

## NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 September 2014 at 7 pm at The Grace Darling Campus Newbiggin by-the-Sea.**

### PRESENT:

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

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 46 members of the public

### PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- A member of the public had submitted several written questions relating to a development proposal in the town centre which the Chairman read out in turn along with the answers:
  1. What consultation has taken place or is planned about the nature of this development.  
*This is an Arch Development and consultation and planning are for it and Northumberland County Council the Planning Authority;*
  2. Exactly how much money has been contributed by the Town Council towards this development.  
*As yet no money has been contributed but the Town Council has agreed to contribute a capital sum of £100,000 over two financial years to secure further public facilities and an office base that will be rent free;*
  3. What date was the decision made to make this contribution.  
*The Town Council decisions are incorporated in the minutes of meetings of the Council 10 July 2013; Finance Committee 31 March 2014; Council 14 May 2014;*
  4. When was the decision made to demolish the existing buildings and what process was followed?  
*That is for Arch/NCC.*

The Chairman then explained that the proposals were from the Arch Development Company and the County Council. It was their development for which only an artist's impression had so far been issued. The planning consultation process had not yet commenced. The Town Council did not have the resources to undertake such a development but was unanimously in favour of the project and would look at the building design in due course. He confirmed in response to a follow up question that the Town Council had committed resources to support the development of local services for the town but not yet seen the plans for the planning application.

During a frequently unruly session a number of statements were made regarding public toilets; building design issues; bus shelter design.

- Referring to the Town Council as a key stakeholder in the proposed development a local resident indicated it must have a voice and asked what its views were of the design. The Town Council could only give an opinion after seeing the plans when they were issued for consultation.
- A local resident asked who represented the people of Newbiggin and decided the Precept and how the money was spent and there had been no consultation on the development. All Councillors represented the community and it was confirmed that for many years there had been a need to transfer the library into the centre of the town to improve footfall for the traders; overcome the risk to the library service; provide customer services. Newbiggin by-the-Sea had come on immensely in the last few years and needed tourist information but the Town Council had no input to the design proposals being put forward by Arch.
- A question encompassing the financial contributions to public toilets; town centre development; acquisition of The Bungalow and what uses it would be put to was submitted. The Bungalow was off Woodhorn Road adjacent to the Sports Centre and was formerly used by Wansbeck DC and Bernicia for offices and customer services. The County Council made this surplus building available by tender and the Town Council wanted to see it retained as a community asset. It was being acquired for £25,000 plus legal costs and completion of the transfer was imminent. It was intended that the Town Council would occupy the building in the interim until the town centre development was completed and that it would be available for a range of community based organizations and local services.
- Reference was made to a great deal of discussion over design and a questioner wanted to know given what had been seen did the Town Council accept it was not in keeping with Newbiggin. Everyone was entitled to an opinion once the designs had been issued for consultation and design was a sensitive issue.
- It was confirmed that the aesthetics of the new building were important.
- The Town Council was asked to confirm which of the two proposed toilet facilities it supported. Following a survey and the adoption of the Town Plan the provision of public toilets in the town centre was the first priority of the community and the Town Council supported both proposals.
- Reference was made to Councillors considering the views of local people and businesses and a member of the public asked if the Town Council would consider withholding the financial contribution until the public had been consulted and issue a questionnaire.

A Member replied and referred to the process with Arch and that only an indicative floor plan in relation to the offices and artists impression had been seen at this point. The Town Council understood that the design issue was emotive from the response of some members of the public to the joint Arch/NCC press release. The formal development plans submitted for the planning application had to be seen after they were issued for consultation and then it could respond. A member of the public indicated that a lot of issues had been raised but he had a sense that the Councillors wanted to preserve the town and that everyone was entitled to respond to the planning application. Another member of the public accepting that the development was out of the hands of the Town Council raised concerns about the future of the two school sites that had been levelled. Meetings had been held with Arch but detailed proposals were awaited for public scrutiny.

**C034/14 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 09 July 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**C035/14 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Grant Committee held on 13 August 2014 were received.

**C036/14 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

No further interests were declared in relation to the business on the agenda.

**C037/14 DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS – FUNDING CONTRIBUTION**

The Town Clerk reported receipt of a request from the Simonside Dance Academy for a contribution towards the costs of hosting the Open Northumberland Championships in November at the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre when the Duchess of Northumberland would attend to present the Finalist Awards.

Members considered this to be an amazing regional event and a credit to the town which required better coverage in the community.

**RESOLVED that: a grant of £1,000 be paid to the Simonside Dance Academy towards the costs of hosting the event.**

**C038/14 NEWBIGGIN GARDENS COMPETITION**

A report was received providing a summary of entrants for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Gardens Competition with details of the costs for the proposed awards celebration to be held at the Newbiggin Maritime Centre on Tuesday 30 September. The competition which was run jointly by the Town Council and Newbiggin In Bloom Association had been arranged earlier this year so that judging could be held early in July and the same was proposed for the following year. Authority was sought for entry of the town in the Northumbria In Bloom competition for 2015.

**RESOLVED that: the report be received and the Town Council meet the costs of the awards celebration and the Northumbria In Bloom entry.**

**C039/14 NCC CONSULTATION – NORTHUMBERLAND STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT**

Northumberland County Council was currently consulting on draft site assessments which had been prepared as part of the update to the Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was part of the evidence base for the emerging Northumberland Local Plan as the National Planning Policy Framework required local planning authorities to prepare a SHLAA significantly boost the supply of housing.

The document identified sites with potential for housing; assessed how many dwellings may be accommodated on a site with potential for housing development; and assessed when sites were likely to be developed for the whole county. Information regarding sites within Newbiggin had been extracted and Members were invited to confirm the indicated status and suitability.

It was confirmed that new development was required to provide much needed higher band market sites within the town to redress the imbalance from over eighty per cent Band A properties and assist regeneration.

**RESOLVED that: all of the identified suitable sites be confirmed and that Windsor School Site be added.**

**C040/14 BUS SHELTER UPDATE**

Some further design work had been carried out by the local manufacturer in respect of the shelters at Dixon's Corner and Woodlea but insufficient information was available to confirm suitability for highways conditions and appropriate financial information to consider in relation to the current budget.

**RESOLVED that: this matter be deferred.**

**C041/14 NOTICE BOARD**

The Town Clerk was able to advise that consent had now been given by the building owners for the installation of a good quality hard wood public notice board to the gable fronting the Quay Wall Piazza. The three bay glazed notice board was likely to cost £1,250 plus headers lettering and delivery.

**RESOLVED that: a suitable notice board be purchased and installed at this location with the cost being met from balances.**

Signed by the Chairman: ..... Date:.....