

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – APRIL 2021

The Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 8 April 2021 at 6.00pm via Zoom conferencing.

Members and the public were reminded they would be muted unless speaking.
Requests to speak would be signaled by a raised/waved hand.
Members were therefore asked to signal agreement by a 'thumbs up' gesture.

PRESENT:

Cllrs Craig Weir, (Chair), Cllrs H Lewis, J Watson, K Morrison, J Dargue, D Bewley, T Hinton, I Parks
V Smith - Town Clerk.

APOLOGIES

None

1.PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: (maximum 15 minutes)

225.1 Mrs J Watson attended as a member of the public but did not wish to speak.

It was noted that Mrs Watson had secured £30 of plants from Morrison's to be used around the fish sculpture.

1.2 To receive a brief report from Northumbria Police

No report available.

A concern had been raised to a number of Cllrs regarding Covid breaches and the proper reporting of these breaches. The Clerk previously confirmed with Northumbria Police that these breaches should be reported using the 101 non-emergency number in order for them to be logged and recorded properly.

2.BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE

2.1 Update on proposals for future meetings from May 2021

The existing legislation which allows Town and Parish Councils to conduct council business using digital meetings is due to expire on 7 May 2021. After this time, it is expected that Town and Parish Councils should resume face to face meetings where members of the public can physically attend should they wish to do so. Members agreed that if it was safe to do so, they were happy to resume face to face meetings.

The law states that Town and Parish Councils must hold their first meeting and AGM within 21 days of the Election taking us to 27 May. However, government coronavirus restrictions regarding numbers indoors will remain in place until at least 17 May 2021. It was therefore proposed to delay the first AGM and meeting of the Full Council to 20th May 2021, which would allow the Council to meet the deadline whilst remaining covid compliant. This was agreed.

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Staff are continuing to seek advice and guidance although it was accepted that there was a feeling that Town and Parish Councils needs have not been considered. This issue is being taken up widely at National NALC and a response is expected within the next week. In the meantime, there are some possible venues available in Amble. All venues require ATC to provide the additional cleaning measures and Risk Assessments. It was proposed that at whichever venue is secured that ATC pay for the venue's cleaner to carry out the additional cleaning requirements. This was also agreed.

TC

3. MINUTES: TOWN COUNCIL

2.1: To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021, items 207 – 224.2
The minutes were agreed.

4. CLERK'S REPORT

4.1 Clerks Report

The Clerks report was accepted.

5. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS and REPORT:

To receive the communications and report of the Chairman pertaining to Council Business:

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5.1: Chairman

The Chair attended the lighting of the Clock Tower for the National Day of Remembrance.
The Chair also attended Azure garden centre to make arrangements for the town's planting needs.

5.2: Vice Chairman

The Vice Chair activities are all included in the agenda updates.

6. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS:

6.1: To receive a report from County Councillor Clark:

No report available. Clerk to chase up.

6.2: To receive a report from County Councillor Watson:

Cllr Watson reported that the Welcome to Amble sign on Acklington Road had been fixed.

Cllr Watson reported that he had dealt with a number of Covid queries regarding the ongoing vaccination programme.

Cllr Watson was frustrated at a lack of progress regarding the lighting column at the Church Street Bus Shelter. Cllr Watson has been promised that this will be looked at by the end of this week.

The Turner Street Car Park is progressing as planned.

Cllr Watson has received a lot of correspondence regarding the campervan feasibility study on The Braid and has received a lot of positive feedback.

7. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES & REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS:

Cllr Weir attended a meeting of ADT and CCT, notes of which have been circulated under private correspondence. He also attended the Fire Extinguisher Service.

7.1 To receive an update following NALC meeting

Cllr Bewley attended a meeting of NALC. The main focus of the meeting was on the upcoming election and the legislation regarding digital meetings. A concern was raised regarding the need for Town and Parish Councils to cover postal vote costs in the Election, especially as postal prices have increased in January this year. Members shared these concerns and whilst ATC has budgeted for these costs there will be some parishes whose precept is too small.

The next meeting of AYP is in two weeks time.

The next meeting of NTC is on 16th April.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT:

8.1 Financial year 2020-2021 to consider voucher numbers 304– 326 for payment and receipt vouchers 86 – 93 for information

The payments and receipts were approved.

