

Morpeth Town Council
Minutes of the Full Council Committee Meeting
Wednesday 25th September 2019
at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber of Morpeth Town Council

<u>Present:</u>	Councillors: A Byard D Bawn N Bawn N Best D Herne A Tebbutt R Thompson J Wearmouth R Wearmouth	- Mayor
	Clerks: Mrs T Bell Miss K Carter	- Town Clerk - Democratic Services Assistant
Absent Councillors:	Councillor L Cassie Councillor J Gebhard Councillor R Hogg Councillor K Holmes Councillor J Parreira Councillor J Tebbutt	- Apologies Received (Holiday) - Apologies Received (Personal) - Apologies Received (Business) - Apologies Received (Business) - Apologies Received (Personal) - Apologies Received (Illness)

114/19 **Mayoral Announcements**

- The Mayor's Ball will take place on Saturday 14th December 2019. Tickets are now sold out.
- A Community Resilience Volunteer refresher session will take place Thursday 26th September 2019. The bus will leave the Town Hall at 1pm to visit the dam at Mitford, a short training session will follow at the Town Hall.
- The Clerk informed members of the results of Northumbria in Bloom:
 - Morpeth won gold and was the overall winner in the town category
 - Abbeyfields School won gold and overall winner in the category
 - St Christopher's Care Home won silver gilt
 - Dobbies Garden Centre won gold
 - New Life Christian Centre won silver gilt
 - The Waterford Lodge won silver
 - Carlisle Park won gold
 - Sanderson Arcade and the Chamber of Trade won gold and was joint overall winner of their category

- Morpeth Bowling Club win silver
 - Morpeth Bus Station won gold
 - Raymond Dixon was awarded the Community Champion award
- The Mayor thanked the staff and the community for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

115/19 Mayoral Diary

Members were provided with the schedule of events to be attended by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor from September 2019 to May 2020.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

116/19 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman received the following declarations of interest on this occasion:

Cllr D Bawn – Community Asset Transfer – (Personal Interest – Northumberland County Council (NCC) Councillor)

Cllr R Wearmouth – Community Asset Transfer – (Personal Interest – NCC Councillor)

117/19 Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public present on this occasion.

118/19 Northumbria Police

Inspector John Swan and PC Yolandie Scott were in attendance to provide answers to the issues and concerns raised, see appendix A.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted
- (ii) The Clerk to circulate contact information for local officers to all councillors.

Inspector John Swan and PC Yolandie Scott left the meeting at 7:20pm

119/19 Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 17th July 2019

The minutes of the above meeting was approved as a true record.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) That the Minutes of 17th July 2019, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved, and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

120/19 Matters Arising from Full Council Committee Meeting on 17th July 2019

There were no matters arising on this occasion.

121/19 Items Referred from Other Committees and Working Groups

Planning & Transport

(i) 19/03146/FUL The Joiners Arms, Wansbeck Street, Morpeth

Members were requested to consider if they have any comments to the above application.

A discussion took place and members agreed to submit the following comment:

Morpeth Town Council welcome the provision of guest homes to the town, however, have several concerns:

- As long as the applicant can ensure that guests will only use the car park overnight and not during the day Morpeth Town Council have no concerns.
- The Town Council are concerned that the kitchen extension is on the boundary of the neighbours and are concerned it will affect their amenity.
- The Town Council are concerned that the dormer windows may overlook private property and would suggest that if this is the case to consider frosted glass in the windows.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) To submit the above comments to the NCC Planning department.

122/19 External Audit

Members were provided with the external auditor's report for consideration and approval.

Members were asked to accept and approve the external auditors report.

A vote was taken: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the External Audit

123/19 Community Asset Transfer

Members were provided with the attached report for discussion, see appendix B.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) That Council approve the Community Asset Transfer of the Bowling Pavilion in Carlisle Park along with Storey Park and St James Community Centres subject to the transfer of funding from NCC and an affordable detailed tender specification.
- (iii) That the Clerk obtains the appropriate surveys and professional advice and guidance to submit a Full planning application at the earliest opportunity.
- (iv) That the Finance and General Purposes Committee have delegated authority to scrutinise the project and approve the finance with the aim of delivering a successful project.
- (v) Community engagement is carried out with user groups.

A vote was taken: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Cllrs D Bawn and R Wearmouth declared Personal Interests in this matter, see Min 116/19.

124/19 Representatives on Outside Bodies

Members were provided for information with the Outside Organisation reports.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

125/19 Strategic County Councillor Updates

Members were provided for information with the County Councillor updates.

Cllr Best informed members that the three priorities submitted for the Local Transport Plan had been sent back by NCC

Cllr Byard advised that the speed sign at Abbey Meadows had been installed that morning 25th September 2019.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.
- (ii) The Deputy Clerk to circulate the list to all councillors for them to prioritise, the top three will be submitted to NCC for consideration.

126/19 Local Council Issues

Cllr Herne raised concerns regarding fly tipping in Stobhill.

Cllr R Wearmouth advised Cllr Herne to contact the County Councillor for that area in the first instance.

RESOLVED

- (i) Information duly noted.

The meeting concluded at 7:36pm with Councillors A Byard, D Bawn, N Bawn, N Best, D Herne, R Thompson, A Tebbutt, J Wearmouth and R Wearmouth.

Questions / Issues Raised with Northumbria Police

- The Council would like to understand the short, medium and long term strategies for dealing with the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues in the town particularly in Stobhill.

Leaflets have been dropped off by Karbon Homes in this area containing a telephone number for residents to ring if they have concerns regarding antisocial behaviour. A team will attend and be able to supply a witness statement, keeping the resident anonymous. No requests have been made to date.

Survey leaflets have also been distributed by the NCC Community Safety department to residents on Shields Road and Jobling Crescent. Seven have been returned so far. Police are in contact with St Aidan's Church to set up a 'Hot Chocolate Club' on a Friday evening to engage with children and build positive relationships.

Work will continue in the area and patrols will be stepped up for the October half term, Halloween and Bonfire Night.

- Councillors have reported several incidents and have requested individual dispersal orders for the offenders. We would like you to look into curfews etc. for the persistent offenders

Dispersal orders have been obtained for the Stobhill area, these allow police to remove offenders from an area for a maximum of forty-eight hours at a time. No further reports have been received when the orders have been in place.

Curfews cannot be implemented without identification of a substantial criminal offence.

- There are many wider causes of ASB, but Stobhill in particular has a huge culture of drug use. There are dealers who live in the area, open drug taking, discarded needles and the perception is that nothing is being done. What measures are being putting in place to tackle the root causes?

No intelligence has been received regarding drug supply and use. Mobile patrols are being conducted and stop/search can be actioned if necessary. The NCC Safety department have not been contacted regarding the clean-up of discarded needles. Residents must report any issues with discarded needles to NCC, who can then feed this information on to the police.

Police are looking to work with schools to educate children about drugs before it becomes an issue.

- There is an issue with car drivers, mainly young, who speed around in the evenings with very noisy exhausts - what actions they are being taken to stop this problem?

A Section 59 order has been issued in the leisure centre area to discourage ASB and reckless driving. These orders apply to both the driver and the vehicle so that a pattern can be identified.

Several cars have been uplifted in the Stobhill area for having no insurance, removing them from the roads.

- Given the government's intentions to increase spending on policing, what increases in coverage of Morpeth can we expect?

Northumbria Police is undergoing a restructure. There will be twice as many 24/7 Inspectors on duty at a time who will deal with specific areas. This means that Morpeth will be patrolled better during peak times.

- As the Council has paid a considerable amount of money on CCTV are the police reacting to what is picked up on the new CCTV cameras? Are they being used proactively?

Northumbria Police would like to thank everyone that was involved in the procurement and installation of the CCTV and complimented the excellent quality of the images. Although the CCTV is not monitored 24/7 it is extremely useful to review to identify offenders and their associated offences.

Mobile phone and private CCTV footage may be used as evidence; however, Northumbria Police highly recommend that the footage is not uploaded to social media as this may weaken the case.

