



**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting
held at St James's Church Centre, Pottergate on Thursday 15th July 2021 at 6.30pm**

Present: Councillors P Broom (Chair), P Burns, P Edge, B Gascoigne-Owens, M Harrington, J Lyford, J Parker, A Symmonds, D Watson and G Watson.

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

RA 21/01 Apologies

Councillor Wood-Mitchell.

RA 21/02 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Watson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9b. Allotments

RA 21/03 Approval of minutes of last meeting (22nd April 2021)

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 22nd April 2021 were approved as a true record.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last meeting on 22nd April 2021.

RA 21/04 Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda

None.

RA 21/05 Budget Update 2021/22

The Assistant to the Town Clerk had circulated a copy of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Income and Expenditure for 2021/22 as June 30th 2021 highlighting the budget lines with expenditure since the last meeting:

TOTAL EXPENDITURE TO DATE £13,888.50. **REMAINING BUDGET** £131,329.14

EVENTS – £100

Market Place events £100 paid to Geordie Chapter

PROJECTS - £2,608.31

In Bloom £2,462.52

Tree, bulb planting £145.79

ASSETS & SERVICES - £11,180.19

Wages/PAYE £3,940.84 (2 months' salary costs).

Play Areas Repairs and Parts £1,628.99 (materials, signs, replacement parts)

Town Hall Lighting £13.46 (1 months electricity)

Memorials £54.20 (1 months electricity, 1 qtr. water charges)

Allotment Expenses £3,339.19 (1 qtr. water charges, materials, asbestos removal, mains water connection fee)

Bins £240 (pressure washing)

Seats £1,078.00 (street furniture cleaning, materials, portable generator)

Street Planters £538.97 (3 new planters)

Street Furniture Maintenance £40.89 (materials)

Bike Track Maintenance £305.65 (equipment hire, plate compactor)

TOTAL INCOME TO DATE £367.64 (allotment rents) against a budget of £5,000.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget update for 2021/22.

RA 21/06 Lion Bench Grant Applications

Councillor Broom issued some additional information provided by Investing in Alnwick.

The Town Clerk advised that Loving Alnwick had submitted an application for a grant towards the cost of a bench in the Market Place as part of the Lion project. The seat had been designed as part of a competition run for children at DCHS. He advised that the project also proposed installing Lion plaques and footprints around the town.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the Town Council own and maintain all the street furniture in the town centre which ensures that any liability relating to them would be covered by the Town Council.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk explained that historically if people have requested to install benches the Town Council have requested that they match the other street furniture. She advised councillors that the Ornate seats in Market Place, including the new WWI Commemorative Bench, were produced by Stephen Lunn and cost around £6,500 each so any new seats should match these. She explained that the Town Council had purchased and installed a Lions 100th anniversary Heritage bench and plaque in Column Field, which they insure and maintain but which the Lions had paid for.

Councillors were advised that the grant application had not come through, or been approved by, the Retail & Town Centre Advisory Group.

Councillors expressed concern that Investing in Alnwick were raising the expectations of the school children without consulting on whether the proposal was feasible first.

Councillors felt the proposed seat looked cheaply constructed and may not conform to the required standards for street furniture in public spaces.

Councillors felt the Town Council should approve the principle of having an appropriately placed seat as long as it complies with the standards of Alnwick Town Council's street furniture. The Committee could not give approval for the proposed plaques and footprints as each plaque would need planning approval from NCC and which may not be supported by the Town Council's Planning Committee.

RESOLVED: i) To approve the principle of having an appropriately placed seat as long as it complies with the standards of Alnwick Town Council's street furniture; ii) To advise Investing in Alnwick that the Recreation & Amenities Committee are unable to approve the plaques or footprints.

RA21/07 Queen's Jubilee

Councillor G Watson reported that lots of groups were interested in taking part and that there would be lot of activities. These would include a float parade organised by Investing in Alnwick from DCHS to town and a vintage games day in Swansfield Park organised by the Lions.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk explained that at the moment there was no budget for any of the Jubilee events and recommended that a budget line be added to the Recreation & Amenities budget 2022/23 as it would then be part of the budget process. She asked if there was likely to be any expenditure during 2021/22. Councillor G Watson advised that there could be. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that she would also add the same budget line to the 2021/22 budget.

RESOLVED: To add Queen's Jubilee as a Recreation & Amenities budget line for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

RA21/08 Thomas Percy Site

Councillor G Watson reported that the proposal to NCC for transfer for the land had been completed and asked the committee to recommend it to Full Council for approval. He issued an updated document with expected costs over the first 3 years.

Councillor Symmonds asked if the costs of Indemnity insurance and staffing costs had been included.

Councillor Symmonds asked whether the idea of an outdoor classroom had been checked with local schools. Councillor Gascoigne-Owens said she felt her school would support this.

Councillor Symmonds felt that some of the student who attend the STARS could be involved in the ground works.

Councillor Edge said the site had great views over the sea and could definitely be made more attractive as NCC had not been using it well.

Councillor Lyford thought that a warden job could be created for which there might be external funding available.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that they approve the proposal that Alnwick Town Council formally apply for land transfer of the Thomas Percy site from NCC.

RA 21/09 Updates:

a) Play Areas - The Project & Funding Officer gave an update:

Swansfield Park – the cone climber has been replaced.

Barresdale – graffiti on the slide which has now been sorted.

Play Equipment for older children - a report will be presented at the next meeting.

b) Allotments - The Project and Funding Officer gave an update:

Ratten Row - most workable plots had now been let but that there were a few which were being closely monitored as they appeared to be neglected. If there was no improvement the plots would be taken back and re-let.

He advised that there had been an issue with burning and he had contacted tenants to remind them of the restrictions.

St James's – one (overgrown) plot is being vacated on August 1st and will be re-let.

St George's – additional parts are needed to finish the Town Council's work on the new water connection.

On vacant plot (plot 5) has been cleared of rubbish and asbestos and will be re-let.

He reported that the Allotment Working Group had reviewed the allotment agreement and made suggestions which would be recommended for approval at the Recreation & Amenities Committee when fees are reviewed.

Councillor Symmonds felt the Town Council could offer help with overgrown plots.

Councillor G Watson said overgrown plots need to be strimmed and covered with weed suppressant.

c) Street Furniture – The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave an update:

Bins – 1 of the 3 stock bins will be installed near to The Stumpery (Wagonway Road/ Prudhoe Street junction) which gets a lot of litter thrown in it.

The 2 bins installed in Taylor Drive are being well used.

We will buy more larger bins for areas of the town centre which get a lot of traffic such as outside Greggs and reuse existing bins elsewhere. The plan is to ask our County Councillors for a contribution towards these.

Seats – the WWI Commemorative bench is now finished and will be installed in the Market Place shortly. Images of the completed bench were issued to councillors.

Planters – 3 new large square planters have been installed at the end of Narrowgate and 3 new small planters at the War Memorial. Other wooden tubs around town will need replacing during this year.

Hanging baskets – the Town Council purchased 32 new cup and saucer baskets and 75 hanging basket brackets and bolts. 80 old brackets around town were replaced to carry the weight of the new hanging baskets. More cup and saucer baskets will be purchased ready for 2022.

There are a total of 192 hanging baskets around the town (30 more than in 2019) with 16 businesses buying them for the first time (partly due to a 50% subsidy from AiB).

The Town Council buy 60 as part of their annual planting contract with NCC and some of these were added to high impact locations to enhance the town, including the gable end of Arriva office (which AiB have had repainted), and The Centre in Fenkle Street).

She reported that the Northumbria in Bloom judging had taken place that day and that Alnwick was hopeful for its 10th successive Gold.

Dog bag dispensers: 3 dispensers will be installed have arrived and are scheduled to be installed in the next couple of weeks. 2 will be installed in Swansfield Park and Fisher Lane and suggestions are welcomed for the location of the 3rd one.

d) Tree Planting

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that a total of 73 of the 176 cherry trees had been planted. (21 at care/residential homes; 28 at schools; 15 in Swansfield Park; 6 at St Paul's Church and 3 at St James's roundabout). The remainder are being looked after by Alnwick Garden and are due to be planted in the Autumn.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

RA 21/10 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Parker asked if future meetings could be held at 6.30pm.

Meeting close at 9.00pm