

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

The Minutes of the Ordinary Full Council meeting of Thursday 14 December 2023, 6.00pm Fourways 2, 6 Dilston Terrace, Amble.

PRESENT:

C Weir (Chair) H Lewis, K Morrison, D Bewley. M Joyce, I Parks, D Carmichael, P Dancer

V Smith – Minute Taker

OPEN SESSION

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: (maximum 15 minutes)

In line with Standing Order 3d-1 members of the public may at the invitation of the Chairman ask questions, make representations, and provide information to the Council in respect of the business on the agenda or any other Town Council services.

There were no members of the public present.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

154. APOLOGIES

C Palmer – illness
Apologies accepted.

156. To receive any declarations of interest from Members:

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda, as required by the Amble Town Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011, now or as they come up in the agenda process. Members are asked to review their completed Register of Interest forms to ensure that they are accurate and up to date.

157. MINUTES: TOWN COUNCIL

157.1: To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023, items 141-153.1

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

158. CLERK'S REPORT:

RECOMMENDATION – That the Council notes the contents of the report and consider actions where necessary.

158.1 Clerks Report attached

The Clerks report was accepted and noted.

159. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS and REPORT:

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

159.1: Chairman

Cllr Weir attended the following:

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

Remembrance Day Service, NCC Christmas Fair, Mayors Reception, Carol Service Alnwick, Carol Service Amble.

159.2: Vice Chairman

Cllr Parks attended Remembrance Day and meeting with JCSC.

160. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS:

160.1: To receive a report from County Councillor Clark

The remedial works to the footpath between Southmead and Newmoor Close have not resolved the issue with the flooded gardens. Further drainage works have been carried out. If the problem persists a drain will be installed.

There remain concerns locally about the small area of land belonging to WHC at the back of Broomhill Street. WHC have responded positively to clear up requests.

The lighting at the Harbour Village is the responsibility of NCC and this has now been repaired. There remain some issues with heritage lighting – NCC are aware.

Coble Quay walkway remains closed. There is yet to be any worthwhile update from the NCC legal team which is creating frustration within the community. Members felt that it was time that NCC released a public statement giving the community some real answers. Members were aware of a press release given to The Ambler despite repeated requests from the Town Council for updates.

Campervans continue to park on Links Road and have destroyed newly placed signage. Addition Civil Enforcement Office personnel has been secured and will hopefully be able to carry out more visible patrols and ticket as appropriate.

Cllr Clark has dealt with a number of housing issues.

A request was receiving for a parking area to be made on the green area at Anne Crescent. It has been explained that this will need to form part of the LTP.

The HUSK drop in was well attended however it was noted that the garages here would not be large enough for vehicles.

Objections to be latest Northumberland Estate planning application were not able to be updated however the planning officer was able to rectify this and there are now at least 45 objections.

The Town Council was thanked for the Remembrance Day invite and invitation to the Chairs Xmas Reception.

A request was received for a grit bin to be placed in Coquet Grange. Cllr Weir declared an interest. As this estate is an unadopted road this is not something that NCC can fulfil.

Cllr Clark to chase up Public Protections regarding the environmental concern received.

160.2: To receive a report from County Councillor Watson

The lights on Acklington Road have now been fixed.

Additional signage for The Braid is being sourced.

Northumberland Estates have agreed to clear up the small wooded area on the A1068 and have agreed to chop the wood into manageable chunks free to those who can use it.

Cllr Watson continues to push for a safer crossing point at the bottom of the Wynd and this is also in the 2024 LTP.

Cllr Watson is meeting with JCSC on 10 January 2024 and continues to push for community car parking facilities. The Town Councils concerns regarding three entrances on Acklington Road have been voiced. There are major concerns regarding Acklington Road and Albert Street junction.

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

There was no further update on Coble Quay.

Cllr Watson agreed to contribute to the CCTV costs for Queen Street and has also secured a £500 donation for Amble Youth Project. Cllr Watson is waiting for NTC to provide costs for gates.

Cllr Watson was aware of the issue on Castle View and the report on Fix My Street. Cllr Watson to be copied into emails previously sent regarding the matter.

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

161.1 To receive the report of Councillors who represent ATC on outside bodies (Cllr Reports)

Cllr Weir attended meetings with Northumbria Police, Planning Committee, JCSC, Highways Infrastructure Manager, town council budget, town council planning committee and attended an event at the Dementia Lounge.

Cllr Dancer attended the meeting with Northumbria Police, town council planning committee and attended NALC 25/11 – this meeting focused on ring fenced funding for broadband and training opportunities for new and existing members. The new hybrid could be improved. John Potts is now the Chairman and Gillian Turner has now left as honorary treasurer.

