

Subject to ratification at the next Meeting of the Full Council.



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Quay Road, Blyth NE24 2AS on Thursday 18th July 2013 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors:

R Parker (Mayor) M Parker (Deputy-Mayor), C Bruce, A Cartie, B W Elliott, A Gibbs-Barton, J R Potts, O Potts, J Reid, L Rickerby and G Thompson.

Officers:

Sue Noddings – Town Clerk (Corporate Services)
Steven Rickitt – Town Clerk (Democratic Services)
Sean Robinson – Assets Officer
Liam Forsyth – Committee Clerk

Also Present:

Amy Syron-Mallenby – Alzheimer’s Society

Members of the Public: 13

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Ellis, G Knox, K Nisbet and A Turnbull.

2. PRESENTATION BY THE ALZHEIMER’S SOCIETY

Amy Syron-Mallenby provided a presentation entitled “Developing Blyth as ‘Dementia Friendly’ Town”. An outline was provided regarding the

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work conducted by the Society on both a National and Local scale and it was noted that (as of January 2013) 4,690 people were living with dementia in Northumberland, a figure which is set to rise to 6,250 by 2021.

The presentation continued to discuss the partnerships that the Society are involved in and an outline of the services provided, including the spheres of contact. Amy discussed the outcomes she was seeking from the Town Council and how the Town Council could help promote and support the Alzheimer's Society's work.

Existing projects engaged in by the Alzheimer's Society were also discussed. It was noted that the Society was seeking to make use of existing facilities and develop a strategy in line with national initiatives.

Potential avenues for the promotion of the outlined project included an accreditation scheme and the associated links to be placed on the Town Council's publications and websites.

The presentation then concluded and Town Councillors were asked if they had any questions.

Councillor L Rickerby commented that she fully supported the proposals and outlined her experience within this field , stating her belief that the Alzheimer's Society would find a captive audience within the Town and the work of the Town Council.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton enquired as to whether the Society's work covered Parkinson's as it appeared to be missing from the presentation. Amy replied that the Alzheimer's Society did indeed work with those with Parkinson's and that it was an important part of the organisation. It was also noted that there was a branch in Morpeth whose focus is Parkinson's Disease.

Councillor J R Potts sought further information regarding stages and levels of Dementia. Amy from the Alzheimer's Society stated that there are stages within Dementia and that this particular scheme is aimed at ameliorating the situation for those in the early/moderate stages of Dementia.

The Mayor thanked Amy for her presentation and noted that there are 3 pilots to take place across the County and that he hoped the Alzheimer's Society would come back and present its findings to the Council at a later date.

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3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) outlined that the Council has been seeking to improve and enhance upon its engagement process and as part of this process has sought questions from social media.

The first question received concerned the use of the website to publicize meetings. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) outlined the issues which had been experienced during the process of bringing the operation of the website in-house, it was however noted that an updated list of Meetings had been placed on the website up to the end of the 2013-2014 cycle.

The next question received via this medium concerned the possibility of extending the period of Public Question Time. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) responded that this was not being looked in to at present however reaffirmed that the Council is seeking further ways to wider engage with the public out-with previous explored fora.

The final question received via Social Media concerned as to whether there was a proposed exchange visit with Solingen. The Mayor commented that it had been proposed that the next exchange visit would take place in May 2014 however proceedings were at an early stage.

The Mayor then opened the floor to questions from the public.

A question was posed from a member of the public concerning the current state of the Blyth beach. It was also noted that there appears to be a lack of bins in the area and that the County Council fails to be providing an adequate service. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he would press the County Council to attain whether they are meeting their requirements. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) also wished to note that the bins in both the Ridley Park and the Blyth beach were the responsibility of the Unitary Authority at present.

The Mayor also provided comment, noting that the County Council no longer holds reserves for the bins but the Town Council has been in contact with the County Council and this situation is to be rectified as soon as possible.

Councillor B Elliott commented that he was hosting a meeting for residents on the following evening and was seeking engagement with both local residents and representatives from the County Council.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton enquired as to whether the maintenance of the bins was part of the planning arrangements for the developments in the

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area and commented that he believed if not, that in the future such arrangements should be made.

A further question was posed regarding the state of the grass beside the Allotments nearest to the Solingen Estate. The Mayor commented that this section of land was the Town Councils responsibility and had been discussed at the last meeting of the Assets Committee and its maintenance was to proceed with haste. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) introduced the new Assets Officer, Sean Robinson and reiterated that this issue was to be dealt with.

A question was posed by members of the public regarding the Allotment fence close to the Solingen Estate. An outline of their proposal and letters was provided and it was noted that all Councillors had received this correspondence as part of the Council papers and that this issue was to be discussed under the agenda item 5.

Public Question Time was then closed by the Mayor following a thank you and a reminder that contact can be sought through the Officers and Ward Councillors out-with Meetings of the Full Council.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 Council to note the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 30th May 2013

The Full Council **NOTED** the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 30th May 2013.

4.2 Council to agree the Minutes of the Annual Meeting and Council held of the 9th May 2013

The Full Council **AGREED** the Minutes of the Annual Meeting and Council held on the 9th May 2013 and the minutes were signed by the Mayor, Councillor R Parker.

5. MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE

5.1 To agree the Minutes of the Allotments Committee held on the 4th June 2013

The Minutes of the Allotments Committee held on the 4th June 2013 were **AGREED** as a true record.

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5.2 In considering item 004/04 Councillors are asked to take into account the attached report regarding fence and new Allotments at the Wensleydale site

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an update and outline of the attached report.

The report set out a preferred option which involved the fence remaining in place and sought the authority to investigate the provision of raised beds. It was also commented that previous concerns regarding the land on the site, that a land transfer would be inappropriate and that an altered planning application had been submitted to Northumberland County Council regarding the properties on the site.

Councillor J R Potts commented that he was seeking clarification as to how the provision of a fence made the residents feel less secure.

Councillor R Parker commented that the fencing which is to be provided within the new allotment site is to be akin to that which has been recently completed at the Bolam Avenue sight and reiterated his belief that this would provide enhanced security.

The Mayor moved this report to be accepted by the Council and this was seconded by Councillor J R Potts. It was **AGREED** that the preferred option was to be proceed.

6. MINUTES OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Assets Committee held on the 11th June 2013 were **AGREED** by the Full Council as a true record.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) wished to remind those present that the War Memorials consultation was ongoing and that he was seeking its promotion and that anybody who was seeking further information should contact the Office.

7. MINUTES OF THE EVENTS COMMITTEE

7.1 To agree the Minutes of the Events Committee held on the 28th May 2013.

The Minutes of the Events Committee held on the 28th May 2013 were **AGREED** as a true record by the Full Council.

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7.2 To agree the Minutes of the Events Committee held on the 2nd July 2013

The Minutes of the Events Committee held on the 2nd July 2013 were **AGREED** by the Full Council as a true record.

7.3 A verbal update regarding the banners in the Market Place

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) provided a verbal update regarding the banners in the Market Place. It was commented that the banners had been had been removed by Northumberland County Council lighting team and delivered to the office of the Town Centre Manager. The Mayor commented that these are to be replaced and consideration must be given to the need for weather proof banners as discussed within the Minutes. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) commented that with the Councils authority this provision would be pursued.

It was **AGREED** that the replacement of the banners in the Market Place was to be investigated and pursued with strong consideration to be given to the banners weather resistance to ensure that they are long lasting.

8. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

8.1 To agree the Minutes of the Finance Committee from 21st May 2013

The Minutes of the Finance Committee held on the 21st May 2013 were **AGREED** as a true record.

8.2 The Chair of Finance to provide a verbal update from the Meeting held on the 11th July 2013

It was noted that the Minutes of this Meeting were circulated to all Councillors prior to this meeting by the Committee Clerk. The Vice – Chair of the Finance Committee provided a verbal update.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) commented that she was seeking a decision regarding the various Assets such as the China and the provision and display of Assets.

It was **AGREED** that the Chair and Vice-Chair of both the Finance and Staff Committee and a member of the opposition (Cllr A Gibbs-Barton) would meet to seek a resolution to the aforementioned issues.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) noted that the 'Blyth First' report was to be added as an appendix to the Financial Regulations. Councillor J

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R Potts commented that the Council would still be seeking the best value for Blyth but would also consider locality as a key factor along with a competitive quote.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) also added that a replacement front sheet for the Finances had been provided and was now available.

9. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

9.1 To agree the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee from 23rd May 2013.

The Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 23rd May 2013 were **AGREED** as a true record by the Full Council.

9.2 Meeting scheduled for the 4th July 2013

It was noted that the Meeting Scheduled for the 4th July 2013 was cancelled.

9.3 To agree the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 25th July 2013

Councillor J R Potts provided an outline for the Full Council regarding the possibility of the Central Link Road which would be used to reduce congestion on Cowpen Road. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that Officers at Northumberland County Council would like to talk to all Town Councillors at an early stage and this is expected to take place at later date, this year.

An update was also by the Mayor and Town Clerk (Democratic Services) regarding the reinstatement of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line. The Mayor commented that the initial plans involve 2 stations in Blyth at Newsham and Bebside. It was also commented that the Council's endorsement was to be sought.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that a delegation from the County Council was expected to meet the Rail Minister and that he was to collate a more comprehensive report to support the project.

The potential for a stakeholder group with the Town Council as a member was also discussed. It was outlined that Blyth Town Council could potentially facilitate a meeting of the local Councils.

Councillor G Thompson expressed his support for the project.

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Councillor A Gibbs-Barton commented that he supports the reintroduction of a light railway however noted that the proposed locations may cause an increase in traffic on already overly congested roads. It was also noted that considerations such as this and previously discussed concerns regarding parking at the planned Newsham station should not become auxiliary issues.

