

## BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Town Council Environment and Regeneration Committee Meeting held on Monday, 10 June 2013 at 6.00 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors: I Hunter (In the Chair for Item 1)  
J Robertson (In the Chair for Item 2 onwards)  
I Dixon  
P Elliott  
A Gibson  
G Hill  
G Jones  
G Roughead  
F Simpson  
J Stephenson

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

S Finch, Town Clerk  
S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk  
1 member of the public

#### **ER001/13 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor J Robertson be appointed Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Committee for the year 2013-14.

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

#### **ER002/13 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **ER003/13 3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor P Elliott be appointed Vice Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Committee for the year 2013-14.

#### **ER004/13 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2013 were agreed and signed as a

correct record.

**ER005/13 5. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**

There were no statements by members of the public present.

**ER006/13 6. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor I Dixon declared a personal interest in Item 8 (Spittal Splash Park) and a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 19 (Applications for Financial Assistance, Spittal Improvement Trust);

Councillor A Gibson declared a personal interest in Item 18 (Issues Raised by Members);

Councillor I Hunter declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Northumberland Core Strategy – Settlement Services And Facilities Audit Update);

Councillor G Jones declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Northumberland Core Strategy – Settlement Services And Facilities Audit Update).

**ER007/13 7. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

**ER008/13 8. SPITTAL SPLASH PARK**

Members expressed disappointment with the lengthy period of non-operation, since re-commissioning, of Spittal Splash Park. It was noted that it was currently operational following ongoing efforts by Northumberland County Council's (NCC) NEAT Team to reach a resolution with the contractors. A site visit, accompanied by a Northumberland County Council officer, was proposed which would include the adjoining play area as the future of play areas was still under review pending the completion of the play strategy.

**RESOLVED: (i) The Town Council to note the current situation and the actions which have been, and are being taken, to ensure the facility is operational as soon as possible; and (ii) Members of the Environment and Regeneration Committee to undertake a site visit which would include the adjoining play area.**

**ER009/13 9. NORTHUMBERLAND CORE STRATEGY – SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND FACILITIES AUDIT UPDATE**

Northumberland County Council had written to the Town Council explaining that the last audit had been undertaken in November 2010 and that Town and Parish Councils were invited to contribute to an up-date of the survey.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council participate in the survey and that members email their contributions to allow the pro-forma provided by NCC be completed and returned by the 26 July 2013.**

**ER010/13**

#### **10. BIG BELLY COMPACTOR BINS**

The Big Belly Bin had been installed on Marygate by Northumberland County Council. A solar panel messaging service indicated when the bin needs to be emptied. During the trial period the bin had been emptied twice a week compared with twice a day, showing substantial savings. As a closed bin, seagulls could not access the rubbish, making the location less attractive to them. Members noted the bin could be leased at a cost of £21 a week but agreed any savings accrued to the County Council rather than Town Council; environmental benefits through the reduction of seagull nuisance were harder to measure. Members noted the information provided for future reference.

**ER011/13**

#### **11. COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS – AREAS AT RISK OF FLOODING**

Northumberland County Council had written to the Town Council outlining their proposal to support areas at risk of flooding by developing 'Community Agreements'. NCC intended to hold a launch event in early summer to explain the proposals and gauge support to develop 'Community agreements', and had asked if the Town Council would like to be involved in the initiative.

**RESOLVED: Members agreed that the Town Council should participate in the initiative.**

**ER012/13**

#### **12. PUBLIC SEATS**

Members considered the previously circulated report which outlined the ongoing maintenance of public seats and identification of those in need of repair. Berwick Preservation Trust had offered to meet the cost of refurbishing and repairing twenty of the thirty-seven seats that are located on the Town Walls. The cost for refurbishing and repairing the remaining seventeen seats on the Town Walls was £5,293.

**RESOLVED: (i) The Town Council to agree to meet the £5,293 cost of refurbishing and repairing the balance of seventeen seats on the Elizabethan Walls; and (ii) to use the balance of the 2013-14 public seat maintenance budget for the repair and maintenance by the County Council NEAT team of other seats requiring urgent attention, as identified by, or reported to, the Council.**

**ER013/13**

### **13. LOCAL PARKING PLAN**

The Town Council had received a letter from the Leader of Northumberland County Council advising that, following on from a manifesto commitment to introduce free parking for all communities across Northumberland, it had been decided Town and Parish Councils should lead in the preparation of community parking plans, to reflect local views.

Members noted the proposal, and Councillors I Dixon, P Elliott, G Hill, I Hunter, G Jones, J Robertson and F Simpson said they would wish to be involved in the discussions about the proposed plan. The Clerk would invite other members who were not on the Environment and Regeneration Committee to put their names forward.

**ER014/13**

### **14. VISITOR MARKETING ACTIVITIES**

A report that had been previously circulated to members outlined the role that the Town Council was taking in destination marketing, to support the visitor economy. The report included mention of the extensive work carried out to improve the information on the [www.visitberwick.com](http://www.visitberwick.com) website, the full page entry purchased in the Northumberland Holiday Guide, the annual events leaflet and pre-visit leaflet about Berwick and the £500 the Town Council is contributing to the making of a VisitBritain film which will be shown via the VisitBritain website. Also mentioned was the Tourism Forum which now met monthly; and the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition about which a promotional leaflet was being produced.

**RESOLVED: The Town Council to note the activities now being undertaken to market Berwick-upon-Tweed and support the visitor economy.**

**ER015/13**

### **15. COACH PARKING**

The Clerk reported that a number of bodies within Berwick, such as the Chamber of Trade, Tourism Forum and Town Team had written to NCC independently to express their concerns over a lack of coach parking in the town. ARCH (Northumberland County Council's development company) was now seeking a solution. A temporary facility was to be provided in the existing 'drop off and pick up' zone in Walkergate. Members confirmed their commitment to the early provision of a single permanent coach park within the Town Walls but agreed there would need to be consultation.

**ER016/13**

### **16. BERWICK HOPPA BUS**

Members noted the Hoppa service had started on 30 May, and use was increasing. Several suggestions had been put forward about possible adjustments to the route and additional features such as a tour guide. It was proposed to have a meeting after 4 – 6 weeks of operation to review useage and any modifications which might help ensure its success and sustainability. The Chair noted the contribution the Clerk had made into bringing this scheme forward.

**ER017/13**      **17. BERWICK PARKS PROJECT**

As adequate information had not been provided to the Town Council this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

**ER018/13**      **18. ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS**

- i. West End bus shelter. The bus shelter and surrounding area were reported by Councillor A Gibson to be in need of repair and clearing-up. Members agreed that quotes should be sought and would be brought to the next meeting. However, the idea of asking local residents associations/groups for possible assistance was also agreed.

[NOTE: Councillor F Simpson left the meeting]

- ii. Flagstaff Park. Councillor A Gibson suggested to the meeting that Flagstaff Park needed updating which should include new play equipment and, for example, picnic facilities. While the idea was supported in principle it was agreed to defer any decisions until the play strategy had been agreed and adopted.

**ER019/13**      **19. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Councillor I Dixon, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room during discussion of the application by Spittal Improvement Trust, and did not return to the meeting.

**RESOLVED: To make a maximum of £500 available to Spittal Improvement Trust [SIT] Gardening Group.**

**ER020/13**      **20. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

No invitations had been received.

**ER021/13**      **21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Monday 15 July 2013 at 6.00pm.