

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 08 February 2017
at 7 pm at the Grace Darling Campus.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: S Todd (Chairman)
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

The Chairman opened the session by referring to the recent submission of a significant number of questions under the Freedom of Information Act which would be responded to following appropriate research.

- A local resident referred to a project for schools accolade which she had written to the Town Council about.

The Members had not yet had an opportunity to consider the matter and a reply would be provided as soon as possible.

- Another resident referred to the purpose of budgets as a mechanism for financial control and comparison of forecast expenditure an explanation of under-spending and believed that the Town Council had not assessed actual expenditure which she considered to be a risk.

The Chairman advised that budgets were not merely a matter of control and not explaining variances was not a significant risk. The Town Council dealt with small budgets that were clearly accounted for with the auditors. The Town Clerk added that while the questioners' purpose was one reason to operate budgets the principle purpose for Town and Parish Councils was to consider the adequacy of resources for the following year to inform the requirement for the Precept. Any Member could request and receive financial information at any point. The majority of significant expenditure was incurred in the second half of the financial year and often at the very end following completion of agreed schemes and projects.

The Chair and Members of the Finance Committee all confirmed that they were happy with the current arrangements.

Despite the inference that information regarding actual expenditure was not published the Chairman confirmed that such information was openly provided every year and published following both internal and external audit.

- Referring to a budget for facilities upgrade at the Bungalow a local resident asked why this was necessary if the Town Council were getting rid of the premises.

The Chairman advised that there was no presumption of getting rid of those premises.

C068/16 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C069/16 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS No new interests were declared.

C070/16 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED that: the Schedule of Meetings be agreed.

C071/16 2017 LEISURE PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk advised that Active Northumberland had confirmed that comprehensive community leisure programme could again be provided in the town throughout 2017-18 without any increase in price. Adequate budget provision was available for a school and community programme providing two school and one community session each week during term time and a holiday activity programme during school holidays except for Christmas. Provision would start with the Easter holiday programme

RESOLVED that: Active Northumberland undertake the Community Leisure Programme for 2017-18.

C072/16 ENHANCED SERVICES

Members wished to see an enhanced local service provided by County Neighbourhood Services again throughout the summer season. An increase in cost within 2% was anticipated to cover salaries and transport costs and that was within budget.

It was suggested that the specific service start early this year so that cleansing and improvement works could be completed ahead of holiday periods and current budgets could meet the additional cost for March.

RESOLVED that: arrangements for Enhanced Services be put in place with Neighbourhood Services to commence at the beginning of March.

C073/16 TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman reported on discussion with Arch of terms for the town centre office and public toilets within the new development which exceeded the Town Council's expectations following changes to the scheme.

The development was well underway with an anticipated contract completion date of 09 November. Heads of Terms were being drafted for the necessary lease of the office space with the initial term being 25 years without rent payment to be renewable and subject to standard reasonable use clause; landlords reasonable consent for any sub-letting and contribution to insurance costs and external decoration to maintain uniformity and signage. The Town Council would make the capital contribution over two financial years.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Heads of Terms for the Lease be agreed as outlined above;**

ii) A capital payment of £50,000 be made by the end of March with the second payment to be made following completion of the development and Lease.

C074/16 URGENT BUSINESS

C075/16 REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Members debated the application for financial assistance to support the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank and considered information regarding distribution to local residents. It was known that a great deal of work went on in the town often unseen and there was concern that significant numbers of families in the community were in need of support.

RESOLVED that: the matter be deferred to the next meeting while further information was obtained.

C076/16 REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

An application from the Newbiggin AFC for financial assistance had been deferred to meet with representatives and obtain additional information and the Chairman had prepared a report which he outlined to the Members. He proposed that the Town Council consider a grant to the club to cover the rent for the use of the pitch for the season and the cost of a new set of strips to assist it over current difficulties. Banner and strip sponsorship would be considered.

RESOLVED that: a grant totaling £1,219 be awarded to AFC Newbiggin.

C077/16 JAYESS NEWBIGGIN BRASS BAND

A Member reported that the Jayess Newbiggin Brass Band had recently won a very prestigious championship at the Festival of Brass in Durham.

RESOLVED that: a letter of congratulations be sent from the Town Council to acknowledge this success

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