

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 February 2013 at 7 pm
at the Grace Darling Academy Newbiggin by-the-Sea.

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE: 4 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

- A member of the public indicated that there were no timetables for the X21 service at the west end of the town and was advised that this was a County Transport matter.
- The poor state of gateway sites owing to horses was again raised as the former school yard was in a particularly disgusting state. The problems were well known and although slow progress was now being made by the County Council and partner agencies to progress the policy for dealing with horses and specialist bailiffs had been out the previous week. While problems remained over ownership and funding for action it was hoped that some action would be seen shortly.
- Reference was made to a report of negative comments regarding housing in the town appearing on an internet web site although it was likely little could be done. Other comments on the Newbiggin by-the-Sea web site should be referred to the web editor.
- A resident advised of an event being organized by CVS to bring together local organizations in April. The Golden Age Forum was arranging a two day training event in the town relating to services for the elderly and deaf.
- The Neighbourhood Beat Manager PC French advised that reported crime locally was down from last year although it was known that not all anti-social behaviour was being reported. Local patrols had been increased and the public were encouraged to report rowdy or anti-social behaviour so it could be dealt with.

C089/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Kirkup and A Thompson.

C090/12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C091/12 MINUTES OF GRANT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Grant Committee held on 28 January 2013 were received the Committee having acted under delegated powers. The Chairperson advised the meeting of the various grants awarded and that the increased budget had been dispensed for the year.

C092/12 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS –In relation to business to be considered later in the meeting Councillor McCready declared an interest as a member of the Portas Team.

C093/12 POWER STATION AND LAGOONS

The Town Clerk reported on the meetings with senior representatives of Rio Tinto Alcan and RWE npower following the transfer of ownership of the power station and most of the lagoons. He and the Vice-Chairperson had met with the new owners and arranged to host a very positive introductory meeting between them and the Town Council and representatives of the regulating agencies the Environment Agency and Northumberland County Planning.

Lynemouth Power Limited the new company created to operate the power station outlined great aspirations for power station and intended regular discussions with local parties. They were pleased to have continued employment at the site and medium and long-term plans were being developed involving accelerated biomass with unit 1 being converted and operating by the end of the year and completion of the other units by 2015.

Shipment of biomass by road would move progressively to 100% rail transport following conversion of the rail point and would vary up to 2015 during the period of transition from coal to biomass burning.

The whole area of the lagoons remained subject to monitoring by the Environment Agency and subject to stringent license conditions until it could be satisfactorily surrendered and planning conditions were in force for restoration of the area. It was unlikely that the No. 1 and 2 lagoons would be needed from 2015 and Members had discussed the need to be involved in the process that would see a transitional surrender of large areas of operational land.

It had been agreed that a restoration plan would be developed in conjunction with the Planning Authority and the Environment Agency to satisfy the conditions ahead of completion of the biomass conversion process with timescales for surrender. Lynemouth Power and RTA accepted a positive approach to consultation with the inclusion of the Town Council and Natural England to develop a plan that would be implemented over a number of years.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council welcome its inclusion in the planning of the likely phased restoration of the lagoon land.

C094/12

NORTHUBERLAND CORE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The report advised of the consultation arrangements for the Northumberland Core Strategy commenced up to 20 March with a series of drop-in and themed workshop discussions.

The substantial publication would become the overarching spatial plan for the county to guide future planning decisions and was available online at www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy and at all libraries and designated offices.

A range of topics were included seeking to identify preferred policies and options across housing; economy; town centre and retail; green belt; minerals; waste; renewable and low carbon energy; sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy; transportation; information and communications technologies; community facilities; natural and historic environment; water environment.

The county core strategy aimed to make climate change work to our advantage; maintain and create sustainable communities; rebalance our economy; give everyone a voice and influence; provide healthy lifestyle choice; support our young people into adulthood; deliver services differently.

The Vision that would underpin the Core Strategy was: By 2030 Northumberland's diverse communities will be healthy and resilient and set within a diverse and strong economy. The County's significant resources will be utilised in a sustainable way and the unique and varied qualities of the natural, historic and built environment will be protected and enhanced

There were eight main objectives to form the basis for delivering that vision and overall the approach of the plan was to allow sustainable development; plan for increases in building to allow growth to boost the economy and bring regeneration.

For the south-east Northumberland delivery area it recognised that Newbiggin by-the-Sea performed an important role as a service centre. Principle issues to be tackled were to realise proposed growth at Ashington and Blyth; tackling deprivation; pressure for coal extraction; reverse the decline in public transport; strategic employment sites.

RESOLVED: that Members consider aspects of the strategy and bring any observations to the March meeting.

C095/12

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Northumberland County Council following the conclusion of the Community Governance Review for the Parish of Newbiggin by-the-Sea had made The Northumberland (Reorganisation of Community Governance)(Parish of Newbiggin by the Sea) Order 2013. The Order as made and sealed on 15th January 2013 under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and would come into force on the ordinary day of election of Councillors this year.

The effect of the Order was that the existing wards of the parish had been abolished and four wards created as shown on the map each to be represented by two Councillors. New Registers of Electors had been requested from the County Council.

RESOLVED that the new wards of the Parish be noted.

C096/12 LOCAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Updates had previously been given on developments regarding Local Service Transfer from the County Council and the further delay of detailed consideration for parks and playing fields with very late decisions made during the budget consultation process.

The Town Clerk reported that some progress was being made with the transfer of the playgrounds and notice had been given to terminate the agency basis and seek actual transfer of the assets by the end of March. While some of that may be achieved it was unlikely that Memorial Park would transfer owing to capacity issues at County.

Revised prices for play areas; bus shelters; public seats; litter bins had been provided during the budget considerations and were at an acceptable level. As there was still uncertainty over the extent of services and packaging of a suitable contract it was suggested that the County Council be again engaged to carry out the work in 2013-14.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk be authorized to complete appropriate agreements with County Neighbourhood Services for 2013-14.

C097/12 TEMPORARY CAR PARK FACILITY

Arrangements for an overflow temporary car park had been investigated and the site owned by the county council was found suitable following ground condition surveys. It had been accepted that the overall cost of the scheme was too high for the Town Council alone and would have to be pursued jointly with the County Councillor and the Portas Project as an infrastructure scheme for the regeneration of the town.

A scheme budget of £21,700 was required and County Councillor Thompson had agreed to provide an allocation of £11,000 from his County Councillor Local Schemes budget. The Portas Project was unable at the present time to make a financial commitment from its resources that were substantially committed to other schemes but would consider a contribution at a later date.

Members discussed the scheme; the need to bring people into the town; the requirement for additional parking to support large events like the Triathlon in particular when the former schools may not be adequate or available. There were reservations about the high cost quoted by the County Council for what were essentially works within the highway requiring its consent owing to the likely infrequent use in the short-term. A balance of £10,700 was required to implement this scheme and Members considered whether it could meet that contribution from balances in the current year.

RESOLVED: that a contribution of £10,700 towards the temporary car park scheme be allocated from balances.

C098/12 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairperson advised of arrangements being made for the Annual Assembly which was required to be held in April each year. It was to have an environmental theme this year and involve other agencies operating throughout the town.

RESOLVED that: the Annual Assembly be held on Wednesday 03rd April 2013.

C099/12 PORTAS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

One of the priority schemes submitted by the Town Council had been included in the County Transport Programme and was progressing. The Spital farm footpath/cycle way was also a priority of the Portas Team to make the area safe and it was likely that a Pelican crossing would be installed and the footpath/cycle way link provided to the entrance to the caravan park. Members also discussed the route linking the promenade and cycling arrangements and signage.

RESOLVED that: the Town Council reiterates its support for the footpath/cycle way project through the Local Transport Plan.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....