

COUNCIL 11 AUGUST 2010**1. Conclusion of Audit – year ended 31 March 2010/11**

- 1.1 I have received notification from the external auditors BDO LLP that they have completed the statutory audit and issued their certificate and opinion that the information contained in the Council's Annual Return is in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.
- 1.2 The Council is now required to approve and accept the Annual Return incorporating the auditor's certificate and opinion and to display a public notice of its availability for inspection.

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Council approve the audited Annual Return.

2. Town Plan – results of local survey

- 2.1 The Town Council embarked on the process of developing a strategy for the town to be incorporated in a Town Plan following public consultation. A survey was undertaken through the delivery of the Council Courier to every home and business premises with access via the web site and responses were very encouraging.
- 2.2 The Annual Town Assembly was held at the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre on 23 June when the responses and priorities of the community were outlined by the Mayor and further encouraging workshop sessions were held to expand on these topics. The results of the survey are attached at Appendix 1 and notes of the meeting at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 A number of comments were received, covering a wide range of topics and a few suggestions were included which will be looked in to as part of the development of the five year town plan.
- 2.4 Interestingly, of the projects most highly ranked by respondents, only street cleansing has not been actively targeted by the town council so far. The town council greatly appreciates all respondents taking the time to submit their views and is continuing to work on the town plan.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council:

- 1) accept these findings from the survey;**
- 2) agree to include provision for these key project areas in the Town Plan; and**
- 3) consult further on the Town Plan and its priorities before adoption.**

3. Local Transport Plan (LTP) Northumberland County Council Integrated Transport Programme 2011/12

- 3.1 The county council is developing a new Local Transport Plan and has invited the Town Council to submit its top three priorities for assessment for inclusion in next years' Integrated Transport Programme.
- 3.2 This programme excludes road and footway maintenance and cannot be used for public transport services which are funded separately. NCC has pointed out that funding is likely to be significantly less than at present.
- 3.3 NCC current transport policy is to promote sustainable travel by walking cycling and public transport and to reduce car use so car related schemes such as new car parks are unlikely to be successful. This fits well with the Town council's decision at the last meeting to press for a better safer footpath/cycle track adjacent to Spital Farm at the entrance to the town in the interests of child safety in particular.
- 3.4 A list of previous requests for local schemes is attached at Appendix 3 for information.

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Council identify its top three priority schemes to submit for inclusion in the Integrated Transport Programme 2011/12.

4. Triathlon Funding

- 4.1 The Town Council included provision amounting to £500 in the budget for 2010/11 to support the staging of a triathlon by TriNorthumberland in the town.
- 4.2 Successful events were held over the weekend of 23/24 July and the "Couple Challenge" Triathlon is scheduled to take place in the bay on 11 September with a record entry from around the country.
- 4.3 Efforts are being made to arrange a partial road closure to demonstrate that the event is capable of featuring in the European Qualifying schedule for next year.

RECOMMENDED: that the budget allocation of £500 designated towards the Triathlon event be released to the organisers TriNorthumberland.

5. Northumberland County Council Consultation Tree and Woodland Strategy

- 5.1 The county council has recently published its final draft of the Tree and Woodland Strategy for the county and is consulting the Town and Parish Councils to seek any comments and suggestions regarding its content.
- 5.2 The document has been circulated to members and covers the importance value and management of trees on council owned land.

5.3 The priority objectives of the policy are:

- to create a cleaner greener safer county
- maintain current good tree care practice, while taking opportunities to improve where possible
- enhance the woodland, rural and urban areas within Northumberland

5.4 A wide range of policy issues are covered including tree related benefits and problems; green infrastructure and biodiversity; general, highway, parks and open spaces and woodland tree management.

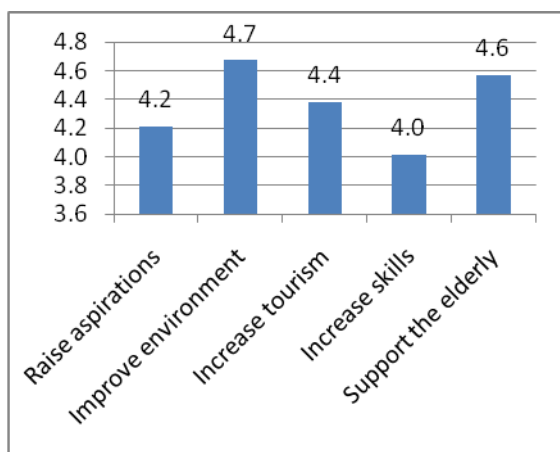
RECOMMENDED: that members consider the Tree and Woodland Strategy and whether any comments or suggestions need to be made to the county council.

