

## COUNCIL 13 OCTOBER 2010

**1 Town Bus Scheme**

- 1.1 At the previous meeting the Town Council agreed in principle to support the trial of an in-town bus service aimed primarily at assisting the elderly and less mobile from the more remote parts of the town to access services.
- 1.2 A trial scheme has been agreed by the Working Group with the county council and WAT bus to operate on Tuesdays and Fridays through to the end of March when it would be reviewed. Further discussions have taken place with the Working Group and Andrew Harding the Transport Manager has confirmed financial arrangements for the trial to operate from 26 October to 31 March 2011.
- 1.3 A financial contribution was requested from the Town Council on a 25% partnership basis amounting to £1,012.50 to cover the trial period when the service will operate for 45 days and be promoted as the 'Newbiggin Nipper'.
- 1.4 The initial service specification is attached at Appendix 1 and will require the administration of a 'Newbiggin Travel Club' with a nominal fee and details are being put together by the Working Group.

**RECOMMENDED that the Town Council:**

- (i) **agree the financial contribution to operate the trial of the Newbiggin Nipper bus service;**
- (ii) **appoint a member to the Management Group and for Day-to-Day liaison with the contractor.**

**2 Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC)**

- 2.1 The Northumberland Association has confirmed changes to its constitution to elect a new County Committee using the county council Locality Areas providing 9 representatives in each of the north, west and south-east geographical areas of the county plus 3 for Newcastle parishes.
- 2.2 In many areas parishes have been grouped together with each able to nominate and elections held if more than one is nominated. Newbiggin is allocated one seat in common with the other larger local councils and their nominee will be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.
- 2.3 NALC seeks commitment from nominees able and willing to co-operate and communicate with the wider local councils' sector. Key duties include:
- reflect the views and interests of local councils
  - network with local councils within the area and act as a two-way conduit with the NALC County Committee, both through face-to-face contact and via ICT
  - contribute constructively to the work of NALC and its partners
  - participation in meetings of NALC's County Committee.

- 2.4 The Annual General Meeting of NALC is to be held on Saturday 23 October 2010 at 10 am to appoint officers and the committee, consider the annual report and audited accounts and agreement of subscriptions for 2011-12 but can also debate issues raised by member-councils and will have a guest speaker.
- 2.5 The Town Council can send two delegates entitled to vote and others can attend in a non-voting capacity.

**RECOMMENDED that:**

- (i) a nomination be submitted for the County Committee;**  
**(ii) two members be delegated to vote at the AGM.**

**3 Farmers' Market**

- 3.1 Two trial Farmers' Markets have been held at the Quay Wall/Piazza on 14 August and 11 September when 10 and 12 traders respectively had operated between 10 am and 3 pm.
- 3.2 The general feedback from the market traders the public and indeed local traders had been very positive and all wanted the markets to continue on the second Saturday of the month. Arrangements had been put in place to operate a further market on 09 October.
- 3.3 Additionally it has been proposed that an evening Christmas Market be operated in conjunction with arrangements to switch on the Christmas Lights and the traders together with the newly formed Newbiggin Chamber of Trade are particularly keen on this.
- 3.4 To operate these two markets a further budget allocation of £1,000 is needed and to include advertising the Christmas event.
- 3.5 The Market Committee will review the market operations and associated costs prior to the budget exercise in December and make proposals for future market operations. These are likely to have to follow after completion of the Quay Wall/Piazza regeneration works scheduled to commence in January.

**RECOMMENDED that a further budget allocation of £1,000 be agreed to operate these markets.**

**4 Christmas decoration arrangements**

- 4.1 The last Council meeting granted delegated powers for expenditure in connection with the Christmas decorations for the town and formed a Working Group with a co-opted member from the Newbiggin Traders Association.
- 4.2 While the Christmas tree promised to the Traders Association including collection and delivery would be free it was apparent that the costs of providing and dressing the tree with lights could exceed £2,000 and the Town Council was being asked to underwrite these costs. Fund-raising activities are well in hand to minimise these costs but an

official order must be placed quickly so that the works can be completed before the last weekend in November.

- 4.3 A chamber and electricity supply for the tree will be provided by the county council as part of the regeneration scheme by mid November but responsibility for the Christmas tree will have to pass to the Town Council as the Traders Association has said it is unable to undertake this.
- 4.4 Arrangements for a switch-on ceremony are being progressed by the Traders Association for Friday evening 27 November but confirmation is required from the contractors that the lights will be in place then.

**RECOMMENDED that a further budget allocation of £1,000 be made to cover underwriting the cost of the provision of tree lights.**

**Specification for 'Newbiggin Nipper' flexible transport      Appendix 1****OBJECTIVE**

To provide a flexible form of transport for those who do not need an ambulance but cannot easily walk 400 metres (5 minute walk) to a local bus.

**GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE** - All of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea.

**WHEN** - Normally two days per week, Tuesdays and Fridays, but with appropriate variations for weeks that include Public Holidays e.g. Good Friday

**PROPOSED HOURS** - Between 0915 and 1230 hrs.

**OPERATOR** - Negotiations have been concluded with the local community bus operator WATbus. They have a suitable vehicle, experienced qualified drivers, and a local base (Sleekburn).

**PROPOSED SERVICE**

The minibus will normally follow a standard route through Spittal, Welfare, and Collingwood Estates linking them with the Sport and Social Club and Front Street. The service will be undertaken using a section 19 permit, a system that provides for substantial flexibility. Pre-booking their journey with the operator by phone will only be required by those with exceptional requirements e.g. in a wheelchair or need picking up off the standard route.

Prospective passengers will join a 'Newbiggin Travel Club' for a nominal annual fee (initially £2 is proposed). A contribution will be requested from each passenger unless they are able to present a Concessionary Travel Bus Pass. Contributions will be counted towards the partnership contribution sought from the Town Council.

**PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

To ensure compliance with minimum standards and provide financial assurance the operator will contract with the County Council. In turn the County Council will agree with the Town Council a minimum level of partnership contribution, initially 25%. How the Town Council raises its contribution will be up to the Town Council. The Town Council will be expected to take the lead on local publicity. A Management Group comprising the County Council, Town Council, and Contractor will meet regularly (initially once per quarter) to oversee performance, promotion, agree any minor changes, and make recommendations for any major changes. Day-to-Day liaison without direct financial impact on the contract will be between the Town Council's representative and the Contractor.

**INITIAL CONTRACT**

To allow the proposed service to be fully evaluated, and for the respective Councils not to enter into commitments beyond this financial year, the initial contract will be for the period 26 October 2010 to 31 March 2011.