

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 09 November 2011 at 7 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Newbiggin by-the-Sea.

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

8 members of the public

ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor Cholerton announced with sad regret that Barry McDonald one of the drivers of the Newbiggin Nipper Service from the outset of the service had passed away. The Nipper Bus would be used to transport regular passengers to the funeral service at St Bartholomew's Church the following week. The Town Council expressed its condolences to Barry's family.

OPEN SESSION

There were no questions raised by members of the public.

C053/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Peden.

C054/11 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record. The Chairperson invited members of the public to attend the bulb planting session on Sunday 27 November.

C055/11 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillors L Anderson and R McCready declared interests as members of the Newbiggin in Bloom Association.

C056/11

LOCAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW – PARISH BOUNDARY

The Town Clerk reported on enquiries regarding the outcome of the electoral review of Northumberland and the relative positions of the County Ward and the Town (Parish) boundaries which had now been clarified.

It was confirmed that there has been no change to the boundary of the County Council Electoral Divisions affecting Newbiggin. It remained as indicated by the green line on the plan attached to the report between Newbiggin Central and East ED and Seaton with Newbiggin West ED however the former Wansbeck district ward boundaries had disappeared.

The overall Newbiggin parish boundary was not affected but the Boundary Committee for England indicated that all parish wards would be co-terminus with county divisions. This contrasted sharply with the previous parish wards indicated by the red line on the same plan. There had therefore been a change in the parish wards from an approximate 50:50 split of electors to nearer an 80:20 split with each ward represented by four councillors that created a significant imbalance that could only be addressed through a Local Governance Review undertaken by Northumberland County Council.

It was suggested that as the objective of the county review was to provide equality of representation for electors across Northumberland that the county council should be requested to undertake a Local Governance Review to re-establish the Parish Ward Boundary that was originally created for the town and provide a balance of representation for the local community.

RESOLVED that the Town Council request Northumberland County Council to undertake a Local Governance Review in Newbiggin by-the-Sea with the object of providing a balance of representation between councillors and the electorate by re-establishing the original ward boundary between Newbiggin East and West.

C057/11

NORTHUMBRIA IN BLOOM

Newbiggin by-the-Sea had achieved a bronze award in the Northumbria in Bloom competition in the last two years. Members were invited to consider entrance of the town in next years' competition and the budget implications covering the entrance fee of £120 and expenses for hospitality of the judges and travel costs.

Members felt that entrance in the competition raised the profile of the area and was good for the town but more people were needed to be actively involved as volunteers. The judges wanted to see local children involved and approaches were being made through the school and Guide and Scout Groups.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Newbiggin by-the-Sea be entered in the Northumbria in Bloom Competition for 2012;**
- (ii) A budget of £250 be made available.**

CO58/11 NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

As a member of the Northumberland Association of Local Councils the Town Council currently paid an annual fee of £446.01. The Association was facing financial pressures through the withdrawal of support from the county council over the current and next financial years and had held preliminary discussions with member representatives about increasing fees to cover the shortfall.

The Town Clerk advised that a new formula approach has been proposed for acceptance at a Special General Meeting that would impose a small increase for inflation for the majority of local councils in Northumberland. It would include the national levy at 5.42p per elector; fixed charge of £22; 10.5p per elector for the first 1,000 electors; 5p per elector beyond 1,000 replacing 3 previous bands producing a new charge of £569.97 for Newbiggin Town Council. The increase for some other towns would be significantly higher.

RESOLVED that budget provision of £570 be made for 2012/13.

CO59/11 LOCAL COUNCIL CHARTER FOR NORTHUMBERLAND

The county council and NALC had issued a draft revision of the charter produced ahead of Local Government Reorganisation in 2009 for consultation. It was now generally recognised as a better document being much more about a working partnership arrangement and outlined the rights roles and responsibilities.

Getting the relationship right was covered in the first section including local democracy; communication; consultation and engagement; finance; advice and support. Finance would be governed by overarching principles of equity, efficiency and transparency with the harmonisation of service arrangements across the county following diverse approaches under previous district councils

The theme of the second section was about delivering services building on a harmonised baseline of core services that were consistently understood to be the responsibility of local councils. Local Service was defined as predominantly benefitting residents within that parish/town council area. These services and assets would be the responsibility of the local council. Non-local Service was those services that benefited residents from multiple local council areas; service that was an integral part of the tourist infrastructure and visitor offer. These services and assets would remain the responsibility of the County Council.