Town Survey – Summary of findings

Appendix 1

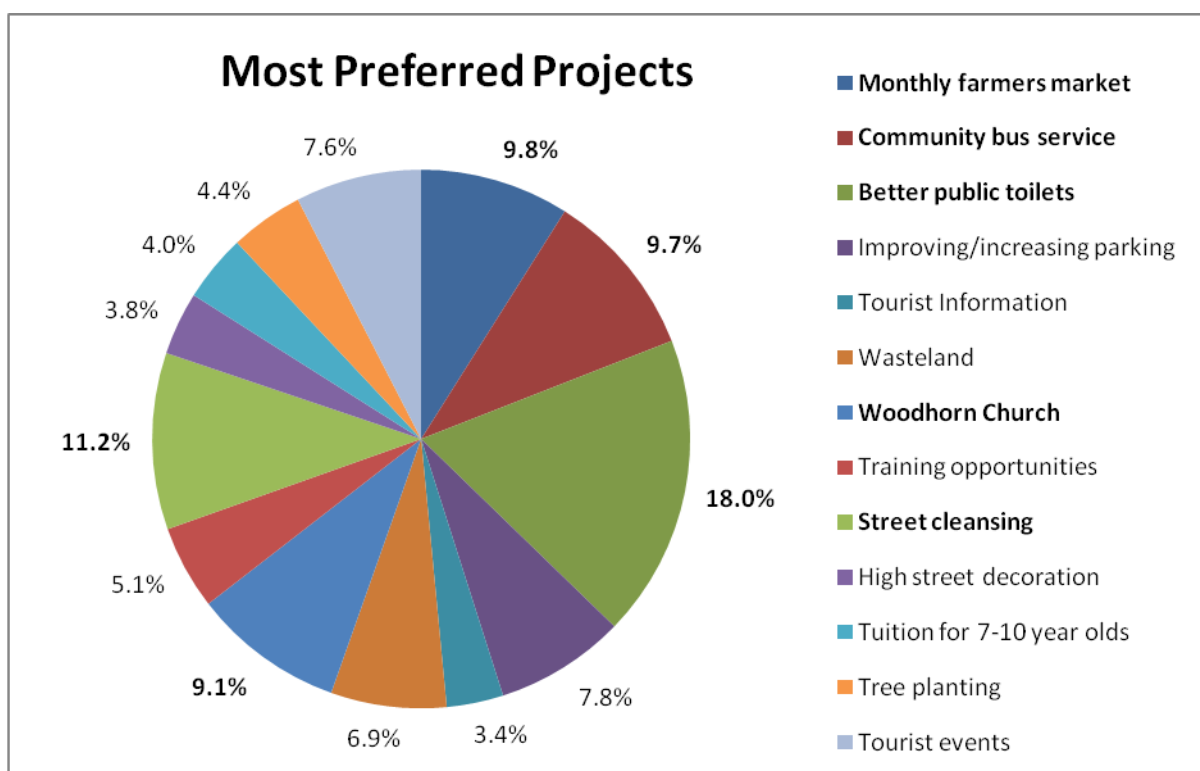
From the 185 respondents (5.2% response rate), the following summary conclusions can be drawn:

All aims were rated 4 or more (out of 5), indicating that they are at least important to our constituents.



