

## COUNCIL 13 JUNE 2012

**1. Minewater Drain across the beach**

- 1.1 An Group Civil Engineer representing UK Coal Mining Ltd has been in touch regarding the 525mm drainage pipe (in the early 1990s?) from one of the old mine shafts north of the Town (the site of the abandoned Colliery), passing under the golf links across the north beach and discharging via a large concrete structure on the beach and a pipeline, into the sea.
- 1.2 At the privatisation of British Coal the small site around the mine shafts and the pipeline became the responsibility of RJB Mining, which subsequently became UK Coal Mining plc (and which operated Ellington Colliery until its closure). Since privatisation the Engineer has been working within the property division, Harworth Estates, and has been set the task of resolving some of the legacy issues associated with abandoned mines etc.
- 1.3 The Coal Authority now intends to pump minewater from Lynemouth No.2 shaft (when the water level within the workings has reached a level of around 50 metres below ground), treat it and discharge it to the sea at Lynemouth, rather than discharge untreated into the sea although it is not believed that there has been any discharge at this location for some time. The Coal Authority does also have a treatment and discharge facility at Bates (Blyth) and will construct another at Lynemouth, pumping water from Lynemouth No.2 shaft, treating it and discharging down the existing 'flume' there into the sea. It is clear that the original purpose of the drain at Newbiggin has been superseded.
- 1.4 The concrete "Tardis" on the beach, (designed to vent any pressure surges arising from tide and wave action on the pipe) is now a safety hazard. The manhole cover on the top has been replaced several times but has been stolen again and children have been known to climb up onto the structure. The steel pipeline also seems to add little to a rather attractive beach and the structures are eyesores.
- 1.5 Both structures can now be removed reasonably easily and the Coal Authority will also tidy up the mineshafts now surrounded by woods. It is intend to pull out the timber piles cradling the pipe but if they won't come out without significantly disrupting the exposed strata on the beach then they will be cut off close to the level of the surrounding. .
- 1.6 From public safety and environmental aspects these works should be welcomed and it is hoped they can be completed before the school holidays.

**Recommended that the Town Council welcome the proposed removal of the minewater drain from the beach.**