

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 October 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
W Rogers A Thompson
Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE:

12 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

- A Colliery resident enquired about the new bus service and timetable for Woodhorn Road services and an update report was to be given latter on the agenda.
- A resident asked about the outcome of the Portas meeting consideration of the public toilets scheme. The Chairperson advised that the exercise had been rendered null and void owing to the behaviour of some participants involving sticker swapping. A date on the petition in favour of the scheme was challenged but it was confirmed that the sketch plan had been shown to the 438 petitioners and it was signed after the objectors' petition.
- In response to a query about the plans and consultation the Chairperson outlined the range of consultation that had taken place building up with the Town Plan; residents and business feedback; the Annual Assembly; target elements of consultation but as previously mentioned it was sabotaged.
- A recent petition from objectors was referred to and a resident enquired if that would be acted on. The sites referred to were covered in the report to be considered later on the agenda. An objector handed in a further copy of that petition and was advised it would be considered later. Forms from the web site had been completed by a few people but it had not been incorporated in the Newsletter distributed to all properties and only appeared on the web site by mistake.
- It had been anticipated that young people subject to Community Service Orders would have undertaken work in the local community particularly the sea front. While it had not happened yet they would do so shortly.

C059/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M Peden.

C060/12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C061/12 MINUTES OF GRANT COMMITTEE

The Chairperson advised the meeting of the grants awarded to local organizations and young people at the last meeting held on 12 September.

Resolved: that the Minutes of the Grant Committee be received.

C062/12 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS – Councillor McCready declared her interest as one of the remaining Trustees at Newbiggin Arts Forum in relation to business to be considered later in the meeting.

C063/12 BUS SERVICE OPTIONS

An update report was given by Councillor Cholerton who wanted to quash some rumours about increased frequency of services along Woodhorn Road. This was wrong and misleading and new timetables were distributed for a minimal service to operate between 9.15 am and 2.30 pm every two hours each way as an extension of the service from North Seaton.

Go North East was investigating the possible provision of services along Woodhorn Road following a meeting with local members although it was likely that an extra bus would be needed with funding through the county council.

Councillor Thompson advised that at the request of the county council Arriva was re-examining its Newbiggin services.

C064/12 PUBLIC TOILETS PROJECT

The Town Clerk presented the report and outlined the further investigation requested at the last meeting. Providing better public toilets in the town centre that were accessible by disabled people was the main priority of the adopted Newbiggin by-the-Sea Town Plan and fit well with the aims and objectives of the Town Council.

All sites within the defined town centre commercial area from the 'White House Corner' to Moor Croft had been looked at again to see where the project could be accommodated. An examination of potential sites within the highway had been undertaken with the Area Manager for Highways and Neighbourhood Services at Northumberland County Council to gauge suitability or otherwise.

As the construction of public toilets within the highway area was a statutory development a number of potential areas were examined as set out in the report together with reasons ruling some of them out. There were a variety of reasons why a

number of commercial or privately owned sites were not available for consideration and the Sailing Club was unable to release part of its building or boat compound.

The site for which planning consent had been sought in Watts Lane/Front Street met the requirements of Conservation Officers and was recommended for approval by the Planning Officer. Objections from local residents and a petition opposing the development at this location had been submitted while a more significant petition was in favour. The Area Planning Committee had refused the application at the meeting in August when some members felt it would result in an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties with an increase in noise and disturbance and a loss of privacy. The Town Council had six months in which to lodge an appeal against the decision to the Secretary of State.

The recent award of 'Portas Town' status had served to heighten the need to find a solution for the provision of improved disabled access public toilets to support commercial regeneration and improved visitor services. Three options remained available for members' consideration either pursue an appeal against the refusal to grant planning permission; increase the budget provision to purchase a suitable available property for conversion in part and submit a new planning application; replace the toilets on the promenade with the agreement of the county council.

Members referred to the interests of regeneration employment and tourism that required a scheme to proceed and acknowledged that no matter which site was chosen there would be some objections against its use and the various petitions were referred to.

It was moved and seconded that the Town Council appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the site at Watts' Lane/Front Street. An alternative proposal to replace the 'Tardis' with two toilets on the promenade was not seconded.

A Member requested that a named vote be taken.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Anderson Boon Kirkup McCready Thompson	Cholerton	Rogers

RESOLVED: that an appeal be submitted against the refusal of planning permission.

C065/12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to financial and business affairs.

Councillor McCready declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as a managing trustee of Newbiggin Arts Forum and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the following item.

C066/12 **RESOLVED:** that Councillor M Boon be elected to chair the remainder of the meeting.

C067/12 **NEWBIGGIN ARTS CENTRE**

The Town Clerk reported to Members information provided that Newbiggin Arts Forum a charitable company acting as tenant and managing the Arts Centre at Woodhorn Villa was to be dissolved and this raised the issue of the future of the various local community art groups currently using the building and availability of facilities for artists in the future.

Details of the commercial arrangements for the lease and premises provided originally by Wansbeck District Council; full responsibility for the tenant to repair and maintain the property including exterior and interior decoration; user requirements; contractual and running costs for the whole premises which comprised several offices; a photographic studio; gallery/meeting room were considered.

Five user groups meeting weekly; fortnightly; monthly currently occupied the multi-function Arts Centre which was fully accessible to both the local and wider community and it was felt that such a facility should not be lost to the local community.

A meeting with an officer from Northumberland County Council Property Services had identified that in principle the residue of the Lease could be assigned to the Town Council rather than surrendered back to the county council with vacant possession. That simple procedure would allow continuity of use by the user groups and leave time to assess the longer term operation and responsibility for the Art Centre.

Management of the building and contact with the user groups was considered as well as the opportunity to preserve the Gallery and Centre facilities and safeguard the position for current users.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council agree to accept an assignment of the Lease of the Art Centre and undertake the future management of the building.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....