Community Asset Transfer Update

1. Background

- 1.1. Storey Park and St James Community Centres are community assets located near the centre of Morpeth, and are currently leased to Morpeth Town Council. The Bowls Pavilion and surrounding outdoor space in Carlisle Park is managed by Active Northumberland who have a lease until the summer of 2020.
- 1.2. All these buildings are all currently owned by NCC however, Morpeth Town Council are seeking freehold ownership of the Centres, pavilion and the surrounding playing field and through a Community Asset Transfer subject to a substantial financial contribution from NCC.
- 1.3. It is accepted that a refurbishment of Storey Park would not deliver a cost effective solution because of the original construction standard and the current poor state of the building. It would be more cost effective to demolish and rebuild the building rather than try to refurbish it, however, a rebuild would be circa £1 million.
- 1.4. St James Community Centre is in need of substantial remedial building works to bring the building up to standard. The centre could be modernised with the removal of the stage and the backstage storage area. The space could be turned into an additional meeting / community area with interconnecting doors which could be pulled back to expand the overall space. The centre needs to be insulated to help save energy and reduce the running costs of the building. Having two rooms would also potentially increase income.
- 1.5. Both centres currently have an average usage rate of approximately 22%, largely due to their poor condition. The running costs of Storey Park are higher, due to the original construction standard, and the net income therefore lower. Continuing to run two rundown underutilised centres no longer makes economic sense.
- 1.6. It is therefore proposed that the suggested building improvements be completed at St James Community Centre, (see attached plan) with bookings transferred to Storey Park whilst the work is carried out. Once this work is completed Storey Park Community Centre will be closed and demolished. It is hoped that all the bookings will be transferred to the newly refurbished St James Centre, however there may be some bookings lost due to an unavoidable clash in times. Alternatively, these could be accommodated in the newly refurbished County Hall or Goose Hill School public space areas which will be available for hire from later in 2019.
- 1.7. Storey Park site will be cleared and the car park will be resurfaced. The surrounding field will be maintained as open space by the Town Council; the site is already fenced giving a secure playing and exercise area. The playing field is currently used by one football team, however, the recently completed Playing Field Strategy shows that this is surplus to the towns requirements as there are other facilities available in this part of the town.
- 1.8. The carpark will be available for visitors of the playing field and surrounding neighbourhood where parking is a problem. Further improvement could be made in the future depending on the community use, demand and funding.

- 1.9. The Bowling Pavilion in Carlisle Park is currently underutilised; the only regular visitors are the bowling team who use the premises for part of the year, the building is dated and would require significant refurbishment to bring it up to modern day standards. This was highlighted by Castle Morpeth Borough Council through their Castles, Woods and Water report (circa 2004) which outlined that the facilities needed significant investment.
- 1.10. The Council's ambition is to have the building remodelled and extended to make use of the riverside views and incorporating a café which would be open all year round. (See attached plan) A separate meeting room would be retained, which could be used for a number of different activities. It will also be available for hire to generate income to sustain the building.
- 1.11. The external area would also be upgraded to make the most of the currently underused space. This would involve extending the café outside so families and dog walkers can enjoy the facilities year round. The underused tennis court could be converted to a MUGA which again would be hired to generate income to help sustain the facilities; there is some opportunity to extend the skate park. The proposals are all subject to costs.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. The Council formally applied to NCC for a Community Asset Transfer in July 2019 of the Bowling Pavilion in Carlisle Park along with both Storey Park and St James Community Centres.
- 2.2. NCC agreed to increase their initial offer of £250,000 (not including the £50,000 demolition costs for Storey Park which would be carried out by NCC and would not be included in the capital receipt of £350,000) to £350,000.
- 2.3. This was formally considered and approved at NCC on Tuesday 10th September 2019.
- 2.4. The estimated costs for the refurbishment of St James is approx. £160,000 and Bowling Pavilion will cost approx. £300,000. These are estimated costs and are subject to a tender exercise where the actual costs will be finalised.
- 2.5. The three County Councillors for Morpeth have indicated that they are willing to put money (approx. £50,000) from their small schemes allowance into this worthwhile project which will serve the whole community.
- 2.6. The Town Council will utilise money in the current and 2020/21 budget to enable the full refurbishment of both the Pavilion and St James.

Recommendation:

- (i) That Council approve the Community Asset Transfer of the Bowling Pavilion in Carlisle Park along with Storey Park and St James Community Centres subject to the transfer of funding from NCC and an affordable detailed tender specification.

- (ii) That the Clerk obtains the appropriate surveys and professional guidance to enable a Full Planning Application to be submitted at the earliest opportunity.
- (iii) That the Finance and General Purposes Committee have delegated authority to scrutinise the project and approve the finance with the aim of delivering a successful project.