

## NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Wednesday 09 May 2012  
at 7 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Newbiggin.**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors: R McCready (Mayor)  
L Anderson M Boon M Cholerton M Kirkup  
M Peden W Rogers A Thompson  
Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

1 member of the press and 9 members of the public

### **OPEN SESSION**

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

- Residents in the Storey Crescent area of the town were in particular experiencing increasing problems from loose horses causing damage to cars and walls as well as eating plants and shrubs from gardens. Three horses had also been deliberately let into the new wood plantation following the wire fence being cut. There was a general danger to the public particularly the young and elderly from loose horses in public areas which had previously been reported to the county council. Other horses were getting out of fields adjoining the Academy Campus as fencing had been removed there allowing them to access the school grounds causing fear among young children.

It was understood that the county council had formed a Working Group headed by the Countryside Team which was finalising a report on how the problem could be tackled. A handful of irresponsible horse owners were blamed for much of the problem and it was important that anyone with knowledge of owners or evidence of their actions should report it to the county council.

Members agreed that the Town Council should write to the Working Group to reinforce the actions proposed must be enforceable and put into place before a more serious accident occurred. This matter would be considered again at the next meeting when an update would be requested from the county council.

- A resident advised again that the flashing road sign near the closed school on Gibson Street continued to operate nineteen weeks after being reported and would be pursued through the South East Area Committee.

**C001/12 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

Members agreed that the present Chairperson had carried out the duties in exemplary fashion and proposed re-election of Councillor McCready for the next municipal year.

**RESOLVED that: Councillor Rebecca McCready be elected Mayor and Chairman of the Town Council for the year 2012/2013.**

**C002/12 MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was made and signed by Councillor McCready.

**C003/12 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED that: Councillor Malcolm Peden be elected Deputy Mayor and Vice-Chairman of the Town Council for the year 2012/2013.**

**C004/12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2012 were agreed with the inclusion of Councillor Boon as present and signed as a correct record.

**C005/12 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Grant Committee held on 11 April 2012 were received.

**C006/12 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made.

**C007/12 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2011/2012**

The Council considered the report of the Internal Auditor as set out in Appendix 1. There were no matters which the Auditor wished to formally draw to the attention of the Town Council. The accounts had been satisfactorily audited and the internal audit report signed for submission with the annual return to the external auditors.

**RESOLVED that: the Internal Audit Report be accepted.**

**C008/12 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENT FOR 2011/2012**

The Town Clerk advised members that the Accounts for the financial year 2011/2012 had been completed and audited and were currently available for inspection by the public as required by the legislation.

The Final Accounts and Balance Sheet were attached at Appendix 2 for members' consideration together with the Accounting statements set out in

Appendix 3 which had to be endorsed by the Town Council and signed by the Chairman prior to submission to the External Auditors.

**RESOLVED that: the Final Accounts Balance Sheet and Accounting Statements for 2011/2012 be agreed.**

**C009/12 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Members were advised that a further requirement of the audit process was that an Annual Governance Statement was incorporated in the Annual Return having been considered and approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk. A draft statement attached at Appendix 4 to the report was considered and reviewed by members who expressed their satisfaction with the sound system of internal control of the Council.

**RESOLVED that: the Town Council approves the Annual Governance Statement.**

**C010/12 OLYMPIC FLAME TORCH RELAY**

The arrangements for the Olympic Flame Torch Relay through the town on the morning of Friday 15 June were confirmed and the Town Clerk reported that the Grace Darling Campus would escort the children from key stages 2 and 3 to line the streets in the vicinity of the former Jackie Milburn Campus and Memorial Park.

A very large vehicle convoy would escort the torch bearers running from Woodhorn Farm through to Spital Estate and traffic movement through the town throughout this period would be restricted.

Members requested that residents along the route provide decorations at the front of their properties to show the town in a good light. Hand held flags would also be acquired for the school children.

**RESOLVED that: the Town Council purchase hand held flags for the children from the Academy.**

**C011/12 QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS**

Commemorative mugs had been ordered and delivered for presentation to the school children of Grace Darling Campus.

