

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 July 2013 at 7 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Newbiggin by-the-Sea.

PRESENT:

Councillors: W Rogers (Mayor)
L Burns M Peden A Thompson

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 8 members of the public

The Mayor commenced the meeting with prayers.

OPEN SESSION

- There were no questions raised by members of the public.

C023/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Boon; M Cholerton; S Todd

C024/13 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C025/13 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Rogers declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the Food Bank having been involved in the formation of the voluntary project.

C026/13 FOOD BANK PRESENTATION

Sean Fugill addressed the meeting to give a presentation of the formation and operations of the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank that covered the area from Mitford to the coast including Morpeth Ashington and Newbiggin.

He advised that those families having to spend more than ten per cent of their income on food were considered to be in food poverty having to choose between paying other household bills and providing adequate food for the family. Many mothers went with little food and the majority of teachers were reporting children coming to school hungry. The project covered six of the nine places across the county with the lowest median incomes and included one of the areas of highest real unemployment in the country.

The project had seen a six-fold increase in the need for emergency food parcels since

last year and the approach was one of applying a sticking plaster until other help could be found. Local Churches and volunteers had developed the project for those in immediate need and operated distribution centres close to the majority of the local population. Over twenty professional referral organizations were now involved. He referred to case studies highlighting the developing need and the impact of social occupancy rule changes that now took £12 per week away from a low income of £71.

Assistance was still required in getting the message out to residents in need; signposting and encouraging people to use the referrers; getting more food in for distribution; raising money for next year's operation. While most food was donated and volunteers gave their time the Food Bank could operate for around £5,000 for the year yet distribute food worth over £20,000.

The Chairman thanked Sean for the presentation.

C027/13 NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL HORSE PROJECT

The Town Clerk gave an update on this project following the presentation to the previous meeting that the County Council had confirmed the three sites in County Council ownership to progress as a pragmatic solution alongside the enforcement action that was now underway with most owners identified and notices served in relation to all horses on its land. The Senior Environmental Enforcement Office had reported an incredible response from the majority of horse owners co-operating with the project.

Two sites in Newbiggin and one in Ashington would soon be fenced to offer grazing plots to horse owners to provide proper facilities for animal welfare. There were capital costs associated with the necessary secure fencing works and landscape tree planting which could not be met in full from the limited County Council budget. A financial contribution of £2,000 had been requested from the Town Council.

Members were only too well aware of the long-term problems affecting local people's homes and agreed to support the efforts now being made to solve them.

RESOLVED that a contribution of £2,000 from balances be made to the project.

C028/13 YOUTH AND ADULT SUPPORT SERVICES

The Council had allocated a budget for youth and adult support services and had been approached by Bad Apples North East to commission and contribute funding towards a similar programme of activities as last year.

The report highlighted the activities undertaken with aid from the Town Council. An employment fun day with over 230 attendees had free activities for kids and employers stalls with current vacancies and training providers holding workshops across the day. Two family fun-days with a range of free of charge activities included a bouncy castle, circus skills and DJ workshops with the first having over 180 attendees and the second around 120.

Free circus sessions had been held on the promenade over the half term holidays which they operated on an open session basis and let people just have a try of the equipment with up to 15 young people a session.

A Key fund over the same holidays enabled a member of staff to work with a group to start their own clothing line. They were now looking to arrange a launch event soon as they had printed the tee shirts.

Bad Apples hoped to add extra sessions during the school holidays although these cost £120 per 3 hour session including all staff and promotion and £250 + promotion if they were to arrange cage football.

RESOLVED that a similar programme be commissioned from Bad Apples North East with the contribution of £1,000 from the budget.

C029/13 PUBLIC TOILET PROJECT

Members were advised that the Party Wall Act procedures were being followed and notices had been served on the adjoining owners regarding the intended works near their properties. The Town Clerk reported that as the suggested Surveyor had not been agreed there was now a deemed dispute and the Town Council would need to appoint its Surveyor to progress the procedure.

RESOLVED that: the Town Clerk be delegated authority to appoint a Surveyor on behalf of the Town Council to progress matters under the Party Wall Act.

C030/13 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairperson agreed to consideration of the following item of urgent business in view of progress and investigations of projects over the next few weeks.

C031/13 NEWBIGGIN SKATEPARK PROJECT

The Town Clerk advised members of the progress with this project and the award of a significant grant from SITA Trust. This combined with other funding would enable a comprehensive scheme to progress with final consultation with the young people carried out by the lowest tenderer to finalize the scheme.

Various conditions were to be met and a formal agreement and contributory payment made to release the funds which the Town Clerk would work on with a view to works taking place early in the autumn.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the grant award be welcomed and the Town Clerk authorized to complete the agreement with SITA and make the contributory payment;**
- (ii) the Town Clerk progress the scheme with the partners BVAL and Bad Apples engaging the lowest tenderer in final consultation and design.**

C032/13 LOCAL COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS

A Member invited the local County Councillors to consider giving a short update on their activities in a five minute slot during future Question Times at the beginning of meetings when they were present. It was felt this would assist in partnership development and working. County Councillors J Lang and E Simpson agreed they would provide such reports when they were present.

C033/13 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 item on the Agenda as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to financial and business affairs.

C033/13 PUBLIC TOILETS PROJECT

The building scheme as approved under Planning and Building Regulations had been put out to tender with three local companies approved for building work in Conservation Areas by the County Council.

Two tenders only had been submitted which were opened by the Members present with one being within the designated budget. While it would not be possible to let a contract until the Party Wall award had been made by the Surveyor Members agreed to accept the lowest tender for the project.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) subject to checking the lowest tender from G A Lothian Building Services be accepted;**
- (ii) the Town Clerk be authorized to let the contract and finalize the specification for the building works.**

C034/13 TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Northumberland County Council had approached the Town Council to consider a possible more comprehensive development in the town centre incorporating several services and a meeting had been convened including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the two local Members of the County Council.

The Town Council considered the request to allow the County Council to put a scheme together which was along similar lines to those previously proposed by the Town Council in 2010 and 2011. The opportunity of such a development in the town was welcomed provided it could be quickly committed by the County Council and delivered in a reasonable period acceptable to the Town Council.

RESOLVED that the Town Council welcome the development opportunity in principle and agree to delay the Public Toilet Project for two to three months pending the County Council investigation.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....