

NEWBIGGIN BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 April 2011 at 7.00 pm at the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre.

PRESENT:

Councillors: R McCready (Mayor)
M Boon M Cholerton M Peden
W Rogers A Thompson
Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 12 members of the public and 1 member of the press

OPEN SESSION

- Enquiries were made about activities in relation to the Royal Wedding following a discussion at a previous meeting when references had been made to obtaining mugs and fancy dress for children. It had been too late to obtain mugs with a logo and this could be considered for the Queens Jubilee next year and the Chairperson advised that there had been insufficient time to consider anything else.
- It was reported that a publication concerning Farmers' Markets had included an April date for Newbiggin which did not take place. This information had not been issued by the Town Council and was an error as the April date clashed with many free events organised as part of the Residents' Festival by the county council.
- The new Dogs Orders had not been advertised in the press as indicated in the report and this was a matter for the county council which was the enforcing authority.
- A query was raised regarding the payment to Bradford Council and it was explained that this covered the cost of some new light motifs and tree lights; the safe installation commissioning and removal of the features. Following a joint procurement exercise with two other local councils a cost effective quotation had been accepted.
- A resident referred to the poor condition of the area in front of the Sports Centre and in view of the forthcoming European Powerlifting events required attention by Neighbourhood Services. A Councillor referred to the item on the agenda and the litter condition of adjoining Woodhorn Road where there was a need for more litter bins and for residents to better respect the area. The condition of the narrow path from the new school site with dog fouling lack of bins and fly tipping was also raised. Members confirmed that these matters had already been referred to the county council.

- Two representatives of Northumbria Police attended and advised that the Community Beat Manager Acting Sergeant Anthony Patterson was no longer covering the Newbiggin Area and a replacement would be appointed. The meeting was advised that the mounds created near Long Park had been the focus of kids causing problems for local residents and were to be flattened. Parking on Front Street and Gibson Street was being tackled with parking tickets recently issued by a Parking Warden who would be visiting again on a Saturday. Crime statistics for the local area were again reported to be down by 8%. Visits were to be made to the schools. A member advised that the last Neighbourhood Watch meeting had been attended by only 3 people and was shocked that local residents had not turned up.
- A resident of Melrose Terrace referred to the run down appearance starting with the derelict building on the corner with the garage door hanging off; the condition of the large planter looking worse after attempted repairs; the children's play area; the dangerous condition of the tree stumps left after the elm trees had been rendered dead and cut down; the condition of the footpaths and grass verges rutted and chewed up. Melrose Terrace was the only access to Milburn Park which had regular visitors from throughout the region to bowls competitions and required attention. A member would visit the area and the various matters would be referred to the county council for attention.

C124/10 CULTURAL STRATEGY – NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

The draft Northumberland Cultural Strategy '*Stronger Together through Inspirational Culture*' had been issued for consultation with the role objectives and priorities of cultural strategy set out in its appendix.

The County Tourism and Cultural Development Officer had indicated that the draft strategy was written during significant structural change in the county and sought to reflect on the considerable cultural activity that was taking place and consider the key issues and opportunities for Northumberland during the next 5 years. The overall purpose of the strategy was to ensure that culture was at the heart of all that they do and that the conditions were right for culture to flourish. It also intended to show how culture could contribute to meeting the long term aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and had been informed by a variety of other strategic documents including the Northumberland Economic Strategy, the Area Tourism Management Plan and the Physical Activity Strategy.

Consideration had been deferred from the previous meeting and an extension to the formal deadline for submissions sought and granted so that a presentation could be provided of the views of other cultural sector stakeholders in the town.

The Chairperson welcomed Eddie Galvin of Newbiggin Arts Forum and Eva Hartley representing Newbiggin Maritime Centre and KEAP Creative.

Eddie Galvin advised the meeting that a strategy for culture was important and that it the key was to tie in with tourism. The current thrust was tending too much to be events based with little cultural legacy. It was necessary for those interested to have the opportunity to continue with dance; music; remain involved with all cultural activities and that the county council should engage with those people in a meaningful way and not just rely on aspiration.

He highlighted that the statement on children and young people mattering most and that this should be at the forefront of the strategy if it was really meant. Climate change was referred to but no real link made. Economic regeneration was a strong theme into which the cultural strategy needed to be linked in Newbiggin and a basic requirement was adequate toilet facilities in the centre of the town. The strategy needed to be more specific and document joined up thinking for a prolonged engagement in cultural activities.

A combined view for the Maritime Centre and KEAP Creative was put forward by Eva Hartley who had prepared representations covering twelve main points. She indicated that much came from the Northumberland Strategic Partnership 2009 Strategy with headings to match the Sustainable Community Strategy which was being refreshed and the Area Tourism Map before Northumbria Tourism had lost its funding and staff. There was a danger in resource allocation in core areas.