Cllr Morrison attended a meeting of Amble Youth Project. There are some staff changes taking place and the youth project is struggling to secure grant funding. In good news, a new sponsor has agreed yearly sponsorship.

Cllr Morrison also attended a meeting with NTC. The funding from the Arts Council was not successful. The new management team was re-elected at the AGM on 20/11. The NTC Team are touring with their performance of a Christmas Carol.

The film nights are continuing with a showing on 15/12. The damage by Storm Arwen has now been rectified.

Cllr Morrison attended a meeting with the Events Committee. The Christmas lights parade was well attended and raised £940 split between the events committee, xmas lights committee and Amble and Warkworth Rotary. It is hoped that the Events Committee will soon be able to restart the Young Citizen of the Year Award.

162. FINANCIAL REPORT:

162.1 To consider voucher numbers 185 - 217 for payment and 58 - 64 for receipt.

Cllr Lewis declared an interest in vouchers 200 and 201.

Cllr Dancer declared an interest in voucher 202.

Cllr Parks declared an interest in voucher 215.

Resolution - The payments and receipts were approved.

162.2 Bank Reconciliation

Resolution - The bank reconciliation was accepted and approved.

162.3 Year to date figures

Discussion took place around the sums within the Earmarked figures. It was noted that the Clerk sometimes does not use the earmarked funds for day-to-day expenditure, leaving a minus figure, and that they could appear high however it was also noted that the earmarked funds are published annually in The Amber after the accounts have been audited which allows the public to see what the bank balance funds. It was suggested that there could

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

be more clarification within the earmarked funds however it was felt that saving up for future projects was a prudent thing for a responsible Council to do.

Resolution – The year to date figures were approved.

162.4 Grant Requests

Clarification was sought around whether there were adequate funds for grant requests.

- **Amble and Warkworth Rotary Club**

Cllr Joyce proposed to support with £200

Seconded Cllr Weir

Resolved: A grant request of £200 was approved for maintenance and repair of the Santa Sleigh¹

TC

- **Amble Youth Project**

Cllrs Parks and Morrison declared an interest.

It was clarified whether AYP were a charity and whether they would be claiming VAT. Clerk to ascertain VAT status. If they do not claim VAT Cllr Lewis proposed to purchase materials up to £400.

Seconded Cllr Joyce

Resolved: A grant request of up to £400 was agreed for items specified.²

TC

- **Great North Air Ambulance donation as agreed at AGM May 2023(maximum £110)**

As agreed annually at AGM the Town Council agree to support GNAA with a donation of £110³

TC

- **Alnwick and District Sports Award Sponsor as agreed at AGM May2023 (Maximum £160)**

As agreed annually at AGM the Town Council agree to support Alnwick District Sports Awards with the requested donation of £120⁴

TC

162.5 To note the NALC Pay Award for 23-24

The annual pay award for 2023-24 was accepted and noted.

162.6 To discuss budget forecast and precept requirement for 2024-25

Cllrs were presented with draft budgets looking at 1% and 1.25% increases, despite outside influences of 4% rises. Final approval will be required in January 2024.

Council is aware that principle authorities are capped and there is no guarantee that they will not pass this to T&PCs.

The precept is calculated using the Indicative Band D Council Tax Base provided by NCC. The Town Council has in the past been able to increase the precept without a great impact on the residents due to the number of new houses online. Cllr Carmichael expressed concerns around the town council increasing the precept in the middle of a cost of living crisis.

163.AMENITIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

163.1 To receive the minutes of the Amenities Committee 30 November 2023

¹ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19 (3)

² Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19 (3)

³ Local Government Act 1972, S137

⁴ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19 (3)

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

Cllr Lewis proposed that the minutes were accepted.

Seconded Cllr Parks.

Resolved – The minutes were accepted as a true record.

163.2 To request Councillors to look at town assets in their respective wards and report back regarding condition

NCC are continuing to work through the zone areas however at a faster rate than the staff can carry out the necessary checks. If they wish, Members are to check their areas when work is complete and if possible provide feedback and a photograph of any concerns to the office.

ALL

164: PLANNING COMMITTEE

164.1 December 2023 Planning Outcomes

The planning outcomes were noted. As requested, staff informed local press of the Councils objection to the Northumberland Estates planning application.

Discussion took place as to whether the current procedure for the collation of comments is effective. Members of the planning committee are expected to comment on all planning applications, however those not on the committee are still able to comment should they wish. Cllr Lewis proposed that discussions are to be held with the Chair, Vice Chair of Planning and staff to discuss whether any improvements are needed. Members are urged to respond to all applications. Seconded Cllr Parks and agreed.

