

## NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11 September 2013 at 7 pm at the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre.**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors:                      W Rogers (Mayor)  
   M Boon              L Burns              R Dixon  
   M Cholerton                      M Peden

Officer:              D Earl – Town Clerk

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 7 members of the public

### **OPEN SESSION**

- A local resident who was also a member of the Newbiggin in Bloom Association requested the Town Council to consider the purchase of a water bowser to assist in the watering of floral displays tubs and hanging baskets throughout the town during the summer months to maintain the displays. Members agreed to investigate the acquisition cost storage and operating arrangements and the involvement of the Traders.
- A member of the public advised of representations at the preceding meeting of the South East Area Committee regarding unauthorised horses on County Council land and the proposed establishment of formal grazing areas in the town for responsible horse owners. The Town Clerk confirmed that in connection with the Town Council's agreed financial contribution he had sought and been assured that they would only be let to Newbiggin residents.

At this point the Chairman agreed to receive a report from a representative of the Newbiggin in Bloom Association regarding the Newbiggin Gardens Competition. There had been an increase in entries this year and a presentation ceremony would be held with the Town Council on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September at the Sports and Community Centre.

It was proposed to jointly run the competition again next year with the time-scales coming forward one month so that the entries could be judged at the end of June and beginning of July when in higher bloom and ahead of the holiday season.

Members wished to place on record their appreciation of the work of the members of the Newbiggin in Bloom Association.

- A resident enquired about the responsibility for clearing dog-dirt and litter from the main streets following another incident when she had to clean the area in front of her holiday cottage at change over. This was a County Council service and the meeting was advised that it was becoming increasingly

responsive. This meant that it was important for members of the public to register complaints with Northumberland County Council by telephone or through its web site. If they were not recorded then no problem was recognised therefore resources for cleansing were not directed to those areas. There was a recognised need to re-invigorate a pride in Newbiggin and volunteers sought to promote this through example.

- A resident referred to the increase in incidents of young people riding bicycles on the pavements in the town centre resulting in frequent near misses. Again such matters needed to be reported straight to the Police to be recorded so that the scale of the problem could be recognised.
- A member of the public asked for clarification of arrangements regarding the Beach Volleyball equipment as a charge of £4 was currently being levied by the Maritime Centre for administration. The Town Council had not been party to these arrangements but would consider accepting responsibility for the equipment later on the agenda.
- Owing to the August recess the County Councillors had little to report except that a loading bay restriction was to be lifted in the town centre and a disabled parking bay provided.

**C040/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Thompson

**C041/13 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 03 September 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

**C042/13 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the grant Committee held on 10 July 2013 were received for information. The Chairman referred to the successful awareness event he had attended on the promenade by the Northumberland County Blind Association.

**C043/13 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

Councillor Burns declared personal interests as Chair of the Portas Team in relation to the business on the agenda concerning the proposals for B1334 and the promenade.

**C044/13 ANNUAL RETURN ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR 2012/2013 AND EXTERNAL AUDIT**

The Accounts and Accounting and Governance Statements as approved had been submitted to the External Auditors who had now signed and returned the certificate and opinion for public inspection. It was confirmed that the information was in

accordance with proper practices and there were no matters to be drawn to Members attention.

**RESOLVED that: the Annual Return as audited be approved and accepted by the Town Council.**

**C045/13 NEWBIGGIN GARDENS COMPETITION**

The report on the 2013 Competition had been presented earlier in the meeting and Members were invited to confirm arrangements for next year so they could be announced at the presentation ceremony. Members also wished to confirm arrangements for a Christmas Lighting Competition this year.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) A Gardens Competition be run jointly again with Newbiggin in Bloom Association in 2014;**
- ii) A Christmas Lighting Competition be held in 2013.**

**C046/13 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) PROGRAMME 2014-15**

The Town Council had again been invited to submit its top three transport priorities as part of the Northumberland County Council process to review the priorities for the LTP for 2014-15.

Of the three schemes submitted the previous year one had been implemented and the first priority for the safe walking and cycling route needed to be considered in conjunction with the following consultation request regarding a proposed Toucan Crossing on the B1334 at Spital Farm. Members discussed the consultation proposal and priority for the cycle track and footpath and considered schemes for access to the Health Centre to alleviate parking on residential streets and dropped kerbs for Welfare Crescent.

**RESOLVED that the following three priority schemes be submitted to the LTP Programme for 2014-15:**

- i) A section of new cycle track and footpath widening scheme adjacent to Spital Farm to provide a safe walking and cycle route to the High School;**
- ii) A town-wide reduced speed limit for all non classified roads in the town;**
- iii) New vehicle**
- iv) access arrangements for the public at the Health Centre from Central Parkway.**

**C047/13 B1334 NEWBIGGIN – PROPOSED TOUCAN CROSSING**

A feasibility report had been prepared by Highways and Neighbourhood Services Roads Design in relation to the requested priority scheme for cyclists and pedestrians on the B 1334 at Spital Farm and the County Council was consulting on a proposed Toucan Crossing. Location and design plans were displayed at the meeting and circulated to members.

An element of the Portas Town Team proposals and the Town Plan involved attracting more visitors to the town and there were links with the connection to the NCN (1) cycle network and proposals for the promenade.

Members still considered that the ultimate traffic solution was to provide a full width cycle track/footpath on the north side of the B 1334 but recognized the difficulties and significant costs. While still requiring young people to cross the road twice the introduction of a Toucan Crossing would improve safety and reduce traffic speeds entering the town. They were opposed to the suggestion of removing the existing footpath alongside Spital Farm as they believed some people would continue to use the route.

With regard to the route to Sandy Bay entrance Members considered that the trees and shrubs should be cut back in any event to encourage safe use of the path by cyclists and pedestrians.

**RESOLVED that: the Town Council supports the provision of a Toucan crossing to improve road safety for cyclists and pedestrians.**

**C048/13**

**CYCLING ALONG THE PROMENADE – PROPOSED REPEAL OF BYE-LAW**

A project to signpost cyclists into and out of Newbiggin had been developed and is included in the Portas Pilot Action Plan and the Town Team believed there was an opportunity to create a distinct tourist loop from NCN1 into Newbiggin, along the promenade and to the Maritime Centre and town centre and back onto the NCN1. This would better represent Newbiggin town centre and Maritime Centre for cycling tourists and other users accessing employment or services using the National Cycle Network.

To achieve the cycle loop the County Council would have to consider revocation of the historic byelaw and a report would have to be prepared for the Licensing and Regulatory Committee followed by a consultation process. The Project Officer felt there were strong merits for revocation of the cycling prohibition to meet modern day requirements and support the tourist trade for the town and that the available width of the promenade would lend itself to dual use without any likely detriment to users.

Members recognized the benefits and were not opposed to the principle of cycling on the promenade provided adequate signage and separation schemes were put in place.

**RESOLVED that: the County Council to undertake the process to revoke the byelaw and support the Portas Town Team Cycling and Signage Project.**

**C049/13 BEACH VOLLEYBALL EQUIPMENT**

The Newbiggin by-the-Sea Partnership had acquired Beach Volleyball equipment installed on the beach with nets and balls available from the Maritime Centre free of charge and had donated the equipment to the Town Council. There was some discussion of whether a charge was to be levied the period the equipment would be available and whether it should be painted a different colour.

**RESOLVED that: the equipment be accepted and added to the Council's Schedule of Assets for insurance purposes.**

**C050/13 QUAY WALL PROMENADE ACCESS AND BRIDGE STREET**

Members were aware of the complaints of problems and safety conflicts in the vicinity of the Quay Wall as a result of vehicles horses and traps accessing Bridge Street and the promenade. There had been clear conflicts with pedestrians in an area that was essentially vehicle free apart from the occasional maintenance vehicle and sailing club access.

The recent regeneration scheme in the Quay Wall Piazza introduced a uniform surface adding to the feeling of pedestrianisation although Bridge Street remained a highway albeit with restricted vehicular access. Vehicles were now frequently parked in this area and horses and horse and traps had added to the safety concerns.

It was suggested that a physical barrier was required to limit vehicular access to Bridge Street and to the promenade to essential vehicles but this would require modification of the highway by the Highways Authority.

**RESOLVED that: the County Council be requested to approve and implement a suitable solution to remove the danger to pedestrians at the Quay Wall.**

**C051/13 WOODHORN VILLA REPAIRS**

The Town Council had taken over responsibility for the lease of Woodhorn Villa last December to maintain the various arts activities and currently had a full repair obligation. Some essential repairs were being undertaken as the rear flat roof was cracked and water entering two of the rear rooms. It was likely that work would also be required to internal ceilings and lighting.

No direct budget provision was made for Woodhorn Villa as there was an adequate income from room lettings but this had declined considerably this year.

**RESOLVED that: The Town Clerk be authorized to arrange the necessary repair works with the costs being met from contingencies.**

**C052/13 NATIONAL PAY AWARD**

The Local Government Employers Organization had for the first time in five years agreed a nominal increase in the pay scales of local government workers. This was set at 1% effective from 01 April 2013.

The National Association of Local Councils and the Society for Local Council Clerks had confirmed the increase to be applied to all employees at local councils and issued modified salary scales.

There was adequate provision in this years' budget to cover the gross cost of £230 including National Insurance contribution.

**RESOLVED that: the National Award be implemented.**

**C053/13 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman agreed to consideration of the following urgent items in view of the need for timely decisions to be communicated to the County Council

**C054/13 FAMILY FAIR**

The Town Clerk reported that he had been advised by the Countryside Access Manager that he had received a request from Slater's to use the temporary car park site between East Lea and Woodlea for a family fun fair in October. It was proposed to take place between Thursday and Sunday 10 to 13 October finishing by 8.30 pm and 4.00 pm on Sunday.

Members felt as it was in close proximity to the residential properties in East Lea and Woodlea but particularly directly opposite Turning Tides the elderly persons' residential home they should be advised by leaflet in advance. There should also be a requirement for the operator to clear all rubbish and make good any damage to the site.

**RESOLVED that: the Town Council agreed to the trial use of this site for a family fun fair**

**C055/13 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman drew Members attention to the young people's art work displayed currently at the Maritime Centre and some poignant comments they included; walking groups following the Art Trail; it was agreed that the damaged ceramic art in the flower bed next to Memorial Park should be removed. He advised that Woodhorn Church

would be open between 12 and 4 pm on Saturday and Sunday for Heritage Weekend and that Below the Salt would be performing.

**C056/13 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.

**C057/13 YOUTH SERVICES**

The Chairman advised Members of a confidential discussion with senior members of the County Council at the new Town and Parish Meeting the previous week regarding local issues. They had considered proposals put forward for Youth Services in the town which had initially been refused and the County Council wanted to know if they were supported by the Town Council.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (i) the County Council be advised that the Youth Service proposals for Newbiggin by-the-Sea were supported by the Town Council;**
- (ii) the Town Council be advised why they were initially refused.**

Signed by the Chairman: .....

Date:.....