

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12 May 2010 at 7 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Newbiggin.

PRESENT:

Councillors: R Mc Cready (Mayor)

L Anderson
M Boon
M Cholerton
M Kirkup

M Peden
W Rogers
A Thompson

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE:

10 members of the public and 1 member of the press

Councillor W Rogers in the Chair

OPEN SESSION

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

- A member of the public queried when the web site for the Town Council would be up and running. Once registration was confirmed it was anticipated that the site would be available by the time of the next council meeting.
- Reference was made to the policy of the Finance Committee regarding the small grants scheme in relation to the sporting grant approved at the last meeting. It was explained that these items related to separate budgets and the policy applied only to the small grants.
- It was reported that KEAP Creative had now handed back the keys for Woodhorn Church to the county council and formal thanks were extended to the Mayor Will Rogers and county councillor Jim Lang for their help. The artists were looking at options for studio space and an approach had been made to English Heritage in view of its places of worship and churches budget but while Woodhorn was already on its casebook it would not be getting directly involved.
- A query was raised regarding the annual accounts and omission of the payment for Remembrance Day. The Town Clerk explained that this was a peculiarity of

the accounts process where donations were separately accounted from expenditure in connection with the event. The Town Council had made a donation but the wreaths had been purchased by a Councillor.

- An update was requested regarding the position of dogs on the beach. As yet the formal consultation to be undertaken by Northumberland County Council had not been launched.
- A request for signage to the Arts Centre had been anticipated and it was indicated that this would be provided in writing.
- A member of the public referred to the town bus service “little white bus” operated by Phoenix and the reported withdrawal of the service following removal of the NCC subsidy which was described as a disgraceful cut affecting the elderly in particular. It was confirmed that this had been one of the cuts made in the budget but that officers were investigating alternatives that may include ‘Dial-a Ride’. Enquiries were being made of the Community Transport Officer.

References were also made to new timetables shortly to be put into operation and the reduction in bus services to Newcastle via Woodhorn Road.

C001/10 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED that Councillor Rebecca McCready be elected Mayor and Chairman of the Town Council for the year 2010/2011.

C002/10 MAYOR’S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was made and signed by Councillor McCready.

Councillor McCready in the Chair.

C003/10 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED that Councillor Lorna Anderson be elected Deputy Mayor and Vice-Chairman of the Town Council for the year 2010/2011.

C004/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received all members being present.

C005/10 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2010 were agreed and signed as a correct record. The Boundary Committee would not be pursuing the parish ward

boundary issue under the Electoral Review and this would have to be considered by the county council in due course.

C006/10 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

C007/10 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Council considered the report of the Internal Auditor as set out in Appendix 1. While there was nothing to formally draw attention to recommendations regarding budgetary control insurance tendering and internal audit visits would all be taken on board.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Report be accepted.

C008/10 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENT FOR 2009/2010

The Town Clerk advised members that the Accounts for the financial year 2009/2010 had been completed and audited and were currently available for inspection by the public as required by the legislation.

The Final Accounts and Balance Sheet were attached at Appendix 2 for members' consideration together with the Accounting statements set out in Appendix 3 which had to be endorsed by the Town Council and signed by the Chairman prior to submission to the External Auditors.

RESOLVED that the Final Accounts Balance Sheet and Accounting Statements for 2009/2010 be agreed.

C009/10 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Members were advised that a further requirement of the audit process was that an Annual Governance Statement was incorporated in the Annual Return having been considered and approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk. A draft statement had been attached at Appendix 4 for members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the Town Council approve the Annual Governance Statement.

C010/10 REVIEW OF NORTHUMBERLAND PARISH CHARTER FOR LOCAL SERVICES

The report referred to a review of the Charter for local services put in place between Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC). The Town Clerk explained that the Charter was intended to be a framework for developing and enhancing the relationship between NCC and the local councils in Northumberland.

There were three main areas of the Charter to consider; consultation arrangements; local service provision to be transferred from NCC to local councils; and more significant services that NCC may devolve to local councils under service level agreements when the capacity had been established. The range of services was set out in the report.

It was stated that the transfer of services was about local communities taking the lead and looking after themselves but the concern over the accuracy and integrity of costs to be applied to parish and town council areas needed to be addressed at an early stage. Members felt that accurate information regarding costs; service levels and liabilities should be built into the Charter and wanted to negotiate a positive conclusion. Greater flexibility over transfer dates of individual services should be sought along with clarification of issues regarding closed burial grounds; parks; playing fields and memorials.

During discussion it was noted that the Trees and Bees initiative had been launched in Newbiggin and six cherry trees had been acquired to be planted on the green area near the Arts Centre.

The Town Clerk gave an explanation of the position regarding possible members' conflicts of interest between county council and town council interests.

Local councils could not be compelled to take a transfer of services and what was required was further negotiation of the Charter in the right spirit for an attractive vibrant sustainable community.

RESOLVED that the above views be put forward to NALC and NCC as part of the review of the Parish Charter.

C011/10 MODEL STANDING ORDERS

New model Standing Orders had been developed by the National Association of Local Councils and it was suggested that a Working Group be formed to consider the detail.

RESOLVED that Councillors Anderson Cholerton and Rogers be appointed to the Working Group.

C012/10 SPORTING AND RECREATION SERVICES – NCC CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk reported on consultations taking place regarding future planning for sporting and recreation services and open space.

Strategic Leisure, a Leisure Management consultancy was currently working with NCC to undertake an audit and assessment of open space, sport and recreation provision within the County to inform the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) to provide a detailed 'audit' to inform the Council's Core Strategy.

Northumberland Sport Board was undertaking broader consultation on the report "Developing a Sports Facilities Strategy for Northumberland" undertaken by PMP Consultancy to establish a long term strategy for sports facilities. Building Schools for the Future should provide opportunities for improvements to facilities on school sites and other opportunities should be driven by a regeneration agenda. NSB members and county council officers were already developing a new countywide Playing Pitch Strategy and initiating discussions about community access to school sports facilities which would be particularly welcome in Newbiggin.

Members felt that in the interests of community integration the availability of properly designed facilities would be welcome. There were large areas of land available in the town and a strategic approach was required. The various organisations should be reminded that there was nowhere better placed to develop sporting and recreation facilities than Newbiggin with the bay and links golf course in close proximity.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Town Clerk write to advise Northumberland Sport; Northumberland County Council Leisure Department; Sport England and the Consultants of the Town Council's views;**
- 2) Local Sporting Groups be advised and their views sought; and**
- 3) Members consider the detail of the full document and submit their views.**

C013/10 URGENT BUSINESS

The Town Clerk reported notification of a road closure order from the A189 roundabout beyond the Queen Elizabeth Country Park in connection with the Triathlon Event on 6th June between the hours of 8.00 am and 1.30 pm.

It was reported that flowers were being pulled from the recently planted flower beds and tubs and the police had been notified.

The Northumbria in Bloom inspection had taken place the previous week with visitors being impressed with the cleanliness of the town. Judging would take place on 07 July.

A member referred to the town's status under the relevant planning policies with formal secondary status having been lost in the 1994 review of the local plan.

RESOLVED that representations be made to the Planning Authority Northumberland County Council for the planning status of Newbiggin town to be restored in the Local Development Framework.

Signed by the Chairman:
Date:.....