

## NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 March 2010 at 7 pm at the School Hall John Dobson Campus Newbiggin.**

### PRESENT:

Councillors:                      W Rogers (Mayor)  
   L Anderson                                      M Kirkup  
   M Boon    R Mc Cready  
   M Cholerton                                      A Thompson

Officer:                      D Earl – Town Clerk

### IN ATTENDANCE:

20 members of the public and 1 member of the press  
Representatives of Northumberland County Council Regeneration Team

### OPEN SESSION

The following issues were raised by members of the public present at the meeting:

- The issue of dog fouling in the town was again raised and its adverse affect on local businesses. There were two separate issues dog fouling generally and the dog ban on the beach which was to be reviewed. The meting was advised that there were still delays in information from DEFRA's legal department and a county policy before the Town Council could assess the issues as it needed to know the actual base-line. Some local people felt that the town was in a disgusting mess and the county needed to enforce now. The provision of bags and large red bins would help as had been used elsewhere. The situation had got worse recently and would impact on visitors during the coming summer season and notices needed to be replaced immediately and enforced.

Cleansing generally was felt to be atrocious and some had lobbied county councillors. The responsible dog owners were not feeling part of the community.

- A member queried the publication of Council meetings and was advised that the agenda was published in the two post offices the library and sports centre each month. It was suggested they could be publicised in the local newspaper or the In Touch magazine but should soon be available on a new web site for the Town Council.

- The Town Council was asked to confirm or deny that in respect of the upkeep of seats and play areas etc. that the county council was to make a levy on behalf of the Town and Parish Councils. This matter related to local service provision that was not transferring to the parish councils on 01 April. The Town Clerk carefully explained the difference between the parish precept, council tax for local services and the special charge that NCC would now impose on local charge payers to separately cover these costs.
- Reference was made to the Town Council precept for the next year and a claimed fifty per cent increase. It was explained that this was the Town Council's first precept following the allocation for administration only in the first year.

It was expected that local people would have a greater say in the services they were paying for but there had not been enough time for the practicalities or proper funding to be sorted to ensure the transfer of local services at the same or better level. An open dialogue was still required to consider aspects of Service level Agreements, in-house provision or collaboration to share equipment etc. There was an exchange whether local people were paying twice for the local services and it was explained that the county council would be reducing its expenditure across the county by £25m and a further r£30m next year.

- Concern was expressed at the condition of the colliery area of the town with litter being described as appalling and the condition of bus shelters a disgrace. Youths were again causing damage to car windscreens. The back of the sports centre was not lit and attracted youths. It was felt that greater care for the area was required that lights needed to be kept on and a greater police presence. Loose horses were again a problem and Woodhorn Road required better sweeping and flower planting.
- Minimum rules on attendance at meetings by councillors were raised by a member of the public as it was felt that face to face contact was required. The Town Clerk explained the statutory minimum requirement to attend meetings every six months. Members also explained that much unseen work was going on outside of meetings.

#### **CO93/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were given on behalf of Councillor Peden.

#### **CO94/09 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2010 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

#### **CO95/09 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Grant Committee held on 03 March 2010 were circulated. The Chairperson outlined the matters agreed under delegated powers and confirmed that

application forms were still available and any balance would roll forward to the next financial year.

## **CO96/09 NEWBIGGIN REGENERATION UPDATE**

The NCC Regeneration Service was represented by Richard Schofield the Senior Project Officer and Gully Atwal-Churchley the Project Support Officer to provide an update on the Newbiggin conservation area regeneration. Richard circulated information and provided an update on the three principle areas of the grants scheme townscape improvements and events and activities.

Grants under the Go Build on your Heritage scheme had resulted in £750,000 of improvements to buildings in the conservation area where 12 out of 16 were now complete and vacancy rates had reduced from a high of 26%. A main and successful priority had been to revert to the old style wooden shop fronts.

Townscape Improvement works to the Bridge Street/Quay Wall areas following initial consultation were now being left until after the summer and allow for further detailed consultation on the priorities as the budget was limited to £150,000. This would take place throughout April/May and works likely to focus on defining a civic, social and commercial focal point would be completed by March 2011. It was intended to remove clutter and open up the Quay Wall area, provide a level surface for better use and remove the mosaic with possibly a new one provided in the band stand. The townscape should complement the shop improvements.

