

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14 May 2014
at 7.15 pm at the St Bartholomew's Church Centre Newbiggin by-the-Sea.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: W Rogers (Mayor)
M Peden (Mayor)

M Boon L Burns M Cholerton
R Dixon A Thompson S Todd

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 6 members of the public

C001/14 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor M Peden be elected Mayor and Chairman for the next municipal year.

RESOLVED that: Councillor M Peden be elected Mayor and Chairman of the Town Council for the year 2014/2015.

C002/14 MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

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

C003/14 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S Todd be elected Deputy Mayor and Vice-Chairman for the next municipal year.

RESOLVED that: Councillor S Todd be elected Deputy Mayor and Vice-Chairman of the Town Council for the year 2014/2015.

C004/14 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C005/14 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Finance Committee held on 31 March 2014 were received and the recommendations deferred for consideration with the item at the end of the agenda.

C006/14 MINUTES OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Grant Committee held on 31 March 2014 were received.

OPEN SESSION

There were no questions from the public.

Northumbria Police Acting Sergeant Lawson gave an overview of crime statistics that were down 35% on last year and referred to visitor shoplifting centred on the Co-op premises which had been stamped out recently. Anti Social Behaviour was also down although there had been recent incidents around the Sports Centre and camera surveillance was being investigated and more police visits. Further visits were encouraged to the allotment avenues where overnight vandalism was taking place. Reference was made to the success of specialist teams and a Police monthly 'drop-in' was being set up for residents to air concerns.

C007/14 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no new declarations of interests from Members at this stage.

C008/14 APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

The Town Council considered the appointment of Committees; Working Groups; and to Outside Bodies. It was agreed to appoint the following Committees and Working Groups to facilitate Council business.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Councillors M Boon; M Cholerton; W Rogers; A Thompson; S Todd be appointed to the Finance Committee;**
- (ii) Councillors M Boon; L Burns; W Rogers be appointed to the Grant Committee;**
- (iii) Councillors M Cholerton; M Peden; W Rogers be appointed to the Environment Working Group;**
- (iv) Councillor M Cholerton be appointed to the Transport Working Group;**
- (v) Councillor W Rogers be appointed to the Woodhorn Church Working Group;**
- (vi) Councillor S Todd be appointed to the Northumberland Association of Local Councils;**
- (vii) The Chairperson Councillor M Peden be appointed to the Newbiggin Portas Team;**
- (viii) Councillor M Boon be appointed to the Newbiggin in Bloom Association.**

C009/14 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2013/2014

The Council considered the report of the Internal Auditor as set out in Appendix 1 and considered it to be a good report. 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.

C010/14 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENT FOR 2013/2014

The Town Clerk advised members that the Accounts for the financial year 2013/2014 had been completed and audited. Significant expenditure supported by grants from various sources had enabled a number of projects to be completed. The Accounts 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 Chairperson prior to submission to the External Auditors.

RESOLVED that: the Final Accounts Balance Sheet and Accounting Statements for 2013/2014 be agreed.

C011/14 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.

C012/14 SIGNAGE TO THE PROMENADE AND BICYCLE STANDS

The Project Officer from the NCC Local Growth Team had enquired if the Town Council wanted to consider the provision of further cycle stands as part of the 'Park that Bike' scheme and signage to the promenade and beach.

There was a range of stand features including planters that could be considered under the scheme and available free of charge although installation costs would have to be met. Location of each feature would have to be on private land or within the highway and would need to meet the highway criteria and attached to existing street features where necessary and each site identified would need to be assessed on its merits.

Improved signage for visitors to the promenade and beach at various locations could be considered if suitable arrangements could be agreed with highways officers.

RESOLVED that: the provision of further signage and bicycle stands be agreed in principle and locations and costs be investigated.

