

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 April 2013 at 7.00 pm at the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre 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: 8 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

- A member of the public enquired about the request to remove the public seat adjacent to the cash machine at the Quay Wall Piazza and was advised this would be pursued with the County Neighbourhood Services where there had been changes in personnel recently.
- A litter bin had been removed from the lamppost at Woodhorn crossroads near to Stonewood. This had led to increased litter on the street and a replacement was requested.
- In response to an enquiry about the minutes of the mid-March meeting the Chairperson advised that these had been reported to the following Council meeting held on 26 March.
- A local resident advised that work had started again that day to plant the wooded area adjacent to Storey Crescent and this was welcomed by the residents.
- PC French referred to recent tyre slashing in the vicinity of Latimer Way/Pelaw Avenue where a substantial number of offences had occurred but no offenders apprehended yet. Posters were to be put up to appeal for witnesses. Overall anti-social behaviour had reduced again.

C118/12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C119/12 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS –No further interests were declared.

C120/12 ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

The Chairperson reported that the meeting of the Annual Town Assembly the previous week had not been quite so well attended as previous ones but a good start had been made on consultation for a number of environmental schemes proposed in Newbiggin.

There was general support and encouragement for other environmental schemes around the town particularly to do with the proposed sand dunes tree planting and the work of the volunteers in Newbiggin in Bloom which was commended.

TOWN PLAN REVIEW

The Town Plan had been established following consultation during 2010 and published in December that year and the Town Council was now in the third year of delivery of the five year programme.

The Chairperson referred to the mission statement of Sustainability through Collaboration and stated that it had been a success even through increasingly difficult budget rounds. The Nipper Transport and other schemes were succeeding and partnership arrangements were growing with local businesses and organizations.

Comments were made in respect of each of the five aims of the Town Plan:

1. To raise the aspirations and prosperity of all our constituents, especially the young – this had been difficult particularly with decreasing county budgets but the Portas Project initiative was developing and local events and community projects had been funded;
2. To improve our environment, providing a clean, tidy and aesthetically pleasing place to live, work and visit – this had been the strongest area of achievement with the Town Council's approach to Local Service Delivery on a small budget. Support had been given to develop Newbiggin In Bloom; local environmental enhancement schemes and the creation of the Dedication Garden;
3. To encourage and support an increase in tourism – publication and increasing distribution of the Events Leaflet each year; support to events attracting visitors; participation and funding for the Olympic Torch and Queens Diamond Jubilee events;
4. To increase the skills base within the town, supporting adults into work – three apprenticeships had been supported at the Maritime Centre and two further ones with the Portas Project;
5. To support an ageing population – the Nipper Transport scheme for the elderly had been the leading project; a successful conference held in 2012 and collaboration for older people.

RESOLVED: that the review be noted.

EVENTS LEAFLETS

The Events Leaflet had again been collated published and printed for extensive distribution prior to the Easter holiday period. While the events list had also been incorporated in the Newsletter for local residents the majority of copies of the Leaflet had been distributed further afield in tourist related outlets through Northern Print Distribution. While some copies had gone to the Library; Newbiggin Maritime Centre; Trinkets Treasure and Treats in was felt that an additional 1,000 should be acquired for local distribution.

RESOLVED: that additional copies of the Events Leaflet be obtained at an approximate cost of £90.

C123/12 PUBLIC TOILETS PROJECT

The Town Clerk outlined his report regarding the Planning Appeal for the Public Toilets Project in Watts Lane Front Street following the decision of the South East Area Planning Committee to refuse to approve the Town Council's planning application. Notification of the Inspectors decision had been issued in March by The Planning Inspectorate following submissions by the Town Council the Planning Authority and objectors.

The main issues considered were the effect upon living conditions of neighbouring residential properties with regard to levels of privacy; noise and disturbance; visual impact and overshadowing. The Town Council had considered these matters carefully in its design of the development and the Inspector found no evidence of a serious reduction in living conditions or material conflict with residential amenity. He concluded that the building would preserve the appearance and character of the Conservation Area.

Planning Permission had been granted subject to five acceptable standard conditions to begin within three years; provide black-painted aluminium rainwater goods; the public toilets to be accessible to wheelchair users; not open outside the hours of 07:00 – 19:00; carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

The scheme accorded with National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy CP18 (conservation area) and CF2 (community facilities in town centres) of the Wansbeck District Local Plan now part of Northumberland County Council Planning Framework and it was unfortunate that the scheme had been delayed by the Planning Committee without proper planning reasons.

Formal Building Regulation Approval was now required for the proposed works that were designed in accordance with those requirements and owing to the proximity of neighbouring properties notice needed to be served on adjoining owners under the Party Wall Act.

The Town Council had maintained budget provision in the allocated balances and it was now necessary to obtain three competitive quotations for the building work. Further copies of the scheme plans would have to be acquired from the Architect to facilitate these processes and appropriate contractors selected. No revenue provision had been made in the budget as public toilets in Newbiggin by-the-Sea was considered as a strategic service and would be maintained by the county council.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk:

- i) Acquire further plans;**
- ii) Submit an application for Building Regulation Approval;**
- iii) Serve Notices under the Party Wall Act;**
- iv) Obtain quotations from suitable local builders.**

C124/12 OUTSTANDING PROJECTS AND BUDGETS

Budget provision had been made for a number of projects to continue as in previous years. Early decisions were required to ensure some could be programmed for the summer and commitment had already been given to the youth leisure programme undertaken by BVAL during school holiday periods and for the town's entry in Britain in Bloom.

The Nipper Transport project was ongoing for older people and Government grant had been secured to extend the service for an extra day. Commitment was required to contribute to arrangements for the Triathlon and for concerts at the band stand in the Quay Wall Piazza. It was felt that the scheme for WCVS to provide support for projects in the town should be left for more detailed information.

A request for assistance towards the Simonside Dance Academy hosting the Northumberland Dance Championships in November was outside the scope of the Small Grants Scheme but provision was available under Youth and Adult Schemes in the budget. This event had potential to attract many visitors and competitors from around the region and members felt the Town Council should underwrite the initial costs to stage the event.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

- i) commit its support for the projects outlined above;**
- ii) give a grant of £1,000 to Simonside Dance Academy towards hosting the Northumberland Dance Championships.**

C125/12 YOUTH LEISURE PROGRAMME

A report had been circulated from Blyth Valley Arts and Leisure (BVAL) on the previous years' activities funded by the Town Council. Details of activities and attendances at the School and Community Leisure Projects were considered as well as the Holiday Activity Programmes and participation in the events at The Newbiggin Mile; National Play Day; Newbiggin Sprint Triathlon.

Some feedback from local children indicated that initially good attendance numbers had tailed off owing to repetitive activities and it was felt that there needed to be a greater change in activities term to term and year to year. The weather conditions had impacted on attendances and some events had transferred indoors.

It was reported that the Grace Darling Campus was developing plans to build a sports complex on site. It was felt that the Academy and parents of local children should be encouraged to give more support and that better publicity be given to free events.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

C126/12 SKATE PARK UPDATE

Progress was being made with the Skate Park refurbishment project following consultation by BVAL and Badapples with local children and a successful application to the County Council under the Housing Developer Fund for outdoor play to complement the allocations of the Town Council and County Councillor Ward Fund. Those resources were likely to be enough only for the safety elements of the scheme to cover replacement fencing; floodlighting; surfaces but improved features identified by local children would rely on an application to the SITA Trust which would not be determined until July.

Members were keen to see progress at the site as soon as possible whatever budget was available in the summer and for BVAL and Badapples to work together and submit further funding applications if necessary.

RESOLVED: that the scheme be implemented as soon as possible.

C127/12 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairperson agreed to consideration of the following item of urgent business in view of complaints regarding development that had been refused planning consent.

C128/12 DEVELOPMENT AT BEACH TERRACE

Complaints had been received regarding the construction of a footpath crossing and a car hard-stand in the front garden of a property on Beach Terrace after planning consent was refused for development at the property. It transpired that the larger scheme had not gone ahead but the County Planning Department had indicated these works proceeded under permitted development rights. The Town Clerk advised that the Government was currently in the process of relaxing planning controls.

Members expressed concern at the effect such development had on the street scene particularly in such high profile locations.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council objected to such developments and the impact on nearby properties and the street scene.

C129/12 MEMBERS TRIBUTES

As this was the last meeting of the first Town Council the Chairperson thanked the public and regular attendees and Members for their support and distributed gifts to Members and the Town Clerk.

Councillor Thompson referred to each Member's valuable contributions over the first four years and with regard to the progress that the Town Council had made the contribution of Councillor McCready had been phenomenal.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....