



## BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of the Events Committee** held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House on Tuesday 26 January 2016

### **Present:**

Councillors:

K Nisbet (Chair), A Cartie (Vice Chair), C Bruce, A Gibbs-Barton, M A Parker, R Parker, J R Potts, L Rickerby

### **Also Present:**

Councillors: B W Elliott, O Potts

Officers:

S E Rickitt	Town Clerk
S Robinson	Environmental Services Officer
A McCabe	Office Manager
M Hawthorne	Committee Clerk
A Spratt	Administrative/Customer Services Assistant

Invited Guests:

J Houghton	Carnival Rides
Sharon Bailey	Isis Arts
Chris Byrne	Active Northumberland
Dominic Smith	Short Circuit Arts Project
P Taylor	Events Co-ordinator (Community Works)
Gareth Davies	Northumberland County Council

Members of the Public: 0

<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Councillor A Turnbull
<b>2</b>	<b>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS &amp; THE GRANT OF ANY DISPENSATIONS</b> None.
<b>3</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2015</b> The Town Clerk advised that the minutes were ADOPTED by Full Council on 21 January 2016. The Committee agreed to <b>ADOPT</b> the minutes.
<b>4</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</b> None.
<b>5</b>	<b>TALL SHIPS</b> Chris Byrne introduced himself as a member of the Tall Ships Work stream. He said he and/or his colleague James Fell would like to attend the Events Committee on a regular basis to provide updates. The general communication will be managed by the Comms Team at NCC and The Town Clerk will be the point of contact for the Council. The Committee Clerk will add this as a standing agenda item.
<b>6</b>	<b>PRESENTATION ON THE ISIS ARTS PROJECT</b> The Committee welcomed Sharon Bailey from ISIS Arts Project. Sharon gave a brief outline of the history of ISIS and her proposal to involve the residents of Blyth in a project; ISIS is a media arts organisation which was founded over 20 years ago. They have received funding for a two year project working with young people in South East Northumberland. This project will link artists and communities across the region and will look at common threads between people. There will be 20 artists in South East Northumberland from 9-22 May 2016. Workshops with local people have already started. The organisation is also working with Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services and Silx in the Market Place. Sharon has met with Karen Walker and Trevor Gyllenspetz, Manager of the Keel Row Centre, and both are very interested in the proposal.

	<p>Councillor J R Potts asked about the language barrier that may exist between visitors from different countries. Sharon confirmed that most of the artists' work is in English and translators are used where necessary.</p> <p>It was agreed that Sharon will attend a further meeting of the Events Committee when she has more information available. The Town Clerk said he will make this information available on the Council's website and Facebook pages.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>POST EVENT DISCUSSION (CHRISTMAS LIGHTS)</b></p> <p>Committee agreed that the switch on went well. The Town Clerk stated that Council on 21 January 2016, agreed to some administrative changes which means the Environmental Services Officer will now take the lead on Christmas lights. Event responsibility will remain with Paul Taylor.</p> <p>It was noted that Councillors were disappointed with the Christmas lights in 2015 and have also expressed their concerns regarding the issues around missing lights. Councillors gave authority to the Town Clerk to negotiate a reduction in the bill from NCC.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>CHRISTMAS LIGHTS</b> (please see attached report from the Environmental Services Officer)</p> <p>Councillor Nisbet stated that there has been a lot of negative feedback about the Christmas lights. The Environmental Services Officer addressed his report which addresses all of the issues raised and outlines proposals for the Christmas lights 2016, including the possibility of relocating the site of the Christmas tree. Consideration will also be given to Councillor Gibbs-Barton's proposal that a flower planter is used to house the tree.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>BUDGET AND EVENTS FOR 2016/2017</b> (please see attached reports)</p> <p>Paul Taylor circulated a document outlining proposed events for 2016 and asked Committee for comments and feedback regarding whether the Council would like to proceed with some or all of the proposals.</p> <p>Councillor Nisbet said that the Council cannot support every event financially. The Town Clerk noted that the Classic Car Show, for example, would be cost neutral as would the Comedy Festival.</p>

	<p>Councillor J R Potts said the meeting on 15 January discussed where there is a central point to advertise all of the events and the Town Clerk stated that he would like to get a "Claim the Date" for the Council and use this to encourage people to let the Council know what is happening. He added that if Councillors are prepared to accept the list where costs are indicated it will give the Council the ability to plan a programme.</p> <p>Councillor Nisbet commented as not everyone has access to IT it is important to use other methods for advertising such as digital displays/notice boards etc.</p> <p>Councillor Potts pointed out that other regional events may clash with the ones planned for Blyth and the Town Clerk asked Mr Taylor to explore this further.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the list in principle and this will be placed on the agenda for the next Events Committee meeting.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>OLYMPIC LEGACY</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk asked the Committee to agree £2,500 to support this event which includes a six week training programme in schools before the event. The Council previously agreed to pay this amount annually for 4 years.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to this request.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>NORTHUMBRIA IN BLOOM</b></p> <p>The Office Manager confirmed that Blyth has been entered into the 2016 event and judges will be visiting in April 2016. The Office Manager will be contacting all of the groups who are participating and the Council are hoping to encourage more community involvement. Work has also started on the improvements to the Sensory Garden. The new soil has now been put in, however the partnership agreement does not cover planting for the garden. The Committee was asked to consider a request for £3,000 to purchase 600 plants at a cost of £4-£5 per plant. The Committee further agreed that the Council can look into costs for the new signage for the garden. Jimmy Reith will provide costings for this.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to this request.</p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>ART INSTALLATION PROJECT – SHORT CIRCUITS</b> (please see attached report from Dominic Smith)</p> <p>Dominic Smith circulated a report which explained the purpose of the project. This project was commissioned by Bait in partnership with the Briardale Centre and funding from the Arts</p>

	<p>Council. Mr Smith also talking to the Silx Project about this. Councillor Bruce asked how he planned to engage people who are not IT literate. Mr Smith stated that he is working with the Briardale to develop some workshops. Mr Smith met with Steve Bradley last week to look at how they can support additional boxes and link this work to Blyth Youth Project. Mr Bradley has offered to house some of the boxes on his building.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to support this project and Mr Smith agreed to provide updated information to the Council.</p>
<b>12</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS OR ITEMS FOR URGENT DISCUSSION</b>  None
<b>13</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b>  The next scheduled meeting of the Events Committee is to take place on Tuesday 23 February 2016 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

#### **MEMBERS OF THE EVENTS COMMITTEE**

Councillors

C Bruce  
A Cartie (Vice-Chair)  
A Gibbs-Barton  
K Nisbet (Chair)  
M Parker  
R Parker  
J R Potts  
L Rickerby  
A Turnbull

Officers

SE Rickitt, Town Clerk  
S Robinson, Environmental Services Officer  
A McCabe, Office Manager  
M Hawthorne, Committee Clerk

## **PART II**

### **CONFIDENTIAL**

#### **BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

To consider resolving to exclude the public and media from the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as it involves the discussion of contractual issues

#### **Present:**

Councillors:

K Nisbet (Chair), A Cartie (Vice Chair), C Bruce, A Gibbs-Barton, M A Parker, R Parker, J R Potts, L Rickerby

#### **Also Present:**

Councillors: B W Elliott, O Potts

#### **Officers:**

S E Rickitt	Town Clerk
M Hawthorne	Committee Clerk

#### **An Event in Blyth**

Gareth Davies was present for this discussion.

Mr Davies attended to discuss the Northumberland Live Music Festival funded by Northumberland County Council (NCC) on Blyth Beach. The cost of this is £27,500. NCC will also spend £500,000 on the Tall Ships Event. Mr Davies said his original plan was to ask the council for a financial contribution towards this event in light of NCC's financial situation. However he has been made aware of a potential issue as the site may not be available for the 2016 event. In order to ensure that there is sufficient parking for the Tall Ships event, modifications may have to be made to the Mermaid Car Park. NCC are in a position where they will have to reach a settlement with the Contractor if this event does not go ahead as some acts have already been confirmed. A decision will be made on this by 15 February 2016.

If there is to be a music festival in future years then this will not be funded by NCC due to budget constraints. Mr Davies said he is aware the Council are doing a base budget review and asked that they make provision from the budget of £27,500.

Discussion took place around potential alternative venues within Blyth. However, consideration has to be given to the proximity of residential areas and there are some placed where there is a "no-alcohol" rule.

The general feeling from Councillors is that the Council should support this event but require further information before a final decision is made. Further discussion will take place at a meeting of the Full Council on 18 February 2016.

### **FINANCE ISSUES**

The Town Clerk said there is an issue with unaccounted wristbands. Councillors expressed their concern about the number of complimentary tickets that had been provided and agreed that this is something Committee should be approving in future.

The Town Clerk agreed he will ask Mr Taylor to provide a report for the next meeting of the Events Committee which will set out a criteria and also to consider what provision may need to be made for the new hotel.

Councillors also commented that the cash handling raised concerns as large amounts of money were left in the Council office overnight. It was suggested that the cash should be banked at the end of each day and if there are problems during a weekend period, then local businesses could be approached and asked if they would hold the cash in their safe overnight.

### **GENERAL SERVICE AGREEMENT/CONTRACT**

The Town Clerk referred to the revised draft contract circulated and proposed that he and Joe Hughes work through this with the Chair and Vice Chair in order to agree proposed terms as there are a number of areas that require clarification. Councillor Gibbs-Barton suggested including the Chair of the Finance Committee in this discussion.

The Committee agreed to this.

**BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
***Events Committee***

***26 January 2016***

***Christmas Lighting***  
**REPORT**

With regards to the Christmas Lighting, concerns were raised on completion of the switch-on event that the old lights had been installed instead of the new motifs that were purchased at the beginning of the year. Subsequent investigations by myself and the Office Manager, revealed that the 32 new lighting motifs were delivered to the Cowley Road depot in February but then they were sent to the Stakeford depot for storage unbeknown to the street lighting team.

As requested by the Events Committee, I met with Mark Kane (Street Lighting Operations Manager, NCC) on site (25 November 2015) to see what could be achieved in the short term to improve the Christmas lighting.

The agreed plan of action was to replace all the Christmas lighting with our new motifs using the original quote/purchase order of installing 36 motifs (32 new/4 of the best older lights) throughout the town and in Newsham). It was also agreed this would be at no extra cost to the Council and work would commence on Sunday 29 November 2015. This was the earliest the street lighting team could begin work as they were already committed for that week to other switch on events.

Subsequent severe weather throughout the County over that weekend resulted in a delay to installing the new motifs with a revised date of 10 December 2015 being agreed. With the continued severe weather and with higher priority tasking the remedial work was not able to be completed. When installing the Christmas tree, the condition of the cage surrounding the tree was deemed to be unsafe to be left unattended and heras fencing was installed around it. Due to potential high winds and the position on the Market Place it was not possible to cover the heras fencing. Concerns were also raised over the tree lights in the market place with only approximately 50% in working order. This was due to the lights not being slackened off in previous years. The cables have snapped or come loose causing them to short out.

A post installation meeting was held with Mark Kane (NCC) on 18 January 2016 to address the problems that occurred over the festive period. With the severe weather over this period the street lighting team were unable to carry out the agreed work. This was due to higher priority tasking and unfortunately the Christmas lighting does not fall into this category.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The new lighting motifs are now safely stored and the old lights will now be disposed of (with the exception of the four best lights which will replace the lights at Newsham) to avoid the same confusion of 2015.

To completely remove all the lights from the trees in the market place and test each of the links to see what is salvageable. From the post installation meeting the outcome is that all the tree lights will probably need to be replaced.

The cage around the tree needs to be replaced as it has gone past its end of life. Mark Kane is sourcing the costs to replace it. Also, as suggested in previous years, there is now a possibility that the Christmas tree can be re-sited on a different part of the market.

The Office Manager and I met with the Festive Lighting Company on 21 January 2016 with regards to supplying new lights/tree/3D decorations etc. We are also sourcing information/prices from Blachere. A verbal update will be given at the Events Committee meeting on 26 January 2016 and hopefully we will have some images on display.

**Sean Robinson**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES OFFICER**  
26 January 2016



## Meeting notes: PT Events in Blyth meeting

Date of meeting 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Date report issues 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016

<p><b>Discussion/Action</b></p>
<p>Classic car show – 17<sup>th</sup> April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PT approached by a car group to produce a classic car show</li> <li>• PT discussed that the layout of the event would ideally be self-funding i.e. vendors would pay for space. At present there are no price implications on the council</li> <li>• TE mentioned working with a ticketing company who use scanners as a way of monitoring visitors</li> <li>• PT investigating which areas to hold the show. This may limit the amount of cars/ vendors which can attend the event</li> <li>• PT to look at what other events which are taking part in Blyth and its surrounding areas to stop event clashes happening</li> <li>• KN requires what support is required from the council before she presents it to the council board</li> <li>• LB mentioned the Love Blyth page now has events pages where events can be listed so that everyone is aware of what is going on and when</li> <li>• KN said that the events page needs to not just be on social media or online due to several age audiences not having access to the internet</li> <li>• Group suggested that there should be an interactive memo board to list events going on in Blyth and the town centre</li> <li>• TG discussed how Keel Row has a free notice board for people to display events on but unsure if anyone knows about it</li> </ul>
<p>Blyth comedy festival – 28<sup>th</sup> &amp; 29<sup>th</sup> May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PT has been approached by Punch Drunk comedy club to hold a comedy club weekend festival</li> <li>• PT suggested a marquee to hold the event</li> <li>• The event is unique and has never been held in Blyth before</li> <li>• Group discussed involving local bars and pubs holding other acts at the premises over the weekend with the famous comedians playing inside the marquee</li> <li>• Cost implication to the council regarding having a marquee</li> <li>• Involve the whole town centre to create a fringe style weekend</li> <li>• Food and drink stalls can be invited to have stalls around the weekend to get involved</li> <li>• Headway arts can engage with the schools around event to encourage interest</li> </ul>

<p><b>Discussion/Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headway arts also mentioned that their new centre space could be used if a marquee was not available</li> <li>• No ticket costs have been confirmed for this event</li> <li>• It was discussed that there may be an opportunity for radio sponsorship</li> <li>• Possible rotation of comedians to keep the weekend fun and different</li> <li>• Wristbands might be the most logical way to sell tickets</li> <li>• Potential to involve the public and search for the best child comedian</li> <li>• The weekend could be extended to bank holiday Monday</li> <li>• Princess Ellie Trust is the charity supported by Punch Drunk. This could be tied into as a fundraiser</li> <li>• TG discussed linking art into the weekend and pulling genres together</li> </ul>
<p><b>Blyth Town Fair – 23<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 24<sup>th</sup> July- tbc</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed date for the weekend after the children break up for summer holiday</li> <li>• Date is tbc as Sunderland air show is on the same weekend</li> <li>• Proposed to take place in the town centre with potential to close Regent street and Church street to make room for food stalls and other vendors</li> <li>• Invite businesses who surround the market square to get involved and take up stalls</li> <li>• The town could also invite local bands or youth groups to provide entertainment such as singing</li> <li>• Look into finding brass bands or marching bands</li> <li>• Headway Arts could create banners with children from the local schools and have them displayed in the streets by the market and conduct an arts trail. This needs to be organised asap to ensure schools can fit it into their school timetable</li> <li>• Banners to go down Wellington street</li> <li>• Discussion into bringing back carnival committee and floats</li> <li>• Other events such as an inflatable cinema to draw interest from the town. PT suggested bringing in a company who provide films and FM radio link for people to watch the film through their car radios</li> <li>• The fair can consist of an artisan craft fair bringing something different to Blyth</li> <li>• Discussion into intermingling the stalls with carnival rides throughout the fair to ensure visitors look around whole of the fair. This will utilise the whole of the town centre</li> <li>• Group discussed events such as window dressing to engage with the whole of the town centre and creating a competition to generate interest or to display an A4 poster in the window</li> <li>• Businesses will also be invited to create offers or discounts on the weekend to help drive footfall</li> <li>• The fair must be positioned as community focused</li> <li>• Group to email PT ideas before 26<sup>th</sup> January</li> <li>• PT suggested having a standalone event on the quayside and one in the town fair involving the whole town</li> <li>• TG discussed how craft fair increased footfall by 137% in Keel Row Shopping Centre on the Saturday</li> <li>• LD discussed how the majority of retailers within Keel Row found the Christmas craft fair to be very successful for themselves and the centre as a whole</li> </ul>
<p><b>Blyth Fashion Show – 17<sup>th</sup> September</b></p>

Discussion/Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fashion show will aim to involve the whole centre and the town</li> <li>• Again like the fair the stalls will contain knitwear, crafts, Jewellery, make-up, beauty etc</li> <li>• Invite fashion college and local schools to get involved</li> <li>• Ask students to create clothes and dress models for a catwalk</li> <li>• To be held in market square with a large marquee</li> <li>• Invite Headway Arts to decorate the marquee</li> <li>• Invite shops from Keel Row to get involved in the fashion show</li> <li>• Invite local supermarkets to get involved too such as Morrisons, Asda etc</li> <li>• Continue discussions with ICG, Keel Row Shopping Centre</li> </ul>
<p>Blyth Fireworks – 30th October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development site could start to be built on in February which could mean a reduction in capacity.</li> <li>• Being re-measured for a more updated total – SR to confirm</li> <li>• Hotel nearby has space which could facilitate crowds</li> <li>• Combine fireworks with Halloween so people can dress up</li> <li>• Sell tickets through wristbands</li> </ul>
<p>Blyth Christmas lights switch on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> November</li> <li>• A celebrity has previously been used at the lights switch on but this year suggested to have children or community champions turn the lights on</li> <li>• Emma Bunton was a consideration but since the Spice Girls 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary it's a no go</li> <li>• Row investigating the Coca cola truck to visit Blyth</li> <li>• Potential Santa's sleigh procession with community champion riding with Santa</li> <li>• Must consider the weather forecast as in previous years it has been bad, however group decided this wouldn't effect visitors</li> <li>• Events throughout the day to be spread out to keep the town busy all day</li> <li>• Also have a market running so people can do some Christmas shopping</li> <li>• Should introduce a nativity scene, carols and other Christmas festivities like other areas put on such as Northallerton</li> <li>• Discussion was held over the possibility of holding discussions with Phoenix Theatre about holding the pantomime in the town centre on this day</li> <li>• Discussed using radio station to set it up i.e. Metro Radio</li> <li>• By using Metro Radio they can replace the celebrity element</li> <li>• Metro Radio has approached regarding Tall Ships, fireworks and light switch on. To arrange meeting with Managing Director</li> <li>• LD mentioned ideas from other clients such as inviting schools to record a song and the community vote for their favourites. Winner can sing at the light switch on</li> <li>• Group are a bit hesitant to use other radios because they cannot engage with the crowd unlike the main radio stations</li> </ul>

<p><b>Discussion/Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Christmas lights will be displayed this year after the wrong ones were displayed last year</li> <li>• Christmas tree will get a new cage around the tree</li> <li>• Blyth Development trust looking into a date for their craft fair but want to keep it separate to other activity and want it around Christmas. They will continue to support other activities around town council</li> </ul>
<p><b>NEXT STEPS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send ideas through to PT with costs before 26<sup>th</sup> January</li> </ul>
<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events meeting with the council on the 26<sup>th</sup> January</li> </ul>

# Short Circuits

## About

Short Circuits is a collaborative digital arts project that creates a new way for people to share stories and pictures that will be collected and used in a free, people's publication. There are a number of free to use access points around Blyth called 'Shareboxes'. They look like Wi-Fi hot spots. We want you to connect to them and share new and old text, image and sound files that relate to the history and culture of Blyth. We want the unique perspective of people living in the Blyth area.

The project is inspired by the idea of 'desire paths', these are the dirt tracks people create when they take the shortest, or easiest route on their journey. They appear over time when people exercising free will, ignoring the standard paths they are offered. They can also appear spontaneously when it snows and normal routes are covered, forcing people to create new tracks. They are an interesting thing to think about when building a community based creative project as it makes you plan around the way people do things naturally instead of asking people to do things that mean they have to go out of their way to take part.

## How it works

Each Sharebox is made using a modified version of software from a project called 'Librarybox'. We take low cost, portable Wi-Fi routers and convert them to run an offline website that people can use to upload and download files. We then work with partners, spread around Blyth to install these Shareboxes so that people who live or travel through those parts of the town can find them and use them easily.

We are also experimenting with a number of solar powered Shareboxes. It would be great to build more of these. If they work as well as we think they

will work we could build a version of a Shortcircuits Wi-Fi network that can survive for about ten years without needing any electricity!

## How to find and use them

If you visit <http://www.shortcircuits.space/> you will see a map on the front page. This map shows the current whereabouts of all of the Shareboxes. The boxes will move around from time to time. Some will break and new ones will be added, so check the map regularly!

Once you are in the right place, check your phone (or other internet device) for a Wi-Fi network called 'Sharebox' and connect. You should automatically be taken to the Shortcircuits website. If you aren't, open a browser and navigate to: <http://sharebox.lan> . Once your connected you will see where to upload images to and where to download things other people have shared.

Unfortunately, anything you upload won't be available to everyone straight away. We check the content of each box about once a week to make sure no one gets any unpleasant surprises

## Who is responsible

This project was commissioned by Bait in partnership with the Briardale Centre with funding from Arts Council England. It is being managed by The Briardale Centre and is the work of artist, Dominic Smith, who devised and is currently running the project.

Contact Dominic Smith: [mail@dominicsmith.info](mailto:mail@dominicsmith.info)