8.2 Bank Reconciliation

The reconciliation was noted.

8.3 YTD figures

Noted

8.4 Grant requests

Lionheart Radio

Lionheart Radio requested a grant of up to £5000 to ensure better coverage in Amble. Members agreed that they should support this but could not support with such a large sum. Cllr Lewis proposed to support Lionheart with a donation of £200. This was seconded by Cllr Morrison. Members wished them well with their fund raising efforts.

FC Juniors

FC Juniors requested financial support to purchase football equipment for newly formed team. Cllr Weir proposed a donation of equipment up to a maximum of £150. This was seconded by Cllr Dargue. Clerk to make contact and request a list of equipment needed.

The Colony Music Festival

The Colony Music Festival requested some financial assistance with a number of items required for

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the upcoming festival in July. Members felt this was a great festival and loved by members of the community and therefore should be supported. There was some caution as to whether the festival would be able to go ahead depending on Coronavirus restrictions at the time. Members decided to support the cause with the hire of the PA / Generator at a cost of £580 minus VAT. Members requested that the Clerk should order the equipment direct once Council could be assured that the event was Covid compliant and going ahead.

TC

8.5 To receive an update on future banking arrangements

Members were updated with regards to banking arrangement. Most banking institutions are not opening new deposit account for new customers at this time. The financial situation across the board is very much wait and see what happens. The Clerk is monitoring the situation at the CCLA and has not reallocated funds into the current account. The latest statement from the CCLA indicates a slight rise in interest. A meeting with Gillian Turner is being arranged and will cover a multitude of financial items to discuss of which members will be invited if they wish to join.

TC

9. AMENITIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

9.1 To approve the minutes of the meeting of 25 March 2021

The minutes were approved.

9.2 To discuss request to use storage facilities at Amble West

A request had been received from the contractor to store some of his equipment and machinery in the old mortuary building at Amble West. In return the contractor would finance the insurance and would also maintain the building. Initial thoughts were that a formal agreement would need to be put in place to protect the Council from any long term commitments and to also outline expectations from each party. The Clerk to obtain costs for a short term lease and also insurance costs.

TC

9.3 To note outcome of Fire Extinguisher test

The service was carried out on 1 April and it was noted that there was no need for 3 extinguishers and therefore one was taken away. One was out of date and replaced, therefore an additional price of £90 was agreed under Health and Safety essential maintenance and retrospective approval was granted.

9.4 To note action taken regarding pest control issue at TIC car park

Reports of rats running from the drains at the former TIC car park were reported to Highways.

9.5 To receive an update re adopted bed at Memorial Gardens

The flower bed is in need of weeding. Clerk to contact. Many plants are being brought on ready for planting in May.

TC

Members were made aware of some historical comments on social media making a reappearance regarding water at the cemetery. The water and tap issue have been resolved for quite some time now and no correspondence has been received through the office.

10: PLANNING COMMITTEE

10.1: To note the planning outcomes for March 2021

The report was noted.

10.2 Percy Drive verges and grassed areas

This issue was addressed at the Partnership meeting with NCC who advised that they would take this issue up with streetworks as appropriate.

11. AGENDA ITEMS:

11.1 To receive an update re Know Your Town

Members agreed to keep this item on hold until Council was in a better position to take the work forward post Covid.

11.2 To seek retrospective approval for National Day of Reflection arrangements

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Members approved the arrangements and cost of £50.

11.3 To agree the protocol for Newpage Councillors' Corner

There was some debate as to why this was an agenda item when agreement on Cllrs Corner had already been given at the last meeting. Under legislation when a decision is made it cannot be revisited for 6 months however this is not the case here as this agenda item is for a separate issue. At the last meeting it was agreed to add a short sentence to the Cllrs Corner section of the published newsletter in The Ambler to make members of the public aware that the following views were not those of the Council but of the individual Cllr.

This item is separate and is intended to provide guidance for any new members of the Council who wish to contribute to Cllrs Corner. After some discussion it was agreed to remove bullet point 8 as it was felt that this was covered sufficiently in bullet point 9.

