

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 August 2011 at 7 pm at the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre.

PRESENT:

Councillors: R McCready (Mayor)

L Anderson	M Boon	M Cholerton
M Peden	W Rogers	A Thompson

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE:

10 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 local resident enquired about the procedures for directors of Newbiggin by-the-Sea Partnership Limited in relation to a grant awarded by the Town Council as she felt that the governance arrangements were the same for all similar organisations and whether it was open for other organisations to apply for similar purposes.

The Grant Scheme was about demonstrating local benefit and the Town Clerk responded that the Grant Committee had been satisfied with the further information provided regarding activities of the charitable company. One current scheme involved steel band tuition for local children over the summer which was also being supported by the Town Council and match funding being attracted by the company to extend that scheme. Newbiggin by-the-Sea Partnership was seen as a local delivery vehicle and while there were other schemes being pursued they were not yet in the public domain.

A county councillor was not aware that this was not a Town Council scheme and felt that it was not in the spirit of the Grant Scheme to pay for governance matters and concerns were expressed over a perceived lack of transparency. The company could be contacted for further information.

- PC Nathan Brown of Northumbria Police attended the meeting and referred to information available on the web site. A recent raid had been information led jointly with HM Customs and Excise and received some press coverage. There had been a rise in thefts from motor vehicles across the county and country with one local example of

an expensive trek-bike being stolen from the back of a vehicle parked in the town. Scrap metal was very valuable at present and led to opportunist thefts.

Vandalism damage leading to a car being an economic write-off had been a one-off occurrence. Crime statistics were slightly reducing and problems of horses; parking; motor cycles were well known but reporting of events was still encouraged. Specific off-road incidents with vehicles could be classed as anti-social driving and following a warning which would last for twelve months vehicles could be confiscated for a second offense with recovery costing £150 so they were often abandoned. Problems of bikers heading between Spital and Welfare to the corn fields continued but with little response to complaints. He encouraged residents to continue to report incidents even if they didn't see immediate benefits.

The police policy towards vehicles driving up and down the beach was queried and that depended on the purpose and whether it was banned. The police would like to see signs erected to assist officers responding.

C026/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

C027/11 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C028/11 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meetings of the Grant Committee held on 08 June; 29 June; 13 July; 03 August 2011 were received for information.

C029/11 MINUTES OF THE SEASONAL LIGHTING WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the meeting of the Seasonal Lighting Working Group were received. The Town Clerk outlined considerations and discussions relating to arrangements for 2011. It was understood that the Traders Association had ordered a Christmas tree.

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Working Group be agreed.

C030/11 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Peden declared a personal interest as a proprietor of business premises in the town and Councillor Thompson declared a personal interest as a director of Newbiggin by-the-Sea Partnership Limited and as a Portfolio Holder on the Executive of Northumberland County Council.

C031/11 SUPPORT AND LINKS FOR LOCAL ORGANISATIONS ASSISTING OLDER PERSONS – AGE UK

The report referred to local organisations providing various services and facilities for older persons in the community and a recent meeting with the Day Services Development Manager of Age UK – Northumberland to consider how to assess future requirements and support.

Meals on Wheels Service funding ran out in July leading to the closure of the Age UK service and this was also likely to affect the WRVS service in Newbiggin. More elderly people could become remote from services and regular contact but Age UK was developing its Handyman and Gardening service to help people feel safe secure and supported.

It was felt that it would be opportune to establish the range and extent of voluntary services for older persons in the town and consider what links and support were required and how the Town Council and Age UK could assist. The Chairperson requested that a conference be established to bring elderly person and carers together with the local organizations to discuss the issues and look to plug the gaps through partnership work.

RESOLVED that the Town Council facilitate a local conference in the autumn of all voluntary groups and organisations involved with older persons.

C032/11 CYCLE/FOOTWAY TO GRACE DARLING CAMPUS

The Town Council had recognised the need to improve and provide an all weather pedestrian and cycle route to the new school being built on the Grace Darling Campus to serve children from 3 years to 11 years from the whole town from September. This was particularly important for children from the east end of the town and a scheme had been proposed as one of the Town Council's top three priority schemes for the county council's Local Transport Programme.

Councillor Thompson advised that the original school plan had lacked provision for proper access from some parts of the town but was now able to confirm that the county council would soon proceed with works to provide a safe walking route to the campus as funding had now been secured with involvement from Sustrans as shown on the plan displayed at the meeting.

Illumination of the full route was not addressed in the current proposals but would be important to support a full range of after school activities through the winter months.

RESOLVED that the Town Council welcome the proposed scheme to provide safe access to the Grace Darling Campus from all parts of the town.

C033/11 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) PROGRAMME PRIORITIES FOR 2012 - 13

Northumberland County Council had started the process to review the priorities for the LTP for 2012-13 and had again invited the Town Council to submit its top three priority schemes for consideration.

Members considered the list of existing requests which did not yet feature in the LTP and the requests for resident parking schemes in several parts of the town affected by visitor parking. The footpath/cycle track scheme would be provided outside of the LTP and traffic calming was required to the road system in the Collingwood road area to complement the safe access to school proposals.

RESOLVED that the Town Council advise the County Council that its priority schemes for the Local Transport Plan were as follows:

- 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 traffic calming scheme in the Collingwood road system to complement the safe route to school scheme;**
- iii) Resident parking schemes to be introduced in Beach Terrace; Prospect Place; Vernon Place.**

C034/11 BUS SHELTERS – MAINTENANCE AND PROVISION

The Town Clerks' report advised that the provision and maintenance of bus shelters was a service that the county council felt should be undertaken by the Town and Parish Councils and was under consideration for service transfer in 2012. It appeared that the county council was unlikely to undertake significant work or replace existing shelters and would not provide new ones.

In recent weeks the condition of the bus shelters throughout the town had been assessed and generally they were in good structural condition with only minor repairs and improvements required. There was a wide range of metal shelters however affording varying degrees of shelter and many in need of redecoration with one or two requiring replacement or additional safety glazing. Request to replace the two shelters on Woodhorn Road at the Colliery which were of poor appearance and requests for new shelters at Front Street (Bank House) and between East Lea and Woodlea (outside Keir Hardie Court) were outstanding.

Details of the county councils' Bus Shelter Procurement application that must be submitted by a Town or Parish Council for approval before any significant works could take place were set out in the report. These required the acceptance of highways standards and future maintenance liability.

Members discussed the need to urgently look at replacement and provision of bus shelters and investigate a new style with shelter at the curb providing a barrier to the road with access clear behind and incorporating the bus sign timetable and litter bin. There was no specific provision in the current budget and some felt that it was premature to undertake schemes this year. After a vote it was

RESOLVED that the Town Council accept in principle the future liabilities associated with bus shelter provision in the town.

C035/11 SUPPORT FOR TRIATHLON EVENT

The budget included provision to support special events including the Triathlon being staged in the town and the Chairperson referred to a request from Tri Northumberland for financial support to provide coarse signage; swim buoy markers; promotional signage now this was a major event.

RESOLVED that the Town Council approve a contribution of £1,000 to Tri Northumberland.

The Chairperson agreed to the following item of urgent business being raised in view of safety concerns.

C036/11 JET-SKI USE IN NEWBIGGIN BAY

In response to concerns expressed about the conduct of some jet-skiers and recent observations Richard Glen had carried out a risk assessment which he outlined to the meeting.

He felt that within a small bay there was a conflict and lethal risk to swimmers within the breakwater who may not survive impact. Some machines were not insured and the switch mechanisms were by-passed resulting in the machine not stopping if the rider fell off and dangerous manoeuvres had been observed. Other observations related to noise disturbance and motor vehicles accessing the beach.

At Blyth beach an area had been specifically designated for use by jet-skiers in licensed clubs but there were no signs prohibiting use in Newbiggin and he felt this raised the issue of liability in the event of an accident.

RESOLVED that the Town Council recommend to Northumberland County Council that it:

- i) review the findings of the risk assessment;**
- ii) erect notices prohibiting unauthorised access to the beach;**
- iii) review and examine measures to regulate the use of jet-skis in the bay.**

C037/11 TETHERED HORSES ON OPEN SPACES

Further concerns had been expressed about the problems of tethered horses throughout the town but in particular one in Argyle Terrace that was not tended properly and in poor condition. This had been raised previously and Councillors had advised that it was in the hands of Public Protection and Neighbourhood Services and passed on to the RSPCA.

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