

NEWBIGGIN BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 09 March 2011 at 7.00 pm at the Sailing Club, Newbiggin by-the-Sea.

PRESENT:

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

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 6 members of the public and 1 member of the press

OPEN SESSION

- A number of questions were asked regarding the employment matters set out in the minutes of the Finance Committee and the Chairperson advised that these recommendations would be considered by the Council later in the meeting and were all within current budgets for employment.
- The Northumbria Police Community Beat Manager Acting Sergeant Anthony Patterson attended the meeting and confirmed his permanent appointment. He advised members that crime was down over the Ashington/Lynemouth/Newbiggin area by up to ten per cent but there were concerns over bogus callers; thefts from unsecured cars and metal theft particularly lead from roofs and scrap metal dealers were being targeted to identify the criminals.
It was felt that local people in the community needed to know who the Beat Manager was maybe through posters and be able to make easy contact and an offer was made to use the Town Council Cottage on the afternoon of the first Wednesday of each month. Thanks were expressed on behalf of the Allotment Association for the excellent work done by the police over recent weeks when posters had been displayed and shed alarms distributed.
An initiative for an anti-social behaviour programme with Blyth Valley Arts and Leisure involving child cyclists was raised by the Chairperson and the police were keen to look at a wide operation relating to bicycles.

C109/10 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 09 February 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C110/10 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Thompson declared a personal interest in the item relating to the proposed Book Fayre as he was the author of a book to be featured there.

C111/10 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting acting under delegated powers held on 16 February 2011 had been circulated and were received.

The Town Clerk declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the employment matters contained in the following item of business and withdrew from the meeting during its consideration.

C112/10 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the Finance Committee and expressed their appreciation of the excellent work undertaken by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 16 February 2011 be received and the recommendations adopted where necessary.

C113/10 MINUTES OF THE EVENTS WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the meeting acting under delegated powers held on 02 March 2011 had been circulated and were received. The Chairperson referred to the arrangements being put in place with spending commitments against approved budgets with adverts being placed on the web site and hopefully the News Post Leader to attract voluntary assistance and dates for local tourist attracting events were required from other organisations.

The Town Clerk referred to arrangements for the Literary Event to be held on 18 June with other supporting events both before and after in partnership with the Northumberland Church of England Academy; Blyth Valley Arts and Leisure and the Library Service.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 16 February 2011 be received;**
- (ii) The Town Council arrange Public Liability cover and the Events Notice.**

C114/10 WOODHORN CHURCH

The report highlighted the developments regarding St Mary's Church at Woodhorn since the county council had declared the building surplus to operational requirements; the Working Group being keen to consider options for its future use maintaining access for the public.

A marketing exercise was undertaken by agents had not proved successful with only one offer deemed acceptable under the current covenants and conditions for use of the building and that was subsequently withdrawn. Currently the county council Estates Surveyor was awaiting a response

from the Church Commissioners regarding the restrictive Covenants on the building as these restrictions limited any future use within the building.

The Woodhorn Church Group would be meeting with the Arch Deacon of Lindisfarne to consider issues to preserve public access in particular. Members felt it was particularly important that before any further decisions regarding use or disposal of St. Mary's Church building were finalized that full consultation regarding the covenants and possible uses should be undertaken by the county council and the Working Group continue to explore other possible uses.

RESOLVED that the county council be requested to ensure that full consultation be undertaken with the Town Council; the Friends of Woodhorn Church; the wider community of Newbiggin and Woodhorn prior to making any further decisions regarding covenants and uses of St. Mary's Church building.

C115/10 INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

In order to test the current market and provide evidence for the auditors a joint tender exercise was being carried out by some of the new councils in South East Northumberland with quotations being sought from three companies well established in the local council market AON; Came & Company; Zurich Municipal. All information was not yet available so delegated powers were sought to put the necessary insurance arrangements in place prior to the next meeting.

RESOLVED that delegated powers be granted to the Chairperson to accept the most advantageous quotation.

C116/10 NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION – CULTURAL STRATEGY

Details of the consultation exercise by Northumberland County Council regarding the draft Northumberland Cultural Strategy '*Stronger Together through Inspirational Culture*' was set out in the Town Clerk's report with a copy attached at Appendix 1. Attention was drawn to the role objectives and priorities of cultural strategy set out in its appendix.

Members felt there were important high-level issues affecting participation in cultural activity the impact on tourism and the significant plans and strategies impacting on it and wanted to know the views of other interested groups in the town particularly with the impending completion of the Maritime Heritage Centre. If possible consideration should be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The report be deferred to the next meeting and the county council requested to extend the deadline for formal responses;**

- ii) **If not the Town Clerk be given delegated power to respond following consultation with members;**
- iii) **Jo Gooding be invited to address the next meeting regarding the Maritime Heritage Centre and the Cultural Strategy.**

C117/10 NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION – STANDARDS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Town Clerk highlighted the issues arising from the consultation by the county council following the announcements from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government who seemed set to disband the current Standards Board regime and with it the compulsory Code of Conduct with proposals included in the Localism Bill currently going through Parliament. All members had signed and were currently bound by the terms of the Code of Conduct that each Council was required to adopt and remained in force until an appointed day following the passing of the act.

