

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 16 December 2009
at 7 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Newbiggin.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:	W Rogers (Chair)
L Anderson	M Kirkup
M Boon	R Mc Cready
M Cholerton	A Thompson
Officer:	D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE:

7 members of the public and 1 member of the press
Eddie Galvin Community Arts Officer – Newbiggin Arts Forum

OPEN SESSION

The following issues were raised:

- A member of the public sought the views of the Town Council concerning the possible closure of the Newbiggin Sports Centre as well as the Ashington Centre in connection with the county council budget reductions. The meeting was advised that at the present time the Newbiggin facilities were not under threat but it was stated that many people from the town used the Ashington facilities and it had the only local swimming pool. There was a significant issue for local people without cars travelling to facilities even a few miles away.

An outline of the county council's position was given and the scale of the budget savings to be made for the next two years. It was stated that the councillors were doing their level best irrespective of politics.

It was felt that support would be necessary from Northumbria Health Care to sustain GP Referrals schemes and healthy living and Sport England to tackle childhood obesity as sports centres in deprived areas could not be allowed to close. Members absolutely did not want to see local centres go.

- Thanks were expressed on behalf of the public for the re-instatement of the Newbiggin Gateway following some damage. It was confirmed that this had been greatly assisted by the Johnnie Johnson Association.

CO67/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor M Peden

CO68/09

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The following matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting were considered:

Community Action Northumberland had advised that there were 4 nominations for the 2 positions on Northumberland Strategic Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnership and a ballot would be held. The Town Clerk would circulate the ballot paper electronically to members and collate the result for submission to CA-N.

The Town Clerk reported that the further account from CA-N for the work in supporting the Town Council had been received and amounted to £418.35 including advertising costs.

RESOLVED that the account be paid.

It was now necessary to decide how the Newbiggin Stints would be held so that the legal transfer could be arranged.

RESOLVED that Councillors Anderson; Cholerton; Rogers and Thompson hold the Stints on behalf of the Town Council.

CO69/09

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Boon declared a personal interest as Secretary of the Allotment Association and Councillors Anderson and Rogers as allotment tenants.

CO70/09

LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION

The report highlighted Northumberland County Council proposals to transfer and standardise responsibilities across the town and parish councils for allotments, public seats, seasonal lighting, play areas and bus shelters for which it would make no financial provision for expenditure 2010/11.

Allotments were the statutory responsibility of the Town Council and the sites at Spital and Woodhorn totaling 361 plots had been operated and managed successfully by the Allotments Association for many years. The formal lease to the association had expired although arrangements had continued on a similar full repairing basis and the annual rent needed to be reviewed as part of the budget exercise.

More detailed historic information was required for services such as play areas to allow accurate estimates to be considered for the budget and further requests had been submitted to NCC.

All of the Town and Parish Councils recently established in South East Northumberland were in a similar position and arrangements were in hand to meet together early in January.

RESOLVED: that

- (1) the transfer of responsibility for the allotments be accepted for 01 April 2010 and the Town Clerk authorised to complete a new lease to the Association on similar terms at the rent to be agreed at the budget meeting;
- (2) the Chairperson Vice-Chairperson and Town Clerk attend the joint meeting with other Town and Parish Councils to consider the principles of transfer of local services from the county council.

CO71/09

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION

The report referred to the NCC arrangements for public consultation to take place over the next few weeks and locally a meeting of the Area Committee for this purpose will be held at Ashington Leisure Centre on Monday 04 January 2010 at 6.00 pm. As the transfer of services and other proposals could impact on the Town Council it was felt that members may wish to attend to obtain further details.

RESOLVED: that where possible Councillors attend the consultation meetings.

CO72/09

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Chairman welcomed Eddie Galvin the Community Arts Officer from Newbiggin Arts Forum who gave a presentation to the meeting of the aims and objectives of the Forum for the Newbiggin community.

The Arts Forum was a charitable organisation operating from the People's House a wide range of arts functions and was creating a sustainable community building with artists' space available for rental. It wanted to extend into the community and was seeking the endorsement of its objectives by the Town Council to aid funding applications.

He stated that the arts profile for Newbiggin had risen to the top and the Forum wanted to focus on the artistic abilities of people who lived here. By bringing people together they wanted to attract economic development investment and tourism and provide a good reflection of their work in the community. There were other community orientated organisations such as Keep Creative that had similar objectives.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The Town Council endorse the work of the Arts Forum;**
- (2) Agree similar support for other organisations meeting the same community ethos.**

CO73/09 COMMUNITY RADIO – SOUTH NORTHUMBERLAND

A request had been submitted for a contribution to funding for a South Northumberland Radio Group based in Bedlington to provide a community radio station to enhance social cohesion in the area.

RESOLVED that the request be deferred for consideration at the budget meeting.

CO74/09 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported on the financial arrangements that had recently been put in place and the payment of outstanding accounts.

The meeting considered a referral from the Finance Committee following discussion of the expenses that had been incurred by members for telephone calls; broadband; printing and stationery and local travel and it was felt that an allowance should be paid as a contribution towards such expenses.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the report be received and approved;
- (2) Councillors be entitled to claim an Allowance of £20.00 per month as a contribution towards expenses incurred in connection with the Town Council.

CO75/09 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

It was reported that allotments were being targeted on a nightly basis including arson and theft and that information was required from the community.

The Mayor reported on the successful Inauguration Service held for the Town Council at St Bartholomew's Church the previous week and on the very positive feedback that it had set a high benchmark. The community involvement of local middle school children and the JAYESS brass band and thanks were extended to the Reverend Judith Grieve for the service.

The next meeting scheduled for 13 January would also be held in the Church Centre.

CO76/09 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 paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to financial and business affairs.

The Chairman declared a personal interest and took no part in the consideration of the following item.

CO77/09 SUPPORT FOR TOWN COUNCIL

Members referred to the assistance they had received in connection with their meetings from two individuals prior to the appointment of the Town Clerk and felt that each should receive an honorarium for their services.

RESOLVED that an honorarium of £250 be paid in respect of work relating to the appointment of the Clerk and of £48 for meeting services.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....