

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 08 March 2017 at 7 pm at Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre.

PRESENT:

Councillors: S Todd (Chairman)
M Boon L Burns M Cholerton R Dixon
M Peden W Rogers A Thompson

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 8 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

- A local resident thanked the Town Council for the new litter bins along the promenade and enquired about legal restrictions for dogs to be on a lead while on the promenade.

The County Council had recently put new orders in place following consultation and while owners had to ensure their dogs were under control it was not an offence not to have a dog on a lead unless in specified areas, children's play grounds or memorial parks gardens etc, or if directed by an authorised officer.

- Another resident had two questions regarding governance. The first referred to Financial Regulation 3.3 and the provision by the RFO of regular statements of receipts and payments and she referred to previous questions in 2016 and at the last meeting with the response recorded in those minutes. She questioned why, if the governing document required a quarterly report containing specific financial details to the Town Council as a body corporate, the regulation was being ignored.

The Chairman advised that new Financial Regulations had been agreed but not yet implemented and that a formal reply would be provided.

There was no change to when the question was asked at the previous meeting when the current position had been explained and confirmed by the members. Current Financial Regulations did not specify the manner in which such information should be provided, or require a report to a Council meeting and although the quarterly timescale was not maintained the members of the Council were content with arrangements and the information provided.

- The second question concerned Standing Orders 17-19 requiring resolutions to be presented to the clerk no less than 5 days in advance of meetings, recorded in a book in the order received and the business they related to made clear on the agenda. Notices of motion or recommendations should be included in the summons for every meeting in the order received. Referring to the agenda for the meeting she asked that the clerk confirm the date and detail of any resolutions received and how the members proposed to deal with the governance issue.

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that the Standing Orders referred to related specifically to a process for advance notice of motions submitted by Town Councillors and that no such notices resolutions or recommendations had ever been submitted and that there were no governance issues regarding the business on the agenda.

C078/16 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 08 February 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C079/16 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Grant Committee held on 08 February 2017 were received.

C080/16 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 15 February 2017 were received.

C081/16 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS Councillors Peden Thompson and Todd declared non-pecuniary interests in connection with the Newbiggin Development Trust.

C082/16 REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – WANSBECK VALLEY FOOD BANK

This matter had been deferred from the previous meeting and the Chairman outlined the additional information relating to the local community he had received from the organization. He proposed the Town Council make a donation of £1,000 and this was seconded and Members confirmed their continued support for this initiative.

RESOLVED that: a donation of £1,000 be given to the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank.

C083/16 NEWBIGGIN ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – MEMORIAL WALLS

The Town Clerk had been advised by the Chairman of the County Royal British Legion that arrangements were being made to have any missing names added to the Walls of Honour in the Memorial Park. This would follow public notice locally in case there were any other names not yet notified then the stones had to be removed and taken to the Stone Mason for engraving.

The Royal British Legion funds could not be used to meet these costs and Members were requested to make a contribution. The estimated cost would be in the region of £300 although the final figure would depend on the number of additional names.

Members agreed this was a fitting tribute that was well received in the community.

It was RESOLVED that: the Town Council agreed to meet the costs to update the Walls of Honour.

C084/16 RISK ASSESSMENT

The annual Risk Assessment attached at Appendix 1 to the report had been circulated and was considered by the Members.

It was RESOLVED to agree the Risk Assessment.

C085/16 INSURANCE RENEWAL

The arrangements for renewal of the Town Council's insurances with Zurich Municipal were considered together with the discounts applicable for long term agreements over three or five years.

RESOLVED that: the insurance arrangements be renewed with Zurich Municipal for the term of five years at an annual premium of £963.37.

C086/16 ELECTION PROCESS AND COSTS

Details of the election process and timetable from publication of notice of the election to the poll on 04 May had been provided by the county elections office and circulated for information.

Costs to be recharged to the Town Council would depend on the additional costs incurred by the County Council which was unable to provide estimates for budget purposes and it was likely to be September before these would be notified. As it would no longer offer the option to pay over several years it was suggested that an allocation be earmarked in balances to be paid in the next financial year.

RESOLVED that: the sum of £5,000 be earmarked in balances as a contribution to the costs of the local elections.

C087/16 ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES AND WILDFLOWER PLANTING

Members had considered the minutes of the Environmental Working Group and were invited to progress projects during the spring months.

