

## **BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 23 September 2013 at 6 pm at  
The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors:	I Hunter (Town Mayor)	J Lang
	J Beresford	J Robertson
	I Dixon	G Roughead
	P Elliott	C Seymour
	T Forrester	F Simpson
	A Gibson	J Stephenson
	G Hill	A Turnbull
	G Jones	

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

S Finch, Town Clerk  
S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk  
Michael Richardson, Sheriff  
Kate Stephenson, Sheriff's Lady  
J Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace  
Caryn Innes, Four Housing Group  
Paul Tanney, Four Housing Group  
Chris Hardie, Berwick Town Team Limited  
17 members of the public

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

### **OPEN SESSION**

A resident of Lord's Mount expressed his concerns over parking at the Greenses and the proposals relating to residents' parking offered by Northumberland County Council for consideration. His concern would be that neither option was appropriate for Lord's Mount and that signage is the best option.

Local residents spoke on the subject of Planning Application 13/02078/FUL. They expressed

concern about the loss of privacy to nearby homes, lack of adequate parking on the site, design and access, density of accommodation, limited access to highway, loss of natural light and lack of consultation.

Caryn Innes and Paul Tanney of Four Housing confirmed their commitment to the town and to the provision of housing which met the needs which had been identified, especially for older residents. The proposed accommodation would provide easy access to local amenities whilst the design and highways issues fully met the required standards.

**CO43/13**            **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillor H Bettison (unwell).

**CO44/13**            **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 29 July 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

**CO45/13**            **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor P Elliott declared a personal interest in Item 6 (Planning Application: 13/02078/FUL);

Councillor G Hill declared a personal interest in Item 7 (Portas Pilot);

Councillor I Hunter declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 6 (Planning Application: 13/02078/FUL) and a personal interest in Item 7 (Portas Pilot);

Councillor G Jones declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 6 (Planning Application: 13/02078/FUL);

Councillor J Lang declared a personal interest in Item 8 (Berwick 900);

Councillor J Robertson declared a personal interest in Item 8 (Berwick 900);

Councillor A Turnbull declared a personal interest in Item 6 (Planning Application: 13/02078/FUL).

**CO46/13**            **4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

**CO47/13**            **5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported on events attended since the last Council meeting which included the visit of the Princess Royal for the Minden Day Parade.

**CO48/13**            **6. PLANNING APPLICATION: 13/02078/FUL**

Councillors I Hunter and G Jones, having declared personal and prejudicial interests, left the room during discussion of this item and Councillor G Hill took the Chair. Further consideration would be given, at the request of Councillor P Elliott,

to planning application 13/02078/FUL, for the re-development of the site of The Elizabethan, North Road, Berwick. This was in light of previous observations made by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 27 August 2013. Concerns expressed included lack of information on roof heights (therefore it was difficult to tell if the development would overlook neighbouring properties), lack of communal spaces, only one access point onto the development and lack of 1 bedroom properties.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders. Caryn Innes and Paul Tanney of Four Housing Group explained that 2 bedroom properties encouraged independent living, parking and access would be adequate, there was a bus stop for local transport, the height of the development was the same as the current building, consultation was widely advertised and the development was 30 meters from the nearest property which was well within the planning guidelines.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

**RESOLVED: To withdraw the observations made by the Planning Committee and submit comments of 'No Objection'.**

**CO49/13**

## **7. PORTAS PILOT**

Chris Hardie, Acting Chair, reported to the meeting on the history and the work of Berwick Town Team Limited, the company which had been formed to deliver improvements to the town centre, including projects funded by the Portas Pilot.

Mr Hardie advised members that Berwick Town Team Limited was now in discussion with Northumberland County Council about its role in the future delivery of the Portas Pilot.

Councillor G Hill said, in connection with the separate issue of the Town Council's own future role in relation to the Portas Pilot, that a majority decision which had been made by the Finance and Resources Committee, under the authority delegated to it by the full Council, was not in her view valid, as she believed that the Council's deliberations and decisions should be open and transparent.

The Town Mayor thanked members of Berwick Town Team Limited for attending.