Councillor J R Potts outlined the situation regarding Newsham station site to the Council. It was noted that it had previously been discussed at a Meeting of the Planning and Development Committee and that the provision of car parking spaces was tied in the development of properties on the site.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) noted that this project involved the same Officers from Northumberland County Council as the Central Link Road and the ABT line and that a Meeting would therefore be potentially easier to facilitate. **Action: LF** to circulate the report via Social Media.

The Mayor also commented on the correspondence from the County Council noting that this was welcome news for the County whilst acknowledging parking within Blyth has remained free.

10. MINUTES OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE

10.1 To agree the Minutes of the Staff Committee held on the 27th July 2013

The Minutes of the Staff Committee held on the 27th July 2013 were **AGREED** by the Full Council as a true record.

10.2 To consider the proposal regarding Blyth Town Council Organisational Structure in the attached report

The Chair of the Staff Committee provided an outline of the proposal to the full Council. It was commented that from the Meeting of the Staff Committee it was agreed that a small group is to be set up.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) commented that potential to use NEREO was limited due to not having set corporate goals.

Councillor J R Potts commented that if possible he would like to seek further comparison figures with the local Town Councils. **Action: SN**

This proposal was **AGREED** and this sub-group was to be compiled of the Chairs and Vice-Chair of Staffing and Financing and a member of the

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opposition (Cllr L Rickerby) in order to make a recommendation to the next Meeting of the Full Council.

10.3 An update regarding Member and Officer Training

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) commented that so far she had received only 6 responses and that following this commented that a date must now be set. Engagement with NEREO was noted and the plan is to provide a broad range of training for both Councillors and Officers. Councillor O Potts commented that she wished any developments to be reported back. **Action: SN**

11. MINUTES OF THE POLICY WORKING GROUP

11.1 To agree the Minutes of the Policy Working Group from the 6th June 2013

The Minutes of the Policy Working Group from the 6th June 2013 were **AGREED** as a true record by the Full Council.

11.2 There will be a verbal update regarding social media and digital engagement

The Committee Clerk provided an update on the Town Councils developments regarding social media and digital engagement. It was noted that the Town Council now has a Facebook page which it hopes will support and supplement the Town Council's website. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) and Councillor O Potts thanked the Committee Clerk for his effort and work in developing this project.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that the figures and reach achieved by the page had been astonishing. Councillor J R Potts commented that hopefully the development of this engagement strategy would allow the Town Council to reach previously unreached areas and avenues.

11.3 To consider the style of the Minutes for future publication

The Mayor commented that he approved of the current style of minutes with the decisions being highlighted and placed in bold. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that the previous box style minutes were administratively more difficult and time consuming.

Councillor B Elliott commented that on all official publications such as Minutes and Agendas, that he would like to see that the list of Councillors within the Committee be placed at the end.

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It was **AGREED** that the Minutes are to proceed in their current form and that a list of Councillors within a Committee is to be attached at the end of all official publications.

12. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY GRANTS

To agree the Minutes of the Community Grants Committee from the 9th July 2013

Councillor J R Potts commented that the form has been redesigned and is to be made available in a more accessible place on the Website. The Council was also asked to note the guidance note and the deadlines which were agreed by the Committee.

The Minutes of the Community Grants Committee from the 9th July 2013 were **AGREED** by the Full Council as a true record.

13. TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING REPORT

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an update on the County Council's Benchmarking Scheme, he noted that this was an exciting development and would accrue benefits for the Town Council at no initial cost.

The potential outcomes and benefits for people and businesses in Blyth were also discussed as well as the methodology which would be employed involving asking customers at premises in Blyth the first 4 digits in their post code. It was noted by the Town Clerk (Democratic Services) noted that should this process seek to be reinstated annually that the Council would have to meet the cost but potential avenues involving local schools could be explored.

Cllr K Nisbet commented that she supported the scheme, stating that the data and findings would allow for a greater understanding and help Blyth to compete with other Towns in the County. Councillor J R Potts also outlined his support reiterated that this sort of information was required in order to act and develop Blyth. The Mayor expressed his support and noted that he supported the outlined conditions.

It was **AGREED** that this proposal as outlined in the report was to progress.

14. ANY FURTHER INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR URGENT ATTENTION

None.

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15. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL

The next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled for the 19th September 2013.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL:

Councillors: - R Parker (Mayor)
 M Parker (Deputy Mayor)
 A Cartie
 B W Elliott
 K Ellis
 A Gibbs-Barton
 G T Knox
 K Nisbet
 J R Potts
 O Potts
 J Reid
 L Rickerby
 D Rutter
 G Thompson
 A Turnbull

Officers: S Noddings Town Clerk (Corporate Services)
 S Rickitt Town Clerk (Democratic Services)
 S Robinson Assets Officer
 A McCabe Administration Clerk
 L Forsyth Committee Clerk