

COUNCIL 13 JANUARY 2016

1 Newbiggin War Memorials

- 1.1 A question has arisen over responsibility for the care and maintenance of the War Memorials in the town. While successive local authorities Newbiggin UDC; Wansbeck DC; Northumberland CC have undertaken such work for over ninety years and the land is currently vested in the County Council, the simple answer appears to be that no one has actual responsibility.
- 1.2 There is a power to undertake such works under the War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923, which will have been relied on by all of these former authorities, but there is no obligation to do so.
- 1.3 In 2012 the then Deputy Leader of Northumberland County Council indicated its view of equalisation of local services throughout the county and the intention to cease to maintain these assets and that responsibility for War Memorials and adjoining land; public seats; litter bins; bus shelters would pass to local councils.
- 1.4 The Town Council intended to take responsibility for these services together with play areas provided the appropriate land was transferred to it. While the ownership of five play areas was transferred the War Memorials and adjoining land were not following a change in administration and policy at the County Council. Budget provision was simply made to provide for cleansing of the War Memorials ahead of the Remembrance Services otherwise Neighbourhood Services would not undertake this function.
- 1.5 Newbiggin by-the –Sea has two War Memorials, erected following public subscription, which are Grade II Listed and it is likely the community will want to see them maintained as appropriate. Cleansing and maintenance can probably be met from the local enhanced services budget but any significant work or repair is likely to require specialist attention and be costly. That could however be addressed on a case by case basis if the Town Council is minded to exercise its powers under the Act. It does not now need to have an interest in the land or memorial.
- 1.6 **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council consider the exercise of the powers under War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923 to maintain the War Memorials when necessary.