

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 2009 at 7 pm at St Bartholomew's Church Centre.

PRESENT:

Councillors: W Rogers (Chair)
M Boon
M Cholerton
R McReady
A Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE:

D Francis, Clerk
S Finch, Local Councils' Development Officer, Community Action
Northumberland
47 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

Issues raised during the open session included:

- The poor state of the roads at Manor Court, which have not been completed to a sufficiently high standard by the developer to allow adoption by the County Council; the Chair said this was a matter for the County Council but would raise it on residents' behalf;
- The issue of parking in Gibson Street, related to the doctor's surgery and dental practice; an entrance from Link Road would alleviate the problem. Councillor Thompson said that this had been proposed to the Area Health Authority; prior to April 2009 there had been a land ownership issue, but this matter could now be re-considered as the County Council was the successor landowner.
- Newbiggin Parents' Forum raised the problem of transporting 11, 12 and 13 year-old children to the new Northumberland Church of England Academy; parents were very strongly of the view that free transport should be provided, especially as a precedent was in place elsewhere in the county. Councillor Thompson advised that free transport would not be provided by the County Council, but the Parish Council could consider under-writing the cost of providing transport, the organisation of which would need to be the responsibility of parents. Following a proposal by members, the Chair asked that an Extraordinary meeting be held to consider the matter of free transport, and that it should follow a meeting of the Parents Forum which was to be held on 16 September.
- It was suggested that public attendees at Parish Council meetings should be invited to sign an attendance list and provide, if they wished, an email contact address to enable minutes and agendas to be sent to them on a regular basis.

- Clarification was sought on items in the 'Courier' referring to the 'status' of Newbiggin; it was noted that 'status' referred to the matter of 'secondary status' in relation to economic development issues; the issue on the present agenda related to 'style' in the sense of how the Council chose to be described. It was further clarified that notes of the Council's last meeting, which had appeared on a Newbiggin website, had not been provided by anyone associated with the Parish Council.
- The requirement to make any decisions relating to expenditure by the Parish Council at a public meeting; it was clarified by the Proper Officer that local councils were entitled to hold informal working group meetings that were not open to the press or public but that any recommendations by such groups required to be brought to a public meeting before decisions could be made.
- The proposals for developments at the Centre Club were raised and concern expressed that they had not been discussed by the Council; the Chair agreed the plans would be looked at again.
- The Chair agreed to visit the area around Newbiggin Colliery, to see at first hand the problems being experienced with environmental issues, and where there was still no provision of floral displays at the colliery entrance.

CO28/09 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Anderson, Kirkup and Peden.

CO29/09 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

CO30/09 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There was no disclosure of interests.

CO31/09 4. DOG BANNING ORDER/DOG FOULING – MAIN BAY, NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA

The Chair suspended Standing Orders to invite members of the public to speak.

The view was expressed that the total dog ban on the beach should be reviewed, since it was not being adequately enforced where the bye-law was being contravened, and the ban was deterring visitors to the village and its beach. A partial ban, such as those in place elsewhere on Northumberland's coast, would better meet the needs both of residents and visitors.

RESOLVED: The Council to review the current dog-ban, and if it was agreed that in the light of the facts and views expressed the ban should be changed, establish whether and how this could be achieved.

CO32/09 5. REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL STATUS

The Clerk advised members that the Parish Council could, by resolution, adopt a different 'style' and be known as a Town Council. This effected no change to the structure, powers or status of the council.

Some members expressed the view that by being styled Town Council, Newbiggin could attract a wider range of funds for regeneration.

RESOLVED: Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Parish Council to be styled Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Town Council.

CO33/09 6. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND USE

The Chair reported that informal negotiations had begun for the Town Council to have office and meeting space at Bank House Cottage; the Council had been offered the option of a two year lease at £1000 per annum.

RESOLVED: (i) Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Town Council to enter formal negotiations for office premises at Bank House Cottage; and (ii) Councillors Boon and Rogers to be signatories on behalf of the Council to any documents as required.

The Clerk confirmed that as temporary Proper Officer he was able to authorise any formal agreements on behalf of the Council.

CO34/09 7. PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION IN NEWBIGGIN

Members noted the progress to provide temporary facilities at the golf course, and Cresswell Arms, which were intended to remain in place until good town centre facilities could be made available. It was hoped that the Council could in due course consider acquiring a centrally located property which could accommodate toilet facilities, some commercial premises and a Tourist Information Centre.

Members asked that recognition be given to the Newbiggin Ladies Tuesday Group petition, which had helped progress the repairs to the toilets near the golf course.

CO35/09 8. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING PROVISION

It was noted that the Council would investigate seasonal lighting provision in Newbiggin, with a view to considering assisting in the supply of lights.

Councillor Thompson reported that former expenditure by

Wansbeck on seasonal lighting would be maintained for the current year only by Northumberland County Council, but no arrangements had been discussed for allocating this among the new local councils.

RESOLVED: The Council to consider proposals for improving seasonal light provision, and to allocate £500 immediately as a provisional budget, to be considered and reviewed at a future meeting.

CO36/09 9. TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Clerk reported that BDO Stoy Hayward had been appointed auditors to the Council.

A letter had been received from the County Council encouraging local councils to log into the Keep Britain Tidy website with a view to adopting some of the ideas.

The Boundary Committee of the Electoral Commission was seeking views on some proposed changes to electoral arrangements for Parish Councils; no changes appeared to be proposed which would affect Newbiggin-by-the-Sea.

Attention was drawn to the development adjacent to the Co-Operative Store and whether planning requirements had been correctly met; Councillor Boon would investigate.

The scope of the Newbiggin Gardens Competition was queried, in particular eligibility of people who had allotments but were resident outside the council area.

CO37/09 10.DATE OF NEXT MEETING

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Friday 18 September at 6 pm at St Bartholomew's Church Centre.

The next ordinary Council Meeting would be held on Wednesday 11 November 2009 at the Sports Centre at 7 pm

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....