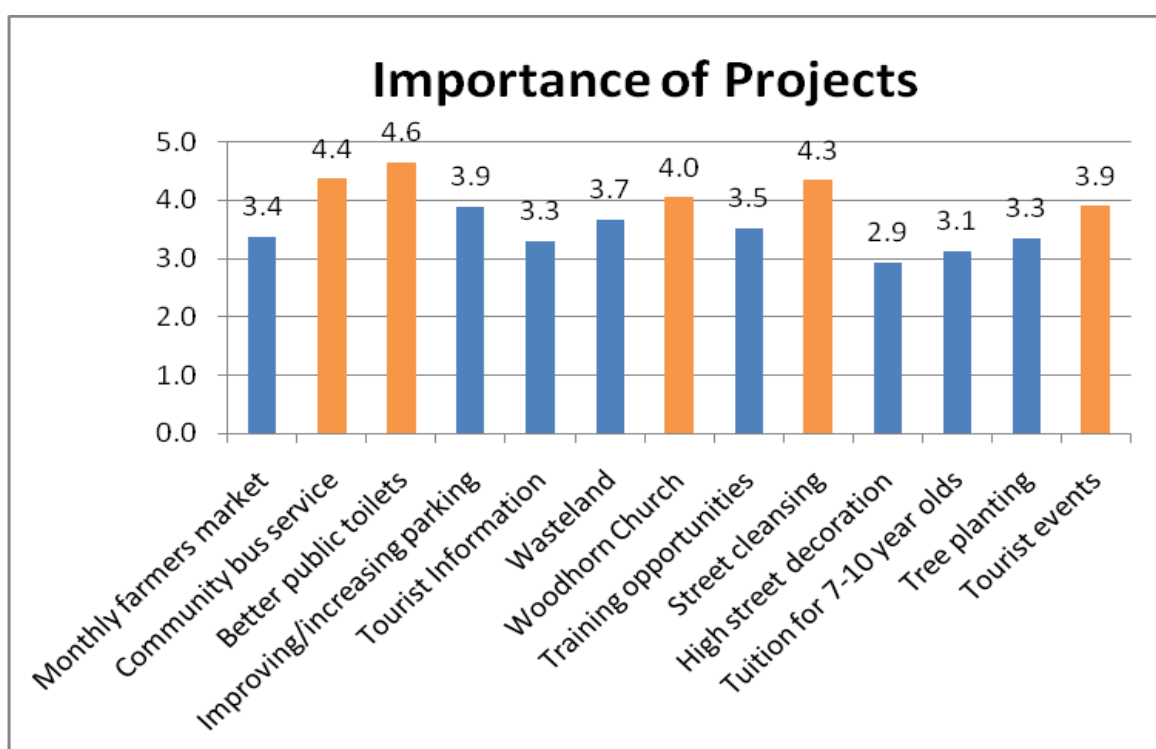
The five most preferred projects are (in order of importance):

1. Better public toilets;
2. Street cleansing;
3. Community bus service;
4. Woodhorn Church;
5. Monthly farmers market.



The five most important projects are (in order of importance):

1. Better public toilets;
2. Community bus service;
3. Street cleansing;
4. Woodhorn Church;
5. Tourist events.



Appendix 2

NOTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN/PARISH ASSEMBLY held in the Collingwood Suite, Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre on Wednesday 23 June 2010 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Rebecca McCready in the Chair
Councillors Anderson; Boon; Cholerton; Kirkup; Peden; Thompson; Rogers and the Town Clerk

County Councillor J Lang and representatives of local community groups: 20 members of the public

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the first Town/Parish Assembly for Newbiggin by-the-Sea and outlined the agenda and process for the meeting to involve presentations from a number of community organisations.

Planning the Town Strategy

Councillor Rebecca McCready, Chair of Newbiggin by-the-Sea Town Council gave a presentation to outline how ambitious aims and objectives were being set in planning the town strategy. For these to be achievable there was a need to work in partnership and develop good relationships with local groups and creative solutions may well be required. A change in approach was anticipated owing to reduced funding by central government to Northumberland County Council.

Five main aims had been identified with objectives against them:

1. Raise the aspirations and prosperity of all constituents especially the young:
Encourage all children to participate in arts; sports; literary or community activities.
Provide tuition-based opportunities for all 7 to 10 year old children.
Facilitate the training of 10 community workers over the next three years.
2. To improve our environment, provide a clean, tidy and aesthetically place to live, work and visit:
Increase the area of woodland around the community by a minimum of 1 acre per year.
Work with other agencies to promote responsible dog control and reduce complaints.
3. To encourage and support an increase in tourism:
Investigate the feasibility of hosting a regular town market by October 2010.
Support a programme of sporting, arts and community events throughout the year.
Investigate tourist information, parking and toilet facilities – costed proposals by December.
4. To increase the skills base within the town, supporting adults into work:
Support the creation of apprenticeships and training opportunities.
5. To support an ageing population:
Investigate the requirements for community transport – costed proposals by December.

Councillor McCready then reported the results and their relative importance from the recent survey:

The most preferred projects were: (1) Better public toilets. (2) Street Cleansing.
(3) Community Bus Service. (4) Monthly Farmers' Market.

Importance of Projects: (1) Better public toilets. (2) Street Cleansing.
(3) Community Bus Service. (4) Woodhorn Church Tourist events.

There were some fine aspirations requiring some hard work to achieve in reality with revenue implications and high workload.

Community Organisations:

Representatives from a number of community groups were invited to give presentations to the assembly:

Newbiggin Arts Forum

Laura Matthewson the Treasurer of Newbiggin Arts Forum that operated from premises on Woodhorn Road advised the meeting that they met in the Sports Centre on the first Monday every month. The Forum was open to all at the People's House for a range of arts activities from 10 – 4 each Saturday and 12 – 4 each Sunday.

