

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 10th June 2021
in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 6.30pm**

Present Cllrs S Allcroft, P Broom, P Burns, G Castle, B Gascoigne-Owens, M Harrington, J Humphries, J Lyford, M Swinbank, A Symmonds, D Watson, G Watson, L Wearn and L Wood-Mitchell.

In attendance P Hately, Town Clerk & Chief Officer; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; Dr Graham Syers, Alnwick Medical Group (GS).

C21/24 Questions from the public
None.

C21/25 Apologies for absence
Councillors Edge and Parker.

C21/26 Declarations of Interest
Councillor Castle and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters.

C21/27 Presentation by Dr Syers, Alnwick Medical Group
Dr Syers started by explained that he was employed as a GP for three days a week and as Clinical Chair of the Northumberland Commissioning Group for two days a week. He gave an update on the following:

COVID:

- rates were rising again in Northumberland
- AMG are currently vaccinating 20-30 year olds
- all 2nd vaccines were being done
- AMG are co-ordinating other practices in Rothbury and Morpeth
- some of the new Delta variant had been found in Northumberland
- winter planning for September / October is being planned

Alnwick Medical Group:

- super busy doing face to face consultations
- e-consult has some limitations on the days and times it's availability
- healthy Alnwick – several factors affect health and well-being, so AMG are using Link Workers to find activities to Social Prescribe people

He finished by suggesting that a group might be pulled together to bring people together to discuss issues that affect Alnwick.

Councillor Wearn asked how the Town Council could help get the message to 20-30 ear olds about vaccinations. GS advised that everyone should get the message out to people about the benefit of being vaccinated.

Councillor Symmonds explained that AMG's efforts were well thought of and that the vaccination process had been well organised with excellent support from staff and volunteers.

Councillor Castle advised that a Health Forum used to be in place and that he would make enquiries and come back to Dr Syers.

Councillor Lyford thought the Link Worker model was a good one and that a Health Forum would help focus effort and would be welcomed. GS advised that it would need to include a number of agencies.

Councillor Wearn reported that everyone she had spoken to had been very pleased with the vaccination process. GS advised he would be happy to come to report to Full Council on a regular basis.

C21/28 Approve Minutes of the Last meeting

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 20th May 2021 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2021 were agreed as a true record.

C21/29 Matters Arising

None.

C21/30 Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported that she had not undertaken any civic duties in the last month. She asked for suggestions for her charity of the year.

Councillors suggested HospiceCare, Mind & Soul and Alnwick Stroke Club whilst Councillor Broom felt all local charities should be supported.

C21/31 Updates:

a) County Council

Councillor Castle gave an update from NCC on:

- i. Market Place – a TRO was being produced to delineate the areas to be pedestrianised
- ii. Narrowgate – further consultation would be undertaken
- iii. Toilets – refurbishment was underway
- iv. Victoria Terrace Pedestrian Crossing – the design is at final stage but should be going ahead
- v. Howling car park – design work is being undertaken and the car park should be operational by Summer 2022
- vi. Residents driving across curbs – NCC have sent out letters to notify liability for any damage
- vii. White lining – mostly done with some around the War Memorial to be done.
- viii. Chapel Lane - the current access to Clayport Street is being reviewed
- ix. Swansfield Park Road – pavement surfacing has been delayed due to gas works
- x. Bus Station – asked Arriva CEO to do more to deal with the litter issue

Councillor Swinbank reported that:

- i. Speed monitoring on Alnmouth was still being chased
- ii. The Cobbles – designs would come to the Town Council's Planning Committee

Councillor Harrington was pleased that the white lining had been done.

Councillor Allcroft reported that Denwick Lane was a real issue as the road surface was becoming a safety issue. Councillor Castle advised that he would discuss this with NCC.

Councillor Symmonds asked if there was any update on what was happening currently with the Allerburn House development. Councillor Castle advised that he would follow this up and provide an update.

Councillor Broom felt that the repair work in Denwick Lane could be done overnight so would have no impact on residents or road users.

Councillor Broom asked about vehicles driving across the pavement to park in Bondgate Without. Councillor Castle advised that, whilst there was no deemed consent to drive across pavements, this was a police matter as it was obstruction.

