

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Environment and Regeneration Committee Meeting held on Monday, 8 June 2015 at 6.00 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: H Bettison (In the Chair for Item 1)
I Dixon (In the Chair for Item 2 onwards)
A Gibson
G Hill
G Roughead
G Smith
C Seymour

IN ATTENDANCE:

W Pattison, Town Clerk

S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk

8 members of the public

ER001/15 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Bettison opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Cllr Dixon was proposed by Cllr Bettison as Chairman and seconded by Cllr Hill and agreed by all.

RESOLVED: Councillor I Dixon to be appointed Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Committee for the year 2015-16.

The Chairman took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

ER002/15 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillor J Lang.

ER003/15 3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Roughead was proposed by Cllr Hill and seconded by Cllr Smith and agreed by all.

RESOLVED: Councillor Roughead to be appointed Vice Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Committee for the year 2015-16.

ER004/15

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record. Cllr Dixon also mentioned that the wheelbarrow display donated by Berwick Inner Wheel looked extremely nice and was a welcome addition to the town.

ER005/15

5. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Haswell expressed concern at the disappointing representation re Berwick on the Visit Northumberland website. No promotion or mention of Berwick's beaches is currently displayed. Mr Haswell also read from a Haven holiday brochure which extolled the area and praised local beaches and Mr Haswell advised that this type of article should be similarly displayed on the websites of both Berwick and NCC. Cllr Bettison advised that the Berwick Website Manager was compiling a report and the content will be reported back at the next Environment and Regeneration meeting. Mr Marshall agreed that Berwick will continue to have difficulty in promoting/marketing the Town as not enough is done currently to market the Town's uniqueness which has not been properly defined and needs to be re-branded. Mr Darling advised his congratulations to Cllr Blackburn on his election to BTC and also advised that Berwick should be re-classified from a Market Town to a Market and Seaside Town. Cllr Blackburn thought Historic and Seaside. Mr Darling also mentioned the Neighbourhood Plan and felt the Town had plenty of expertise and skill sets to change things and to fully separate from ARCH and NCC influences. Cllr Hill thought BTC should now go ahead now and invite interested parties to join a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. This was agreed.

ER006/15

6. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllr Bettison declared an interest in item 12 (personal) and also item 13.

ER007/15

7. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

None

ER008/15

8. BERWICK LOCAL SERVICES OFFICER

Councillors discussed which would be a better employment option for BTC. Cllr Gibson felt appointing through NCC was a better option as the handy person would be managed by NCC rather than by BTC office staff. Cllr Hill thought the

cost of 34k including pension and vehicle was too much and preferred the option used by Alnwick Town Council which employs a handy person who uses their own vehicle to get around the town. Cllr Seymour agreed with this. Cllr Dixon felt a decision should be made and it was decided to discuss at the next appropriate staffing committee and to try and meet with NCC officers prior to the Staffing committee meeting to discuss further, along with the possibility of inviting the Alnwick Town Clerk / handy person also. It was also felt a list of jobs suitable for the handy person to take on should be compiled before the meeting.

RESOLVED: To put onto the next Staffing Committee Agenda and to invite NCC and Alnwick Officers to take part in a meeting and to compile a list of suitable jobs

ER009/15

9. BUS SHELTERS

Cllr Gibson advised Councillors that the Town had 27 bus shelters and possibly soon to be 28 and all of them were very dirty and in a poor state. Cllr Gibson suggested BTC appoint a window cleaner to wash the glass on a regular basis. Cllr Bettison said they all used to be washed down with a pressure hose by NCC and suggested the NEAT team clean them all now and then discuss costs for them to be cleaned regularly. Approval for this will be put onto the Finance and Resources agenda and costs will be ascertained from NCC.

RESOLVED: To put onto Finance and Resources agenda for approval of a 'one off' clean and to ascertain the costs to be cleaned on a regular basis.

ER010/15

10. PLAY PARKS

The transfer documentation has now come through from NCC. The Clerk has advised NCC that BTC cannot take control of the play parks until all repairs are completed to the current play equipment and drainage concerns at Flagstaff Park are addressed. Cllr Hill advised that the freehold for the parks should also be requested and this can be signed for at the same time as the transfer once all repairs have been completed. This was agreed unanimously by all Councillors.

Standing Orders Suspended

Mr Brian Darling advised that BTC should suggest a time frame on this work being carried out and this was agreed by Councillors as being the last week in July/start of the School holidays. Mr Haswell advised that the water was coming into Flagstaff Park was from the reed beds, running through the Stanks and then into

Flagstaff Park. Mr Marshall thought a new area should be found to locate the Play Park instead of using Flagstaff Park and this would stop any concerns regarding the present flooding issues. Cllr McLean thought there would be heritage procedures to consider re drainage.

Standing Orders re-instated

RESOLVED: To sign both the transfer and the freehold agreement together once all repairs have been completed and to give NCC a timeframe to get the work done by the start of the July School holidays.

ER011/15

11. TOURISM – BERWICK

A request to employ a Tourism Officer on a one day a week basis was discussed. Cllr Hill was not convinced this was necessary.

Standing Orders Suspended

Ms Clare Dean advised that both NCC and Berwick websites needed updating regularly every week as information was out of date on both websites.

Cllr Dixon agreed more needed to be done to promote Berwick and a suggestion was made to write to NCC on behalf of BTC and advise concerns re the lack of promotion of Berwick.

Standing Orders re-instated

It was decided that Tourism will be put onto all future Environment and Regeneration agendas

Standing Orders Suspended

A request to ensure that Berwick is placed on the Visit Northumberland website under Beaches and Islands was further suggested

Standing Orders re-instated

It was further suggested that the Clerk ascertain the costs for current representation on the Visit Northumberland website

RESOLVED: To place Tourism on the agenda on all future Environment and Regeneration Committee meetings. The Clerk will also write to advise NCC of BTC concerns regarding Berwick's current representation on the Visit Northumberland website which needs revision and to ascertain current costs for Berwick's representation on the website.

ER012/15

12. XMAS LIGHTS ON THE NEW BRIDGE

A letter has been received from Berwick Rotary Club which advises that NCC

have requested they make a £5k donation towards the electricity supply for the xmas lights on the New Bridge. Cllr Bettison felt that Berwick was not given the same treatment from NCC as Alnwick or Morpeth and suffered as a consequence. Electricity problems last year had also been problematic. The Clerk will contact NCC on this matter and will also respond to Berwick Rotary Club.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will write to NCC Street Lighting and express BTC concerns re cabling charges and will also respond back to Berwick Rotary Club.

ER013/15

13. SIGNAGE

i. A signpost for the Spittal Cycle Route which was first commissioned 15 years ago by Royal Bank of Scotland and in conjunction with lottery funding has been lying forgotten and neglected in a local tradesman's workshop and found by Cllr Gibson. This signpost was one of a 1,000 made in year 2000 and it was agreed by Councillors to ask NCC to provide a quote to place on the cycle route and to ascertain correct placement re the exact mileage as quoted on the sign post.

RESOLVED: To ask for a quote from NCC to place into position and to ascertain correct mileage re location.

ii. Three quotes have been obtained for the placement of a sign at Spittal Splash Park to advise opening times through the Summer. It was decided to employ Vital Signs to make and affix the sign and a decision to have 2 signs made was proposed by Cllr Gibson and seconded by Cllr Bettison and approved by all Councillor with Cllr Seymour preferring to order one sign only.

RESOLVED: To advise Vital Signs to make and affix 2 signs to be placed at the back and the front of the Splash Park

iii. A request from a resident to have signage displayed at Golden Square to warn off large coaches to not turn right into Marygate to avoid exacerbating traffic problems and to prevent large vehicles getting stuck at the corner of Church Street and Hide Hill was discussed by Councillors.

Standing Orders Suspended

Cllr Blackburn thought there were future planning issues to be considered and it was premature to put signs up.

Standing Orders re-instated

Cllr Dixon advised the request for signage was noted and was decided that the

Clerk would write to NCC and ask Highways to look at the current situation.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will write to NCC and request Highways look at the current traffic situation

ER014/15

14. FESTIVE TREES AND LIGHTING

Cllr Bettison advised that no mention had been made re costings for Spittal and Tweedmouth. Cllr Hill thought installation of lights at a cost of £7,200 seemed high. This was decided to defer to Finance Committee and the provision to extend further to Tweedmouth and Spittal will be discussed at the next Environment and Regeneration meeting.

RESOLVED: To defer approval to the Finance and Resources Committee and to discuss provision of trees and lights for Tweedmouth and Spittal at the next Environment and Regeneration meeting

ER015/15

15. DOG BAG DISPENSERS

A request has been made by residents from West End to install 2 Dog bag dispensers along the Riverside Walk at the beginning and also at the end of the walk.

Standing Orders Suspended

Cllr McLean advised that a request for a dog bin at Tommy the Miller's had been refused by NCC as not considered necessary. A further request to have a dog bin installed at Askew Walk will be put on the next agenda.

Standing Orders Re-instated

RESOLVED: TO purchase 2 dog bag dispensers for Riverside Walk

ER016/15

16. STOCKS AT TOWN HALL

Approval has been obtained from English Heritage, NCC Conservation and the Freeman Trustees to put the stocks back into place and a quote received from Mike Lee for £435 plus VAT to affix the stocks back into position was accepted by Councillors.

RESOLVED: To install the Stocks back into place asap

ER017/15

17. SEATS

A list of seats for removal, varnishing and repair mainly located in the town centre was discussed by Councillors and agreed. A broken seat at Spittal Point was also added to the list.

Standing Orders Suspended

Cllr Blackburn advised of a broken seat to the left of the Coastguard Station and Mr Darling advised of a seat on the top of the banks at the end of the promenade at Spittal , it was washed away when the land slide happened . Councillors thought this seat could be replaced and put back into position.

Standing Orders Re-instated

RESOLVED: To advise the NEAT team to replace, varnish and mend broken seats

ER018/15

18. FLAGSTAFF PARK ROSE GARDEN

An order for plants for the Rose Garden for approximately £280 was placed by the former Clerk in November and was discussed by Councillors. It was thought there was no necessity to plant any further plants at this location. Cllr Seymour thought this order should be honoured and the plants would look nice. A vote was then taken by all Councillors who all voted against buying the plants apart from Cllr Seymour who was in favour.

RESOLVED: No plants to be purchased for the Rose Garden and the Clerk will advise NCC.

ER019/15

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday 20 July 2015 at 6.00pm.