**CO50/13**

**8. BERWICK 900**

Councillor J Lang produced a leaflet setting out plans for Berwick 900 in 2015 and highlighted key points. The Berwick 900 Committee had set out objectives and a framework for events as well as the practicalities involved and was ready to present these ideas to the public. The suggested date for a public meeting was Friday, 25 October 2013 and this event would be used to recruit volunteers who would work in sub-groups on different aspects of the plans.

Significant funding had been pledged by the Town Council and the Freemen although further support would be sought including funding and volunteers.

Councillor Lang's report was noted.

**CO51/13**

**9. RESIDENT PARKING AT THE GREENS**

The Town Council considered the 2 options proposed by Northumberland County Council for Resident Parking at the Greens.

**RESOLVED: To support Option 1: Resident Permit Parking bays and No Waiting restrictions.**

**CO52/13**

**10. STANDING ORDERS**

Members considered the recommendation put forward by Councillor G Hill. It was proposed to set up a Policy Working Group, closed to the press and public, to meet approximately every two months with the main focus being to consider and discuss policy and strategy. The Group would not be a standing committee, and would be open to all members of the Council. The name of Strategy and Policy Working Group was suggested.

**RESOLVED: To set up the Strategy and Policy Working Group as proposed by Councillor Hill.**

**CO53/13**

**11. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Reports were received from County Councillors I Hunter, G Jones and J Smith on their divisions and within the county as a whole.

[The reports are appended to these minutes].

**CO54/13**

**12. PARISH LIAISON WORKING GROUP**

Members noted the report by Councillor I Hunter; the next meeting of the Parish Liaison Working Group would be held in October.

**CO55/13**

**13. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee**

held on 23 July 2013.

**CO56/13**

**14. EVENTS COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Events Committee held on 8 July 2013.

**CO57/13**

**15. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on 15 July 2013.

**CO58/13**

**16. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 22 July 2013.

**CO59/13**

**17. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**RESOLVED:** Councillor P Elliott to represent the Town Council on Berwick Community Trust.

**CO60/13**

**18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 25 November 2013 at 6 pm in the Town Hall.

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

### **Report received from County Councillor I Hunter.**

About 2 years ago I asked officers to look at the speed humps in Prior and look for alternative traffic calming they would not due need of evidence it need to be hard evidence from residents. last summer I leafleted via survey every house in Prior including Brickfield Lodge asking residents to say if they wanting the humps removed, stay or alternatives the survey had to be returned to me, in a box at the chip shop or freepost to Alnwick out of 500- 600 surveys only 27 was returned which officers agreed was in sufficient evidence, so this summer with the help of 2 colleagues I door knocked every house in Prior and got 200+ people who were in at the time to sign a petition to ask for the speed humps to be reviewed. I have submitted this to Area Committee on 9th September and a report should come back to the next Area Committee but because the October meeting is the Joint meeting with Town & PC's it will come back to the November meeting, this is to include a review of the junctions of Dean Drive & Prior Road on to Cemetery Lane. This may delay the resurfacing of Dean Drive scheduled for December by a few weeks.

The next round of consultation on LDF I am told will be in November but a tight timescale for responses and meetings will be only held in Large Towns, hopefully the Clerk should be informed shortly.

