**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Town Assembly for Newbiggin by the Sea held at Grace Darling C of E School Hall on Wednesday 25th May 2022 at 7pm**

Present: Town Council Chairman, Louise Spratt

 Acting Town Clerk, Gillian Turner

 Assistant Clerk, Leanne Lawson

 12 members of the public (including 10 electors)

1. **Report of the Chairman/Town Mayor**

Town Council Chairman Louise Spratt welcomed everyone to the meeting. She provided a report on the activities of the Town Council covering:

* Following the May 2021 elections, a “new council” was elected
* Staff changes – retirement of Dennis Earl, appointing Elaine Brown as New Clerk, Leanne Lawson as Assistant Clerk, Gillian Turner Acting Town Clerk covering Elaine’s maternity leave.
* Easing of COVID restrictions
* NTC taking over Remembrance Events
* Installation of CCTV cameras and Speed indicator devices
* Installation of new ramp and slipway on the promenade
* Production of the Neighbourhood Plan
* Enhanced Services with NCC
* Borderland Initiatives
* Providing both large and small grants
* Litter picking
* Queen’s Platinum Jubilee
* Introduction of Garden and Community Awards

2. **Report by Newbiggin West County Councillor J Lang**

* Covering the areas of Spital, Welfare, Westmorland and William Hopkinson Way.
* Thanks to outgoing councillor Lynn Burns for the help and support given over many years.
* Engagement with the new council and councillors Spratt and Woodman.
* The ward is generally in good order with reports of litter being rare – residents are praised for their efforts.
* Works to the play area – replacing the banana slide has been undertaken and some new pieces of equipment have been introduced.
* One area of concern is the grassed area between Spital and Welfare where the annual bonfire goes – some lorries have been offloading rubbish in large quantities. This needs to be kept under review and monitored carefully.
* Road calming measures have been requested for William Hopkinson Way and he believes that plans have been drawn up and could be finalised soon.
* He helps with running the Spital Hall which has a craft and upcycling group. A raised bed has been installed and another is being looked at for amateur gardeners.
* He is a trustee of AFC and was involved with the successful bid for £250k for new fields and changing rooms.
* He is also a member of Newbiggin Community Ventures and has been invited to join the Newbiggin Place Team within the Borderlands Initiative.

3. **Newbiggin Neighbourhood Plan**

 A presentation was given by Jo-Anne Garrick covering:

* What is Neighbourhood Planning (NP)
* What can NPs include
* What are Planning Policies
* What are Community Actions
* Key Stages in Preparing a NP
* Legal Tests and Basic Conditions
* Timetable of Newbiggin NP 2018 to Spring 2022
* Key Issues Identified
* Structure of the NP
* Vision
* Objectives
* Distinctive Place
* Maps of Conservation Area, Listed Buildings etc
* Sustainable, Thriving and Healthy Community (housing, employment, well connected (transport walking and cycling)
* Community Actions including improving wildlife corridors, public footpaths and bridleways, maintenance of play areas, Conservation Area, supporting the diverse heritage of the area, establish a business hub,
* Maintenance of Public Rights of Way, Highways improvement projects
* Next Steps – Consult on the draft plan by end of July, Submit to NCC in the autumn of 2022, Examination winter 2022, Referendum in Spring 2023 – FINAL PLAN Spring 2023.

**Questions from the Floor:**

Q. Do we have to have a NP?

A. The Acting Clerk responded – The NCC Local Plan has just been adopted in 2022 and has taken since 2009 to come to fruition. During that time there was a “loop-hole” where developers could put in planning applications which were not necessarily in the places deemed the most applicable. Therefore, many parishes and towns made a NP to protect their communities during this period. The Government has also been encouraging NPs to be drawn up and offered grants to cover the cost of works.

Q. Would there still be a Town Plan

A. At the moment, we are concentrating on the NP and Borderlands.

4. **Borderlands Place Programme**

 A presentation was given by Anne Lawson covering:

* What is Borderlands and the Growth Deal Commitment
* Maps of the Area included
* Economic Recovery Approach
* Capital Interventions – purchase and assembly of land, vacant and derelict sites, property development, arts and cultural, visitor economy, community and skills, shops and businesses and affordable housing.
* Core Principles
* Newbiggin Borderlands Programme Board
* Newbiggin Consultation, best and worst things about Newbiggin
* Demographics – age, disability,
* Vision and Strategic Objectives
* Next Steps – develop investment themes, project development, investment

5. **Report and Update by Northumbria Police – Inspector Wayne Daniels**

* Inspector Daniels covered incident reports from the last 28-day period, including reports of anti-social behaviour, motor bike disorder, and theft.
* Neighbourhood officers conducted an engagement event on 7th May – main area of concerns being motorbike disorder. Officers patrolled hotspot areas and visited a number of families believed to have access to offroad vehicles.
* He issued the Northumbria Connected flyer and encouraged everyone to sign-up to the scheme.

**Questions from the Floor:**

Q. Due to several instances of anti-social behaviour and threats to her property, a resident believes that the UK laws need to be changed in order to tackle current criminality i.e. people should be “guilty ‘til proven innocent” rather than the other way round i.e. “innocent ‘til proven guilty”. Also, guilty by association should be taken into account too.

A. Inspector Daniels replied that he would speak to her personally after the meeting to ensure that her concerns had been reported to his officers and to see if there was anything further could be done.

 The chairman asked if there could be more police presence in the form of “more police vehicle patrols”? Unfortunately, due to cuts and lack of manpower, the workforce was heavily “stretched” at present.

6. **Public Question and Answer Session**

Q. Public Toilets – what is happening with the toilets beside the Cresswell Arms as they are an eyesore and in dangerous condition?

 A. The contract has now been signed for the demolition to go ahead.

Q. There are still concerns about the lack of public toilets in the Town and the closing times of the existing ones.

A. Northumberland County Council is responsible for the opening and closing of the toilets and they have only a limited number of staff to open and close every toilet block in the County. At recent events, local town councillors have been closing the toilets in order to keep them open longer for the public.

With no other questions raised the meeting closed at 8.20pm