

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12 March 2012 at 7 pm at the Newbiggin by-the-Sea Sailing Club.

PRESENT:

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

Officer: D Earl - Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 8 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

OPEN SESSION

The following questions were raised by members of the public:

- A local resident from Sutherland Avenue attended to ask about a scheme for a Jubilee Orchard to be planted on a grassed area in Buteland Terrace behind the rear gardens of Sutherland Avenue properties and claimed this was not wanted by local residents who felt it was inappropriate for wild flower planting and infrequent cutting.

Councillor Thompson replied regarding the county council proposal to enhance the area and that the officers had not received any objections from residents. The Town Council had not been formally consulted on the detail of the scheme but did support the general aims. A member indicated that the green areas throughout the town were a great asset that needed to be maintained.

- A number of local issues were raised by a resident who enquired why the shrubs had been removed from the raised beds at Dixon's Corner leaving a mess on the paving. This was still work in progress and members felt that the area had been cleared and would be restocked with new plants.

The former 'Boatyard' area at the south end of the promenade was considered to be a mess as following its removal no further work had been done or planting carried out. Concerns were also expressed regarding the riding of horses both on the promenade and the beach. Someone had been observed schooling a horse on the beach in close proximity to children playing and it was queried whether former by-laws were in place to control the riding of horses in these areas and bicycles on the promenade. These were matters to be referred to the county council.

- Reference was again made to the flashing speed signs outside the former school at Dixon's Corner which county had not responded to; the parking situation approaching the corner on North Seaton Road.

It was noted that an item on the public toilets project did not appear on the agenda and the Chairperson advised that an update would be given after the application had been considered by the County planning Committee.

The small grant for the provision of bunting for local traders was to supplement the Associations own funds.

C096/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Peden.

C09711 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 08 February 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

C098/11 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of the Grant Committee held on 29 February 2012 were received the Committee having acted under delegated powers.

C099/11 MEETING DATES 2012-13

A schedule of suggested meeting dates for the next municipal year had been circulated. Members agreed to continue with the cycle of meeting on the second Wednesday of each month and to rotate to venues around the town.

RESOLVED that the dates be agreed.

C100/11 MUSIC BURSARY

Provision had been made in the budget to commence a small bursary for an individual musician living within the parish boundary to assist with future equipment costs or expenses. It was thought that this could best be facilitated through Wansbeck Music Festival where an Examiner could be invited to identify a suitable young person showing considerable promise.

Newbiggin had always played a part in the Wansbeck Music Festival and Members felt that to continue encouraging the participation of local young people that the Festival should be requested to rotate the location for the final to include Newbiggin in the future.

RESOLVED that the Wansbeck Music Festival be invited to administer the award of the bursary.

C101/11 HIGH STREET PORTAS PROJECT

The Chairperson referred to a government call to compete for grants of up to £100,000 to support pilot projects towards improving local high streets as highlighted in the Mary Portas Review.

Local traders had been working with county regeneration and the Maritime Centre with a view to submitting a bid for Newbiggin and it was essential to show local support. It was felt that the Town Council should provide match funding as one of the partners and even if the project bid was not successful it could consider smaller scale schemes being put in place jointly through agreement with other partners.

The Town Council Chairperson would be a member of the Strategic Group being formed and a Delivery Group would seek wider participation. Members felt there was a need to be proactive locally for regeneration to be successful.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

- i) Allocate £15,000 as match funding for the High Street Project bid;**
- ii) Consider subsequent detailed schemes in Newbiggin;**
- iii) Provide a letter of support for the project bid.**

C102/11 RISK ASSESSMENT

The draft Risk Assessment and Management for 2012-13 had been prepared by the Town Clerk and circulated for Members consideration. The Chairperson led a detailed examination of all elements including new services and projects. The agreed twenty-year replacement policy would be incorporated in the controls for the transfer of local services which were in hand. It was noted that none of the school crossing points now met the county criteria and following a meeting of local residents with county officers only minimal restrictions would be provided near the entrances to the new campus. Members reduced the level of risk to Low.

RESOLVED that the Risk Assessment and Management 2012-13 be agreed.

C103/11 INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Council's insurance arrangements were due for renewal in April and the Town Clerk reported on enquiries made regarding the addition of public liability for the services transferring from the county council. Covering these assets for replacement following damage had also been explored but that would increase the premium four-fold with excesses applied for each loss. Members agreed to proceed with the inclusion of the additional public liability cover.

RESOLVED that quotation 2 for the insurance renewal be approved increasing the public liability cover with Zurich Town and Parish at a cost of £894.62 for 2012-13.

C104/11 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – CONFERENCE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

This local conference had been well advertised through local groups and in the press with arrangements well advanced. Registration of delegates for the conference was likely to exceed fifty and local organisations involved in providing services to older persons were encouraged to attend. With the full day programme it was felt that reasonable and healthy refreshments would have to be provided which would increase the likely budget allocation.

RESOLVED that the budget for the Annual Town Meeting and Conference for Older People be increased to £1,000.

C105/11 NEWBIGGIN SKATE PARK

The Newbiggin Skate Park located close to the Sports and Community Centre was one of the play areas that would transfer to the Town Council on 01 April and had been identified by the Police and the Strategic Community Safety Team as the site to redirect young people using inappropriate sites for scooters and skate boards around the town.

While the current equipment was safe it was known that some works would be required to the site together with the reinstatement of the lighting to the park which had not operated for some years. Members felt that this site needed to be enhanced and lighting provided for year round use and wanted to see local young people engaged with the appropriate agencies to develop the skate park.

A member raised the conflict of cyclists and horses on the promenade and the lack of adequate signing at either end to deter use or assist enforcement. It was felt that this matter required further investigation and input from the police and the Coastal Warden.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Strategic Community Safety Team; Blyth Valley Arts and Leisure; Groundwork North East and the local Police be requested to work jointly with local young people to identify how the skate park should be enhanced and developed for safe use;**
- 2) The Town Council offer to match fund fifty per cent of the costs of approved works up to a maximum of £10,000.**

The Chairperson agreed to the following item of urgent business being raised owing to the need for urgent investigation and action in connection with a breach of planning control.

C106/11 ATTENUATION PONDS NEAR SPITAL ESTATE

Reference was made by Councillor Boon to planning conditions imposed by the former Wansbeck Council for the planting and maintenance required in connection with the creation of the attenuation ponds to support development to the east of Ashington. It had been observed that the new plants had been poisoned recently and now contractors had commenced to plough those areas and had intended to plough up the dry pond area.

It was urgent that such action was stopped and the planting scheme reinstated. Members made reference to the assurances that had been given throughout the planning process that woodlands to support wildlife habitat and a nine-hole golf course would be provided around these areas but had not materialised.

The Town Council was asked to support the request to the county council to urgently investigate the likely breach of planning control and seek reinstatement of the original scheme.

RESOLVED that Northumberland County Council be requested to take all necessary action to prevent further damage to the area and seek immediate reinstatement of the planting scheme at the attenuation ponds.

Signed by the Chairperson:

Date: