

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 June 2012 at 7 pm
at the Grace Darling Campus 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:

1 member of the press and 8 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

The following issues were raised by members of the public present at the meeting:

- A representative of residents in the vicinity of the site for the proposed public toilet development advised that the amended plans had been inspected and the objectors had the same concerns over privacy; access; didn't know what might be kept in the storage element and didn't want a toilet block near their homes. Objectors felt there were other more suitable sites near the Cresswell Arms; Maritime Centre; Sailing Club or the Car Park.

The meeting was advised that the plans had been amended following feedback from the County Conservation Officer and that other sites had been examined. The Town Council would discuss the project fully once the outcome of the planning application was known.

- An enquiry was made regarding the transfer of responsibility for floral planting from the Northumberland County Council to the Town Council; the expected role of the local In Bloom volunteers and whether the budget for such work had also transferred.

The Chairperson confirmed that this service had transferred on 01 April as part of the county-wide planting standardisation and the County Council would no longer undertake this service. The Town Council had included £6,000 in its budget for the first year as the flower beds were a prominent feature in the town and had arranged for NCC to undertake this work and would consider testing service provision for subsequent years although no land transfer was involved. There was no money in the county budget this year and many other local

councils were doing a similar exercise and the In Bloom Association would undertake planting in Memorial Park in conjunction with the Royal British Legion and other partners so there would be no reduction in service this year. In response to a further query in the event of the volunteer association being unable to undertake all of the work or disband it was confirmed that the Town Council would take responsibility for alternative arrangements.

References were made to the varying standards of planted areas in other parts of the town and to a range of improvements recently completed. Members placed on record their thanks and appreciation of all of the hard work undertaken by Councillor Lorna Anderson throughout the town.

- It was reported that the interactive speed sign at Gibson Street had now been switched off and other complaints were now being made about the loss of the service.

C015/12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 09 May 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C016/12 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Grant Committee held on 11 April 2012 were received. The Chairperson advised of the recent award of grants and fed back information concerning a range of Diamond Jubilee parties.

C017/12 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor McCready declared a non prejudicial interest as a member of the strategic team leading the Portas Project.

C018/12 TOWN CENTRE PORTAS PROJECT

The Council welcomed the success of the pilot project application working on the Town Team principle led by a small strategic group and a wider interest group with the County Council acting as the Accountable Body. It was intended to advertise and appoint a Project Manager and another three apprentices which would help pass the Town Plan target.

Members felt that the Portas Project would be helpful in promoting Newbiggin by-the-Sea which had suffered from lack of investment for many years with a lack of industrial units and office provision.

Members were invited to endorse the decision to provide the agreed contribution of £15,000 towards the project.

RESOLVED that: the contribution of £15,000 be released to the Portas Project.

C019/12 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN AND FEEDBACK

The County Council had now approved the LTP for 2012/13 at a value of almost £15m with separate block allocations of grant for integrated transport and highways maintenance. Urgent works for Spine Road Replacement Parapets; Street lighting Column Replacement; Connect 2 Cycle way totaling £1.19m had been brought forward.

Feedback on the Town Council's three individual requests was set out in the appendix with the Spital Farm Cycle track widening scheme accepted for a feasibility study; traffic calming in the Collingwood Road area placed on the reserve list; the resident parking schemes had been added to the Directory of Requests for future consideration.

The process would be commencing soon to invite priorities for the 2013-14 programme and Members were requested to consider the Town Council's approach.

C020/12 NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CORE STRATEGY – ISSUES AND OPTIONS

The Town Clerk advised members that the County Council had published the issues and options document for consultation as the next stage in the Local Development Core Strategy for the County. It was supported by a Technical Index; Sustainability Appraisal; Habitat Regulations Assessment Scoping Report; Equality Impact Assessment which were substantial documents.

As this was an important part of the planning process to seek views on future housing needs; new work opportunities; protection and enhancement of the environment and energy; minerals; land and water resources a number of public drop-in sessions had been arranged around the area at which Planning Officers would be in attendance. The nearest being in Ashington on Wednesday 20 June (4:30 pm to 7:00 pm at the Old Coop) and Tuesday 26 June (9:00 am to 1:00 pm at The Market, Station Road).

Members would consider the various provisions and decide whether any comments would be submitted in August.

C021/12 HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Arrangements for the Heritage Festival were now in hand with the Newbiggin Maritime Centre now leading. The Town Council had included £500 in the budget to contribute to such a festival and the Chairperson invited members to agree to the release of the funds. .

RESOLVED that: the Town Council release the funding amounting to £500 to Newbiggin Maritime Centre towards the Heritage Festival.

C022/12 NEWBIGGIN TRIATHLON

The organisers of the Triathlon event had advised that they were proposing

enhancements to the road and crowd safety arrangements for the event in September and advanced timing systems. Funding to contribute to the expenses of the event had been included in the budget.

RESOLVED that: the Town Council release the funding amounting to £2,500 to support the Triathlon event.

C023/12 ON AND OFF-STREET PARKING TARIFFS FOR COUNTY

The County Council was proposing a countywide restructure of its on and off-street pay and display tariff structure with consultation being carried out under the Local Authorities Traffic Orders Regulations.

The principal of the new tariff structure was that core town centre parking should be the shortest stay as that parking space was at a premium with more flexibility in less central parking spaces. Charges at off-street car parks would be levied between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm with on-street charging finishing at 5:00 pm.