There was a rural county reference but 46% of the county's population lived in the urban corner which needed relevance to address high deprivation and the strategy needed to be delivering cultural opportunities with measurable outputs and targets incorporated with proactive measures. Formal mechanisms were required for organisations to be involved in the development of the strategy with identified assistance for the community sector; cultural volunteers; how to address funding tensions and strengthen commitment to smaller organisations.

The commitment towards protection of historic buildings and monuments; the Lindisfarne Gospels and Christian Heritage was at odds with the county's actions towards one of its finest assets St. Mary's Church at Woodhorn where active disposal was being pursued.

Jo Gooding felt that while the cultural strategy met the objectives of the Maritime Centre it did not identify with funding sources and needed to align and match objectives.

A local focus was required particularly from Newbiggin's perspective as more than half of the county's population lived within a 10 mile radius with good public transport links. The strategy should bring and provide cultural opportunities to local people and not seek to rely on one-off major events focusing in the north and west of the county. Culture must engage the community and be accessible.

Members considered the various issues and supported the responses from the other local organisations. There needed to be more balance and not neglect of the more populated local area; preservation of the historic Woodhorn Church for the community; links to other strategies for play and tourism but not dilute the central message of culture; support for work already being done in arts and culture by local organisations with practical support and guidance as well as resources. Priorities for the majority should be aligned with funding streams with a strong focus on legacy to provide follow-up opportunities so that interest did not fizzle out and ensure support for community groups.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

- 1) Support the views of the local organisations and submit the above comments in response to the consultation exercise;**
- 2) Thank the representatives for their valued contributions.**

C125/10 NEWBIGGIN MARITIME CENTRE

Jo Gooding the newly appointed Manager of Newbiggin Maritime Centre was welcomed to the meeting to give a presentation oversight of the centre project and business extension. She had been in post only one month and came from an Assets and Enterprise background having operated from Scotland to London previously. The Centre hoped to confirm an Events and Education Officer in post by mid May and arrangements for the operation of the cafe were in hand with advertisements being prepared for staff with training provided. There would be a further call out to re-invigorate volunteers with many activities for them to get involved with the Maritime Centre.

Work on the building was well advanced with the handover of the shell anticipated by 06 May when the second fix and fitting out would start on the exhibition centre. It was hoped that some soft opening would be possible by early July although there were a few things that could yet hold up their count-down. Landscaping with a considerable number of sea watered plants had to be completed.

The Centre was looking for local producers for the outlet and wanted a good cafe but not one that was inaccessible for local people. In due course it was expected that eleven full time equivalent jobs would be created and they were looking ahead in the coming months to the educational offer and jointly promoting with other events.

The centre presented the opportunity of a possible venue for celebrations and discussions would take place with the Church. Donations through Buy-a-Brick were still encouraged as well as interviews for screening in the Centre. Members paid tribute to the work of the volunteers and acknowledgement of the early contributions through the Heritage Centre which kick-started the project.

C126/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Anderson and M Kirkup.

C127/10 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor McCready declared a personal interest as a member of Newbiggin Arts Forum.

C128/10 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 09 March 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C129/10 DOG CONTROL ORDERS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Town Clerk reported the outcome of the consultation exercise carried out last year that resulted in the county council receiving over 3000 responses. There had been strong support for the introduction of the orders relating to dog fouling and requesting dogs to be placed on a lead; a slight majority of respondents in favour of a dog on leads order and a majority were against the exclusion of dogs from beaches. When the county council had looked at the detail of responses for Newbiggin and Blyth there was stronger support for a seasonal beach ban for sections of these beaches.

The consultation exercise had resulted in 4 new orders being agreed by the county council which should result in the two seasonal beach bans being operational from the 1st May.

Animal Welfare Officers (dog wardens) & Community Wardens would enforce the orders with the beaches being regularly patrolled as resources allowed. It was their intention during summer months to carry out a daily patrol during the week with some weekend patrols. Press releases would announce the orders and for the first two weeks of May county officers would adopt an educational role in the enforcement of the beach bans approaching dog walkers to inform them of the beach exclusion and its extent; that it would be enforced through fixed penalty notices from 16th May onwards; to hand out free 'poop' bags to dog walkers.

Members felt that the boundary for the dog exclusion area did not accord with their representations and was not in the natural place at the end of the promenade to avoid confusion. Clear signage was needed and a good working relationship with the enforcement officers although members were encouraged to seek evidence to support representations in light of experience over the summer.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk seek clarification of the plan for the order excluding dogs from part of the beach.