The national Standards Board itself and the power to suspend members would be abolished and a new criminal sanction put in place. There would be no requirement for authorities to have a Standards Committee although a requirement would remain for authorities to 'promote and maintain high standards by members of the authority' and members will still have to register and declare personal interests.

Northumberland County Council had the obligation in many cases to investigate and hear complaints against local councillors for breaches of the Code of Conduct was now consulting over future arrangements and a voluntary code and Standards Committee would be possible but sanctions would extend to censure only.

Members debated the various questions raised by NCC and agreed that local Councillors conduct should be regulated and preferably adjudicated by an independent body such as Northumberland Association of Local Councils. It was also felt that a local ethical framework/code of conduct should be put in place if the Standards Board was abolished and that councillors should face sanctions for general misconduct such as disrespect and disrepute although priority was to be left to the county council.

RESOLVED that the Town Council respond to the consultation as outlined above.

C118/10 DEDICATION GARDEN

Following the decisions at the previous meeting the Chairperson provided an update on arrangements for the inaugural dedication tree planting ceremony in the Dedication Garden. This would take place at 12 noon on Sunday 20 March and Marcia Bircham the Northumberland County Council Chairperson would perform the opening dedication.

The first five trees and two initial plaques had been ordered for delivery before the ceremony with the county council doing some initial preparatory work for the planting.

Representatives of the first publicly dedicated tree would be present and an open invitation was extended to those wishing to attend.

C119/10 BAY ENVIRONMENT GROUP

It was acknowledged that the beach and the bay environment were clearly fine assets and a high priority of the town where a range of overlapping issues interests and events would benefit from some coordination. Litter cleaning; dogs' strategy; work with the Beach Warden and representation to the police; overall strategy and volunteer recruitment including establishing regular volunteer cleaning events and establishing partnership arrangements including the county council could best be coordinated through an Environment Group.

Members felt that representatives of the RNLI; Newbiggin Sailing Club; Newbiggin Maritime Centre; the Coastal Warden and a Dogs Issues representative should be invited to join the group.

RESOLVED that Councillors Cholerton and Rogers be appointed to the Working Group and invitations be extended to other representatives.

C120/10 NORTH SEATON ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Members had reported that traffic movement and indiscriminate parking along both sides of North Seaton Road continued to be a problem for both pedestrians and motorists.

It was felt that existing restrictions may not be adequate and enforcement of existing arrangements was irregular and insufficient. Possible solutions were considered which could require a full traffic management scheme and this would require research and detailed discussion with the county council as the Highways Authority and the police.

Members felt that full parking restrictions were required on one side of the road with single line restrictions on the other side to prevent the double parking effect that restricted traffic and pedestrian movement. Subsequent adequate enforcement would also be required.

RESOLVED that the Town Council request the county council as highway authority to investigate and consult on the provision of adequate parking restrictions and enforcement on North Seaton Road.

C121/10 LOCAL TRANSPORT – NIPPER BUS

The Supplemental Report highlighted the trial service that had been operated by WATbus on Tuesday and Friday each week since October with financial support from the Town Council and Northumberland County Council. By the end of February the Nipper Service had carried 1,249 passengers averaging 34 per day and had been well received by the members of the scheme.

The county council Transport Manager had confirmed funding for the service to operate for the year from April and the contribution required from the Town Council was £2,431. This was within the budget set for next year although some costs will be incurred in printing passes and application forms. High praise was extended to WATbus their drivers and the volunteers.

RESOLVED that the expenditure and administration of the Nipper scheme for 2011/12 be approved.

The Chairperson agreed to consideration of the following items of urgent business so that payments could be made in the current financial year.

C122/10 EUROPEAN POWER LIFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Provision had been made in the budgets for both 2010/11 and 2011/12 to contribute towards the European Power Lifting Championships to be hosted in the town for several days from 7th to 11th June. The organisers had confirmed that arrangements were well in hand with competitors coming from many parts of Europe but had requested assistance with the advance purchase of medals for the Championships.

Members expressed their great appreciation of the efforts of Fred McKenzie for his selfless efforts in connection with the sport and Championships.

RESOLVED: a contribution of £2,000 be made towards the cost of providing medals for the Championships.

C123/10 GRANT APPLICATION

An application for grant funding was considered from the RNLI Ladies Fundraiser to provide children's entertainment at the annual Harbour Day on Sunday 31st July to encourage attendance by children and their parents.

RESOLVED: A grant of £300 be approved for the RNLI Ladies Fundraiser.

A number of issues were raised concerning planning permission for fencing in the Conservation Area; sand removal from the play ground at the Church Point and RNLI Station; former Wansbeck Town Twinning artefacts that would be pursued by the Town Clerk.

Signed by the Chairperson

Date: