

## COUNCIL 13 APRIL 2011

**1 Northumberland County Council Consultation – Cultural Strategy for Northumberland**

- 1.1 This item was deferred at the last meeting and the county council has agreed to accept a response after the formal closing date for the consultation. Jo Gooding the Centre Manager of the Newbiggin Maritime Centre has been invited to present an overview from her perspective and Eddie Galvin from the Arts Forum. The original report is set out below.
- 1.2 Another comprehensive consultation exercise by Northumberland County Council is underway and the Town Council is invited to comment on the draft Northumberland Cultural Strategy '*Stronger Together through Inspirational Culture*'. A copy is attached at Appendix 1 and attention is drawn to the role objectives and priorities of cultural strategy set out in its appendix.
- 1.3 The County Tourism and Cultural Development Officer has indicated that the draft strategy was written during significant structural change in the county. The new strategy has been produced which seeks to reflect on the considerable cultural activity that is taking place and consider the key issues and opportunities for Northumberland during the next 5 years. The overall purpose of the strategy is to ensure that culture is at the heart of all that they do and that the conditions are right for culture to flourish.
- 1.4 The new strategy shows how culture can contribute to meeting the long term aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and has been informed by a variety of other strategic documents including the Northumberland Economic Strategy, the Area Tourism Management Plan and the Physical Activity Strategy.
- 1.5 The draft strategy has been produced following an initial consultation programme by Northumberland Strategic Partnership's Culture and Tourism Board which includes Northumberland County Council and other cultural sector stakeholders.
- 1.6 The strategy vision is that:

*Culture is at the heart of all that we do, bringing a rich and meaningful quality of life for people in Northumberland*

What we want to achieve:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
- Enhancing cultural opportunity
- Enriching residents' quality of life through access to culture
- Promoting a sustainable infrastructure for cultural activity within the county

1.7 In particular feedback is sought on the following questions:

1. Do you feel the objectives and priorities are correct? How could they be improved?
2. How can you / your organisation help to deliver the strategy?
3. What will success look like in 2016 if the vision (page 6) is achieved?
4. What targets and measures should we use to monitor the strategy?

1.8 Many of the arts tourism volunteering and healthy activity aspirations are complementary to the Councils own Town Plan.

**Members are invited to consider any representations to the consultation.**

## **2 New Dog Control Orders**

- 2.1 The consultation exercise carried out last year resulted in the county council receiving over 3000 responses.
- 2.2 There was 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 the respondents were in favour of a dog on leads order and a majority were against the exclusion of dogs from beaches. When they looked at the responses, however, for Newbiggin and Blyth there was stronger support for a seasonal beach ban for sections of these beaches.
- 2.3 The consultation exercise has resulted in 4 new orders being agreed by the county council and they are currently subject to final consultation. The timetable for implementation (making of the orders) is the 18th April resulting in the two seasonal beach bans being operational from the 1st May. A formal notice announcing the Orders should be in the press now giving a further 7 days for final representations.
- 2.4 Animal Welfare Officers (dog wardens) & Community Wardens will enforce the orders. The beaches will be regularly patrolled as resources allow. It is their intention during summer months that there will be a daily patrol during the week. There will also be some weekend patrols. Press releases will announce the orders and for the first two weeks of May officers will adopt an educational role in the enforcement of the beach bans approaching dog walkers to:

- 1) inform dog owners of the beach exclusion & its extent,
- 2) that it will be enforced through fixed penalty notices from 16th May onwards,
- 3) hand out free 'poop' bags to dog walkers.

**RECOMMENDED that the Town Council welcomes the new orders and arrangements.**

## **3 Town Twinning – visitors from Remscheid**

- 3.1 It was agreed to investigate possible twinning arrangements following the recent changes in local government and an opportunity arose to meet with six visitors from

Remscheid who have stayed in Ashington and Newbiggin between 04<sup>th</sup> and 09<sup>th</sup> April.

- 3.2 A seminar was arranged and hosted by Northumberland College on Tuesday 05<sup>th</sup> April attended by Councillors Anderson and Rogers and the Town Clerk together with representatives from Ashington Town Council and a number of local organisations. There is keen interest both locally and from the representatives from Remscheid to maintain town twinning links which have been historically strong with Ashington and Newbiggin for almost 60 years.
- 3.3 One of the visitors Mr Sven Wiertz is Head of the Office of the Mayoress to the City of Remscheid and so formal links are now established. Another Mr Christian Guenther, who undertook a short internship in Ashington Community High School, is studying to become an English Teacher and the group have made quite a number of contacts with local community organisations.
- 3.4 Everyone understands that civic twinning visits are no longer sustainable but this has been an excellent opportunity to foster links between organisations and individuals and provide a contact route through the local authorities.
- 3.5 To facilitate this Ashington Town Council 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. Ashington Town Council has agreed to underwrite the associated costs of approximately £1,000 which in the circumstances has been excellent value for money. It would be 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.

**RECOMMENDED that the Town Council agree a financial contribution to the hospitality costs.**

#### **4 Local Transparency - Publication of Accounts over £500**

- 4.1 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has decreed that all local authorities should be more transparent and publish all spending over £500 online for ease of public access. Half of the major authorities had published their payments by the end of the year and others including Town and Parish Councils were encouraged to do so in January. While it is not compulsory the Departments' web site will name those authorities that do not publish.
- 4.2 Agenda and minutes of meetings are already published this way and a schedule of payments can be included without much difficulty. Attached at Appendix 1 are the few payments above £500 that have been made and I would suggest that this be added to each month or when such further payments are made so that there evolves a 12 month rolling list. Salary and tax payments etc. are exempt.
- 4.3 There is a 26 page Practitioners Guide to Local Spending Data agreed between the Department; CIPFA and other groups which frankly I think is over the top for unitary

councils never mind parish and town councils. It advocates extracting data from financial systems with a template for matched data and creating links via Direct.gov with all information in compatible format. I suggest we place a pdf. document on our web site periodically.