C013/14 VISIT OF THE BRASS BAND OF LUTTERINGHAUSEN (REMSCHIED) GERMANY

A weekend visit was being arranged by the Brass Band of Lutteringhausen from 09 to 13 October continuing the longstanding town twinning arrangements between Remscheid in Germany and Ashington and Newbiggin by-the-Sea. On the afternoon of Sunday 12 October the Brass Band would be giving a performance at the Church Point in conjunction with the Maritime Centre and the Town Council was requested to provide a buffet for the performers and invited guests to help support the visit.

Members welcomed the proposed visit and were happy to underwrite the cost of providing the buffet at the Maritime Centre at an estimated cost of £300.

RESOLVED that: the Town Council confirm it will meet the cost of the buffet.

C014/14 FIRE SERVICE CONSULTATION

The report advised that Northumberland Fire Service was consulting on the Fire & Rescue Plan 2014 – 2017 against the background of budget reductions of 12.5% in the past few years and further reductions to come. Management posts had been reduced by 20% and whole time firefighter posts reduced by 25% and replaced by retained firefighter posts.

Statutory responsibilities to promote fire safety; extinguish fires and protect life; rescue and protect from serious harm in road accidents; deal with other emergencies when necessary together with its remit to identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks to the community and its priorities were set out in the report.

Only the new stations at Pegswood and West Hartford were whole time stations serving 51% of the county population in South East Northumberland. There were day staffed and retained services at various towns throughout the rural areas of the county and the service now had 146 whole time and 218 retained personnel.

Prevention Protection and Response were the themes of the service approach to mitigating the impact of risk for the communities and had to be demonstrated in a cost effective way. Business continuity arrangements were required under the Civil Contingencies Act as assessed through the Community Risk Register; Emergency Response Plans; training and testing arrangements and applying learning to review and amend plans.

During the last five year plan period fires accidents and false alarms had all reduced significantly and progress had been made against all priorities. The Plan supported the Council's Strategic priorities and Local Service themes and would undertake a number of reviews.

Reference was made to the significant reduction in fires in recent years which were welcomed and changes to first response approach often by 4 x 4 vehicles and motor cycles without the necessity for the full appliance to attend and the transfer of emphasis to education. Members did not feel that hydrant testing was regularly done and were unhappy at reductions in whole time staffing.

RESOLVED that: the County Fire Officer be advised of the Town Council's views.

C015/14 SUMMER SCHEMES – BAD APPLES NE

A number of sessions had been delivered last year by Bad Apples on the beach at the bandstand and in the leisure centre to engage and signpost local young people and visitors to sites in the town. Bad Apples was in the process of putting its summer program together and needed to confirm funding to arrange a community games event again this year and other sessions in Newbiggin.

RESOLVED that: an allocation of £1,000 be approved from the existing youth and adult support budget.

C016/14 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 personal financial and business affairs.

C017/14 PUBLIC TOILET PROJECT

The recommendations from the Finance Committee meeting on 31 March to commit to a joint town centre scheme incorporating public toilets had been deferred and were now confirmed.

Arising from those discussions the Town Clerk updated Members regarding both schemes and the revision of tenders to incorporate party wall underpinning works to the Front Street premises. A number of additional fees had been incurred in that process and the budget allocation would need to be increased slightly to cover these matters.

Members expressed the need to proceed with the provision of improved modern public toilet facilities in the town for the benefit of visitors and an aging population as soon as possible particularly as the unreliable Quay Wall facility had now been closed. Questions were raised about future cleaning costs and the Town Clerk advised that there would be no additional costs as public toilets in Newbiggin were designated as a strategic service and carried out by the County Council and this had been the basis of discussions with officers for several years. While there was some minority descent regarding the Front Street development most Members were strongly in favour of proceeding with the works as soon as possible.

The Town Council remained unanimously in favour of the partnership scheme which would take longer to achieve and the Town Clerk reminded Members of the requirement for continued confidentiality.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The recommendations of the Finance Committee be adopted;
- ii) The budget allocation be increased to £64,047; the tenders be accepted and the works proceed for the Front Street public toilet project and underpinning.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date:.....