C130/10 TOWN TWINNING

The opportunity had been taken for Councillors Anderson and Rogers and the Town Clerk to meet with six visitors from Remscheid who had stayed in Ashington and Newbiggin between 04th and 09th April. A seminar was arranged and hosted by Northumberland College on Tuesday 05th April attended by representatives from Ashington and Newbiggin Town Councils and a number of local organisations. There was keen interest both locally and from the representatives from Remscheid to maintain town twinning links which had been historically strong with Ashington and Newbiggin for almost 60 years.

Formal links were now established through one of the visitors Mr Sven Wiertz Head of the Office of the Mayoress to the City of Remscheid and the group had made quite a number of contacts with educational and local community organisations.

Everyone understood that civic twinning visits were no longer sustainable but this had been an excellent opportunity to foster links between organisations and individuals and provide a contact route through the local authorities. Ashington Town Council had hastily arranged a programme of visits throughout the area some kindly sponsored by the Wansbeck/Remscheid Friendship Society culminating in a joint Farewell Event with the Town Councils. While they had agreed to underwrite the associated costs of approximately £1,000 which in the circumstances has been excellent value for money it was felt appropriate to contribute towards these costs to show the Town Council's commitment to facilitating local community and individual exchanges and the formalisation of friendship links with Remscheid.

RESOLVED that thanks be expressed to Ashington Town Council and a contribution of £300 be made to the cost of facilitating the community exchange.

C131/10 LOCAL TRANSPARENCY – PUBLICATION OF ACCOUNTS OVER £500

The Town Clerk reported on the requirements from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government that all local authorities should be more transparent and publish all spending over £500 online for ease of public access.

Agenda and minutes of meetings were already published this way and a schedule of payments could be included without much difficulty. The few payments above £500 that had been made were set out in Appendix 1 and it was suggested that this be added to each month or when such further payments are made so that there evolved a 12 month rolling list excluding salary and tax payments etc. which were exempt.

A Practitioners Guide to Local Spending Data agreed between the Department; CIPFA and other groups advocating extracting data from financial systems with a template for matched data and creating links via Direct.gov with all information in compatible format. However periodic publication of a document on the Town Council web site should suffice.

RESOLVED that payments over £500 be published on the web site.

C132/10 EVENTS LEAFLET

Details of events in the town were being finalised so that an Events Leaflet could be published and arrangements were being made for design work and printing so that it could hopefully be distributed in May.

RESOLVED that John Fox be engaged to design the leaflet on terms agreed by the Chairperson.

C133/10 NOTICE BOARD

The Chairperson referred to the research into the acquisition and location of a new Notice Board for the Town Council.

RESOLVED that enquiries be made to see if shop window space or the Sailing Club window could be made available in the short-term.

C134/10 LITTER COLLECTION – WOODHORN ROAD

Members felt that action needed to be taken to improve the collection of litter on Woodhorn Road in particular following the report from a local councillor and the discussion at public question time relating to discarded beer cans and take-away litter. It was also felt that residents needed to respect the area better and take their own litter away.

RESOLVED that representations be made to the county council to provide more litter bins and improve litter collection along Woodhorn Road.

C135/10 FARMERS’ MARKET

Members of the Market Committee had been looking at future arrangements for the Farmers’ Markets at the Quay Wall/Piazza which was now to be regenerated in September. That would restrict operations for the year and owing to proposed works to the band stand and the extensive promotion of the Northumberland residents’ Festival providing free access at many locations around the county on 09/10 April it had been decided to wait until May to commence the Farmers’ Markets.

It was felt that the Farmers’ Markets should follow the same pattern of the second Saturday in the month to minimise clashes with other established markets in the county and operate between 9.30 am to 2.00 pm on Saturday 14 May; 11 June; 09 July; 13 August; 10 September with an extra market on Saturday 27 August to complement the St. Bartholomew’s Fayre weekend.

RESOLVED that the arrangements for the Farmers’ Markets be confirmed.

C136/10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC - RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item of business as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to personal financial and business affairs.

C137/10 FARMERS’ MARKET

Discussions had also taken place between the members of the Market Committee the Town Clerk and the former Markets Manager who has now left the county council with regard to arrangements for the management of Newbiggin’ markets and overseeing provision of stalls and operations. Members discussed the basis on which these services could be commissioned for the agreed programme of events this year on terms previously circulated to them. Funding for this work could be provided from an allocation from the current Employment budget.

RESOLVED that the Robert Hindhaugh be commissioned to oversee the market arrangements on the terms circulated to members.

Signed by the Chairperson.....

Date: