

Minutes of a meeting of Amble Town Council held on Thursday 9th January 2014 at 6.30pm in the Council Meeting Room, Harbour Commissioners Building, The Quayside, Harbour Road, Amble.

PRESENT: Cllrs Weir (Chair), Arckless, Mrs Dargue, Mrs Lewis, Miss Morrison, Watson and the Clerk: Miss Brown.

Gazette reporter James Willoughby and 3 members of the public were present.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Mrs Bennett – Personal commitments. The apologies were agreed.

The Chairman wished all present a Happy New Year.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllr Arckless declared an interest in item 14.4 being a member of the County Council Policy Board who would decide on the proposed closure.

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: (maximum 15 minutes)

The members of the public present were parents of children attending at St. Cuthbert's RC First School. They details issues with leadership and management in the recent OFSTED report. They wished the school to stay open and believed the diocese should be reminded of their duty of care to their parish and bridge the gap in funding and address the problems with leadership. They believed that the present Governors were unable to make the school work then they should be replaced, school church relations had become fragments which may have resulted in the plummeting pupil numbers. The imminent housing developments in the Town may improve the pupil numbers.

For the benefit of the members of the public the Chair moved item 14.4 forward on the agenda.

14.4: Consultation – Proposed closure if St. Cuthbert's RC First School, Amble – As the consultation was open until 24th February, this would be deferred to the January meeting of the Council whilst members considered the proposal document – It was RESOLVED that the Members did not agree to the proposal to close the school. A response to the consultation would be sent to the Governors stating that in a town parent who wished their children to do to a faith school should not have to send their young children a considerable distance by bus. Whilst it was appreciated that the problems with the management structure of the school and the dropping numbers may have forced the Governors into this position, it was believed that the church and Northumberland County Council should come up with alternatives to try to make positive changes to bring children back into the school. It was also noted that there were plans to build over 300 new homes in the town and 740 in the local area being the figure used in the recent Core Strategy consultation. It was believed that the Coquet Partnership of Schools was still I existence and it should be investigated whether teachers for the other schools within the partnership were in a position to help. It was felt that it would be bad president to close a school when having trouble with numbers.

3. MINUTES: TOWN COUNCIL

3.1: It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 12th December 2013 were a true record.

4. CLERK'S REPORT:

RECOMMENDATION – That the Council notes the contents of the report

4.1: Quote for Options Analysis and Feasibility Study accepted. – Initial meeting with consultants held.

4.2: Letters of thanks sent re: popping planting volunteers/donations

4.3: Letter of thanks to Harbour Light Choir re: Christmas Performance

4.4: Request to NCC to drain paddling pools which were filled during the tidal surge on 5th December – confirmation of drainage received 17th Dec.

4.5: Damage to walkway at the Paddlers reported to NCC following tidal surge on 5th December.

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4.6: Query to NCC regarding no communication over suggested Town Council action at the North Area Committee on 11th November

4.7: Meeting with Homes for Northumberland held.

4.8: Letter to Corporate Director of Finance querying his response to the non recurrent grant.

4.9: Email re: High Street garden – requesting anticipated time frame for removal and construction of walls

5. AGENDA ITEMS FROM CLERK’S REPORT inc.:

5.1: Response from Corporate Director of Finance – It was RESOVLED not to pursue this further. Cllr Mrs Lewis expressed that she may pursue this as a private individual.

6. CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS and REPORT:

The Chairman had attended the Christmas Carol Service in Alnwick on 18th December.

7. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS:

County Councillor Arckless presented his report which was circulated.

County Councillor Watson noted that the progress on the Acklington Road bus shelter would be discussed by the Amenities Committee.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES & REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS:

Cllr Mrs Dargue informed that she was unable to attend the most recent LMAPS meeting.

9. AGENDA ITEMS:

As item 9.5 could have an implication on the budget if agreed to move this item forward.

9.5: Consideration of subsidising bus service 471. Cllr Arckless proposed the Town Council subsidise this service for a year with a contribution of £1500 while looking at alternatives. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Dargue when put to the vote there were 3 in favour and 3 against. The Chairman exercised his casting vote and the motion was not carried.

9.1: To consider the budget for 2014-15 It was RESOVLED that the budget of £106,300 be agreed.

9.2: To consider the revised Amenities Committee Terms of Reference and sub committee terms of reference. It was RESOVLED that they be accepted.

9.3: Update on Central Ward vacancy – The Clerk informed that the notice of election should be displayed from 10th January

9.4: Submission for newspaper Ambler Issue 84 – It was RESOLVED this be agreed.

10. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

10.1: It was RESOLVED that the reports and recommendations of the Meeting held Thursday 19th December 2013 be agreed.

11. REPORT FROM THE CEMETERIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

11.1: The next meeting was due to be held 23rd January 2014

12. REPORT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

12.1: It was RESOVLED that the reports and recommendations of the meeting held 17th December 2013 be agreed with amendments.

12.2: It was RESOLVED that the reports and recommendation of the meeting held on 7th January 2014 be agreed.

12.3: The Planning report for the month of December would be circulated.

13 REPORT FROM THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE:

13.1: The next meeting would be held on 16th January 2014

14. COMMUNICATIONS:

14.1: Proposal to close St. Cuthbert's RC First School – This item was dealt with under public question time.

14.2: Freedom of Information request to Northumbria Police delayed re: traffic statistics – the deadline for this item was 14th January.

14.3: Youth Work Northumberland – It was detailed that an event would be held to show the benefit and efficiencies of Youth Work in Northumberland. The Clerk would circulate this information of the event when it was available.

14.4: NCC - Council Charter Task & Finish Working Group – Cllr Weir attended on 7th January, the notes of this meeting would be circulated.

14.5: NCC – Working with Town and Parish Councils – The letter would be circulated for comments to be returned to the Clerk. Concern was raised that it did not appear that where a Cemetery/Park was retained by NCC a special expense would be levied on the Parish. This would mean that where the Amble rate payer contributed to the running costs of the Amble Cemeteries via their local council tax, they would also be contributing towards the running cost of NCC retained cemeteries for example. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk with the Chair compile a response from Member comments.

14.6: NALC – Changes to subscription formula 2014-15. It was noted that there would be a 5% increase for the 2014-15 financial year which was inline with previous years increases.

14.7: Mrs Burke – Parking consultation – In Mrs Burke's letter to NCC she raised the issue of lack of long term stay car parking facilities in the Town. Whilst this was addressed in the Town Council response to the parking consultation, it was RESOLVED to support the idea of NCC investigating long term stay parking.

14.8: AONB – Management Plan 2014-19 Consultation (end date 20th January) – Any comments should be returned to the Clerk.

14.9: East Amble Women's Workshop Project – Primarily this was for information but the Project were also looking for temporary office space. It was RESOLVED that the information be circulated to Members and it be delegated to the Vice-Chair and Clerk to respond.

15. INFORMATION ITEMS AND ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION:

RECOMMENDATION - That the Council note the information items.

15.1: NALC – E-news December 2013

15.2: CAN News Winter 2013

The information items were noted.

16. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

16:1 The next Meeting will be on **Thursday 13th February 2014 at approx. 6.30pm.** in the Town Council Meeting Room, The Quayside, Amble to be preceded by a meeting with Sodexo and Acklington Parish Council at 5.30pm in Acklington Village Hall

It was RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public will be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda due to their sensitive nature.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE

17. PRIVATE REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES & REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS:

17.1: To receive the report of Councillors who represent ATC on outside bodies – no reports were given.

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18: Update on staff absence – Although a return to work date was not yet known, it was RESOVLED that the Clerk be given delegated powers to purchase the necessary office equipment to make the officer comfortable on their future return to work.

19: Consideration of Future Town Council Developments – Cllr Mrs Lewis presented a report on possible future developments. It was RESOLVED that the Cemetery Storage area be investigated and brought back to the Cemeteries Management Committee for further consideration and progression.

It was RESOVLED that planning advice be investigated for the Coal Yard site.

The meeting closed at 9.17pm