A wide range of time limits and tariffs at over ninety locations throughout the county were being replaced by twelve tariffs covering Short Stay: Medium Stay: Flexible Stay: Long Stay with only two sites remaining free of charge. Parking spaces in Newbiggin by-the-Sea were not included in the scheme and Members felt strongly that it should remain that way to encourage retail and tourist visits to the town. That was an important principle to emphasis in the context of the recent Portas Project recognition to reinvigorate local shopping facilities; provide new facilities in the town and attract new investment.

RESOLVED that: the Town Council emphasis the need to retain free parking in the town particularly in the context of the Portas Pilot.

C024/12 NEW STANDARDS REGIME

Under the provisions of the Localism Act the Secretary of State had disbanded the Standards Board and existing Codes of Conduct and replaced them with a new duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. There were seven principles of accountability; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership to be considered although no mandatory or draft Code issued by the government.

It was now for Northumberland County Council to put in place arrangements to deal with complaints including those relating to Parish Councillors. It has been working with the Northumberland Association of Local Councils on a possible Code but it could not be finalized as regulations regarding the registration and disclosure of "Disclosable Pecuniary Interests" had not been issued despite the new regime taking effect on 01 July.

Details of the new Standards Committee appointed by the County Council comprising 8 members were set out in the Town Clerk's report with nominations by the NALC County Committee for the Parish Representatives and an advertisement for the appointment of an Independent Person. There was a requirement for the County

Council to establish a new Register of Members' Interests including those of Town and Parish Councils and this would be published on the Web Site. Failure to register in future would be a criminal offence and there would be a duty to disclose unregistered interests at the commencement of consideration of any matter in which a member has an interest. New forms had to be completed once regulations had provided the definitions.

It was intended that all local council's adopt the same Code for consistency although the powers relating to sanctions were greatly reduced. In the area of member decision-making the issues of allegations of bias and pre-determination had long been controversial and the government had included a presumption against a member having a "closed mind" unless that could be rebutted perhaps by the use of strong language or extreme views. Member training would be necessary when all of the Standards issues had been finalized.

In view of the timescale for the new requirements the Town Clerk would watch developments and advise Members.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Town Council note the changes to the Standards Regime;**
- (ii) agree in principle to adopt a new recommended Code and process with the detail being reported to the next meeting.**

C025/12 UNAUTHORISED HORSE GRAZING - ENFORCEMENT

Following on from renewed complaints at the previous meeting members were advised of developments at the county council with a view to putting an enforcement regime in place to tackle the problem. A multi-agency working group had developed proposals for consideration by the Management Group.

RESOLVED that: the Town Council note that its comments had been listened to and that action was being progressed by the County Council.

C026/12 DOG ORDERS – REVIEW OF FIRST YEAR

Members had sought a review of the new Orders brought into effect last year to restrict access to the beach with dogs and provide for fixed penalties in the light of continuing complaints.

The Senior Community Warden in Regeneration and Public Protection had a team of 6 Community Protection Officers covering the whole of Northumberland .The report outlined the remit dealing with dog issues and the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) to owners. This was supported by a team of Animal Welfare Officers consisting of 5 officers and a Senior Officer also covering the whole county authorised to enforce Dog Control Orders.

Details of the nominal formal complaints received by the team with regard to dog fouling in Newbiggin were set out in the report as well as details of the patrols carried

out which amounted to Newbiggin beach and promenade three times per day.

It appeared that while people in Newbiggin were expressing dissatisfaction with arrangements regarding the new Dog Orders very few were making formal complaints through the proper channels at the county council. It was clearly important that members of the public reported breaches direct to the county council either by telephone or e-mail so that they were recorded. Information regarding identity if known; location and frequency should be provided so that the Community Protection and Animal Welfare Officers could carry out their job effectively leading to an improvement in local environmental conditions.

Members discussed the relative issues regarding the Dogs Orders; the adequacy of signage; what could be done to improve education and felt that the Senior Community Warden should be invited to discuss these matters.

RESOLVED that Town Council:

- (i) Invite the Senior Community Warden to discuss the review with the Town Council;
- (ii) Authorize the expenditure of the budget for Dog education issues in the current year;
- (iii) Encourage members of the public to support the enforcement arrangements by officially reporting all incidents and providing appropriate information to county officers.

C027/12 MINEWATER DRAIN

A supplemental report was tabled by the Town Clerk following an approach on behalf of UK Coal Mining Ltd regarding the 525mm drainage pipe from one of the old mine shafts north of the Town passing under the golf links across the north beach and discharging via a large concrete structure on the beach and a pipeline into the sea. This was one of the legacy issues associated with abandoned mines etc. that since privatisation the Engineer had been working with Harworth Estates to resolve.

The Coal Authority now intended to pump minewater from Lynemouth No.2 shaft when necessary treat it and discharge it to the sea at Lynemouth and also had a treatment and discharge facility at Bates (Blyth) so the original purpose of the drain at Newbiggin has been superseded.

As the concrete "Tardis" on the beach was now a safety hazard with the manhole cover on the top replaced several times and the steel pipeline becoming eyesores on the beach both structures were now to be removed by the Coal Authority. It also intended to pull out or cut off the timber piles cradling the pipe and leave the beach level. From public safety and environmental aspects these works were welcomed and it was hoped they could be completed before the school holidays.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council welcome the proposed removal of the minewater drain and structures from the beach.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....