Members confirmed the historic importance of the Quay Wall to the town; the need for the area to be useful to local people and visitors and the roll in the town's Art's Trail. It was confirmed that funds were available from GO Wansbeck for softer events to support regeneration with animation activity and the team were looking for co-ordination for combined events.

The Team was thanked for the update and there would be a further opportunity for input during the final consultation stage.

## **CO97/09 FARMERS' MARKET INITIATIVE**

The Town Clerk presented the report into the possibility of establishing a Farmers' market in Newbiggin by-the-Sea following initial investigation with North East England Farmers' Markets (NEEFM). This could not only provide a service to local people but also attract visitors to the town from a wider area and assist in regeneration particularly if linked with other events and venues.

NEEFM has experience in encouraging and publicising the development of an increasing network of markets for local produce as shown in the appendix of existing markets attached to the report. A key to the success of such markets was ensuring genuinely local produce was available by the producer actually selling at the market and that all goods on sale were grown, reared or processed by the stallholders and this could be assisted by certification FARMA the National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association.

Combining market produce with local craft stalls to coincide with specific events to provide a Seaside Market on a few specific weekends might be the best way to test whether there was sufficient interest to make the venture viable and it was likely to need ongoing financial support from the Town Council.

If such a venture is to be established or indeed tested this year then there was much to be done and this would be challenging covering stall hire and health and safety requirements. It would be necessary to attract sufficient traders to make a market successful and to fix dates that they could attend well in advance so that it was part of the traders' calendar as fresh produce had to be provided. A team effort was required.

Members were strongly in favour of such a venture and expressed appreciation of the work so far undertaken by Councillor Peden.

**RESOLVED that the Town Council pursue the establishment of a local market along the lines outlined above.**

#### **CO98/09 DATES AND VENUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

A draft diary of meetings for the next year had been circulated with alternating venues around the town for member's consideration.

**RESOLVED that the Diary of Meetings for 2010/2011 be agreed.**

In view of the consultation timetable the Chairman agreed to consideration of the following tabled report.

#### **CO99/09 CAR PARKING CONSOLIDATION ORDER**

A report was tabled by the Town Clerk advising of consultation arrangements by Northumberland County Council following the issue of a draft Traffic Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to consolidate car park arrangements throughout Northumberland.

Any views or objections must be submitted by 26 March and although a small number of changes were proposed, in general the purpose of the order was to consolidate and rationalise the existing former district council off-street parking places orders. The Northumberland County Council (Off Street Parking Places) Composite Order 2010, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 was part of the county wide review of parking. NCC advised that bringing together of the former district council orders would make current management and enforcement of restrictions easier.

Generally operational hours were defined as 8.00 am to 6.00 pm where a wide range of charges and restrictions applied together with excess charges for contravention of the order. Provision was being made for a county wide permit and weekly tourist permits

All hours Monday to Sunday inclusive (including Bank Holidays) were included as operational days and hours for the six car parks in Newbiggin although initially no chargeable hours or tariff were included.

Members expressed their concern that there should be no introduction of car parking charges at Newbiggin.

It was not believed that the Church Point Car Park should be included in the order as it was not in the control of the county council the lease to the former Wansbeck Council having expired. There were other issues for that car park and it was suggested that discussions be held with the Freeholders and the Heritage Centre. It was also felt that these car parks needed to be part of a 10 year traffic management plan for the town.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1) **NCC be advised to remove the Church Point Car Park from the Order; and**
- 2) **discussions concerning the future of the car park be held with the Freeholders and the Heritage Centre.**

**CO100/09 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to financial and business affairs.

**CO101/09 MAJOR PROJECTS AND FUNDING**

Members considered the issues relating to possible major projects and funding when urgent and commercial decision-making was required and whether the Council should consider delegation and setting parameters.

It was felt that the issues of professional reports; adequate estimates; future revenue support; extent of grant availability in the interests of scrutiny were all available to ensure the full support of the Town Council for major projects.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1) **meetings be called at short notice when necessary if significant issues were involved;**
- 2) **the Town Clerk arrange for a structural survey to be undertaken by Rickards in accordance with their quotation.**

Signed by the Chairman: .....

Date:.....