

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 15th July
2020 at 7.00pm via Zoom

PRESENT: Councillors: A Thompson (Chairman) (part)
M Boon L Burns
M Cholerton M Peden

Officers: D Earl – Town Clerk
E Brown – Deputy Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 5 members of the public

It was noted that the Chairman was having technical difficulties and it was uncertain at this point whether he would be joining the meeting so Cllr Burns as Vice Chair was requested to take the Chair.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

C001/20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Thompson – technical difficulties.

C002/20. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22nd APRIL 2020

RESOLVED unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held 22nd April 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and would be signed later by Cllr Burns as Chair of the meeting.

At 19.03 Cllr Thompson entered the meeting and assumed the Chair.

C003/20. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 20th MAY 2020 –
RESOLVED unanimously that the minutes be received for information.

C004/20. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Cllr Burns and Cllr Peden both declared a personal interest and non-pecuniary interests in C008/20 as representatives of Newbiggin Community Ventures and Newbiggin Development Trust respectively as these organisations were working partners in several projects.

C005/20 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019/20

The Annual Internal Audit Report has been received and informs the Town Council that satisfactory financial arrangements are in place. It also supports the Annual Return to the External Auditor to be considered later in the agenda.

The Internal Auditor has reviewed all of the activities referred to in his report which was attached at Appendix 1 for members' information. Only one comment has been made recommending a review of the level of Fidelity Guarantee which is currently set at £250,000. Owing to the carry forward of allocated balances at the year end this figure can be exceeded when the Precept instalment is received in the bank, so it is suggested that the cover be increased to £500,000.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Internal Audit report be agreed and the Fidelity Guarantee

Increased to £500,000.

C006/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20

A draft statement was attached at Appendix 2 for members' consideration. The Annual Governance Statement is incorporated into the Annual Return and completed ahead of consideration of the audit and accounting statements. Once considered and approved by the Council it will be signed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk for submission to the external auditors.

RESOLVED unanimously that members approve the Annual Governance Statement.

C007/20 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2019/20

Attached at Appendix 3 for members' consideration was the Final Accounts for the financial year 2019/2020 which include actual expenditure against budget heads. The Asset Register has been updated and circulated to Members. The Accounting Statements set out in Appendix 4 must be endorsed by the Town Council and signed by the Chairperson and the Responsible Financial Officer for submission to the External Auditor.

RESOLVED unanimously that members confirm the accounts in the light of the Internal Audit Report and approve the accounting statements.

C008/20 PROJECT ALLOCATIONS

Attached as Appendix 5 for members' consideration was the Project Allocations 2020-2022. Finance to move projects on while also support and attracting the section 106 contributions towards the projects.

RESOLVED unanimously that members agreed to the project allocations

C009/20. VEHICLE ACTIVATED SPEED SIGNS

There are currently three Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) signs located with the Parish.

- North Seaton Road – at junction to Spital Burn
- Gibson Street – at New Ship
- Woodhorn Road –at STB Autos

At present only one VAS is operational, this is the one located at North Seaton Road and this has been licensed to Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council. This is operated via solar panel and repairs were last conducted in 2017.

The non-operational VAS on Woodhorn Road also has solar panel connectivity. The VAS on Gibson Street does not. These two units have not been operational for at least three years. A parish council has the power to contribute towards the cost of traffic calming works (including sign) to be carried out by the highway authority to the benefit of the council area. It has been suggested that the Town Council investigate changing the VAS to Speed Indicator

Device (SID) signs.

It is not possible to switch to SID display within the 450mm dimensions of the existing units and they cannot be reworked to give the information required.

SID is only available in the 600mm sized at a cost of £3254 each (excluding VAT and installation charges).

An alternative lower cost option is the DF11 SID with the solar powered unit costing £2645 (excluding VAT and installation charges)

RESOLVED unanimously that:

- i) The Town Council request NCC remove the non-operational unit on Gibson Street at no cost to the Town Council. This is due to the proximity to the traffic lights on Dixons Corner, the pedestrian crossing on Gibson Street and the Speed camera on Front Street, it is believed that this unit is surplus to requirements.
- ii) The Town Council immediately replace the units on Woodhorn Road and North Seaton Road with the DF11 SID.

C009/20. DEDICATION POLICY

No policy existed for the provision maintenance and removal of dedication benches and trees. The dedication application form also required updating due to increases in purchase costs. Attached as Appendix 6 for members' consideration was the Dedication Policy for Seats, Trees and Planters.

The stone planter at Central Parkway had been planted up by NCC with a seasonal display of an NHS badge to represent thanks from the community for all key workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Members had considered options to install a more permanent tribute on behalf of the community.

Following the publication of the agenda the Deputy Clerk had been made aware of a community fundraising effort taking place to fund a dedication tree for the same purposes. No contact had been made with the Town Council by the organisers of this fund raising. It was suggested this would be a good opportunity for the community and Council to work together to create a small tribute garden within the dedication area.

RESOLVED unanimously that:

- i) the policy on the dedication of trees and benches within the parish be approved.
- ii) the Council plant 2 x dedication trees with tree guards and plaques.

'In thanks of all key workers during the Covid -19 pandemic' and

'In memory/dedication of also who suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic'.

Welcoming any contributions from the community to enhance the scheme.

PART II

C010/20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to

Meetings) Act 1960 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 confidential and exempt information relating to financial and embargoed information.

C011/20 NEWBIGGIN ECONOMIC PLAN

The Economic Plan was circulated as an exempt document. It was acknowledged that the document emphasised the partnership working of organisations within the town and the need for economic development and regeneration.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Town Council endorse the Economic Plan.

C012/20 GRANT APPLICATION

A large grant application has been received from Newbiggin Maritime Centre requesting the amount of £3,500 as contribution towards a year of free exhibitions, events and activities open to all residents of Newbiggin by the Sea. Providing the opportunity for residents to attend concerts and theatre productions at discounted prices. To host the public defibrillator, purchase replacement pads and hold annual training and to support the displays of local interest groups, charities and groups at no cost. And to support the centre being a member of the Local Loo Scheme.

During Covid-19 Lockdown Newbiggin Maritime Centre, as a not for profit subsidiary of Newbiggin Heritage Partnership, has had to cancel many planned events, has had zero income and no financial support at the time of submitting this large grant application.

Newbiggin Maritime Centre are planning a comprehensive programme of events and new Initiatives from August 2020 to September 2021 for the benefit of residents and to increase visitor footfall into the town but state that with their depleted finances they will be unable to deliver without support.

A grant application was not submitted for support during the financial year 2019/20 although a large grant of £3500 was paid by the Town Council in February 2019 for the events of 2019/20.

Newbiggin Maritime Centre had submitted a copy of their most recent bank statement to support their application. They have not submitted a copy of their safeguarding policy nor their governing document although these were provided at the time of submitting their application for funding in 2019.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, the Maritime Centre would reimburse any grant funds unspent as a result of the cancelation of events.

RESOLVED unanimously that:

- i) a grant of £1000 be agreed to fund events scheduled to take place between August 2020 to March 2021 of which the total costs were shown, as provided with the application, to be £3540.
- ii) it be delegated to the Officers to devise a plan for the partial release of funds throughout

the remainder of the current financial year subject to coronavirus restrictions being lifted and events proceeding as planned.

It was noted that the Town Council support of the Maritime Centre was not included in previous promotional materials for their events and they be reminded of the conditions of grant.

The meeting closed at 20.08

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