Local work mostly by amateur artists was exhibited and some was sold. She referred to collaboration with Northumberland Business services on the first Saturday each month to help with business start-up. There were two permanent tenants 2000 Voices and a photographer with other rooms available to rent as a local resource.

Newbiggin Sailing Club

James Derrick had been involved with the Newbiggin Sailing Club for many years in all capacities from Cleaner to Commodore. He explained that the club had started in 1961 and expanded as an open members club operated by volunteers.

Funding from the Coal Fields Regeneration Fund of £400,000 had enabled the club to renovate its headquarters and build a four story extension. They worked with Sport England to provide sessions with local schools and encourage people out into the bay. Several young people had developed marine based careers. Sailing was relatively inexpensive to encourage youngsters in the activities and the facilities of the building were available to the community.

St Bartholomew's Church

St Bartholomew's Church was represented by Josie Armstrong who referred to their outreach to the local community and encouragement of visitors with an open church and weekend activities.

The village show and fayre would once again take place and they were looking for more entries to revive the event for the pageant of King John handing over the charter. Refreshments were provided at the Church Centre with displays in the cottage with crafts of Northumbria.

The Church of St Bartholomew was a landmark in Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and pro-active in outreach in the community with clubs meeting regularly and volunteer drivers collecting the elderly from nursing homes to maintain important contact for them. The church had a team of 'wheelers' who went regularly to the hospital and volunteers were always needed.

Newbiggin Heritage Partnership

Sheila Harrison referred to the several founder members with the vision in 1998 to convert the 'hut' to display heritage for the local community and many visitors had been attracted. Some 200 pre-booked visitors had attended the centre in recent weeks and were now combining visits to the

Church and graveyard. Links had also been created with the Lifeboat Station which was opened up by Stan Green when required.

There was great interest in the new visitor centre provision and the Maritime Centre project had almost completed the necessary fund-raising from around the country which now exceeded £3million. There had been land issues which caused a set back and required a visit to the High Court for authority to build. The plans had been reduced slightly and were now back in the planning process.

Volunteers were working at the centre knitting over 300 chicks for sale to raise funds and were working with Wansbeck Enterprise & Education Initiative (WEEIN) and involving school children in poster design and writing poems.

To complement the heritage offer Sheila said that the partnership was relying on the Town Council to provide nice clean toilet facilities and have Newbiggin feature on the brown Coastal route signs as recently over 80% of visitors had been from outside the area. The new building should be ready by the same time next year and seven full-time posts would be created but they still needed volunteers.

TriNorthumberland

The Triathlon that took place in Newbiggin last year was heralded by Barry Taylor as a fantastic success where spectators had helped to create the best event and TriNorthumberland wanted to attract even more competitors from outside of the region.

A number of events were planned for the town commencing with the Couple Swim on Friday 23 July to coincide with the Blyth Valley Arts & Leisure promotion of the Olympic Festival of Sport Weekend. The Couple Half Iron Man Triathlon would follow on Saturday 24 July lasting for six hours from mid-day and over 90 entries had been received from around the country. They wanted to link with other visitor attractions for those visiting the town for the weekend.

On 12 September a Newbiggin Bay Sprint was being arranged with over 120 competitors expected and the provision of other arts and cultural attractions would help support the visitors over that weekend. Plans were being developed for next year and a bid would be made for European Championship qualification status and the Town Council's support was requested.

Members expressed their thanks and appreciation of the enthusiasm shown towards the community by all five organisations.

Northumberland County Councillors:

County Councillor Jimmy Lang

Councillor Lang advised the assembly that he represented the ward of North Seaton and Newbiggin West that covered two town councils and surgeries were held on Wednesday at the Welfare Band Hut and on Monday at the Elizabethan Hall to engage with local people.

Concern had been expressed at the loss of the Bottle Bank following the closure of the Bank House facility and improvements to waste land were required in other areas at Spital and welfare. He had worked with the police on the problems for local children at the underpass and Newbiggin children had completed the graffiti art. A capital allocation of £15,000 was available each year for the ward

and a car park and footpath had been provided at the Band hut last year. He was currently looking for new projects.

Councillor Lang was currently on board with the academy to get the best school even if it was not to be in the right place. As it was a primary school the government formula did not allow for a theatre etc. And they were searching for funding for changing rooms as there was an eagerness to have the Newbiggin Football Club resurrected and provide dual use of facilities.

