

## Royal Burgh of North Berwick Community Council

### Minutes of the 424<sup>th</sup> Public Meeting held at 19:30 on Tuesday 01 November 2011 at the Fire Station, North Berwick

**Present:** Cllr P Burton Chairman  
Cllr K Smith Secretary  
Cllr E Danks Treasurer  
Cllrs M Baker , R Bryson, J Goodfellow, R MacEwen, W Macnair, J Scott,  
S Sinclair, I Watson

**In attendance:** ELC Cllrs D Berry & N Rankin, PC Dobbie, Mr S Wallace, Ms P Earle, local  
press

Mr S Wallace, Secretary of North Berwick Environment Trust, was welcomed to meeting.

**Action**

#### **1 Apologies for absence**

Cllr L Hall, Mr S Short

#### **2 Minutes of meeting held on 04 October 2011**

The Minutes were approved, being proposed by Cllr MacEwen and seconded by Cllr Watson.

#### **3 Matters Arising**

##### *3.1 Parking*

(3.6) ELC Cllr Berry had asked that the parking line outside the police station be delineated. It was noted that kerbstones had been laid and it was hoped that the new arrangements would prevent pedestrians drifting into the road.

##### *3.2 Community and Police Partnership (CAPP)*

(4.4) The partnership between police, community wardens and the community was working but members of public were encouraged to attend the meetings. The partnership had been mentioned in the recent newsletter.

##### *3.3 Severe weather*

(11.1) It as reported that more tractors and staff clearing roads were to be provided. There would be a larger salt store at Macmerry. See item 4.4 below.

#### **4 Police report**

4.1 There had been 12 reported crimes in the past month of which 6 had been solved. PC Dobbie was pleased that the level was low and reported that solvency had again increased. The breakdown was as follows:

Theft of pedal cycle – 2	Domestic assaults – 2 (2 solved)
Vandalism – 2 (1 solved)	Theft other – 2
Theft by shoplifting – 2 (2 solved)	MDS possession – 1 (1 solved)
Malicious mischief - 1	

4.2 Those responsible for vandalism to floodlights at the skate park had been charged.

4.3 Schools had expressed concern about pupils being dropped off at school by parents in a dangerous manner. Law Primary had been working with the police on a 'Park and Stride' policy. Law Primary School could issue a map of safe parking areas and further information. Personal safety talks had been given in the schools about Bonfire night and Hallowe'en and all local teams were working together on these events.

4.4 The next CAPP meeting would be held on Wednesday 30 Nov at 19:30. The meetings were now being advertised on the force webpage and twitter site.

4.5 Enhanced surgeries were being run and could be arranged on request by contacting 893585, [laura.dobbie@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:laura.dobbie@lbp.pnn.police.uk) or [colin.banks@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:colin.banks@lbp.pnn.police.uk)

- 4.6 Hallowe'en had been quiet, with very few incidents and no acts of vandalism. Eggs had been thrown from a vehicle in the High Street and Quality Street and it was hoped that CCTV would help in investigations.
- 4.7 It was expected that extra officers would be on duty for Bonfire Night. The meeting discussed legislation regarding fireworks.
- 4.8 ELC Cllr Berry had raised the issue of speeding boats in the summer with the police. A meeting had been held with a representative of the Marine Unit, who had pointed out that Forth Ports had instigated a series of byelaws and consequent fines. ELC Cllr Berry would be convening a meeting with relevant parties. A proactive policing plan could be put together if the times of the highest incidence of offences were known in advance.

[PC Dobbie left the meeting]

## **5 Edington Hospital**

- 5.1 The Review Forum had met on 10 October, having been attended by Cllrs Burton, MacEwen and Goodfellow, the Friends of the Edington, the GP practice, local councillors, East Lothian Community Care Forum, ELC officers and East Lothian Community Health Partnership. A timescale had been agreed for completion of a study of functions and services. A public event would then be held in North Berwick to discuss the options being proposed. On request, a press statement had been submitted by NHS to their Communications Officer but it had not yet reached the press. The public meeting was provisionally scheduled for the end of January/beginning of February, although it was considered that that might be ambitious. The next meeting would be held on 14 November.

## **6 Coastal museum**

- 6.1 The shadow committee had met on 13 and 26 October. Cllr Burton had represented NBCC. The meeting had viewed the rooms in the museum building and then had met in the SSC Education Centre. The next meeting would be held on 22 November, when an ELC architect would attend. The architect had displayed plans and given an update on the timing of planning and building alterations. It was understood the work would take most of 2012 to complete so opening was expected to be later in the year than April, as originally planned. Both groups involved, the working group and the shadow committee, would meet on 22 November to update and hand over.

## **7 East Lothian Housing Strategy**

- 7.1 Cllrs Sinclair, Hall and Goodfellow had met and produced an interim report and a draft response, which would be discussed in the near future. The following issues would be highlighted:
- With regard to affordable housing, in North Berwick the ratio between median earnings and house prices could be as much as double that in other areas in East Lothian;
  - It was unlikely that the solutions to increase supply could be achieved. There was concern about comments on private sector housing stock, which was stated to be in poorer condition than public sector, and the suggestion that a centralised database of stock condition should be compiled. This was thought to be an immense task and the group was not sure it would justify the financial investment involved. There was discussion about whether this referred only to rented properties or also included bought ones. Some residents might see the questions as an invasion of privacy if the dwelling was not below tolerable standards. ELC Cllr Berry did not think close inspection of such properties would take place;
  - With regard to social housing quality and management, it was felt that social housing was often grouped together rather than ideally integrated into communities of non social housing. It was noted that the Mains Farm proposal was an example of this;
  - Referring to special needs and housing support the response tried to reiterate that, if people were not on the social work register it was difficult for them to know where to go if they suddenly found themselves with a need, there being

no central phone number. It was felt that needs took a long time to be addressed once they were established;

- There was an imbalance in the type of housing stock in some areas and it was felt that this could be addressed by requirements set in development briefs for a higher proportion of smaller more affordable houses in areas where there was a shortage of this type of housing;
- It was felt that North Berwick had reached its capacity to absorb any further housing development beyond that already zoned without overloading existing services which had a limited capacity to expand.

Comments should be brought to the discussion.

**ALL**

- 7.2 A separate paper had been produced by Cllr MacEwen on fuel poverty/climate change. It had been noted that there was no insistence from ELC for zero carbon offsetting in the Mains Farm development. ELC Cllr Berry noted that most Council developments had been above requirements but there was no control over private developers. ELC was applauded on its levels. Pensioners were most likely to be in fuel poverty and therefore needed to be treated as a special group; this was even more important because the Older People's Strategy wanted people to stay in their homes for longer. Insulation was still the easiest and most cost-effective way of reducing carbon footprints and fuel poverty, so all measures possible were to be encouraged. All councillors were to read the document and discuss it.

**ALL**

## **8 Parking and Transport consultation workshops**

- 8.1 Workshops had taken place on 25 October in the Community Centre. Several councillors had attended. It was noted that there had been good attendance at both events. Presentations had been made on the results of the survey carried out by the consultants, MVA and groups had discussed these with facilitators. They were considered to have been useful events. Most residents had been anxious about not parking in the High Street and had been in favour of paid residents' parking permits or using the Glebe Field. Some residents accepted that their choice to live in the High Street involved a parking problem. All had felt that park and ride was not a good idea but several ideas had been forthcoming. It was noted that the consultants, had thought it unlikely that park and ride would be economically viable in a town the size of North Berwick. Clear signage was needed. Some considered that it had been unfortunate that there had been no summing up, although that had allowed for more discussion time. It was understood that a report would be produced after an internal document had been discussed. The length of stay in car parks had been surprising, with an average of 6 hours in all car parks. 480 people drove to work within the town and it was noted that some cars stay in High Street all day. A NBCC response was to be produced.

**RM, JG,  
MB, SS**

## **9 Christmas lights**

- 9.1 A risk assessment confirmation from ELC was awaited. Lights would be hung the following Sunday if permissions were in place. Jay Crawford of Real Radio would switch on the lights. Publicity was in hand both in the press and around the town. A bank account had been opened. Businesses were being very supportive and stickers would be issued to them; £800 had been donated to date. Quizzes were on sale. A meeting would be held on 22 November and switch on would be at 16:00 on Saturday 26 November. Councillors would inform the Chairman if they would be on hand to help.

**ALL**

## **10 Social care – winter contingency planning**

### *Severe weather arrangements*

The Secretary had spoken to the Emergency Planning & Risk Manager at ELC following the last meeting. ELC was not keen to store shovels etc at the amenity site, as it was not manned all the time. The Secretary would enquire whether the container at the allotments could be used. A quantity of grit would be stored either at the amenity site or the Council yard. It was noted that third party liability insurance would be covered by Zurich Municipal as they had accepted the community council resilience role as being part of the duties of a community council. The insurers should be advised of involvement.

- 10.2 *Vulnerable members of the community*  
A letter from the Head of Adult Social Care had requested identification of people in the community who might be vulnerable. The Chairman had circulated her response, stating that NBCC would not have access to such information and it was more likely to be known to GPs and ELC. A hotline had been suggested for help or advice.

## **11 Kirk ports church tower roof**

- 11.1 A meeting had been convened by Cllr MacLennan on 31 October, with representation from ELC, Cllrs Burton and MacEwen, North Berwick Environment Trust, local councillors, the Property Department and Historic Scotland. Mr Hanson, District Architect of Historic Scotland, had produced a report on the whole fabric of the church, making broad recommendations. It was suggested that, if implemented, the whole of the church could be brought into a state that ELC could manage, given that they owned it. As a result, the Property Department had produced figures based on the recommendations. It was noted that just to make the tower secure and replace the roof could compromise the fabric of the church. The cost of stabilising the whole property was in the region of £385,000.
- 11.2 Mr Wallace, Secretary of the Environment Trust, felt that the ELC leader wanted to know what the community wished and therefore views should be sought from Environment Trust members. It was noted that more funds could be made available through the Environment Trust, as it was a charity. It was felt work should be prioritised if not all funds were forthcoming.
- 11.3 It was noted that a dangerous building notice could be issued if no work was done. Historic Scotland felt that this work would be necessary to allow the building to remain upright for next 30-40 years. If it was not done, other more expensive work might become necessary. It was noted that Historic Scotland was very keen to support this type of project but they would only be able to support a certain percentage of the funding. It was understood that Historic Scotland would consider local fundraising, other grants, and support from ELC. It was understood that ELC would put the item into its budget discussions if NBCC felt that the project should go ahead. It was noted that ELC would contribute experts to help to keep fees down.
- 11.4 The meeting discussed the significance of the building and the need for reconstruction. It was noted that the Regional Growth Fund, if it provided funds, required local training and employment, which would benefit the community. It was noted that the local community wished the area to be kept as it was and therefore funding should be sought. On taking a vote, there was unanimous support for the proposal. Mr Wallace would put the figures to the Environment Trust for their views.

## **12 Public toilet provision**

- 12.1 ELC Councillors were asked for their view on the lack of provision of facilities in the town. ELC Cllr Berry reiterated that the Glen Golf Club had seemed willing to accommodate toilets in its building instead of the previous plan for Castle Hill but development of this plan had stalled. The current position of the Glen Golf Club was not known. ELC had not thought the suggestion for a toilet at the west putting green was plausible as an additional facility would not have a great deal of use out of season. ELC Cllr Berry felt he had not received a clear view regarding the positioning of a toilet at the west end of the town. It was unknown whether there was plumbing at the station but it was noted that local residents had objected to having toilets there in the past, although it was understood that there had only been two objectors. It was felt that one block of toilets in a tourist town was insufficient.
- 12.2 NBCC would pursue the idea of toilet provision, either at the station or elsewhere in the west of the town, and would present views to ELC in the near future. It was noted that Council policy was to provide one toilet in each town, notwithstanding the nature of the tourist town with its influx of visitors in summer. ELC Cllr Berry suggested that the committee should discuss the prioritisation of work needed in the town.

12.3 NBCC would write to ask both councillors on the progress on facilities at the East Beach, following which ELC Cllr Berry would check. **KS**

### **13 East Lothian Landscape Capacity Study for Smaller Wind Turbines Consultation**

13.1 The Chairman reported that she and Cllr Macnair had considered ELC's Capacity Study and prepared NBCC's Response to this Consultation, which had been circulated previously to NB Community Councillors for approval. The Response had been sent in time and acknowledged by the Policy Planning Department. In their view, even small wind turbines had a detrimental impact on the landscape. ELC Cllr Berry explained that, although ELC had been proactive in having wind farms in less inhabited areas, there had been no policy in more inhabited places and, in view of the surge in applications, it had therefore sought local views. It was understood that a paper based on the consultation would be presented to the next ELC Cabinet meeting.