PD
DB

164.2 To receive the minutes of Planning Committee held 5th December 2023 if available

Cllr Lewis proposed some minor amendments to the minutes. Cllr Dancer approved the amendments. Resolved: Staff to make amends and publish. The minutes were agreed.

TC

165. AGENDA ITEMS:

165.1 To receive an update on clock tower maintenance and drainage inspection report

Members noted the drainage inspection report and images. No issues to report.

The contractor has been on site to investigate why the clock tower was no longer chiming on the hour. A verbal report from the contractor was given. The issues were rectified, and the clock was given a 2 day run through and no further issues were reported.

The flood light at the front of the Clock Tower remains in need of repair. An electrician is being sought.⁵

TC

165.2 To receive an update on domain registrar if available

The Clerk is seeking a teleconference between ATC and supporting organisations.

TC

165.3 Update on Community Hub if available

There has been no further update to date. Clerk to contact NCC officers.

TC

165.4 To receive an update on the Community Website if available

The logo was amended as per comments from the Council. The website requires additional photographs and also requires information to provide the content. The students are to contact those groups on the Youth Activities leaflet to ascertain up to date information. Members were urged to provide any details of town activities etc.

165.5 To receive an update on Neighbourhood Plan developments and delegate Cllrs to progress

The Chair has signed the Neighbourhood Designation Area. Member support is to be decided and a steering group will be required. As the plan is to be community led, the Clerk

⁵ War Memorials Act 1923 extended 1948, s133

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

to publish a social media post explaining what the plan is to focus on and to seek volunteers to work on the steering group. Clerk to contact ADT with an update.

The Council has been supplied with funding advice however it was noted that this funding expires in March 2024. It was also noted that within the guidance it stated that any unused funding must be returned. Therefore Council decided to proceed with publicity and arrange a meeting in February with the hope of establishing a steering group for the next financial year.

165.6 To discuss improvements on internal email communications

Staff and Councillors were briefed on new email procedures.

165.7 Internal & external communications- to discuss setting up a working party to report on possible ways of improving these.

It was proposed that Council should promote and publicise its actions more frequently and more widely so that the public can be sure that as Council we have their interests at the heart of what we do. A working party was suggested to ascertain what is currently done and how this can be improved and to suggest any new ideas.

Seconded Cllr Parks and agreed.

Membership will consist of Cllrs Carmichael and Parks with the Clerk. A preliminary report is to be provided by 8 February 2024

165.8 To receive an update on D Day arrangements

It is too early to source insurance quotations. Cllr Lewis to contact enactment group. Nearer the time, food vendors are to be approached. Cllr Parks is to produce an information leaflet for the event to provide some background.

165.9 Remembrance Day de-brief and proposal for changes for 2024

Remembrance Day went well with a great turnout. Despite the clock chimes not working, bell chimes were provided by our contractor.

Cllr Lewis proposed to change times that NCC arrive to fix the wreath stands and barriers to 10am rather than 9am. This is due to the fact that there is no longer the need for the gazebo etc which reduced the time spent on site.

Seconded Cllr Weir.

Resolved. Clerk to contact NCC.

165.10 To discuss / agree consent to Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment Programme

Concerns were raised as this area is a closed cemetery. In principle members did not object to the survey however as a caveat to this work it is requested that Council is made aware of when they intend to be on site and that Council receives a copy of the survey results. Concerns were also raised around the depth of the survey. Clerk to seek clarification on this.

165.11 To discuss response to Proposed Parking Restrictions – Acklington Road/Bisley Road, Amble

Members agreed to the extended double yellow lines in this area. Clerk to contact NCC.

165.12 To review the design logo for the Community Website

Discussed item number 165.4.

165.13 To receive an update on CCTV

An initial meeting has taken place with regards to the remedial works needed to the CCTV system⁶. Cllr Lewis proposed that the maintenance schedule is reduced to every 4 months,

⁶ Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s31

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

July, November, March.

Secoded Cllr Parks and agreed.

Resolved: Clerk to contact contractor.

165.14 To respond to Northumberland Local Plan - Open Space Assessment Survey – deadline 22nd December 2023

Members have until Monday 18th December 2023 to provide feedback on the draft content of the assessment.

165.15 To note letter to NCC re Ivy Street and response if available

The response was acknowledged however it was felt it was now too late to respond. It was acknowledged that notes of the Estate Walkabout action points will be circulated in future.

165.16 To delegate attendance at a meeting for interested parties re: parking on Acklington Road, 19 December 2023, 5.00pm, Amble Fire Station.

Cllrs Parks and Bewley were delegated to attend.

165.17 To receive an update on Coble Quay walkway if available

Members acknowledged the previous updated from County Cllrs however did not feel this was adequate.

166. COMMUNICATIONS: RECOMMENDATION - That the Council note or discuss where necessary the items.

166.1 AONB National Landscapes update 15/11, 23/11,

Noted

166.2 CAN Newsletter 23/11, 24/11

Noted

166.3 NALC November 2023

Noted – Members were encouraged to undertake the training on offer and reminded that Council pay for any training needs.

166.4 Anti-Social Behaviour concerns and action taken

Noted.

167. INFORMATION ITEMS AND ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION:

RECOMMENDATION - That the Council note the information items.

167.1 To note the success of the Dovecote Centre arts programme

Noted.

167.2 Update from Northumbria Police 1/11, 2/11, 3/11, 8/11, 14/11, 4/12

Noted.

167.3 To note Chairs attendance to Civic Christmas Carol Service 12 December 2023

Noted.

167.4 To note offer of volunteer hours

Noted.

167.5 To receive notes of the meeting with Russell Gaines and JCSC students re Community Website 20 November 2023

Noted.

167.6 To receive notes of the Partnership Meeting with NCC 21 November 2023.

To follow.

167.7 To note November monthly roundup

Noted

167.8 To note staff leave during the Christmas period

Clerk to circulate.

TC

ALL

DB

IP

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

167.9 To receive notes of meeting with Northumbria Police 29 November 2023 if available

To follow

167.10 To receive an update from the Estate Walkabout 6 December 2023

Noted

168. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

168.1 11 January 2024, Amble Town Council Offices, Fourways2 at 6p.m.

169. DATES FOR DIARIES

169.1 Staff Training - Winning Strategies for the Funding Game – 15 December 2023 – 12noon

169.2 Full Council 11 January 2024, 6.00pm

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: To consider passing the following resolution: That under Section 1(2) the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the agenda due to their sensitive nature.

In accordance with Standing Order 3w, it was proposed and accepted by Members that the meeting duration was extended.

PRIVATE

170: Exempt Report - attached

170.1 RECOMMENDATION – That the Council notes the contents of the report and consider actions where necessary.

The Exempt Report was noted.

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

171.1 To receive the private report of Councillors who represent ATC on outside bodies (Cllr Reports)

Cllr Weir did not attend a meeting of the Amble Development Trust but provided the following feedback:

ADT had received feedback regarding flying the Ukrainian Flag. An Amble Supports Peace flag is to be erected.

Dry Water Arts are looking at a calendar of events and are looking at microvolunteering funding in connection with ADT.

Issues continue around car parking at the Welfare.

Cllr Dancer attended a meeting of Warkworth Parish Council as a private individual. His item in public question time was not moved forward for discussion.

172. AGENDA ITEMS

172.1 To receive a legal update

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – DECEMBER 2023

Draft deed of variation and transfer document

It was queried whether the Council was legally able to do this. It was confirmed that legal advice had been sought throughout the process and Members have repeatedly given their consent for the Chair and the then Vice Chair to work on this and report back on a monthly basis. A synopsis to provide background information to newer Cllrs is being prepared. Clerk to send on completion. Members are to direct questions to Clerk, Cllr Lewis and Cllr Weir.

Members viewed and discussed the outline drawing plans. It was noted that plots 5-6 (4 storey properties) were superseded by plots 1-6. (3 bedroom properties). TC

It was noted that proposed in the drawings are 8x2 bedroom flats and 4x1 bedroom flats and 11x3 bedroom properties.

It was also noted that all matters were reserved in the Design and Access Statement.

Members were asked to consider approving the plans for the outline application.

If Members decided not to proceed the site it is likely that the site would ultimately become a liability for the Council.

A statement has been drafted for residents which outlines the reasons for doing this which includes addressing the desperate need for smaller properties and using the funds to support a community building. The developer would also be granted a right of access to the site which would result in the access road being brought up to a suitable standard, thus improving access to the allotments. AAHS are aware of the plans and have agreed to provide a supporting statement if required.

Cllr Lewis proposed to approve the outline plans.

Seconded by Cllr Morrison.

Members voted to approve the outline plans.

Clerk to discuss an additional one month extension if required with the developer to ensure that adequate time is given to ensure the application meets the deadline.

172.2 To receive an update from HomeGroup

It was noted that ESH expect to be on site for works to the culvert in March 24. TC

172.3 To discuss recommendation from Amenities Committee for additional staff hours to enable plotting of town assets on mapping system.

Cllr Lewis proposed that additional hours were agreed at staff discretion.

Seconded Cllr Dancer and agreed

Clerk to action.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm