related information held by area co-ordinators.

C20/63 Website Tender update

The Town Clerk reported that a scope of works had been developed with Strive Digital who would develop a skeleton website for the Town Council to populate.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell asked what the cost of the new website would be. The Town Clerk confirmed that the cost was £5,400.

RESOLVED: To approve the appointment of Strive Digital as the website supplier.

C20/64 Town Centre Repairs

The Town Clerk reported that the Freeman wished to have the archway under the Town Hall repainted and asked if the Town Council would pay half the cost.

Councillor Watson asked if it could be painted a darker colour to discourage vandalism.

RESOLVED: To pay half the cost of repainting the archway under the Town Hall.

C20/65 Remembrance Sunday

The Town Clerk reported that Covid restrictions will make a traditional Remembrance Sunday impossible this year. It is recommended that a small ceremony be held with a limited number of attendees focusing on wreath laying. Residents will be asked not to attend but to show their respects by taking part in the 2-minute silence at 11am outside their houses. It is planned to try to live stream the ceremony.

Councillor Watson asked if the military flag bearers could be invited.

Councillor Symmonds said he had been contacted by Rotary wanting to pay homage.

Councillor Swinbank felt it was important that residents knew what was happening.

RESOLVED: To approve the approach to Remembrance Sunday.

C20/66 LTP Priorities

The Town Clerk explained that the process had been started with the Sustainable Travel Advisory Group producing a list of priorities. This list had gone to the Planning Committee before coming to Full Council for final selection and approval. He reported that NCC had confirmed that the following Town Council priorities from 2019 would be undertaken:

- The crossing at the Co-Op on Victoria Terrace
- The footpath at St James's roundabout

Councillor Swinbank explained that NCC's criteria focusing on pedestrians, then cyclist and then drivers had been used to develop the LTPs and outlined the 4 shortlisted.

Councillor Castle felt that the money for the footpath works on Alnmouth Road could be found elsewhere and that the other 3 were more important. Councillor Wearn asked where the money for these would come from. Councillor Castle

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's 3 LTPs and submit to NCC.

C20/67 To receive the Minutes of the Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport (17th September 2020) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport held on 17th September 2020 were received.

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (24th September 2020) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 24th September 2020 were received.

C20/68 Correspondence

The Town Clerk advised that no correspondence had been received since the last meeting.

Councillor Castle left the meeting.

C20/69

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAIL
Depothire Ltd	£420.00	£70.00	Skip hire
Fife Plant Hire	£145.80	£24.30	Cement and gravel
CBS World	£229.63	£0.00	Printing charges
Northumberland Estates	£6.48	£1.08	Fencing materials
Davidson & Son	£32.64	£5.44	LED light for Cemetery workshop
NCC	£11,605.36	£5.00	Payroll for September
Strive Digital	£648.00	£108.00	20% payment for new website
Northumberland County Council	£5,000.00	£0.00	Contribution to the Alnwick Bus Station Contract
Diamond Group	£10.18	£1.70	Copying / printing charges (Aug - Sept)
Loyal Company of Town Criers	£35.00	£0.00	Annual subscription (Roger Daniel)
Ian Hopper	£40.03	£6.67	Fuel
Syd Carr	£98.57	£16.43	Fuel/Materials
P Hately	£150.00	£24.99	Fuel, keys, stationery
J Pibworth	£1,075.99	£135.16	Hand sanitiser, road tax, Zoom licences x 3

SLCC	£281.00	£46.83	SLCC Membership
	£19,778.68	£433.96	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure

The following invoices were paid by direct debit & were reported for information:			
Corona Energy	£93.63	£4.46	Electricity (Cem Chapel, Cem Workshop, Rob Fount, THC)
Biffa	£119.71	£19.95	Trade Waste for Aug
British Gas	£25.63	£0.00	Gas contract
BT	£119.53	£19.92	Telephone services (Cemetery / Greenwell Lane for AUG)
Total	£358.50	£44.33	

RESOLVED: To approve the payments £19,778.68, the grant payment of £6,000 to Alnwick Christmas Lights and note the direct debit payments of £358.50.

a) Investments

The Town Clerk advised that there were the Lloyds account had £102k and the Santander £53k. He had found two options – one which gave 0.1% on a 1-year investment and the 2nd which gave a 0.2% interest on a 2-year investment.

Councillor Harrington said he was concerned that all the Town Council's money sat on one bank account.

Councillor Watson asked if the Town Clerk could do some research to see what other local authorities do regarding investments.

RESOLVED: To research other investment options and report to Full Council in November.

C20/70 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Allcroft reported that the response to the Broadband mailshot had been very low. She advised that the Chamber of Trade and Anne Marie Trevelyan had both been emailed regarding this issue.

Councillor Patience asked if this had been to Full Council for approval. The Town Clerk advised that it had been to Full Council under AOUB and that actions had been undertaken to publicise the issue with the Gazette and on the Town Council's website.

Councillor Patience said she was not happy to spend anymore officer time on the matter. The Town Clerk said he would spend a bit of time reviewing the situation.

The public meeting closed at 8.41pm.