

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 July 2011 at 7 pm at the Sailing Club Newbiggin by-the-Sea.

PRESENT:

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

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE:

7 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:

- A resident was keen to pursue the possibility of developing training opportunities and referred to a local business in second hand goods requesting that Councillors Peden and Cholerton to accompany her to discuss possible expansion. Members acknowledged that they wished to encourage initiative with businesses and individuals.
- County Councillor Lang referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and the intention to invite him to participate in a wasteland project and enquired whether any location had been identified. The Chairperson advised that a specific site to work with had not yet been identified yet but there were some areas to be improved. He also enquired about developments with the Triplett's Trust and was advised that approaches were to be made to the interim trustees appointed by the county council before matters could proceed further.
- A problem relating to horses tethered near the narrow path and sometimes untethered was raised by a concerned resident who had to divert her journey. The matter needed to be pursued with the county council again and perhaps the police. Horses around other parts of the town; the Sports Centre; Spital Estate; Long park were causing problems and preventing children from playing on some areas.
- The problem of wind-blown sand was preventing the proper use of equipment and facilities at the Atlee Park playground. It was acknowledged that the county council had encountered problems because of the law affecting movement of sand but it was being addressed and work was needed to prevent sand coming

through the fence and also towards the church. Councillor Peden had met with officers and a scheme to remove and redistribute a depth of six feet of sand was to be carried out with machinery but possibly not until September now.

- A resident referred to another problem relating to horses being ridden on the beach and in the water causing potential danger to other beach users. This was not covered by the new dog bylaws but some members believed that the former Wansbeck Council had banned horses from the beach. These matters would be taken up with the county council.
- To negate nuisance problems from bicycle riders it was understood that the mounds and humps near to Long Park were to be removed but this had not happened yet. Some were near a terrace of houses and others near the Aged Persons bungalows.
- A query from the Forum which was continuing was raised regarding the dead holly trees in the Dedication Garden. The meeting was advised that these trees had now been removed by the county council and replacement trees would be planted in early winter.
- Referring to the discussions from the Town Assembly Plugging the Leaks a resident reported that she had taken forward the Buy Local Group and contacted local traders two months ago but as yet had no response. Newbiggin Forward now wanted to deal with this matter.

C013/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Kirkup and A Thompson.

C014/11 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C015/11 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

C016/11 BULB PLANTING FOR 2012

The county council had approached Town and Parish Councils to see if they want to add any areas of bulb planting for next year as orders had to be placed now. This fit well with the environmental aspects of the Town Plan and a display of Daffodils and mixed Crocuses covering twenty square metres could be provided for £250. The location would be agreed by the Town Clerk with Neighbourhood Services in due course.

RESOLVED that an order be placed to the value of £250.

C017/11 REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that the county council was due to complete a review of polling places by the end of 2011. This would be done in two stages with stakeholders invited to comment on existing arrangements and then any proposed change.

When conducting a review the local authority had to ensure that all electors in the constituency had such reasonable facilities for voting as were practicable in the circumstances and so far as is reasonable and practicable the polling places were accessible to those who are disabled.

Polling places currently used in the constituency area were at St Bartholomew's Church Centre; the Sports Centre; the Library; the Elizabethan Hall and the Boundary Commission had decided that it would maintain the Ward boundaries shown on the plan to provide approximate equality of voters to Councillors and not alter subdivisions for Town Councils. This could be looked at as a Local Governance Review by the County Council on request.

The county councillor for Seaton and Newbiggin West commented that he believed that the county ward boundary had remained unchanged and this needed to be clarified.

Members felt that existing polling arrangements worked well and did not need to be altered.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

- 1) Confirm the present arrangements regarding polling stations;**
- 2) Request Northumberland County Council to undertake a Local Governance Review if necessary to establish the correct boundary and arrangements for Newbiggin by-the-Sea.**

C018/11 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY – CLIFF TOP PATH

The Countryside Access and Recreation Manager was seeking views on a number of proposed changes to the path network around Sandy Bay to overcome issues relating to the erosion of the cliffs and the consequent loss of the cliff top path and the realignment of a cul-de-sac path through the caravan park currently obstructed by buildings, to provide a through route connecting the path up to the river Wansbeck estuary.

The Town Clerk referred to a plan displayed at the meeting demonstrating the proposals that also provided a public bridleway to provide rider access to the foreshore and a new section of footpath to provide a continuous footpath link where a gap in the network previously existed.

It was confirmed that the cliff top path between was substantially lost through coastal

erosion and collapse of the cliff face and the proposed alternative was being created with the agreement of the landowners to provide an alternative safe route that was stepped back a safe distance from the eroding cliff edge.

Members welcomed the plans that were a significant improvement on present arrangements and suggested that signposting be provided to link to the Sustrans routes nearby and query an apparent bridleway through the allotment site.

RESOLVED that the Town Council approve and welcome the proposed alterations and improvements to the public path network.

C019/11 ANNUAL RETURN ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT

Members had approved the Accounts and Accounting Statement for the financial year 2010/2011 following consideration of the Final Accounts and Balance Sheet at the Annual Meeting in May and the documentation had been available for inspection by the public as required by the legislation.

The Annual Return had been submitted to the appointed External Auditors BDO LLP who had now signed and returned the certificate and opinion. They had confirmed that the information in the annual return was in accordance with proper practices and no matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

While not affecting their opinion the External Auditors had drawn attention to some of the fixed assets disclosed at a £nil value in the Annual Return because these assets could be undervalued.

The Town Clerk explained that fixed assets are required to be correctly stated measured at cost value and not changed unless disposed of or scrapped. The assets in question were the items of furniture acquired free of cost from the county council on the creation of the Town Council and were therefore recorded at cost value.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

- 1) Approves and accepts the Annual Report as audited;**
- 2) Takes no action regarding the value of assets acquired free of charge.**

C020/11 LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION – PROSPECT PLACE PUBLIC TOILETS

Last summer the Town Council in line with the Town Plan had arranged for the renovation of the public toilets at Prospect Place and service uplift was provided so that additional cleaning could take place at weekends and longer opening hours.

Members were invited to consider whether service uplift was required for this summer and estimates of costs of around £1,500 provided to the meeting for the period 23 July to 02 October. The premises had been kept in good condition last summer and it was felt the same service standard should be provided this year while the Town Council was revisiting other options for the future.

RESOLVED that the Town Council agree the service uplift for the Prospect Place public toilets and delegate to the Chairperson and the Town Clerk authority to agree arrangements with the county council up to a maximum of £2,000.

C021/11 TOURIST SIGNPOSTING AND CAR PARKS

The Town Plan had identified the need to work with relevant organizations and the county council on a number of issues relating to tourist information signage and public parking.

A recent meeting with the Manager of the Newbiggin Maritime Centre regarding such matters particularly in relation to the launch of this prestige visitor centre this month had identified a range of signage required to direct visitors both to attractions in Newbiggin by-the-Sea and to appropriate car parking. The Maritime Centre would be approaching the Automobile Association for temporary road signs and it was thought that the Town Council should take the lead on the overview of broader signage for Newbiggin by-the-Sea and tourist signage that might require formal applications to be submitted to the Highways Authorities.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Councillors Boon, Peden and Thompson along with County Councillor J Lang be appointed to a Working Group to consider the requirements with local stakeholders;**
- 2) authority be given to submit all necessary applications.**

C022/11 REVIEW OF OPEN SPACES, PLANTING AND SHRUB BEDS

Northumberland County Council Neighbourhood Services had requested that the Town Council review the planting schemes and shrub beds within the open spaces throughout the town and consider whether any changes were required to the types of display with a view to reducing maintenance requirements.

Members needed to consider such matters as part of the overall assessment of local service provision and standards and it was suggested that this would be best achieved through a Working Group to report back to a subsequent Council meeting.

RESOLVED that the Town Council appoint a Working Group consisting of all members to work informally on this significant piece of work for future generations.

C023/11 NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES – CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

A Customer Satisfaction Survey was being carried out by the Business Co-ordination Officer from Northumberland County Councils' Highways and Neighbourhood Services with a view to providing the highest possible standard of service in Grounds Maintenance.

The public were able to complete the survey online on the county council website but

they had specifically invited Parish and Town Councils across the county to complete the questionnaire as valued end users of their service. A copy had been circulated to members so that issues could be considered individually and discussed collectively at the meeting.

Members debated the various service questions to reach the following consensus. Specific references were made to the ongoing sand problem at the Atlee Terrace Play Area and on the promenade; the exceptional standard of the Memorial Park; good but erratic responses to requests; the workforce and managers doing well under difficult circumstances.

RESOLVED that the county council be advised that the Town Council assessed the service standards as follows:

Q1:2; Q2:2; Q3:2; Q4:4; Q5:2; Q6:3; Q7:3; Q8:4; Q9:5; Q10:3.

Urgent business

The Chairperson agreed to the following urgent items being considered.

C024/11 LOCAL MUSIC TUITION

The Chairperson referred to an opportunity to provide local music tuition in the town through the summer holiday period. A proposal had been put forward through Newbiggin Partnership Limited whereby two musicians would provide intensive tuition to create two steel bands involving 20 children aged 9/10 selected through the Primary School Manager.

The contribution required was £1,200 and the Town Council had a sufficient budget for tuition based opportunities. Plans for continuation of the opportunity through involvement of the school would be considered. Members suggested that the bands formed be requested to perform a concert in the bandstand in due course.

RESOLVED that a contribution of £1,200 be made to provide music tuition by the creation of the children's steel bands.

C025/11 EVENTS AT ST MARY'S CHURCH WOODHORN

Events being promoted by Friends of Woodhorn Church were to take place to provide public access on a similar basis to previous events. On Saturday evening a musical concert would be held at 7.00 pm and on Sunday between 1 and 4 pm the public could attend to share the history of the church including previous marriages etc. On September 09, 10 and 11 the building would be open as part of Heritage Open Days.

Signed by the Chairman:Date:.....