Councillor Broom reported that litter had become a real issue in the town since pubs had reopened. Councillor Castle advised he had asked NCC for ward stats for litter offences.

Councillor Broom ask why there could not be a referendum on Narrowgate to enable the people of Alnwick to decide how they want their town to look. Councillor Castle advised that there would not be a referendum but that a consultation would be undertaken after which the decision will be made by elected members.

b) Advisory Groups

Retail & Town Centre

Councillor Harrington reported that there was a lot of forward planning for Christmas.

Sustainable Travel

Councillor Swinbank reported that:

- i. work was still progressing with the Alnwick Greenway
- ii. a residents group was looking at resident's parking in Prudhoe and Lisburn Street
- iii. additional toilet facilities during the summer
- iv. drop curbs – NCC have a budget for these so asked councillors to let him know of any suggested locations.

C21/32 Meeting Schedule 2021/22

The Town Clerk presented the proposed meeting schedule for the remainder of 2021/22. He explained that the schedule was dependant of Covid but felt that the schedule balanced the need to have physical meetings with the health & safety of officers and councillors.

He advised that he wanted the Away Day to look at the Schemes of Delegation which could impact on meetings in future years.

RESOLVED: To approve Council and Committee dates for 2021-22.

C21/33 Financial support requests from The Alnwick Partnership

The Project & Funding Officer reported that a request had been made by the Retail & Town Centre for £3,000 towards the cost of appointing New Skills Consultancy, who previously worked on the Lily Dory Project at The Alnwick Garden, to look at the impact and benefits of the Christmas Light Trail project.

Councillor Symmonds explained that, as the Town Council are committed to helping regenerate the town, and the project would enhance the town, he supported the request.

Councillor Watson asked if the VAT could be reclaimed if the consultants were employed by the Town Council. The Town Clerk advised that the VAT could be reclaimed.

Councillor Lyford endorsed the positive comments made and asked if an extra day could be added for the consultants to look at the other Advisory Groups.

Councillor Harrington thought this might be able to be included in the 5 days,

Councillor Castle felt that this could dilute their efforts and supported a separate day.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell felt the statistical information and data would be useful to the wider group. She advised that she would like to see the specification for the consultants.

RESOLVED: To support the work of the Retail & Town Centre Advisory Group by paying for New Skills Consultants up to the value of £3,000.

C21/34 Financial Matters**a) Payments**

The following invoices had been received/payments were due:

PAYEE	TOTAL	DETAIL
Diamond Business Systems	32.85	Monthly copying charges
Alnwick Properties	940.00	Asbestos removal
The Protector Group	589.50	CCTV Call Out Charge
Wybone Limited	646.76	Planters
Fife Plant Hire	123.60	Materials
Chubb Fire & Security Ltd	89.82	Annual safety checks
Rural Market Town Group	156.00	Annual Subscription
Northumberland Tree Surveys Ltd	350.00	Tree survey and plan
T Kirton (Northumbrian Water Limited)	1,192.80	Connection fee
Pickard Electricals Ltd	1,170.00	New heating system
James N McLean Ltd	90.49	Materials
Northumberland County Council (rent)	2,700.00	Office rent Greenwell Lane
Syd Carr Drainage	242.55	Staff mileage
J Pibworth (CPC)	319.98	Equipment
J Pibworth (Screwfix)	449.99	Portable generator
John Ainsworth	650.00	Internal Audit fee 2020/21
Zurich Insurance	6,516.50	Insurance for 2021/22
Total	£16,260.84	

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

Biffa	119.71	Monthly trade waste (Apr 21)
Barclays Bank	28.56	Bank Charges (Apr-May 21)
Corona Energy	147.47	Monthly electricity charges (May 21)
Northumberland County Council	13,427.56	Monthly payroll (May 21)
British Gas	28.08	Monthly gas contract (June 21)
BT	158.09	Monthly telephone charges (June 21)
Corona Energy	2,078.41	Monthly electricity charges (May 21)
Total	£15,987.88	

RESOLVED: To approve and authorise the above payments amounting to £16,260.84 and to note the direct debit payments of £15,987.88.

b) Bank Reconciliation

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that the Bank Reconciliation as at 31st May 2021 showed the cash in the bank as £388,773.42 and that all transactions for April and May had been reconciled. Expenditure in May £21,281.55 and Income in May was £5.64.

She reported there were 9 uncashed cheques / unprocessed payments to the value of £5,195.20 most of which will be on June's bank statement as these were actually processed in June.

RESOLVED: To approve the Bank Reconciliation for May 2021.

c) Budgetary Controls

The Assistant to the Town Clerk explained that the Budgetary Control report which had been issued to councillors was from the new accounting system, and showed the financial position for each budget line and would be produced on a monthly basis. A more detailed version of the report would also be produced for committee meetings.

RESOLVED: To note the Budgetary Control report.

C21/35 Approval of Annual Governance and Accounting Return & Accounts 2020/21

The Town Clerk issued a completed copy of the completed Annual Governance and Accounting Return for 2020/21 along with the final version of the accounts for 2020/21 would be available at the June meeting after the internal audit was completed.

He issued the Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2021 which showed the end of year cash in the bank as £456,086.98.

RESOLVED: To approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accounting Return for 2020/21.

C21/36 Co-option to fill vacancies on the Council

The Town Clerk advised that, following the election on May 6th 2021, the Town Council had two vacancies – one in Castle Ward and one in Clayport Ward.

He explained that, in cases where councillors resign, vacancies are filled by election if 10 voters come forward to request this within 14 days. If no election is called then the vacancy can be filled by co-option. As the two vacancies resulted were not filled at the election on May 6th they can be filled by co-option and he requested approval to do this.

Councillor Broom suggested that the Town Council ask representatives of groups, such as DCHS and Alnwick Chamber of Trade, to consider being councillors.

RESOLVED: To approve the commencement of the co-option process to fill the two vacancies.

C21/37 Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that Councillor Symmonds had been approved as the Town Council representative for the Alnwick Playhouse at the last meeting but that the rest of the Outside Body positions remained unfilled. He went through the list and councillors were approved as below:

Alnwick Chamber of Trade	Councillor Burns
Alnwick Christmas Lights	Councillor D Watson
Alnwick Forum	The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors Broom, Harrington, Humphries, Watson
Alnwick in Bloom	Councillors Broom and Humphries
Alnwick Music Festival	Councillor Burns
Alnwick Town Juniors	Councillor Castle

Alnwick Young People's Association	Councillor Lyford
Alnwick & Denwick Relief in Need Charity	Councillor G Watson
Bailiffgate Museum	Councillor Wearn
Mechanics Institute	Councillors Edge, Gascoigne-Owens, Harrington, Symmonds

RESOLVED: To appoint Town Council Outside Body representatives as per the list above.

C21/38 Correspondence

None.

C21/39 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Gascoigne-Owens reported that there was a real problem with litter at the bus station. She felt that some anti-litter posters might help.

Councillor Wearn felt that there should be a bin by every seat and asked for this to go to the Recreation & Amenities Committee for approval.

Councillor Castle suggested that Arriva could be invited to a Council meeting along with NCC's Community Safety Officer.

Councillor Harrington felt it was important to get buy-in from Arriva and agree that litter and anti-social behaviour were the main issues. He felt that the police should also be invited to a Full Council meeting to discuss the issues.

Councillor Broom felt this would be a valuable item for the Town Council's Away Day. He felt that the issue might be addressed by moving the location of the bus station.

Councillor Swinbank felt that the Town Council could arrange to talk to the police and Arriva privately, in the first instance, about the issue.

Councillor Lyford felt it would be helpful to talk to the people about the issue.

Councillor Watson agreed with Councillor Broom's suggestion about the location of the bus station. He advised that he knew of some bus stations where classical music has been used with positive effect.

Councillor Symmonds felt the matter should be added to the next Full Council agenda when decisions can be made.

Councillor Lyford felt a discussion on the Away Day would also be useful.

Councillor Watson advised that extra meetings, of Full Council or committees can be called at any time to discuss urgent matters.

The public meeting closed at 8.18pm.

C21/40 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The following resolution was moved and seconded, to exclude the public and press. "That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act". The items discussed were:

Civic and Freeman Awards