

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 16th October
2019 at 7.00pm at Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre

PRESENT: Councillors: A Thompson (Chairman)

A Bromwich-Alexandra L Burns

S Harrison E Hartley M Peden

Officers: D Earl – Town Clerk

E Brown – Deputy Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 14 members of the public

The Chair informed of a question that had been submitted in writing in advance of the meeting asking whether the Town Council were changing the grant conditions to meet the grant application to be considered later the agenda. The Chair confirmed that the Council were considering amendments to the grant conditions which would be applicable to all future grant applications to enable the support of new and expanding projects that were presently restricted by the existing conditions.

A member of the public queried previous motions relating to the replacement of high street banners, re-designation of Newbiggin as a town and painting of the heritage lighting columns. The Chair informed that the Town Council had on numerous occasions requested a meeting with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the County Council and a meeting date had not yet been forthcoming.

The Deputy Clerk informed that the purchase order for the repainting of the heritage lights had been in place with the County Council for over a year now but unfortunately their contractor arrangements had changed and this has caused a delay in the painting of the columns,; this was being chased up on a monthly basis. The banner replacement was ongoing with previous design details being unobtainable and new designs being requested. A member of the public suggested a local designer and was asked for forward the designers contact details to the Deputy Clerk.

A member of the public asked whether the council supported full transparency and open accountability in accordance with the current agreed best practice and why the Council were considering changing grant procedures to make them less transparent and accountable. The Chair responded stating that the Council is transparent and compliant with legislation in all procedures and practices.

A member of the public asked whether the Town Council approved of and supported the bay project. The Town Clerk outlined the Council's position as detailed in previous minutes; the Council supported a scheme being developed in principle but at this stage nothing further has come back to the Town Council for consideration.

A member of the public raised some questions regarding the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group;

- i) who decides who sits on the Steering Group, and
- ii) was there a representative on the Steering Group from Newbiggin Voice.

The Chair and Town Clerk informed that the Town Council selected the organisations to be represented on the Steering Group, to cover employment; regeneration; land and property; commercial trade; community regeneration but it was those organisations that selected their own representatives and the Chair confirmed that Newbiggin Voice, had not been asked as to have a representative on the Steering Group.

The member of the public continued to ask questions regarding the proposed residential development opposite the sport centre which were matters for Advance Northumberland

C058/19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors M Cholerton and M Boon. These were accepted

C059/19. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

A Member queried minute No. C053/19 who was to undertake the review of the grants policy. The Town Clerk confirmed that Officers produced the amended draft for consideration of the Council; the Town Council would be undertaking the review.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 18th September were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

C060/19. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

A Member queried minute No. C057/19 and who would be responsible for any financial charge incurred in a variation of the lease conditions. The Town Clerk informed that if a formal change is required, considering the minor amendment, the Council will look at reclaiming that charge from the tenants.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 25th September were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

C061/19. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS – None.

C062/19 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

An application for funding was being worked on to advance the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Clerk informed that this would be developed with the guidance of NCC Planning Officers.

C063/19. OUTSIDE BODIES – REVIEW AND REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

The Vice-Chair informed that she and the Chair attended the Town and Parish Council Conference hosted by Northumberland County Council which included a presentation from County Councillor Glen Sanderson and an opportunity to meet various officers from various departments, the minutes would be circulated when made available.

A Member who had also attended referred to the updated NCC/Local Council's Joint Charter and the Who's Who guide of NCC Officers.

Chairs question re: car park town centre site available clarification was requested. The Chair informed that this was in relation to the overflow car park which would need to be confirmed by resolution of the Council.

C064/19. CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

The External Auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP had advised of the completion of its review and issue of the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2018/19. Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in their opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Section 2, Box 8 does not agree to the bank reconciliation. The figure in Box 8 should read £232,220.

Amendments will be corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR.

The Town Clerk informed that this was due to the figure being used was to reflect the town council's net assets at that moment in time but did not include creditors such as the VAT return which had been submitted but not received.

RESOLVED that the Town Council receive and agree the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2018/19.

C065/19 REVIEW OF LARGE GRANTS CONDITIONS

The revised draft procedure has been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Council defer a decision to allow Members to discuss points concerning the draft in an informal session.

C066/19 GRANT REQUEST – NEWBIGGIN GENEALOGY GROUP

This item was deferred pending the review of the conditions of the Large Grants scheme.

Signed by Chairman..... Date.....