### **14 Planning**

14.1 The following applications were discussed and met with no objections:

3 Quadrant – alterations to house

60 bed care facility and day centre - Tranent

4 Marly Green – replacement roof tiles

Use of astroturf pitches at High School – change in hours

Ferrygate Farm – extension to and re-roofing of house

14.2 The following applications had been decided:

Bass Rock – application for erection of 16 flats and associated works permitted

Gin Head – application for formation of 7 houses permitted. It was noted that education provision had now been avoided and that the law required a Section 75 if present provision was inadequate, but not otherwise.

14.3 *Ferrygate Farm*

A Proposal of Application Notice had been submitted for the use of 35 hectares for an estimated maximum of 700 houses. No opinion was necessary at the moment. It was noted that provision was being made now for future planning. It was noted that the Dirleton Village Association was concerned about the coalescing of communities.

14.4 *Fenton Barns sewerage works and associated development*

It was noted that this application included a significant housing-enabling development. The meeting discussed the potential increase in employment. It also discussed the neglect of facilities which resulted in enabling developments and the lack of the need for affordable housing in such developments. It was noted that the new application had less detail. A future meeting would discuss the application.

14.5 *Old Coastguard Station*

It was noted that this application would be on the agenda of the next ELC Planning Committee meeting. Cllr Goodfellow would attend to support objectors. **JG**

### **15 Reports from groups and societies**

15.1 *Twinning committee*

Progress was being made in discussions with the German town of Forst. The Colts football team was arranging a visit to the area next summer.

15.2 *Youth network*

The group was discussing arrangements for the Community Festival in the summer of 2012. A board meeting would discuss whether the Lodge grounds café would be run again in 2012. It was noted that it was becoming more difficult to raise funds.

15.3 *North Berwick in Bloom*

The group had been awarded 5 out of 5 blooms (the highest possible) in the international Community in Blooms scheme. National flags had been exchanged.

- 15.4 The trophy for the Gold Winner of Coastal Award in Beautiful Scotland in Bloom was on display at the meeting. A request had been made for trophies to be displayed in the John Muir House reception but a response had not been received; it was hoped that they might be displayed in the new coastal museum in future. It was noted that Canada had been interested in the Spring bulb walk.

## **16 Correspondence**

### **16.1 *Tantallon Terrace & Heugh Parking Byelaw***

The Secretary reported that Head of Law & Licensing was awaiting a response from the police and Scottish Seabird Centre before submitting a report to the Council's Cabinet for authorisation to make the byelaw under the statutory procedures, prohibiting camping in vehicles in various areas.

### **16.2 *Footpath obstruction***

Mr Skirving had written about a tree in Dirleton Avenue with roots which obstructed the pavement, particularly for wheelchair users. It was suggested that the fence could be moved over to create a cycle and foot path outside the roots. A letter would be sent to ELC's Peter Forsyth regarding the matter. **KS**

### **16.3 *Letters of thanks***

The local MP, Fiona O'Donnell had written to NBCC thanking it for its work and a similar letter had been received from Iain Gray, MSP.

### **16.4 *Civic Pride grants***

The deadline for Civic Pride applications was 30 November. Cllrs Smith and Macnair would proceed with an application to fund the proposed community notice board. **KS/WM**

### **16.5 *Consultation and Engagement Strategy***

ELC had issued a Consultation and Engagement Strategy document which the Chairman would consider. **PB**

### **16.6 *4 York Road***

The response from the Chief Executive of ELC regarding the handling of the planning application would be passed to Cllr Goodfellow.

## **17 AOB**

- 17.1 A Remembrance Sunday service would be held on 13 November at the Abbey Church at 10:30, followed by a ceremony at the war memorial at 12:00. Councillors were encouraged to attend. **ALL**

- 17.2 Broadband may be disrupted on 15 November due to upgrading works.

## **18 Date of next meeting**

**19.30 on Tuesday 6 December 2011 in the Fire Station**