

Barbara Ross read a statement to the meeting stating that the move of the Whalton Unit would be a great loss to the community particularly those who are most vulnerable as the facilities in the Wansbeck hospital were not as good as not all rooms were ensuite and transport would be an issue. She stated that the lack of public consultation was not acceptable. She asked if the Town Council would support the petition to stop the move permanently.

Alistair Turnbull stated his concerns regarding the alternative transport provision and whether it would be tailored to visiting times? He also raised concerns with the rising population of Morpeth and the impact this would have on any future services.

Brian Kipling stated that he felt let down by the Northumberland Health Trust as in 2007 they stated that the third floor of the health centre would be reinforced for future use and this had not happened. The Whalton unit could have been transferred there. He raised concerns over the lack of transport and free parking as well as having to pay for the television in Wansbeck hospital.

Jan Clark read a letter from Dr James Lunn a former Morpeth GP who raised concerns over the transfer of the centre becoming permanent he stated that he felt the statement released to the public was misleading.

Chris Hall raised issues regarding the statistics produced in the press release. She would like some clarity on how these were produced and what is meant by the Morpeth area what does this include? She also asked if the free transport would be means tested?

Cllr Bawn invited the guest to reply to the question raised by members of the public.

Claire Riley and Dr. Jeremy Rushmer stated that they understood the concerns raised and made the following statements in answer to the concerns raised:

- A long term staff consultation has been ongoing for a number of months however the Trust were making the temporary changes due to the reduced level of staffing at the unit. This is reaching a critical level due to staff leaving and long term sickness. There is a national shortage in doctors and nurses which has had a direct impact on the recruitment at the unit.
- The long term future of the location of the unit would be reviewed next year
- The transport would be free to anyone needing it and would not be means tested.
- They would look into the possibility of providing free t.v however free parking would probably not be possible as the Trust had to be fair and equitable to all patients.
- The unit is being transferred completely with all the staff in existence which is what the staff had requested.

- Not all the facilities at Wansbeck are ensuite however these are NHS beds and not private or residential facilities. They would endeavour to provide private facilities where possible to those in most need.
- The relocation of the unit would have benefits as the patients would have onsite specialist services which are not currently available in the unit. At present patients may have to wait up to six days for transport to go to a hospital for diagnosis.
- The service is not a cut it is a relocation
- The decision to hold a public consultation on the move would lie with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Trust prided itself on the outstanding rated care it provided to all patients and it wanted to maintain that standard at all times.
- Anyone who had any questions or queries could email them to the Town Council and these would be forwarded to the Trust for an answer.

Cllr R Wearmouth advised that anyone wanting to raise the issue should write to the Cllr Jeff Watson Chair of Overview and Scrutiny at NCC or alternatively raise the issues through the Local Area Forum where these types of issues could be addressed as the Town Council has no decision making powers with regards to this issue.

A long discussion took place with the Councilors regarding all of the points raised.

The Chair thanked the guests for attending and answering the questions raised he reiterated that any further questions could be email to the Town Council on info@morpeth-tc.gov.uk and these will be passed to the Trust for answers.

The meeting was suspended at 7.35pm for a 5-minute break while the guests and members of the public left the meeting.

206/18 **Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 7th November 2018**

The minutes of the above meetings were approved as a true record.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee be approved, and signed as a correct record by the chair.

207/18 **Matters Arising**

Cllr A Tebbutt advised that he had the Aldermen's contact details and would pass those to the Clerk so that they could be added to the Remembrance Day parade list.

208/18 Authorisation of Payments

The payment lists for December 2018 was circulated for consideration.

RESOLVED

- (i) That members agreed the payment list for December 2018, totalling £82,053.08.

