



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL'S EVENTS COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Quay Road, Blyth NE24 2AS on Tuesday 2nd September 2014 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors:

K Nisbet (Chair in the Chair), A Cartie (Vice-Chair), C Bruce, M Parker, J Potts, J Reid and L Rickerby

Councillors R Parker and O Potts were also present though not members of the Committee

Officers:

Sue Noddings – Town Clerk (Corporate Services)
Stephen Rickitt – Town Clerk (Democratic Services)
Sean Robinson – Assets Officer

Also Present:

Paul Taylor – Events Coordinator

5 Members of the public

096/14/01: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Gibbs-Barton

097/14/02: DISCLOSURE FOR INTERESTS AND ANY GRANTS OF DISPENSATION

None

098/14/03: MINUTES FROM EVENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH JULY 2014

With the insertion of Councillors Cartie, Gibbs-Barton and M Parker (as members of the committee), together with Councillors B Elliott and R Parker being present, the minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

099/14/04: MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

None – not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda

100/14/05: REPORT OF TOWN CLERK (DEMOCRATIC SERVICES)

The Committee noted and endorsed the update report from the Town Clerk (Democratic Services); a copy is attached to the signed minutes.

The Committee were provided with a copy of an email received that morning from the Acting Head of Public Protection at the County Council confirming that a formal investigation would not be undertaken into certain aspects of the Maritime Festival. A copy of the email is to be provided to all Town Councillors as well as being attached to the signed minutes.

101/14/06: REPORT OF THE EVENT COORDINATOR

The Committee considered the report of the Event Coordinator; a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

The Committee raised the following issues

6.1 Blyth Maritime Festival

The Event Coordinator informed the Committee that he had been speaking to members of the public since the previous meeting and gained the impression that most felt that the event had been a good one. There were some dissenters but the majority seem to enjoy the event especially on Sunday when the weather was better.

6.2 Blyth Fireworks Event

The Event Coordinator informed the Committee that he had held a meeting that morning to consider arrangements. Unfortunately neither the Port of Blyth nor the police had been present. He asked the Committee to consider his report and give a steer on how the event should proceed.

Councillor J Potts asked whether the same site was to be used as in 2013 and what its capacity would be. The Coordinator informed councillors that he had been in discussion about the use of a barge for the fireworks but have not received an answer. The new ARCH building will reduce the capacity.

The Assets Officer informed councillors that last year's site had a capacity of over 18,000 spectators. 15,000 spectators had however been the planned limit, leaving a buffer of 3000 persons. He advised members that the use of the barge is the key as there are no readily apparent alternative locations in that vicinity.

Councillor Nisbet expressed concerns about the time left to make arrangements and that a clear input from the Port was required before the go-ahead could be given.

Councillor Bruce expressed concern that the use of a barge had not been resolved despite it being raised at the June meeting of the Committee.

The Coordinator advised the committee that this week was the absolute deadline for having arrangements in place if the event was to proceed. Councillors expressed concerns about the delay in making arrangements for a barge.

The Committee then considered whether there were other sites and whether a Park and Ride could be used. Meggies Burn was a one site discussed but the Assets Officer advised that experience shows that there would be traffic issues and Park and Rides were underutilised as spectators nowadays wanted to park as close as possible to the event.

Councillors also discussed whether there should be an admission charge or whether it should be free. The Committee was advised if the event was free and numbers were not control, then organisationally the event could have to cater for potentially greatly increased number of spectators. This would be dependent on weather and other factors.

The Committee was concerned that the Council has already promoted the event and had spent the past three years building up a fireworks display as an annual event.

The Committee resolved to impose a deadline for arrangements to be made of 4.00 PM on Thursday 4 September 2014. With the consent of the Mayor, this item will be added to the agenda of the special Town Council meeting commencing at 6:30 PM on 4 September 2014. The full Council will be asked to decide whether or not fireworks event can safely take place

6.3 Christmas Events

At the request of the Town Team, the Committee confirmed that the Town Council would not be arranging any events in the Market Place on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd of November 2014. This enables the Town Team to endeavour to arrange a Victorian Market on those dates.

Councillors were concerned that a celebrity had not yet been arranged to switch on the lights and various suggestions were made and repeated from the June meeting of the committee. Councillor Bruce expressed concern at the lack of progress.

6.4 Christmas Lighting

The Coordinator was asked about the purchase of new lights. In response the Committee were advised that the County Council would be collecting the existing lights from Balfours within the next week. The Coordinator had received a quotation of £1000 to white light the tree. The Committee approved the purchase of additional lights for the Christmas tree at a maximum cost of £1000. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) was requested to write an immediate letter to the County Council confirming their instruction as contractor for the erection of Christmas lighting. The Committee decided not to offer funding towards the renovation of the snowflake that previously erected on Westgate House.

Councillor Bruce drew attention to the advert in the latest issue of Local Links and asked that future adverts be properly populated and gives details of the forthcoming events. It was confirmed that there would no longer be a continental market organised by the Town Council on 22nd and 23rd of November 2014.

The Committee noted a request from Headway Arts for a contribution towards the cost of a lantern parade. With regret the Committee were unable to accede to this request.

102/14/07: REPORT FROM TOWN CLERK (DEMOCRATIC SERVICES)

The Staff Committee had referred a report they had considered in June 2014 regarding the sale of merchandise; a copy of the report is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Whilst noting the difficulties for staff to allocate sufficient time for direct marketing and sales, the Committee were mindful that part of the purpose was to raise the profile of the town and assist its regeneration.

The Committee endorsed a suggestion from the Town Clerk (Democratic Services) that he should investigate the possibility of seed corn funding a Blyth organisation to produce Blyth branded products. A report will be presented to a future meeting of this committee.

103/14/07: ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND URGENT ATTENTION

Presentation by John Houghton

The committee received a presentation from John Houghton; a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes. The theme of the presentation was the potential for a sponsorship agreement between his business and the Town Council.

The Committee asked the officers to investigate such a sponsorship deal as it might involve granting exclusive rights and bring a report to a future meeting.

104/14/08: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of the Events Committee is scheduled to take place on the 30th September 2014 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm

Agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair

..... Date.....