

## NEWBIGGIN BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 08 September 2010 at 7.00 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Front Street Newbiggin.

### PRESENT:

Councillors: R McCready (Mayor)  
L Anderson M Boon M Peden  
W Rogers A Thompson

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

### IN ATTENDANCE:

9 members of the public and 1 member of the press

### OPEN SESSION

The following issues were raised by members of the public present at the meeting:

- The Chair of the newly formed Traders Association Joyce Durmaz thanked the Town Council for the grant and requested a further meeting to consider the Christmas Lighting arrangements as a large Christmas tree had been promised from Keilder and a local garage would arrange delivery. They Association needed to work with the Town Council regarding lights storage and erection arrangements.
- The Reverend Grieve raised the issue of communications highlighted by the arrangements for a road closure in connection with the Triathlon owing to the effects on church services and a baptism where many visitors were attending from around the country and would not be familiar with alternative back roads. Advance notice would help prevent similar clashes and the organisers would speak to the marshals to make them aware and this would be built into the processes for future events.

### C53/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Cholerton and M Kirkup.

### C54/10 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2010 were agreed and signed as a correct record. The Chairperson referred to ongoing discussions with the Regeneration Manager over the notice board and its possible relocation in the short-term and investigation of costs for new provision.

### C55/10 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

No declarations were made.

**C56/10 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PROGRAMME 2011/12**

Consideration of the county council request regarding the new Local Transport Plan had been deferred from the previous meeting so that members could consider the detail of the previously suggested schemes for improvements in the town.

The promotion of sustainable travel by walking cycling and public transport and to reduce car use was central to NCC current transport policy.

It was proposed that the Spital Farm cycle track/footpath scheme to provide a safe route for school children; a trial composite reduced speed limit of 20 mph for the town to manage traffic hot spots and calming needs; a new all weather cycle track/footpath to link East Lea with the Colliery and then the new school be the three priorities as they would encompass the majority of local requests.

Members debated the issues of providing one speed for the whole community avoiding the need for expensive signage and speed humps while some felt this was unnecessary through the main part of the town and an alternative of reducing the speed limit to all non classified roads was suggested. The detail of any scheme would be for the highway authority to determine.

**RESOLVED that the Town Council submit to Northumberland County Council the following three priorities for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan for 2011/12:**

- i) A section of new cycle track and footpath widening scheme adjacent to Spital Farm to provide a safe walking and cycle route to the High School;**
- ii) A town-wide reduced speed limit for all non classified roads in the town;**
- iii) A new cycle track and footpath from East Lea to the Colliery and the new school site to provide a safe all weather route for young children.**

**C57/10 TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY - NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION**

The draft Tree and Woodland Strategy for the county was the subject of consultation and had been circulated to members and deferred at the last meeting to consider in greater detail the importance value and management of trees on council owned land.

Members welcomed the priority objectives of the policy to create a cleaner greener safer county; maintain current good tree care practice; improve and enhance the woodland areas within Northumberland. However in relation to the wide range of policy issues including tree related benefits and problems and tree management members felt that there was a need for residents to have a better say regarding trees affecting their areas and property. Discussions were taking place to have a scheme put in place and provide for applications to be made.

**RESOLVED that the Town Council make representations to ensure that a suitable scheme be put in place to provide for residents to make applications regarding trees in their area.**

**C58/10 PROPOSALS FOR A REFERENDUM REGARDING INCREASES IN LOCAL TAXATION**

The Town Clerk reported on the government's proposals to replace capping powers with local referendums to veto 'excessive increases' in local taxation following the coalition promise to give residents the power to veto high council tax rises.

A short technical consultation commenced had not included Town and Parish Councils despite the intention to extend the new power for precepts levied by them for the next budget round. Legislation would give the Secretary of State power to determine a principle based on a comparison of the authority's level of council tax with the level in the previous year probably resulting in an arbitrary percentage being applied.

The new scheme would require any authority intending to exceed the limits prescribed by the Secretary of State to prepare a parallel budget and arrange a local referendum. In the case of Town and Parish Councils this would be undertaken by the county council and the cost recharged. Should the local electorate reject the increase then it had to be refunded or deducted from the following year's precept.

Members recognised that these arrangements were at odds with the governments stated intention of devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level and the expectation to transfer local service delivery from the county council. The newly created local councils in Northumberland would be distinctly disadvantaged by these proposals as a realistic service delivery level had not yet been established and the current precept contained little of what the Charter for Local Services envisages.

**RESOLVED that representations be made to the Department of Communities and Local Government and that a special case should be made for the newly created local councils.**

**C59/10 NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

The Northumberland Association had 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.

Newbiggin had been allocated one seat in common with the other larger local councils and its nominee would be appointed at the Annual General Meeting. NALC was seeking commitment from nominees able and willing to co-operate and communicate with the wider local councils' sector and the key duties were set out in the report.

The Annual General Meeting of NALC was 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 could also debate issues raised by member-councils and would have a guest speaker. The Town Council could send two delegates entitled to vote and others could attend in a non-voting capacity.

**RESOLVED that the matter be deferred to the next meeting.**

## **C60/10 CHRISTMAS DECORATION ARRANGEMENTS**

Arrangements had to be put in place for seasonal lighting as responsibility had now passed from the county council to local councils. A budget had been provided and as detailed arrangements and urgent decisions would be required a Working Group and delegated powers were proposed.

The Newbiggin Traders Association was seeking to contribute to the arrangements and had secured a large Christmas tree. The possibility of a Christmas Market and switching on the lights at the same time could be explored.

### **RESOLVED that**

- i) A Working Group consisting of Councillors Peden Thompson and Rogers be appointed;**
- ii) A representative of the Newbiggin Traders Association be co-opted;**
- iii) Delegated powers be granted to the Town Clerk to make arrangements and incur expenditure within the budget.**

### **URGENT BUSINESS**

Owing to the urgency of arrangements relating to the regeneration works at the Quay Wall and the provision of local transport services and the need for repairs the Chairperson agreed to the consideration of the following items of urgent business.

## **C61/10 NOTICE BOARD**

The present Town Notice Board would soon be removed as part of the regeneration works at the Quay Wall Piazza and the county council Regeneration Officer had indicated that if the Town Council wanted to acquire its own notice board it could be installed as part of the scheme on the Post Office wall.

The scheme was about to be finalised and the band stand likely to be omitted and a range of issues were considered and members wanted to have a space created for significant community events. Provision for a Christmas tree; electricity points and suitable multi-purpose anchorage points and cover were important.

**RESOLVED that representations be made to the county council to obtain maximum investment for the town.**

## **C62/10 TOWN BUS SCHEME**

The Working Group had been developing arrangements with the county council for an acceptable offer from WATbus for the operation of a trial in-town transport service to benefit the elderly in particular and if agreement could be reached it could commence operation on Tuesday 26 October and reviewed at the end of March.

A contribution of twenty five percent of the cost would be required from the Town Council and a decision in principle to participate as a partner in the service provision was required.

The Working Group would meet again to finalise the detailed arrangements and promotion for the scheme and costs confirmed at the October Council meeting. Members expressed their appreciation of the terrific efforts of Councillor Cholerton and the Working Group in relation to re-introducing local transport arrangements.

**RESOLVED that the Town Council agree in principle to support the trial in-town service.**

**C63/10 SPITAL FARM STONE WALL**

A member reported the continuing deterioration of the stone wall adjacent to the footpath on the main entrance to the town as a result of vandalism and requested that the owners be contacted to undertake re-instatement.

**RESOLVED that the owners' agents be advised and requested to arrange repairs to the wall.**

Signed by the Chairperson .....

Date: .....