

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 7.00 pm at the Grace Darling Campus.

PRESENT:

Councillors: S Todd (Mayor)

M Boon	L Burns	M Cholerton	R Dixon
M Peden	W Rogers	A Thompson	

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 10 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

- A local resident referred to the minutes of the previous meeting regarding financial regulations and enquired whether local councils had freedom to consider whether they would be adopted.

The Chairman referred to discussions within the Association of Local Councils both nationally and locally where there was concern over the implications for smaller councils in particular. He confirmed that there was freedom to look and see what provisions would be adopted.

- In relation to the expenditure of £30,000 over the last two years on The Bungalow for acquisition and maintenance a local resident asked whether the public was getting value for money when only open for two hours each week and whether it could be rented out in the evenings.

The Chairman confirmed that the building was used for other meetings and if community groups made application to use the premises they would be considered. The premises had been offered for use as a Post Office but had not been accepted. Thanks and appreciation was extended to Councillor Peden for the significant work undertaken by him at The Bungalow.

- An update was requested concerning previous queries relating to the maintenance of the War Memorials.

The Town Clerk advised that nothing further had been received from the County Council and unfortunately the Area Manager had to cancel a meeting to progress matters the previous week which hopefully would be rescheduled within the next few days with a view to having any necessary works carried out shortly. The Chairman advised that he and the Vice-Chairman would be attending a meeting at County Hall the next day and would seek to obtain further information.

- It was claimed that half way through the financial year the list of payments over £500 had not been updated but the Town Clerk confirmed that it had been updated earlier that week.
- The same resident referred to the response at the previous meeting regarding the Newbiggin Development Trust and that it had met on Council premises without a resolution and asked if the Council had a policy; schedule of payments; whether the Trust paid.

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The Chairman advised that there was no formal policy but the Council would consider all requests. The Development Trust had met the previous Tuesday and would make a decision on how it is to be run. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had an interest in the company and matters would be referred to the Town Council when necessary and while those interests were well known they were not financial as no payments could be made. Other matters were not Town Council business.

C041/16 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C042/16 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Members of the need to declare any new interests in relation to business to be considered at the meeting.

C043/16 NEWBIGGIN LEISURE PROGRAMME

Lee Paris and Sam Moore Sports Activators from Active Northumberland Get Active SE Team attended to give a presentation to Members of the leisure programme operated in the town in partnership with the Town Council and showed a short video of activities in Newbiggin encompassing the bay; promenade; Sports Centre; cycling and running events.

The Team was keen to grow staff from apprentices and to cover all ages and abilities. Over the last year there had been 3,025 attendances over 173 hours of activities plus two sponsored events with 250 people participating in a charity run along the promenade. Activities at the school provided weekly dance camp and football club for local children which had an impact on behaviour.

Members raised questions and discussed issues of moving children on to local clubs; tangible school support; engagement of 14-17 year olds; participation of sponsored coaches; young mothers and working with the Clinic and Children's Centre; Sportivate and High Sheriff funding and the need to create sporting habits for life.

The need to support the Sports Centre to make it sustainable was recognised as there was a reliance on external funding. The Town Council provided the only targeted funding for Newbiggin by-the-Sea and low cost provision was important to local residents. Statistics showing rising obesity in young children in local wards was a concern and there was a feeling that the schools needed greater involvement with engagement level staff being the key.

The Autumn Half Term Holiday Programme; Get Newbiggin Running advertising; Leisure Inclusion Team information leaflet were circulated for information and the Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation and information.

C044/16 CONSULTATION – PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Town Clerk outlined the proposals from the Boundary Commission for the review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries throughout the country which had to comply with new legal requirements creating constituencies with broadly similar electorates.

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The North East would have four fewer constituencies and the current Wansbeck Constituency would disappear being subdivided into three adjoining constituencies with Newbiggin by-the-Sea Ashington and Choppington proposed to be incorporated into the Berwick Constituency.

The Chairman advised that the Northumberland Association of Local Councils was to consider this consultation on a county-wide basis. Some Members felt that the proposals were detrimental to the local community and would stretch lines of communication and were encouraged to submit concerns the Chairman to be raised at NALC.

RESOLVED that: the matter be considered at a future meeting.

C045/16 NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS – PRECEPT REFERENDUMS

The report of the Town Clerk provided information regarding the possibility of the Government extending Precept Referendum principles to town and parish councils. The principle could be applied to all although the initial threshold could be over £500,000

Further reductions in local services were anticipated but only formal transfers from County to Town and Parish Councils subject to onerous conditions would avoid a Referendum. The prospect of a 2% cap on increases on top of the loss of Council Tax Grant was seen as an attack on local communities and would limit localism and local service delivery. NALC was strongly opposed to these proposals and had passed the resolution set out in the appendix.

Members expressed similar concerns about the impact these matters had on local councils and it was **RESOLVED that the Town Council supported the resolution from NALC and opposed the imposition of Referendum principles.**

C046/16 URGENT BUSINESS The Chairman agreed to consideration of the following items of urgent business to consider information regarding an intended new development application and arrangements for the next meeting.

C047/16 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR FORMER COLLIERY SCHOOL SITE

The Chairman was pleased that action was now coming forward to improve this eyesore site on Woodhorn Road opposite the Sports Centre to provide residential development. Ascent Homes had made documents available from the public meeting the previous night which would be made available for the community.

Members had received different information regarding timescales for development but it was generally felt that the proposals were positive for the town and with the right sales plan promoting local opportunities the new properties would again sell quickly.

It was RESOLVED that the firm proposals for the site would be looked at in detail through the planning process.

C048/16 NEXT MEETING

The Chairman advised of an invitation to the Academy Prize Giving next month which clashed with the scheduled date of the next Town Council meeting and asked if Members wished to consider re-arranging the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that: the meeting proceed on the scheduled date.

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C049/16 CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON

A Councillor advised that the Traders Association was proceeding with arrangements for the Christmas Lights Switch-On by a celebrity and would change to the Saturday afternoon this year. In view of the additional cost for the contractors to attend it was likely that installation and testing would be completed on the Friday and the tree lights only left for the formal ceremony on Saturday.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date: