



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 8th April 2021 via Zoom at 6.30m

- Present** Cllrs L Wearn, P Broom, G Castle, P Edge, B Grisdale, J Humphries, M Harrington, J Lyford, J Parker, 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; Beth Gascoigne
- C20/158 Questions from the public**
None.
- C20/159 Apologies for absence**
Councillors Allcroft and Aynsley.
- C20/160 Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in all County Council matters.
- C20/161 Presentation by Doctor Syers, Alnwick Medical Group**
Dr Sayers was unable to join the meeting but will attend a future meeting.
The Mayor asked that the Town Council formally thanked Alnwick Medical Group for their work during the Covid pandemic.
- C20/162 Approval of the Minutes of the Last meeting (11th March 2021)**
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11th March 2021 were tabled for approval. Councillor Swinbank asked for a correction to minute F20/142 regarding the 30mph speed limit at Denwick Bridge which should read 40mph.
- RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2021, with the agreed amendments, were agreed as a true record.**
- C20/163 Matters Arising**
None.
- C20/164 Mayor's Report**
The Mayor reported that there had been no civic activities since the last meeting but that she had visited the Community Allotment at St Georges.
She reported that the cherry trees were now being planted and that the Embassy had asked for any images to be shared with the Sakura Project.
- C20/165 Updates**
- a) County Council**
Councillor Castle reported that the B6341 (Moorhouse to Alnwick) would be closed for 4 weeks from May 24th to June 21st for major resurfacing work.
Councillor Symmonds asked when NCC were planning to fix more potholes as some of the previous repairs needed redoing.
Councillor Castle advised that some had already been done and recommended that councillors reported repairs that were needed through NCC's website.
- b) Advisory Groups**
- i. Sustainable Travel
Councillor Swinbank reported that the Alnwick Greenway was still progressing. Discussions were taking place about Bondgate Tower and traffic flow around the town. The group had discussed the impact of staycations in Alnwick and that this would go to

the Alnwick Forum. He reported that designs for the cobbles had been received and that cycle racks would be installed shortly in various locations around the town.

ii. Housing, Economy and Employment

Councillor Lyford reported that the first meeting of the Advisory Group had taken place. She advised that a refreshed Housing Needs Assessment was not expected but Alnwick Town Council would be asked to comment on NCC's policy. She added that a LinkedIn group was being set up and that she had a meeting with Abi Conway from CAB.

iii. Climate Change & Natural Environment

Councillor Patience reported that the last meeting of the Advisory Group had focused on the Climate Change Action Plan looking at possible additions. There had also been an update on the tree planting projects which had reported issue with the old cricket ground. She advised that would be a event in the Northumberland Hall on October 23rd.

iv. Retail and Town Centre

Councillor Harrington reported that the group had focused on Christmas Light Trail and were working with Alnwick Garden on this. The group were also looking at Employment Hub in the town and had several people already interested in accommodation. He reported that £500 grants were available through the Chamber of Trade for local businesses. He added that the Town Trail app was complete and he would send a link to all councillors.

v. Heritage

Councillor Grisdale reported that the Heritage Advisory Group had met on March 30th and that the focus had included the Heritage Open Days in September. The Freemen and Northumberland Estates were unable to attend but hope to attend in future.

RESOLVED: To note the updates.

C20/166 Meeting Schedule 2021/22

The Town Clerk explained that from May 7th Town and Parish Councils were no longer able to hold meetings on-line so the AGM will need to be a physical meeting.

He advised that his recommendations were:

- i. That the Annual General Meeting takes place on the 20th May at the St James' Centre, Pottergate.
- ii. Nominations for committees and interest in Chair/Vice Chairs to be collated prior to the meeting. Appointments can be made in the absence of nominees as long as they are proposed and seconded at the meeting.
- iii. The only meeting in May would be Full Council to fulfil the legal obligation.
- iv. The next meeting of Full Council following the AGM will be on June 11th.
- v. The Full Council meeting on the June 11th will review the meeting schedule for remainder of 2021/22.
- vi. Advisory Group meetings can continue to be held on-line.

Councillor Symmonds asked why the Town Council needed to meet. The Town Clerk advised that this was a national decision by government.

Councillor Watson advised that he would prefer not to meet until later in the year.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that officers had to organise the AGM meeting and that councillors must decide whether to attend. She advised that she had spoken to St James's Church Centre who had undertaken a risk assessment and have a Covid addendum to their conditions of hire. She explained that there was no worship at St James's Centre and only one group are using the centre and that this was likely to be the case at least until September. St James's require that masks are required to be worn at

all times, there is a QR Code at the centre and a list of attendees we will need to be kept by Alnwick Twon Council.

Councillor Castle felt that the recommendations made by the Town Clerk were well thought through and supported them.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell asked what would happen if the Full Council meeting was not quorate and if there could be a mix of councillors, some of whom attend in person and some who attend on-line. Councillor Wearn advised that the decision was a national one and not a Northumberland one but that the Town Clerk would make enquiries including being quorate.

The Town Clerk felt that the national decision being forced on Town and Parish Councils was a bit early and should have waited until the end of lockdown.

Councillor Broom thought that everyone could do a flow test before the meeting.

Councillor Harrington suggested that the meeting could be held outdoors.

Councillor Swinbank felt that it would put pressure on councillors, from a democratic perspective, to attend. He advised that if the meeting had to take place he felt that councillors should put themselves forward for Chairs, Vice Chairs and committee places.

The Town Clerk asked councillors to let him know which Chairs, Vice Chairs and committee places they wish to be considered for.