## Report received from County Councillor G Jones.

### Issues Underway:

- Cobbles on the New Bridge - latest update I have is that they should be removed in October;
- Coach Parking - my requirement is simple - that we have a coach park for Spring next year. As most of you will be aware from the correspondence, there is a solution which should be delivered in this timescale.
- Morrisons extension - the contractors used an access onto Countess of Buchan Way. This was not on the agreed plan and I had Highways enforce the reinstatement of the kerb and stop the contractors from using the access.
- Morrisons extension - loss of screening - I had a planning officer out to meet residents and she is now working with Morrisons for a solution (although the basis for this will be goodwill, as Morrisons have planning permission for the current situation).
- Verges in Percy Terrace - the previous Councillor had the verges replaced. There were a number of issues with the work and after canvassing the residents I had the workmen back to discuss the issues with one of the residents. The verges have now been sorted.
- Low Greens residents parking - I organised a meeting between the Council Officer and members of the Residents Association and this is now in consultation stage.
- Other issues in The Greenses, such as bins and an overgrown climber from the NHS have been addressed.
- West Street no entry sign - this has had a hard time since I've been elected. I've had officers out twice. Someone was complaining on Facebook about it last week; in fairness to officers they have been quick at rectifying the sign when people pointed it out to me, so it will probably get a quicker response if people email ASK rather than post on Facebook or call me up.
- Travellers - I've had some correspondence with County Solicitor on travellers. The best and quickest solution is for the police to deal with Travellers as there are fewer loopholes that Travellers can use. This was how the Travellers were removed from the 5 Arches so quickly.
- Police - Councillor Elliott and I met with the Police last week, as we've both had a few issues passed to us which are police matters - the key points from the meeting are:
  - people can report incidents anonymously
  - people should ask for a log / incident number
  - if people don't report incidents, the police won't have the information needed to address the activity
- Dropped kerbs - as a result of resident complaints, dropped kerbs should be implemented along North Road and Castle Terrace; I've also asked for other parts of the town to be prioritised, including Church Street, Silver Street, Ravensdowne.
- Bridge Street carpark - a resident approached me while I was trying to get emergency services out to an accident in the carpark to request that the markings be re-painted. Given someone was injured, I didn't take her details so I am unable to let her know that I have had officers out re-paint them!
- Community Centre at Newfields - Councillor Elliott and I are working hard to get a solution for this.
- Other County issues in the Three Fields such as lighting and pot holes, even the ones I've reported / followed up, I don't feel I can take any credit for, as Councillor Elliott does a superb job of documenting and reporting.
- Lots of other casework from trees to loft insulation.
- Attending meetings, planning site visits and the like - the minutes of these meetings should be available on the County Council website if anyone is interested in further details.

#### Taking Forward:

- I'm working with officers and the Holy Island Partnership to see whether we can get signage promoting Berwick in the Holy Island carpark; Holy Island has an enormous number of tourists and I'm keen to find a way of getting some of these tourists to come another 10 miles up the road to visit Berwick;
- Separation of parking zones;
- I've asked Highways to prioritise Tweed Street - the quality of the pavement, kerbs, gullies needs addressing, along with traffic flow.
- Double yellow lines outside the bowling club need to be re-visited
- Speeding on North Road and Pier Road - this has been referred on to the police.

#### Not Taking Forward:

- Councillors Hill and Forrester reported that the recent traffic control for Northern Gas works on Castlegate was "dangerous" and that there were "near misses". I suggest this is taken up directly through the ASK mailbox, as I am not clear as to what outcome is being sought, given the traffic control has been removed.

## **Report received from County Councillor J Smith.**

The Unitary Authority came into being over four years ago. We did not want it, but we have it and must make it work. There is now the opportunity for Town and Parish Councils to deal directly with Northumberland County Council and improving communications.

Berwick East Ward covers Tweedmouth and Spittal and recent ward work ranges from wasps nests to drains. The drains along Main Street in Spittal continue to be a problem with flash flooding, in spite of a recent flushing out there is still work to be done.

Dropped kerbs, H bars, extra parking, disabled parking, Japanese knotweed, replacing seats, extra seats, cutting back foliage, illegal overnight parking, beach cleaning, play areas are some of the topics being addressed at the moment.

Every County Councillor has an annual small schemes allowance of £15,000 to be spent in their ward. It must be used for new schemes, not repairs or replacing like for like. I am looking to add something new to Spittal playpark where the swings have been out of commission this summer. The Spittal promenade railings are to be painted with the help of the probation service.

The dropped kerb and H bar at Tweedmouth Parish Church Hall will be paid for through my small schemes budget as was the work carried out at the war memorials in Tweedmouth and Spittal and the extra parking bays at Highcliffe.

The County Local transport Plan programme for 2014-15 needs submissions before 27<sup>th</sup> September. I believe The Town Council has already submitted its priorities and if these are backed up by the county councillors it will improve the scoring.

The recent formation of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership combining seven north east councils for economic growth will see a local growth pot of money devolved to us in April 2014. The county regeneration team ARCH continue to have a big input for Berwick and the Core Strategy is looking at affordable housing in its next stage.

There are four residents associations in the ward raising concerns and a close working relationship with county officers, Sure Start, LMAPS and other agencies seeks to address these concerns.