The report referred to a levelling and paving scheme required at the access to the Church Point headland from the car park to make access easier for the elderly and disabled and would be complemented by wildflower planting on either side. Similar planting was suggested for the unkempt bank-side in front of the new housing at the west end and sections of promenade railings required painting which had not been done by the County Council for several years.

Members felt it was important to continue improvement schemes to benefit local residents and the increasing number of visitors to the town.

RESOLVED that: the Town Council agree to proceed with these schemes and delegate powers to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Environmental Working Group to place the necessary orders within current budgets.

C088/16 TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

The Heads of Terms outlined at the previous meeting had been agreed and had now been documented by the developer and the detail of the commercial transaction considered by all Members.

RESOLVED that: the Heads of Terms as circulated to Members be agreed and the Town Clerk complete the document with the initial payment to the developer.

C089/16

**POLICIES - MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL
- HABITUAL ABUSIVE PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS BEHAVIOUR**

Following particular problems around the County the Northumberland Association of Local Councils had recommended that these policies be considered by Town and Parish Councils to clarify expectations of all parties and guide the process in the event of any problems.

Copies of draft policies incorporating examples from NALC the County Council and other Town Councils were attached at Appendices 3 and 4 to the report and the Chairman recommended adoption of the policies.

RESOLVED that: the Member/Officer Protocol and Habitual Abusive Persistent or Vexatious Behaviour Policies be adopted.

C090/16

SUPPORT FOR NEWBIGGIN DEVELOPMENT TRUST

A Director of Newbiggin Development Trust Limited had written to request the formal support of the Town Council to move forward the stated aims of the company:

“A private Charitable Trust, limited by guarantee, whose vision is to make Newbiggin by the Sea a better place to live, work and visit.

We will do this by working in partnership with others, encourage local pride and a greater sense of identity, seize opportunities for growth and sustainable development, help others to deliver projects in the cartilage of Newbiggin by the Sea and act as a catalyst for change to strengthen the community.

The Trust will operate as a not for profit organisation and will seek to serve the local community and its changing needs. It will report annually to the local Town Council.”

It was indicated that the Trust was aware of the challenges faced by local government and was well placed to support the Town Council by accessing grant aid that it was unable to directly access. It had been successful in being accepted by the Carnegie Trust as one of only ten organisations in the British Isles to work with others on their Twin Towns programme. Being twinned with Withernsea in the East Riding who faced similar economic challenges in a broadly similar environmental context it would share emerging successes and new ideas. That programme is fully supported by Northumberland County Council and their regeneration team.

While some queries were raised Members were broadly supportive of the aims and objectives of the company and felt it was important to develop working relationships with other organizations supporting the community.

RESOLVED that: the Town Council welcomed the creation and initial success of the Newbiggin Development Trust and agreed to support and work with it in partnership where possible for the benefit of the town and local community.

C091/16

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 following items on the Agenda as they involve 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.

C092/16 STAFF ESTABLISHMENT

Members had seen and commented on an overall Job Description for the future requirements of the Town Council which was accepted as a starting point.

Irrespective of whether full- or part-time posts were required it was important to address the skill sets and consider the essential and desirable elements to improve the capacity of the Town Council as well as looking to relevant experience and qualifications.

The Chairman requested that The Town Clerk look at the detail of the revised JD and break down the requirements for an additional post.

RESOLVED that: the matter be deferred for further consideration.

C093/16 REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – NEWBIGGIN DEVELOPMENT TRUST

A further element of the request from the Development Trust referred to the benefit from start-up capital to allow the Trustees to apply for matched funding and facilitate administrative support to make more rapid progress.

The Town Council was requested to consider providing a regeneration fund for use by the Trust from the Wind Farm monies in line with the original purpose of that funding.

Members discussed the aspects of support for regeneration and access to other grants that would allow the Development Trust to undertake projects of benefit to the local community and it was proposed and seconded that a grant of £15,000 be provided to the Development Trust for regeneration purposes.

RESOLVED that: a grant of £15,000 be provided to the Newbiggin Development Trust from the Regeneration Fund received from the Wind Farm income.

As it was anticipated this would be the last meeting of the Town Council prior to the local elections the Chairman expressed his thanks for everyone’s contributions over the term of the Council.

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