It was claimed that the majority of local councils already delivered the local services including allotments; seasonal lighting; play areas; Town Twinning. From April 2012 further services and assets involving all public seats; provision of new litter bins; public conveniences that met local need; War Memorials; 'In Bloom' competitions; all Bus Shelters would be the responsibility of all local councils in the county.

Other local services to be phased from April 2013 would include local parks; playing fields or miners welfares; provision of local gateway signage; cemeteries. It would be for local councils

to determine the most appropriate means of delivery. Baseline service standards would also be specified for other service areas to allow local councils to consider service enhancements of quality or quantity.

RESOLVED that the Town Council had no amendments or other comments on the new Charter.

CO60/11 TOURIST TELESCOPES

Provision had been made in the budget to consider the installation of tourist telescopes in the town and investigation had indicated that acquisition and installation costs would be in the region of £2,000 for each one.

There was some discussion of issues affecting the lens; possible theft; location with the Maritime Centre being mentioned; consent from landowners; installation by local contractor and flag poles as an alternative project. Further quotations and estimates for ground installation works were required.

RESOLVED that further quotations be obtained for acquisition and installation of tourist telescopes.

CO61/11 GATEWAY FEATURES

It was considered that a gateway feature was required at the west entrance to the town and members felt a small scheme around the name sign just down from the spine road possibly using stone from the local company could be considered but the trees and shrubs would need attention along this corridor.

Members also considered that something was required as a draw into Newbiggin by-the-Sea and the Town Clerk referred to the possibility of involving Groundworks in developing a grander scheme in the vicinity of the roundabout that would probably require grant assistance. An approach to the Caravan Company was a possibility and the offer of providing a boat as a feature for flower planting was put forward.

RESOLVED that a possible project be pursued with the investigation of match-funding.

Urgent Business The Chairperson agreed to consideration of the following items of business as a matter of urgency.

CO62/11 NORTHUMBERLAND CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY AWARDS

The Chairperson referred to the Academy Awards evening which had been a remarkable event held in St. Nicholas Cathedral at Newcastle when a glass trophy for the Citizenship Award had been presented to a local student Kirsten Shears who would retain a small replica and Amazon voucher. The cost had been approved under delegated powers and the main trophy would be retained at the Academy with which a strong working arrangement was being developed. Ashington and Lynemouth Councils had presented similar awards.

CO63/11 OLYMPIC TORCH ROUTE

Confirmation had just been received that the Olympic Torch would visit Newbiggin by-the-Sea on 15 June 2012 as part of the national procession. This would provide an opportunity to showcase Newbiggin and it was hoped that there would be an opportunity to influence the actual route within the town and present Newbiggin and the bay in a way everyone would be proud of. Local people would be encouraged to get involved so that the horticultural side was at its best and there were suggestions of regular litter picks; trying the shop local campaign again; pushing the tourist agenda next year and publicity through the events leaflet and BVAL programme.

Travelling along the promenade would present a fine filming opportunity with the Sailing Club in the bay and particularly if a linear event or focus handover could be staged. It was suggested that the Academy should be requested to release the students to observe the Torch during the period it would pass through the town.

RESOLVED that an open meeting be held on 18 January at the Sports and Community Centre to seek coordination of arrangements with businesses etc.

CO64/11 PUBLIC TOILET PROJECT

Following up the main priority in the Town Plan members had conducted an exhaustive search for a suitable site for new public toilets in the town centre and now recommended proceeding with the vacant site in Watt's Lane adjacent to Front Street. The pre-planning process had been positive with no significant planning issues being raised. Plans had been prepared and authority was now sought to submit a formal planning application to the county council following local consultation.

RESOLVED that the Town Council seek formal planning consent for the development at Watt's Lane Newbiggin by-the-Sea.

CO65/11 DRURIDGE BAY PROJECT

Councillor Rogers referred to the Druridge Bay Project through the Coal and Coast Partnership with N W T . The partnership area scheme included Woodhorn and it was thought that there may be the possibility of involving the North East Civic trust in renovation of Woodhorn Church so the partnership should be encouraged and supported.

RESOLVED that a letter of encouragement and support for the Druridge Bay Project be sent to the Coal and Coast Partnership.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date: