

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Environment and Regeneration Committee Meeting held on Monday, 06 January 2014 at 6.00 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: J Robertson (Chairman)
I Dixon
P Elliott
A Gibson
G Hill (from Item 4 onwards)
I Hunter
G Jones
G Roughead
F Simpson
J Stephenson
A Turnbull

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk

S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk

4 members of the public including representatives of Mitie and Better Business Forum

ER069/13 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillor A Turnbull (work commitment).

ER070/13 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

ER071/13 3. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

John Moses gave an introduction to the Better Business Forum whose application for financial assistance would be considered under Item 12. The aims of the Forum, which is a registered charity, were to help those starting up in business,

aid networking and help with the setting up of apprenticeship schemes. Two Trade Fairs a year were proposed; these would have their own website.

Councillor Roughead raised the concerns of his constituents following recent flooding in Tweedmouth. It was suggested that he discuss the issue with County Councillor Jim Smith with a view to arranging a public meeting to engage with residents and consider future action.

ER072/13

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor P Elliott declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 6 (Mitie); Councillor G Jones declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 7 (Portas Pilot) and Item 12 (Applications For Financial Assistance) and a personal interest in Item 10 (AONB Consultation);

Councillor J Robertson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 7 (Portas Pilot).

ER073/13

5. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

(i) Requests for dispensation enabling them to participate in discussion and voting on Item 6 (i and ii) were received from Councillor P Elliott; and on Item 7 were received from Councillors G Jones and J Robertson.

(ii) The Council agreed to the dispensations requested.

ER074/13

6. MITIE

Standing Orders were suspended.

- (i) Ben Jenkinson updated the meeting on the work of Mitie since changes to Eco Funding by central government. The level of funding had been reduced although after negotiations Mitie had a deadline of 31 March 2014 to complete work on properties under current funding arrangements although this could be withdrawn at any time. At present there were 352 properties to complete. Mitie would be holding public meetings on Tuesday 7 January 2014 and Wednesday 8 January 2014 to explain the situation to residents. A contact telephone number would be available for residents to ring who had concerns about the changes in programme.
- (ii) An Energy Advice Centre would be opened in the William Elder Building on 1 February 2014 to assist access to funding for the wider community. This would be available to private properties and social housing and the

boundaries would not be limited to Berwick-upon-Tweed. It was hoped the current workforce could be retained after 31 March to assist with work generated by the Advice Centre. A meeting had been held with Annette Reeves, Conservation Officer, to discuss the special problems associated with insulating historic buildings.

The Chair thanked Mr Jenkinson for his up-date.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

ER075/13

7. PORTAS PILOT

Councillor J Robertson reported to the meeting that, after a meeting with John Lord of ARCH, he had learned that £70,000 had been allocated to projects leaving a balance of £130,000 to distribute. Councillor J Robertson then put forward a proposal for the Town Council's management of the Portas Pilot, The management group (responsibility for the membership of which had been delegated to the Environment and Regeneration Committee, reference minute CO73/13) would include 2-3 Councillors, 2-3 local business people and 2-3 people from the wider community.

Project funding under £5,000 could be approved by the management group whilst anything over £5,000 would need further approval from the Environment and Regeneration Committee, full Council and ARCH. Applications for grants could be made by individuals or groups.

An advertisement inviting expressions of interest would be placed in the local paper with a closing date of the end of January. The Environment and Regeneration Committee would consider applications and agree who would be invited to join the group

RESOLVED: To agree to the proposal by Councillor J Robertson for the Town Council's management of the Portas Pilot.

ER076/13

8. PLAY AREAS

Following the Environment and Regeneration Committee's decision to take

responsibility for play areas, each play area would now be assessed separately to include consideration possible management arrangements, condition and maintenance of existing equipment and potential for new equipment at each site. Councillor P Elliott reported to the meeting that he had recently undertaken training to inspect play areas for safety and maintenance issues.

RESOLVED: To form a Play Areas sub-group including Councillors P Elliott, A Gibson, I Hunter, J Robertson, G Roughead and J Stephenson.

ER077/13

9. BUS SERVICES

The Town Council had received notification of the beginning of the process of bus service contract renewals by Northumberland County Council. Councillor J Robertson highlighted concerns including services covering the rural community that are less profitable as most users are the elderly who receive concessionary fares. The value of bus services in promoting Berwick as a car-free hub for visitors was also stressed.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to Northumberland County Council highlighting the concerns of the Town Council about the possible impact on Berwick of a reduction in bus services.

ER078/13

10. AONB CONSULTATION

To consider a Council view of, and response to, Part 2 of the Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan Review.

RESOLVED: That Councillors email their comments to the Clerk by Friday, 10 January 2014, who will then formulate a response in discussion with Councillor J Robertson.

ER079/13

11. USE OF TOWN COUNCIL LOGO

Councillors discussed the issue of having a policy relating to the use of the Town Council logo by external bodies. They agreed that further guidance should be sought and brought before the next meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee before any policy would be discussed and agreed.

ER080/13

12. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

RESOLVED: To make £2,000 available to help meet the costs associated with the Better Business Forum's proposal to arrange two trade fair events in Berwick.

ER081/13

13. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

No invitations had been received.

ER082/13

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday 10 March 2014 at 6.00pm.