

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Environment and Regeneration Committee Meeting held on Monday, 04 July 2011 at 6.45 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: J Robertson (Chair)
A Bowlas
I Dixon
M McNeely
A Reid
C Routledge
J Waterhouse

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk
2 members of the public

ER017/11 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Simpson.

ER018/11 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

ER019/11 3. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

There were no statements by members of the public.

ER020/11 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

ER021/11 5. PLAY AREAS

The Clerk referred to the paper which had been circulated and which set out a number of issues for consideration in the lead in to any transfer of play areas, including ongoing day to day maintenance and the status of land on which play areas are sited.

RESOLVED: (i) The Council should begin discussing possible service level agreements with the County Council to ensure appropriate staff and equipment available to deal with day-to-day maintenance and upkeep issues; and (ii) The Council to seek the transfer of the freehold to the Town Council of the land on which those play areas which are being transferred is located.

Members were reminded that a visit to existing and potential sites was to take place on 26 July at 5.30 pm.

ER022/11

6. PUBLIC SEATS

Members considered the paper which had been circulated giving progress on the issues associated with an audit of public seats, the need to agree responsibility for strategic seats with the County Council, and the requirements to give consideration to repair and replacement.

RESOLVED: To proceed with the proposed audit, which would be undertaken by the Assistant to the Clerk as a project over and above his contracted hours, the costs to be met from the Environment and Regeneration Budget.

ER023/11

7. TOWN SIGNPOSTING AND VISITOR INFORMATION

- (i) The Clerk reported that new 'Welcome to Berwick' signs had been ordered to replace the two existing signs; two additional signs had been ordered for Etal Road and Ord Road. It was hoped the two replacement signs would be in place for 22 July; Neighbourhood Services had been asked to provide some planting at the base of each sign.
- (ii) A suggestion was considered that a visitor guide dedicated to Berwick-upon-Tweed should be produced, to replace the former Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council brochure. Following discussion, it was agreed that whilst a publication with local information was very much needed for visitors, the ability to raise advertising revenue was uncertain. It was suggested there should be a meeting of the North Northumberland Tourism Association and Chamber of Trade to discuss the proposal.
- (iii) The Chair outlined the proposal for 'monolith' signs at strategic points

around the town to give visitors maps and information; these were part of the Public Realm Strategy proposals. Members noted this and confirmed they were happy for the option to be considered but without information on costs would not commit the Town Council further.

ER024/11

8. ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOW-UP

Members were referred to the paper which had been circulated describing how the raw data collected at the annual meeting on 19 April had been refined both in discussion with Groundwork NE and at a subsequent meeting of a sub-group of the Committee on 2 June. There were now six broad topics which would be brought forward to a follow-up meeting on 27 July at 6 pm at the Town Hall, when the relevant professionals would be asked to attend to discuss possible implementation of some of the options.

ER025/11

9. COMMUNITY CENTRES

- (i) Three quotations had been received for undertaking a business plan for Mitchell Memorial Hall.

RESOLVED: To instruct North East Business Advice and Consultancy Services to undertake a Business Plan in accordance with the quotation dated 22 June 2011.

- (ii) The Chair reported that following a meeting with Three Fields Residents Association, it had been agreed the Town Council should look at the old community centre and consider options for its refurbishment.

ER026/11

10. PLAYHOUSE SITE

The Chair reported that discussions had been held with the agent of the owner of the Playhouse site, as well as with other interested parties, to see whether temporary enhancement of this strategic site could be arranged, at least until such time as the site was taken forward for development. If successful, this could be a model for other sites within the town. Members noted this and agreed the Council should continue with these discussions.

ER027/11

11. SPITTAL SPLASH PARK

The Chair suspended Standing Orders. Mike Greener, Secretary of the Spittal Improvement Trust brought members up to date with the progress on the Spittal Splash Park. In particular he outlined the issues around the proposed plant room, which was now to be located within the play area, and for which planning permission was required. This could delay the project for eight weeks.

He also referred to the change required in the routing of utilities.

The Town Council had been asked to become the client for the project to allow it to proceed more quickly than would be the case if the County Council were to take on the role. Mr Greener explained what this would entail for the Council, and the safeguards in place to protect the Council. The works were being undertaken in accordance with the standard contract terms set out in the model RIBA Contract; a Project Administrator had been appointed whose role included approving and certifying works before payment, and ensuring compliance with site regulations. The client would receive the planning file and manual at the completion of the project and release retention monies as appropriate.

RESOLVED: (i) The Council to become the client for the Spittal Splash Park Project; and (ii) The Council to commence discussions as soon as possible with the County Council with a view to the area on which the Splash Park and Play Area are located being transferred to the Town Council.

ER028/11

12. ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk reported that several possible sites for allotments were being considered, but that there was a resistance to the loss of sports and recreational space. There had also been an informal discussion with Berwick Borough Housing to identify possible sites for community gardens; the legislative framework attached to allotments made community gardens a preferred option. Members noted these enquiries would continue.

ER029/11

13. BERWICK PARKS PROJECT

There was no further information at this stage about whether the Heritage Lottery Fund would support the application proceeding beyond the first stage.

ER030/11

14. BERWICK IN BLOOM/PLANTING AND FLORAL DISPLAYS

Members were advised that preparation of the portfolio for the Northumbria in Bloom judges was nearly complete. A number of improvements had now been made to several sites within Berwick. The new hanging baskets in Marygate had highlighted the poor state of the painted ironwork in Marygate, including the lighting columns. The County Council had confirmed it had no budget to paint the columns, and the Conservation Officer had confirmed there was no conservation issue relating to the ironwork, and repainting was part of the Public Realm

Strategy.

RESOLVED: The Town Council to accept a quote of £2,118 to paint lighting columns, bollards and railings in Marygate and Golden Square.

ER031/11

15. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

No invitations had been received.

ER032/11

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday, 12 September 2011 at 6.30 pm in the Ante Room of the Town Hall.