Councillor Lyford asked if the public would be allowed to attend the AGM. The Town Clerk advised that Morpeth were limiting the number of public to 6 people on a first come first served basis. Officers would make the decision about the number

Councillor Parker felt that the meeting should be organised and all councillors invited to attend which councillors could decide for themselves.

Councillor Watson advised that the Constitution requires 6 councillors to be in attendance to be quorate and that if this was not the case business would be discussed and approved at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: i) That the Annual General Meeting be the only meeting in May; ii) Nominations for committees and interest in Chair/Vice Chairs are submitted to the Town Clerk before the meeting; iii) The next meeting of Full Council following the AGM will be on June 11th which will review the meeting schedule for reminder of 2021/22.

C20/167 Risk Management Plan

The Town Clerk advised that the Risk Management Plan had been reviewed by the Finance & Policy Committee who were recommending it for approval by Full Council.

RESOLVED: To approve the Risk Management Plan.

C20/168 Asset Register Update

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the Asset register had been reviewed by the Finance & Policy Committee who were recommending it for approval by Full Council.

Councillor Watson asked if the asset register was depreciated. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that all new assets over £250 were added but that it was an insurance list and was a like for like replacement list and used for the end of year accounts. She advised that the auditors were satisfied with the way the assets are treated.

RESOLVED: To approve the updated Asset Register.

C20/169 Mechanics Institute Draft Accounts

The Town Clerk explained that the finances were in a healthy position with a £8,500 profit in 2020/21. He explained that some of the electricity had been paid from the Town Council's bank account and that this would be repaid. Some improvements had been delayed due to the Covid but that these would be undertaken this year.

Councillor Swinbank asked what improvements were made in the year. The Town Clerk advised that a new floor had installed in the upstairs back studio which had made a significant difference.

Councillor Broom asked if Broadband could be installed as this might increase the usage. The Town Clerk advised that Broadband had been installed during the year.

RESOLVED: To approve the draft account 2020/21 for the Mechanics Institute.

C20/170 To receive the Minutes of the Committees

Minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee (18th March 2021) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee held on 18th March 2021 were received.

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee (25th March 2021) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on 25th March 2021 were received.

C20/171 a) Payments

PAYEE	TOTAL	VAT	DETAILS
Diamond Group	£6.00	£1.00	Copying charges (Dec 2020)
Davidson & Son	£111.48	£18.58	Materials
James N Mclean Ltd	£24.84	£4.14	Materials / Clothing
Wybone	£646.76	£107.79	Planters
The Protector Group	£2,112.00	£352.00	Annual maintenance charge
The Northumberland Estates (Earl Percy Northern Estate)	£75.00	£0.00	Annual rent for Ratten Row
Fife Plant Hire	£171.60	£28.60	Sand/paving slabs
Town & Country Tree Surgeons	£4,560.00	£760.00	Lime pollarding
J Pibworth (deduct 1p for overpayment in March)	£225.96	£28.62	Diary, hand sanitiser dispensers, tree ties, rootgro
TrailTale Limited	£1,200.00	£200.00	Tourism route app final payment
S J Carr	£100.00	£0.00	Weekend repairs to dangerous equipment at Swansfield Park Play Area
Alnwick & District Round Table	£300.00	£0.00	Grant towards Duck Event
Broxap	£919.20	£153.20	Benches for cemetery
J Pibworth	£544.95	£0.00	Mileage Jan 2020-Mar 2021
Jim Coulson Installations	£420.00	£0.00	Installation for greenhouse
Alnwick Town Juniors	£15,000.00	£0.00	Grant payment

Loving Alnwick	£1,500.00	£0.00	Grant payment
Aln Valley Railway Trust	£1,000.00	£0.00	Grant payment
Alnwick Area FOE	£357.20	£0.00	Grant payment
Alnwick Civic Society Treasurer's Account	£1,000.00	£0.00	Grant payment
Alncom Computerware Ltd	£1,067.28	£72.00	Annual Office 365 licence and support
Petty Cash	£140.00	£0.00	Petty Cash for Cemetery
Amberol Limited	£1,121.57	£186.93	Hanging baskets
Marmax	£627.60	£104.60	Recycled benches for Barndale School
Total	£33,231.44	£2,017.46	

* Indicates LGA 1972 s137 Expenditure

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

Barclays Bank charges (Jan-Feb)	£23.35	£0.00	Bank charges
Wave	£936.36	£0.00	Water charges (allotments)
Wave	£865.05	£0.00	Water charges (cem main tap)
Wave	£22.67	£0.00	Water charges (cem new tap)
Wave	£31.67	£0.00	Water charges (rob fountain)
British Gas	£28.08	£0.00	British gas contract
Biffa	119.71	19.95	Trade waste Jan
BT	£149.94	£24.99	Phone (Cemetery / Greenwell Lane (Feb))
Corona Energy	193.72	9.23	Electricity charges Feb 2021
Corona Energy	57.89	2.76	Electricity charges Feb 2021
NCC	£11,591.28	£30.00	Payroll Mar 2021
Total	£14,019.72	£86.93	

RESOLVED: To approve the payments £33,231.44 and note the direct debit payments of £14,019.72.

Councillor Watson thanked the Town Council staff who had helped with the installation of the Community Allotment greenhouse.

b) Bank Reconciliation

The Assistant to the Town Clerk explained that expenditure was currently at £346,711 and Income at £428,944.34 and that transactions balance to the bank statement at the end of March 2021 and there are 3 cheques not cashed totalling £4,782.

The first transactions for April had been put onto the new Scribe Accounts system.

C20/172 Correspondence

None.

C20/173 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.32pm.