

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2010 at 7 pm at the Sailing Club Newbiggin.

PRESENT:

Councillors: W Rogers (Chair)
L Anderson M Kirkup
M Boon R Mc Cready
M Cholerton A Thompson

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE:

9 members of the public and 1 member of the press
Representatives of Scottish Power; Alcan UK; Wansbeck Life; SN Radio Group

OPEN SESSION

The Chairman advised that the agenda was being varied so that the members of the public could be given an opportunity to raise questions concerning the presentations.

CO84/09 LYNEMOUTH WINDFARM PROJECT

The Chairman welcomed Andy Lewin (Scottish Power Construction Project Manager) Martin Mathers (Community Relations Manager) Jennifer Snelson (Alcan UK) Bob Stephenson (Wansbeck Life) to give a presentation regarding the windfarm project.

The project for 13 turbines 120 metres in height on land to the west of Alcan between Ashington and Lynemouth but partly within Newbiggin Parish boundary had planning consent and some noise conditions were being varied for consistency across the development. A site start in July was anticipated for the erection of the turbines and individualised sub-station and office but all anchorage would be underground. Installation and distribution connections were anticipated in May 2011. It was explained that there would be no effect on residential properties from any noise and the county central planning team had responsibility for the planning conditions.

Once commissioned the project would provide community benefit of £4000 for each of the three turbines located in Newbiggin Parish for 25 years and similarly for Ashington. This would be administered and distributed through Wansbeck Life and would be available as match funding and for joint projects for local benefit. An offer of community benefit had also been made by Scottish Power to the Lynemouth Ellington Linton area although there was no obligation.

Councillors and members of the public raised a number of queries regarding the possible effect of noise making comparison with the single turbine at Wansbeck

Hospital and on tourism in the area. The Team reassured the meeting that there was no evidence of adverse impact from windfarms and that the turbines were significantly quieter now but that they would return if any problems became apparent. There would be a traffic management plan; information boards would be provided and hopefully a positive impact on tourism.

The financial provisions of the community benefit were set in a contract between the former Wansbeck Council and Scottish Power and were index linked. The Chief Executive of Wansbeck Life explained that it was in recognition of the social environmental and economic impact for the community and that they would be seeking input for the mechanism for assessment of projects to benefit from the decisions of appointed local representatives.

The Team was thanked for the update and offered to return to a future meeting.

CO85/09 SOUTH NORTHUMBERLAND RADIO GROUP

Colin Heathcote Chairman of the South Northumberland Radio Group was invited to address the meeting regarding the project for the establishment of a community radio station.

This project was being undertaken by volunteers with community radio experience and was seeking contributions to funding of £60,000 to undertake two four week experimental broadcasts to establish the need and success to meet the Licensing Authority's requirements. It offered an opportunity to be accessible to all in the area which had a population of 160,000 to overcome apathy by providing an instant medium for local issues and obtain feedback.

South Northumberland was served by only one free newspaper and advertising would raise up to 50% of operating costs with a Station Manager and volunteers operating from premises in Bedlington available for three years rent free. All were experienced in community and hospital radio and while start up costs were higher than the projected running costs three employees would be required.

The members thanked Mr Heathcote for the informative presentation.

CO86/09 The following issues were raised by members of the public present at the meeting:

- A local business-lady was keen to be involved in efforts to attract people into the town and enquired into the possibilities of a market; annual fair and entertainment being provided. A number of initiatives were in the planning stages by existing groups including entertainment; community dance; food and drink based event; the annual Summer Arts Fair and the Town Council was investigating the possibility of a farmers' market.
- A member of the public asked whether the Town Council had agreed to fund uniforms for the brass band. This had not yet been considered although a grants process was about to be agreed and application forms and details should be available from the following day.

- In view of the report that Ashington Town Council was to take over the responsibility of public conveniences scheduled to be closed by the county council a member of the public wanted to know if there were any implications for Newbiggin. In the coming financial year these services in Newbiggin would not be affected.
- The advertising board in the town centre was likely to be affected by the immanent regeneration works and the Town Council was also looking into the possibility of locating one near to its office.
- It was anticipated that the Town Council web site should be available in a few weeks.
- The Chairman gave an update on the issue of missing signs from the promenade regarding dog fouling. Following MAFF involvement the county council had advised that they would be replaced in 4/5 weeks.

CO87/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were given on behalf of Councillor Peden.

CO88/09 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2010 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

CO89/09 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Boon declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8 as Secretary of the Allotment Association and Councillors Anderson and Rogers as allotment holders.

CO90/09 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee held on 02 February 2010 outlined the matters considered and recommended their acceptance. Each item was considered in turn.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Finance Committee be approved and accepted

CO91/09 PLANNING CONSULTATION – GRACE DARLING CAMPUS

The Town Clerk reported on the application submitted to the planning authority Northumberland County Council for a new primary school and nursery at the site of the Grace Darling Campus. A number of plans and documents had been provided relating to the development of the existing Middle School site although no outline application had been made.

Members considered that there were a number of issues to be addressed and it was noted that the application had to be assessed on planning criteria not educational issues. There were two major overlapping planning issues regarding the application those of location and community integration.

It was considered that the proposed site was too remote from most of the village for the age range of 3 to 11 year old children and prevented proper integration into the community. There were very good facilities now but only one multi-use sports hall was included in the development with no changing facilities. A central location near to the sports centre would play a major part in the community aspect.

A member advised that the town had previously had five schools and the oldest ones had survived well and the Town Council and County Council had to get this matter right. A more traditional building was required providing proper integration into the community with late night use. A new school development was welcomed but it had to be incorporated into the strategic plan for the town not remote to it and presently it was sited in the wrong place.

There were detailed observations regarding the proposed orientation of the building; access arrangements; carbon footprint; materials and maintenance and self sufficiency in respect of the current proposals.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council object to the development of the new school at this site and submit its observations regarding the detailed matters outlined.

Councillor Boon declared a personal and prejudicial interest and withdrew during consideration of the following item.

CO92/09 ALLOTMENTS

Members were invited to confirm the arrangements for management of the allotment sites in the town through the Newbiggin Allotment Association as previously discussed. The Town Clerk referred to difficulties in obtaining accurate documentation in respect of the two sites but progress needed to be made in view of the transfer of arrangements from the county council on 1st April.

The former Wansbeck Council and Alcan the freeholder of the Colliery site had agreed a wayleave with Northumbrian Water for a surface water sewer from the Gentoo development along the access track.

In order to assist funding applications for improvements to the scout hut at the Spital site it either needed to be excluded from the Association lease and leased direct or a sub-lease authorised.

The Town Clerk also sought authorisation for the execution of deeds and documents.

RESOLVED that

(1) the lease to the Allotment Association be renewed;

(2) a sub-lease of the scout hut be approved or if required by funders its exclusion from the Association lease and a direct lease be authorised;

(3) the wayleave for the sewer be approved; and

(4) Deeds and Documents be executed by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and the Town Clerk.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....