A request from the traders that the presentation by local Town Councillors take place at the Band Stand at the Quay Wall Piazza on the Friday afternoon preceding the Diamond Jubilee Weekend had been discussed with staff at the Campus. Councillor Cholerton reported that in view of problems with supervision and logistics the request had been declined but arrangements would be made for members to attend the Campus to present the mugs.

**RESOLVED that: Members attend the Grace Darling Campus to present the commemorative mugs to local children.**

## **C012/12 NEWBIGGIN MANOR STINT INCOME**

It was reported that the Town Council was in receipt of income amounting to £576 from the four Stints assigned from the County Council and that initial thoughts to place this with the Triplett's Woodhorn Charity were not viable.

Discussions had been held with the Manager of the Newbiggin Maritime Centre regarding plans to provide three apprenticeships in conjunction with and supervised by Northumberland College. As the Town Plan identified support for the creation of training opportunities and there had been an under spend on several associated budget heads the Chairperson recommended that this receipt be increased and contributed to support the apprenticeships. This would hopefully provide a flagship for other local businesses and would be evaluated for the future budget process.

**RESOLVED that: a contribution of £3,500 incorporating the Stint income be made to Newbiggin Maritime Centre to support the creation of three apprenticeships for local young people.**

## **C013/12 LOCAL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Town Council had requested the County Council to undertake a Local Governance Review following the implementation of the County Ward Review and its effect on the parish ward boundaries that are changed for the 2013 local elections. The Town Clerk reported on the purpose and intention of the review and an update from the County Council following consultation with the Boundary Commission.

An artificial boundary had been created in the West of Newbiggin by the boundary of the County Electoral Division for Seaton with Newbiggin West which incorporated the estates of Spital Welfare and half of the Avenues with North Seaton. This has been done to maintain numerical balance of the county divisions and ignored community identity for electors.

It had been intended to provide a balance of representation in the Parish between councillors and the electorate by re-establishing the original ward boundary between Newbiggin East and West which was an approximate 50:50 split with four councillors in each ward. The Electoral Commission however would not now sanction parish ward boundaries overlapping county division boundaries. It would not review this situation until 2016 insisting that a parish ward must be wholly within the county division.

That Ward representing only 20% of the electorate had to remain for the next election so the question for the review was now how to deal with the rest of the town where 80% of the electorate resided (West: 957 electors; Central and East: 3,741 electors). Leaving the status quo with 4 councillors representing each of the two wards would leave a significant imbalance. The Chairperson outlined the other options of having no wards and all 8 councillors elected by the whole town; the larger part of the town being sub-divided into 2 further wards with 3 councillors; or 3 wards with 2 councillors each.

Plans showing possible ward boundaries based on 2; 3 and 4 Wards were circulated at the meeting.

Previously the town had been sub-divided between four polling stations and with some relatively minor alterations could provide 3 further wards averaging 1,250 electors each giving the best ratio of electors to councillors available in the circumstances. It was the least disruptive option from an elections perspective whereas to subdivide the large area into 2 wards provided an average of 1,870 electors was more difficult geographically in terms of community identity.

Members were in agreement that four Wards for the Parish was the best balance and both easier and clearer for the electorate providing identifiable wards in the North; South; East and West of the town.

**RESOLVED that the Town Council request that the Community Governance Review proceed on the basis of four Wards being created as shown on Plan B.**

**C014/12 URGENT BUSINESS**

Issues relating to continuing problems of indiscriminative parking on grass verges at the Sports Centre; further Headstones being broken or laid down at St. Mary's cemetery at Woodhorn; complaints of dog dirt along the promenade would be pursued with the county council.

St. Mary's Church at Woodhorn would again be opened by the Friends Group on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May between 11 am and 3 pm with a music concert being held on the Saturday evening.

A local resident thanked the Town Council for hosting the recent Older Persons Conference which had been greatly appreciated by local people and support groups.

Signed by the Chairman: .....

Date:.....