County Councillor Alan Thompson

Councillor Thompson the ward member for Newbiggin East reflected on where the community had come from over the last twenty years and looked ahead to what could be done in the next twenty years.

Huge achievements such as the waste treatment plant to provide clean water in the bay and trigger the regeneration of Newbiggin bay; the local Fayre that had been one of the most successful in the north; the Golf Club had been transformed; Powerlifting Championships; the Sailing Club. The pieces were in place for a hugely successful community and had been achieved by local volunteers.

He identified that there was plenty of land available for future use and that tonight was the opportunity to plan for the next twenty years and provide opportunities for young people so that the culture of volunteers could gather pace and work together for the benefit of the local community. Hopefully the final funding for the Heritage Centre would soon be available and he referred to the need to pursue the extension of the road from Buteland past the new school to connect with the roundabout.

Your Views - Topics for discussion:

Four workshop sessions were held covering Valuing the Environment; Public Toilets; Town Cleanliness; Tourism. Ideas generated attached in Appendix 1.

Conclusion

Councillor McCready closed the meeting by referring to the next stages of the development of the Town Strategy and thanked all those who attended for their enthusiastic participation.

VALUING OUR ENVIRONMENT

How can we achieve this?

- Improving what we have.
- Making more of what we've got.
- Local resources, sustainability, climate change ...

Signpost and advertise Nature Reserves. Woodland Biodiversity.

Recruit environmental helpers. Encourage volunteering for gardening & open spaces.

Garden Rubbish Not collected (NCC will not meet environmental target).

Encourage Home Composting.

Open access to field ponds etc.

Micro generation – NAREC Tidal Flow. Make more of cycle tracks.

Leave Welfare/Spital green land – good for children sporting activities.

Encourage cyclists into Newbiggin.

Nature and education areas in current wasteland.

Work with RSPB & Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

PUBLIC TOILETS

How do we provide them cost-effectively?

- Consider locations, opening hours.
- Cleaning & Maintaining.
- Preventing vandalism and misuse.
- What would be an acceptable budget?

Use shops and pubs to provide this with a small fee to help.

Town Caretaker.

Need plenty of money to build and maintain.

Build Toilet Block with flat above that could house Caretaker to look after toilets and stop vandalism etc.

Town Centre Manager. Staffing toilets.

Public Toilets in the Heritage Centre – public money building it.

TOWN CLEANLINESS

How do we approach this?

- What needs cleaning? (back streets; main; dog mess; litter; graffiti; broken glass)
- How best to tackle this?
- What is most important?

More dog litter bins. Litter bins always too high for children.

Youth offenders – extra street cleaning & clean graffiti.

Report run down areas. Back streets/housing estates.

Tackle dog fouling & litter – more bins.

Tackle fly tipping – contact a Parish Councillor for it to be removed.

TOURISM

How do we attract more people?

- What would draw people in?
- What would make them return?
- What should we avoid or resolve? (that would prevent them returning)
- What is most important?

Signs.

Mixture of food outlets.

Clean environment including toilets.

Signage on roundabout near Sandy Bay.

Publicity on TV/radio for events such as Triathlon.

Signage for tourism. Information Centre.

Yobbo behaviour. Litter.

Hotel in town. Heritage Centre. Couple Sculpture.

Appendix 3

Request	Location	
Footway	Sandy Bay entrance to Newbiggin	
Footway	Corner of Argyle Terrace and Long Park to the Sports Centre	
Surface existing path	Path connecting Moor Estate, Sea Crest and East Lea to Moorside First School	
Installation of Bus Shelter	Outside Keir Hardy Court, Woodlee Estate	
Replacement of two Bus Shelters	Woodhorn Crescent, Woodhorn Road (Newbiggin Colliery)	
Installation of Bus Shelter	Adjacent to Bank House Car Park, Front Street	
Installation of Bus Shelter	Bottom of Seacrest Road	
Street Lighting	North Seaton roundabout to Newbiggin	
Action to reduce traffic speeds	Whitehouse Corner area, Front Street	
Traffic Calming Measures	Collingwood Road (to Woodhorn Road)	
20 mph Zone	Spital Estate	
Traffic Calming	Church Point and Front Street	
Traffic Calming	Collingwood Road and King Georges Road	
20 mph Zone and one way system	Spital Estate	
Traffic Calming/road markings	Manor Court/Manor Drive	
Traffic Calming Measures	Latimer Way	
One-Way system	Windsor Road area	
Residents permit parking on the street	Vernon Place	