209/18 Updates from Working Groups

a. Parish Boundary Working Group

Cllr R Wearmouth informed members that the maps which will be included in an information leaflet for residents of Hebron Parish Council have been completed and a leaflet explaining the possibility of boundary changes would be distributed shortly. No leaflet will be distributed in Mitford as the proposals do not affect any residents. Hepscoth Parish Council do not any further engagement in the process.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

b. In Bloom Working Group

Members were provided with the notes of the In Bloom Working Group meeting from 13th November 2018. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting with Dobbies had proved to be a success and they have confirmed they wish to be involved in the Inbloom entry. Planting details need to be worked out and a further meeting will take place once this has been completed. The Clerk advised Members that she has received a letter from Northumbria in Bloom inviting Morpeth to be the Northumberland representative in the Britain InBloom, Best Town competition for 2019.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) That the Town enter the National Inbloom competition.

c. Morpeth Partnership Working Group

The Clerk advised that a short debrief meeting following the Christmas light switch on event had taken place. The Partnership met to discuss the internal communication issues raised prior to the switch on. A full meeting will take place in January to discuss in detail the feedback received from businesses and the public as well as the future direction of the partnership.

Cllr Best asked if GMDT would be invited back into the partnership. A discussion took place regarding the history of their departure from the partnership.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) That GMDT would need to approach the partnership if they wished to rejoin.

d. Morpeth Forum

Cllr R Wearmouth advised that lots of discussions are still taking place regarding the future of the Chantry and Leisure provision in the town. An update will be given to the public in the first quarter of 2019. This will take place in the Town hall and will follow the same format as the other events.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

210/18

Budget 2019/20

Members were provided for consideration with the second draft budget for 2019/20. Cllr Tebbutt raised a number of questions regarding the reduction in 2019/2020 budget provision for some services such as the community centres, toilets, subsidies, major items and earmarked reserves (EMR). The Clerk advised that the reduction in budget at the community centres and toilets was due to the new ways of contract provision which has reduced costs. The subsidy budget has reduced slightly due to one group no longer requiring the money and the reduction in EMR is due to the completion of the parks regeneration programme which has taken place throughout the year. The clerk will check the reduction in major item spend.

No further capital growth items have been identified.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) That the Clerk checks the reduction in major item spend.

211/18

Allotment Charges 2020/21

The Clerk advised members that allotment holders are required to receive a years' notice of the proposed allotment charges; therefore, members were asked to approve the allotment charges for 2020/21.

The Clerk advised that there had been a significant increase in water bills due to the hot summer. Members discussed the need for a rise and the development of new allotment plots at East Riding.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the bills be increased by £2 per annum and that the allotment charges for East Riding will be discussed once the plots were ready.

212/18

Small Grant Application

Members were asked to consider a Small Grant application from the Morpeth Rotary Club. The Clerk advised that the Rotary Club are leading on this as community project and would like to receive funding from a number of organisations to achieve this. Members thought this was an excellent idea and fully supported the project.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the grant be approved

A vote was taken: 7 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

213/18

Property and Assets Update

Members were provided for information with an update on Town Council property and assets. Cllr R Wearmouth advised that he is currently in discussions with NCC's Sec 151 Officer with regards to possible funding for Storey Park.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted

214/18

CCTV

Cllr Tebbutt gave an update of the meetings of the working group. Cllr Hogg advised that detailed quotes were received from three companies however, only one company provided ongoing maintenance. The working group met with the contractor to view the quality of the images and to discuss the technical specification. The working group are recommending that the contract be awarded based on quality, price and the provision of an ongoing maintenance contract. NCC are in the process of checking the lampposts for suitability and the possible use of the leisure centre roof to enhance the signal.

Cllr Bawn advised that the Chamber of Trade had not made a decision on supporting the project and this would not happen until their January 2019 meeting. Cllr Hogg requested that the project be brought forward and started as soon as practicable.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted
- (ii) That the project be started as soon as practicable.

215/18

Local Council Issues

There were no issues raised on this occasion.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

Members unanimously agreed that the following resolution be passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting, to discuss the following item in closed session:

Exclusion of Press and Public - Council members are invited to consider passing the following Resolution:

"That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the disclosure of the following items on the agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of schedule 12A in the 1972 Act as indicated below."

Issues concerning: Staffing

There was no other business to discuss and the meeting concluded at 20.30pm with Councillors D Bawn, A Tebbutt, Best, Gebhard, Hogg, Wearmouth and R Wearmouth present.