

## NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 09 October 2013  
at 7 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Newbiggin by-the-Sea.**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors: W Rogers (Mayor)  
M Boon L Burns M Cholerton R Dixon  
M Peden A Thompson S Todd

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 18 members of the public

### **OPEN SESSION**

- A local resident had written and expressed her concerns about what she termed bad bus routes in particular local service routes 35 and X21 operated by Arriva. Services were often taken off without notice which could result in a forty minute wait in poor weather and there was concern for patients being late or missing hospital appointments. She felt that the operations of the company were dysfunctional; that tannoy announcement systems were required and would lease with local Councillors to make representations.
- A member of the public was seeking information regarding ownership and intentions for the former Windsor School site and any benefits for the local community. She considered it was prime land for tender so that the town could benefit from the receipt.

It was confirmed that the site had been transferred from the County Council to Arch a company established by it for regeneration and development options were being considered. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had already met with Arch and made representations on behalf of the community and was awaiting consultation proposals.

- Another resident had submitted a written question and the Town Clerk advised members of concerns that there had been no Post Office service at the west end of the town since the beginning of the year. The service was needed and the elderly and infirm in particular had difficulty travelling to other outlets. It was known that proposals to place a Post office facility in another business establishment had fallen through and further options would be considered at the appropriate time but this was a private matter between the Post office and retailers. The Town Council would write to encourage a replacement service.
- A resident advised that some public seats on the promenade appeared not to have been painted yet and were still left with an undercoat.

- Reference was made to the commemorative stone installed in Memorial Park which it was felt could do with being cleaned.
- A resident had submitted through Councillor Dixon a copy of his letter to Northumberland County Council concerning a review of policy concerning disabled parking bays. The saga had continued for several years but a bay to accommodate his elderly mother had not been provided.
- Northumbria Police representative PC Julie Jameson reported on local crime statistics which had increased as a result of anti-social behaviour resulting from a spree of tyre slashing in particular and burglaries at the allotments which the Police were targeting.

Members raised issues concerning the menace of youths on bicycles particularly without lights and the Police were pursuing parents when contact details were obtained and were issuing enforcement letters. The problem of motor cycles and Quad-bikes was also raised but that involved adults and the Police were uplifting these whenever they had descriptions from the public. Action could be taken when appropriate information was provided by the public even when the Police had not witnessed events themselves.

#### **C058/13 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **C059/13 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Grant Committee held on 25 September 2013 were received.

#### **C060/13 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

No new interests were declared by Members.

#### **C061/13 FAMILIES BY THE SEA**

Claire Owen the Outreach Worker for Action for Children was welcomed to the meeting to give a presentation on behalf of a newly-formed organization called Families by-the-Sea.

The group had been formed by mothers to reduce isolation and improve community spirit with the long term outcomes for children and improve the experiences for families. While in its early stages it was planning events for half term and it was bringing out motivated mothers who would not always get involved in the Children's Centre. Several of the mums had attended to support the presentation and give short inputs themselves explaining how they were gaining in confidence and wanted others to benefit from an open group that would help them all avoid isolation and loneliness.

This had been a big first step for them and they wanted to develop specific programmes and wanted to inspire others and care for their community. A small grant application had been completed to help kick start a favourite family cook book to provide for intergenerational activities in the town that would be considered by the Grant Committee.

Members welcomed the initiative and thanked the group for their participation and expressed the hope that some would become involved in further community activities. .

## **C062/13 BUS QUALITY CONTRACTS SCHEME**

Town and Parish Councils had been advised of consultation proposals submitted by Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority (TWITA) to develop a bus quality contract scheme as it would impact on some services on cross boundary routes between Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.

Initially eleven services into Northumberland could be included but only one in the locality - 19 Ashington to North Shields and the Newbiggin Nipper Service was not affected by the scheme by TWITA to operate the services for 10 years from 2015.

The proposed QCS focused on a vision to ensure that buses continued to play a central role in providing a simple, affordable and integrated public transport system. The objectives were to arrest the decline in bus patronage; maintain and grow by 2% accessibility; deliver better value for public money by reducing public expenditure by £7 million per annum through competitive tendering of services included in QCS.

It was intended that the QCS would operate a network of services across the area to a consistent standard with a common fare structure with a Customer Charter for standards and performance. A completely new fares structure was proposed covering single trip; all day; weekly; four weekly and annual tickets priced on a zone basis similar to the existing Metro scheme but extending well into Northumberland and Durham. Concessionary fares would continue for young people and be extended to 16-18 year olds and free travel continuing for ENCTS customers.

The Nexus services were operated by three large bus companies and the possibility was acknowledged that the introduction of the new bus system and competitive tendering may have knock-on effects in neighbouring areas. While the vision was commendable the objectives were ambitious and the underlying outcome would be a reduction of public subsidy so changes to services would appear inevitable.

Members had some concerns and reflected on previous experiences where large firms dominated service provision often to the exclusion of other local service providers and subsequently leading to a loss of service for communities. It was felt that local firms should be supported to provide local services and the public needed to respond also.

**RESOLVED that: the Town Council makes representations to the County Council and responds to the consultation exercise.**

**C063/13 NEWBIGGIN BY-THE-SEA TRADERS ASSOCIATION**

The Trader's Association was again providing a Christmas tree in the town centre and had requested the Town Council to donate a prize for the Christmas raffle that would help raise funds.

**RESOLVED that: a donation of £75 be agreed.**

**C064/13 DEED SIGNATORIES**

The Town Clerk advised that a number of property transactions would take place as a result of service transfer and that the legal documentation had to be signed by two Members.

**RESOLVED that: the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the Town Council.**

**C065/13 BANK SIGNATORIES**

A further signatory was required for bank transactions.

**RESOLVED that: Councillor Mavis Cholerton be added as a signatory to the Town Council's bank accounts and the Town Council acknowledge and agree, amongst other things:**

- (i) Instructions may be given by the individual named above and can be given by any method such as in writing or by telephone or online, in accordance with the Customer Agreement.**
- (ii) Formal overdraft arrangements, loans and third party payments may only be agreed by authorized persons appointed under the Appointment of Bankers mandate.**
- (iii) The Bank is authorized to disclose the balance and all other information about each account to the individual named above.**
- (iv) This authority is to remain in force until cancelled by any of us in writing.**

Signed by the Chairman: .....

Date:.....