

## NEWBIGGIN BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 November 2010 at 7.00 pm at the Sailing Club Newbiggin.**

### PRESENT:

Councillors: R McCready (Mayor)  
L Anderson M Boon M Cholerton  
M Kirkup W Rogers  
Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

### IN ATTENDANCE:

9 members of the public and 1 member of the press

### CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairperson opened the meeting with an apology for the technical matters that had prevented the meeting papers being published on line prior to the meeting and hoped it would be resolved by the end of the week.

She expressed thanks to Reverend Judith Grieve for her hard work and dedication to the people of Newbiggin throughout her stay and described her as a tremendous force for good in the community.

Appreciation and thanks were also extended to Jane Pritchard for the art design and production in very quick time of the logo to launch the Nipper Bus Service.

### OPEN SESSION

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

- A member of the community referred to discussions with county education officers over the withdrawal of the 'Lollypop Lady' crossing control from the main road into the town (B1334) which had not been a permanent arrangement so after looking at usage numbers it had been deemed not to be needed. There was now no controlled crossing for High School children from Newbiggin and the CCTV on the same route had been inoperative for over six months.

The county council should be pressed to reconsider the withdrawal of this service and for the CCTV to be re-instated. As the Town Council had expressed its own concerns over the existing pathway it was requested to consider funding the re-instatement of the crossing control. This would be considered during a subsequent item on the agenda.

- Problems over the lack of control of horses left to graze on land belonging to the county council behind the Colliery Estate and between Woodhorn Lane and the railway line. Up to twenty horses were either breaking loose or being released and causing a danger and damage to gardens in the area. The county council would be requested to deal with the matter.
- A resident referred to the proposed amendment of the Dog beach ban and requested that the matter be reviewed after one year. He also raised concerns that there was no specific consultation planned for Newbiggin by the county council regarding the car parking strategy. The meeting was advised that an additional consultation meeting for the area would be held on 22 November at Ashington.

#### **C76/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Peden and A Thompson.

#### **C77/10 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2010 were agreed and signed as a correct record. Regarding the Nipper Bus Service it was reported that this local transport initiative had got off to a good start and that fifty people had used the Nipper bus the previous day.

#### **C78/10 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

No declarations were made.

#### **C79/10 INTERACTIVE TRAFFIC SIGN – B1334**

The Town Council had been approached by County Councillor Lang who had been invited to give a presentation on the proposal to install an interactive highways sign on the B1334 entrance road to the town to the south west of Spital Farm. He was however unable to be present and had sent apologies and relevant information.

The Chairperson outlined the proposal to allocate part of the member's local improvement scheme fund to cover the capital costs of acquisition and installation of the sign and the location was shown on the plan attached to the report. While a warranty would be provided accidental damage or vandalism would not be covered so the county council would require the Town Council to meet any future maintenance costs associated with the interactive sign. The financial information provided was considered.

The worth and impact of the scheme was accepted and the Council had to consider whether to meet future maintenance responsibility. Members felt that it was necessary to safeguard

children and that local people would be positive towards the scheme. The crossing control issue was also considered and members were in principle in favour of having it re-instated.

**RESOLVED that the Town Council:**

- i) Agree to meet the maintenance responsibility of the Interactive Sign on B1334 and make a budget allocation of £1,500 in the current and next financial years;**
- ii) Agree in principle to seek the re-instatement of the crossing control for the schoolchildren and delegate powers to the Chairperson and the Town Clerk to investigate and consider the detailed arrangements within a budget of £1,500.**

#### **C80/10 DOG BYLAWS**

The report of the Town Clerk was considered regarding the outcome of the county council consultation concerning dog bylaws.

In relation to the main local issue the responses of those with a Newbiggin post code showed an almost equal split between those in favour and those against a “beach ban”. The county council’s intention was therefore to propose a change to the existing Dog Control Order implemented by Wansbeck District Council and open up a section of the beach to the south of the bay in Newbiggin as shown on the plan. The remaining beach would be subject to exclusion although this would be seasonal i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> May to the 31<sup>st</sup> October. A similar arrangement was being proposed for a section of the beach at Blyth and this again would be a seasonal ban similar to arrangements in nearby North Tyneside.

Members welcomed the proposed compromise and agreed a review of access and controls would be required at the end of the first season to see how effective the new arrangements had been. They felt a joint review with the county council should be undertaken and welcomed the intended education and approach to the new orders.

**RESOLVED that the Town Council:**

- i) Welcome the proposed change to the Dog Control Order;**
- ii) Seek a joint review with the county council following the first season of operation.**

#### **C81/10 CAR PARKING STRATEGY – NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION**

The Town Clerk outlined the comprehensive consultation exercise being undertaken by the county council towards a Car Parking Strategy to cover the whole county. It was being promoted as a means of placing restrictions on those car parks that required some control through time restrictions to manage use.

The aim of the strategy was to balance the needs of different stakeholders and the imposition of charges or the level of charges was for the budget exercise not the strategy.

The car park assessment model set out at appendix 2 to the report showed that the main Newbiggin car parks would score highly and members felt that Newbiggin trade needed to survive and thrive and that some restrictions or charges could be counter-productive. Socio-economic arguments and comparisons with affluent large towns and the tourism impact for the Maritime Centre meant that decisions were required based on the local environment and needs not a model.

Members felt there should be individual consultation on specific orders affecting the town and that the Town Council should assist by providing local information to the county council before decisions were made.

**RESOLVED that the Town Councils views be conveyed to the county council in response to the consultation on the strategy.**

#### **C82/10 COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS**

The report referred to government consultation on a revised Code on Local Authority Publicity intended to have a new single code to ensure proper use of public funds and provide guidance on content, dissemination and timing of publicity. This was to be grouped into seven principles that require local authority publicity to be lawful, cost effective, objective, even-handed, appropriate, have regard to equality and diversity and issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.

The Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) had drawn specific attention to paragraph 28 and the effect on local council community newsletters restricting their frequency to quarterly and limiting non-council information. Publicity was to be limited to information about the business, services and amenities of the council or other local service provider.

Members felt that minute limitation on parish newsletters, notice boards and web sites were unnecessary and may mean that local events cannot be adequately publicised.

**RESOLVED that representations be made to the government and Member of Parliament opposing these restrictions for Town and parish Councils.**

#### **C83/10 MEMORIAL GARDEN AND PLANTING**

The decision to facilitate memorial tree planting and a suitable area for a memorial garden/planting area at the entrance to Long Park opposite the Memorial Park had been progressed through discussions between the Chairperson and Town Clerk with officers of Northumberland County Council.

They had agreed the proposal and site subject to the provision of approved standard tree species and minimum specifications for all works, plaques, seats etc. The county council would supply a catalogue and specification and the scheme would be administered by the Town Council. Planting and other works should only take place following written approval including the wording for any memorial plaques and at times agreed by officers.

While it would be permissible to scatter ashes with any tree being planted or within the memorial garden area the 'burial' of boxes or urns would not be allowed nor would any dedicated or exclusive rights be created.

Members were keen to encourage the creation of a community friends group to help look after the area and assist with planting and tree and shrub maintenance in due course. While the possibility of grant assistance would be explored to help establish the initial garden area and signage it was felt that a start-up budget should be provided to get this project established over the winter tree planting season.

A number of queries were raised concerning standards species and costs of acquiring suitable trees and seats for memorials and it was suggested that advice was required regarding birds feeding on the area suggested for the garden.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The scheme for the memorial garden and tree planting be agreed subject to consultation with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds;**
- ii) A local voluntary group be sought to assist with maintenance and arrangements;**
- iii) Administration of the scheme in accordance with conditions and specification of the county council be delegated to the Town Clerk; and**
- iv) A start-up budget of £1,000 be approved.**

**C84/10 WOODHORN CHURCH – REPORT FROM WORKING GROUP**

Councillors Rogers and Kirkup reported back to the Council on the outcome of several meetings of the Woodhorn Church Working Group since the first meeting with county council representatives in July. During that time the county council had declared the property surplus to operational requirements and responsibility had transferred to Property Services which had appointed agents to market the property for which sealed bids were to be submitted by 22 November.

The options for use of the building were significantly limited owing to the Grade 1 status of the building and the covenants in place. Costs of maintenance were high in view of the nature of the building and it was felt that it would be difficult to establish a beneficial use. Adherence to the terms of the covenant was considered important to the Working Group and the Town Council to preserve access to this fine historic building. Requests had been made for a Carol Concert and a Dedication Service for the replacement window to be held there before Christmas.

Efforts were in hand to establish a Friends of Woodhorn Church Group to support the building and the application form could be placed on line. The Chairperson expressed thanks to members of the Working Group for the investigations undertaken so far.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Friends of Woodhorn Church Group be supported;**
- ii) The county council be requested to confirm adherence to the terms of the covenants and allow access for the proposed services;**
- iii) The Working Group investigate further possible options depending on the outcome of the marketing exercise.**

Signed by the Chairperson .....

Date: .....