

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 18th
November 2020 at 7.00pm via Zoom

PRESENT: Councillors: A Thompson (Chairman)

M Boon L Burns

M Cholerton M Peden

Officers: D Earl – Town Clerk

E Brown – Deputy Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: 28 members of the public

C013/20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

C014/20. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JULY 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 15 July 2020 were agreed as a true record and would be signed out of meeting.

C015/20 Minutes of the Finance Committee held 12 August 2020

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the meeting held on 12 August be noted for information.

C016/20 Minutes of the Finance Committee held 28 October 2020

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October be noted for information.

C017/20 Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held 14 July 2020

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July be noted and agreed.

C018/20 Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held 8 September 2020

The Town Clerk updated that Officers had been able to progress the autumn phase of consultation which had been circulated through-out the parish and responses were currently being collated. Work was also progressing with the Neighbourhood Planning Consultant on getting the final stage of consultation, ahead of consulting on the draft plan, out. It was anticipated that the consultation would be distributed end of November/early December.

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September be noted and agreed.

C019/20. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS: Cllr Burns declared a personal but non-pecuniary interest as a volunteer of Wansbeck Valley Foodbank.

C020/20 Conclusion of Annual Audit 2019/20

PKF Littlejohn LLP, the appointed external auditors, had reported completion of the review of the Town Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year 2019/20.

The External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20 duly signed was presented to the council and the Town Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) drew Members attention to the section 2 exception which was the same matter addressed last year concerning the statement and restatement of the Box 8 value of cash for the year ending 31 March 2019 from £235,527 to £232,220.

The RFO explained that this had no material effect on the accounts and was as a result of omitting to change the amount for the previous year on the submission agreed in July and therefore technically the assertion 7 was incorrect in section 1. This was easily corrected on both documents which would then be published along with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and placed on the web site.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

- i) Note the External Auditor Report and Certificate.
- ii) agree the amendments to Box 8 and assertion 7.
- iii) publish the amended documents along with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and the Report and Certificate for 2019/20.

C021/20 Public Conveniences near Cresswell Arms/Church Point Car Park

A communication had been received from Northumberland County Council Neighbourhood Services advising of its intention to proceed with demolition and remove the disused structure at the end of the month. Within that timescale they had asked that the Town Council consider whether to formally request an asset transfer.

Members had referred to the increase in visitor numbers in recent times and the need to provide further accessible facilities for the disabled. To make an informed decision Members had requested updated information in relation to the possible refurbishment of the toilet block.

In response to Members queries it was confirmed that the refurbishment scheme was specifically designed by the Architect to provide updated disabled access with the plans showing wheelchair accessibility; safety concerns and risk assessment would be addressed by any contractor before going on site and any matters within the highway were for the Highway Authority to address. Planning consent was not required for the refurbishment of the existing building.

The report and supplemental report set out the estimated ongoing annual revenue costs for operating the facilities including utilities; repair etc. and financial information relevant to the lowest tender agreed in 2019.

Northumberland County Neighbourhood Services have confirmed a contribution of £20000, its budget for demolition, towards the scheme if the asset transfer proceeds.

Northumberland County Planning had confirmed that the S106 Regeneration Fund

receipts could be spent on this project.

There were sufficient balances held by the Town Council allocated for budget projects and regeneration contributions which could be used this financial year without any impact on the 3-Year Project Plan and no effect on the Precept. Schemes that will not be on site before March could be realigned in the Project Plan for early next year.

In the event of an asset transfer all responsibility and liability would transfer to the Town Council including cost of demolition of the building should that be necessary.

There is unlikely to be any suitable alternative site for public toilet provision for which planning permission would be required and possibly contested.

County Highways would need to establish what works, e.g. dropped kerbs; raised paving, would be required in the highway to facilitate wheelchair access or disabled parking.

The Council was required to consider the information and decide whether to pursue an asset transfer from the County Council and proceed with a refurbishment scheme.

A motion was moved from the Chair to accept the asset transfer, this was duly seconded. Members spoke for and against the motion.

A member proposed an amendment that the matter be deferred until a public consultation regarding the asset transfer of the toilets could be held with the community. The amendment was seconded and as provided in Standing Orders a named vote was requested.

FOR

Cllr L Burns
Cllr M Peden

AGAINST

Cllr M Boon
Cllr M Cholerton
Cllr A Thompson

ABSTAIN

The amendment was defeated.

The original motion was put to the vote as provided in Standing Orders a named vote was requested.

FOR

Cllr M Boon
Cllr M Cholerton
Cllr A Thompson

AGAINST

Cllr L Burns
Cllr M Peden

ABSTAIN

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Town Council accept the asset transfer of the public conveniences near

the Cresswell Arms/Church Point Car Park.

C022/20 Notice of motion

Councillor Burns moved the motions as set out in the agenda with an amendment to the wording of part ii):

RESOLVED unanimously that:

- i) In view of the ongoing difficulties for local families the Town Council make a further donation of £1000 to the Wansbeck Valley Foodbank for use in supporting eligible Newbiggin families
- ii) The Town Council fund the provision of a selection box and a small gift to the children of Newbiggin via Grace Darling Campus to lift spirits in these challenging times to the amount of £2000.

C023/20 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that: under Section 1(2) 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 exempt information

C024/20 Training Request

Following completion of the Certificate of Higher Education in Community Governance, the Deputy Town Clerk expressed her interest in studying the Foundation Degree in Community Governance (Level 5) which was a two-year part-time distance learning programme provided by Society of Local Council Clerks and De Montfort University with the expectation to attend three x 24-hour residential study days during your study year. The academic year runs from 1st Feb to 31st October.

Studying for the Foundation degree would bring the following benefits to Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council;

- The focus of study would be on the community of Newbiggin and the organisation of Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council,
- Personal and professional growth, including boosting self-confidence and the confidence Councillors and the public have in the work of the Council, and
- Enabling the Council to be better prepared for future challenges and opportunities.

RESOLVED that the Town Council:

(i) set up a Training Agreement to cover 50% of the training fees for the Level 5 course on the basis that if the employee leaves within a year of completing the qualification they reimburse the council in full, in the 2nd year reimburse 75% of the council paid cost, in the 3rd Year 50% of the cost, 4th Year 25% of cost 5th year 0%.

The employee agreed to pay the remaining 50% of the fees and cover the cost of study materials.

(ii) Allow the three residential days to be taken in work time.

The meeting closed at 7.45.

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