**RECOMMENDED that payments of over £500 be published on the web site.**

## **5 Farmers' Markets**

- 5.1 Members of the Market Committee have been looking at future arrangements for the Farmers' Markets at the Quay Wall/Piazza which is to be regenerated in September.
- 5.2 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 was decided to wait until May to commence the Farmers' Markets. The Quay Wall/Piazza regeneration works will commence in September.
- 5.3 The Farmers' Markets are to follow the same pattern of the second Saturday in the month to minimise clashes with other established markets in the county:

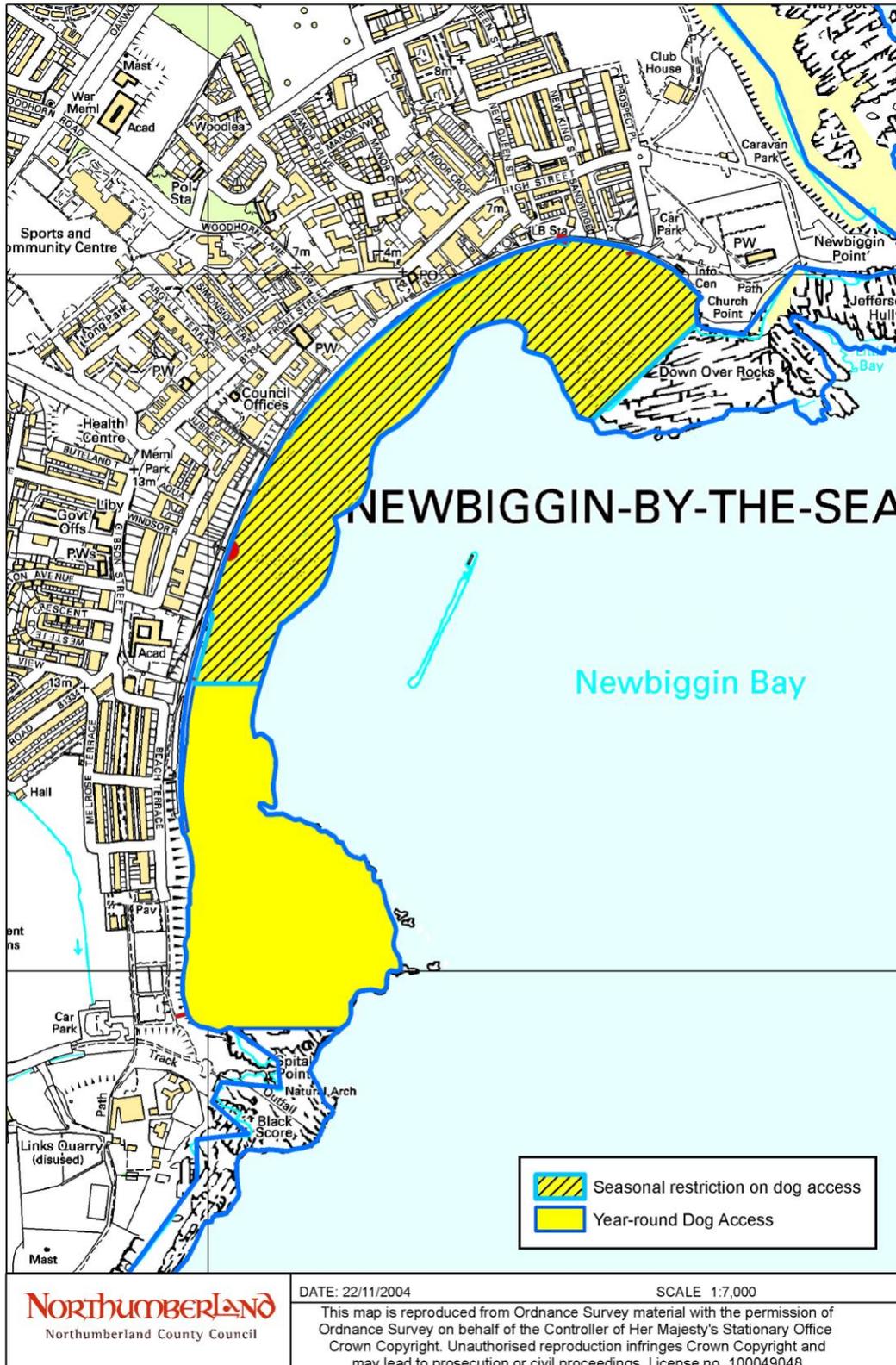
Saturday 14 May	9.30 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 11 June	9.30 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 09 July	9.30 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 13 August	9.30 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 27 August	9.30 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 10 September	9.30 am to 2.00 pm

- 5.4 Discussions have taken place with the former Markets Manager who has now left the county council with regard to arrangements for the management of Newbiggin' markets and overseeing stalls and operations and can be commissioned for these events on terms circulated to members. This can be funded by an allocation from the current Employment budget.

**RECOMMENDED that:**

- i) Arrangements for the Farmers' Markets be confirmed;**
- ii) Robert Hindhaugh is commissioned to oversee the market arrangements.**

Plan of Newbiggin Beach



**2011****NEWBIGGIN BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL****Payments exceeding £500**

Blachere Illumination	Christmas Lights	1,081.00
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Bradford Council	Christmas Lights	6,895.72
Parkhead & Wansbeck Power Sports	Euro Championships Grant	2,000.00