TC

11.4 To agree mayoral attendance at RBL event on 11 July 2021 subject to covid restrictions

Mayoral attendance on 11 July 2021 was agreed. The newly elected Mayor to be informed when the time comes.

An additional request was discussed regarding lighting of the clock tower for RBL 100 on 15 May 2021. Whilst formal approval was still being sought from the RBL, as this is the last meeting before this date, it was agreed that should the RBL contact the Council to request permission, this was to be granted. Cllrs Lewis and Watson declared an interest.

TC

11.5 To discuss proposed seat relocation on Percy Drive

Members were updated regarding the removal of the seat from Percy Drive and were given a map of the proposed and preferred location, to the right of the right of way at the sewage works. Members agreed the preferred location. Clerk to action.

TC

11.7 To discuss meetings venues and possibilities from 7 May 2021

Staff are looking at various venues to enable physical meetings to resume from 7 May onwards. Members will be informed as and when updates are available. The next meeting of the Full Council will take place on 20 May 2021, time and venue to be confirmed.

TC

11.8 To discuss renewal of CCTV cameras at 4 locations

There are four cameras which are in need of repair and are out of the warranty period. The cameras cost £595 plus VAT. Members agreed that these should be supplied and accepted that there will be continual maintenance costs to be built into the budget annually.

TC

Previous discussions with Northumbria Police have indicated that the cameras have been used in successful prosecutions and also act as a deterrent as well as used for evidence.

11.9 To discuss Memorial Gardens Nordmann Fir

The tree in the memorial garden is browning on its lower needles. Staff have contacted various specialists to their advice and await responses. Work on Betty's Tree is currently on hold until we can ensure that the new tree remains viable.

11.9 To discuss trees to recommend for preservation orders

Members were supplied with a list of trees which could potentially benefit from having a TPO. Members agreed that all trees listed were worthy of a TPO and agreed for the Clerk to contact the preservation officer with a request that these be included and to ask what the procedure is. It was also queried what the criteria is to be given a TPO. Clerk to investigate.

TC

11.10 To seek retrospective approval for Good Friday Vigil request from CCT

Members agreed retrospective approval for the Good Friday Vigil.

11.11 To receive an update on Clock Tower

Whilst having the clock tower flood lights repaired, the clock was accidentally stopped. However, the position of the fuse box means that it would be impossible to do any electrical works on the clock without stopping the time. It is not possible to relocate the fuse box.

The Clerk arranged for Smith of Derby to come out to reset the clock at a cost of £150 and also show how to reset the clock ourselves. The engineer was happy for the Clerk to contact him direct in future to talk through issues that may be simple to resolve. The electrician was also present. The call out fee was approved.

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12. COMMUNICATIONS:

12.1 NALC News 9/2, 11/3, 12 March 2021

Noted

12.2 To note concerns received regarding trip hazard on Town Square

Noted

12.3 To note the newsletter from Anne Marie Trevelyan

Noted

12.4 To note the request re Covid19 data

Noted

12.5 To note the complaint regarding condition of road at Gloster Hill

Noted

12.6 To note the arrangements for the Acklington Road Speed Sign

Noted. Clerk has requested installation information and warranty details.

13. INFORMATION ITEMS AND ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION:

13.1 To note receipt of formal notification of outcome of Governance Review

Noted

13.2 To note letter of thanks from JCSC

Noted

13.3 To note the minutes of the Partnership Meeting with NCC 30 March 2021

Noted

13.4 To note Library Service update

Noted

14. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

14.1 20 May 2021, Time tbc, Venue tbc

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public will be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda due to their sensitive nature.

PUBLIC VERSION OF PRIVATE

15: MINUTES –

15.1: Town Council meeting held 11 March 2021 – items 221 – 224.2

The minutes were approved.

15.2 Minutes of the Amenities Committee 42.1-42.2

The minutes were approved.

16. PRIVATE REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES & REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

16.1 None

17. AGENDA ITEMS

17.1 Legal Update

An update was given

18. INFORMATION ITEMS

18.1 Notes of Amble Development Trust 17 March 2021

Noted

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18.2 Notes of CCT meeting 30 March 2021

Noted.

More information will be circulated when permitted.