

Royal Burgh of North Berwick Community Council

Minutes of the 466th Public Meeting held at 19.30 on Tuesday 07 April 2015

in The Fire Station, Station Road, North Berwick.

Present: Cllr S Sinclair Chairman
Cllr K Smith Secretary
Cllrs L Hall, P Hamilton, G Johnstone, D Kellock, W Macnair, D Ritchie, J Scott, H Smith, I Watson

In attendance: ELC Cllr J Goodfellow, Alison Rodger, local Press, Mrs A Turgoose.

1 Apologies: Cllrs M Baker and E Danks, ELC Cllr T Day.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 March 2015.

The adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Cllr J Scott and seconded by Cllr D Ritchie.

3 Matters Arising.

3.1 New Quality Street Noticeboard.

(3.1) Cllr Macnair reported that issues regarding the opening mechanism had not yet been resolved. Options were being considered, including a modification to move the fastening to the front. The Chairman expressed disappointment at the delay in finding a solution.

3.2 Resilient Communities.

(5.1) Cllr Ritchie advised that, due to unforeseen circumstances, completion of the draft plan had been delayed. It should be available by the end of April.

3.3 Ferrygate

(10.1) Cllr Macnair noted recent coverage in the Press regarding the appeal by Miller Homes. ELC Cllr Goodfellow confirmed that the matter had been referred to the Reporter at the Scottish Government.

3.4 Community Centre Manager

(11.8) The Chairman was pleased to note that the importance of this post had been acknowledged. The post had been advertised with an expectation that it would be filled by the end of April.

3.5 Toilets at the Harbour

(13.1) Cllr Macnair asked for a progress report as some work had been undertaken but the job had not been completed. The Chairman reminded Councillors that the deadline for completion had been Easter. ELC Cllr Goodfellow stated that the toilets were still being refurbished and that he would obtain an update.

4 Police Report.

4.1 During the period 03/3/ 2015 - 07/4/2015, there were 96 calls to the Police. As there was no Police presence at the meeting, the Secretary read out the Police Report.

WARD PRIORITIES:

1] Road Safety: You told us that there were issues with speeding motorists and inconsiderate parking, especially in central areas and near schools.

On 7 March, there was a road traffic collision at the traffic lights on Dirleton Avenue involving 3 vehicles which left one driver with minor neck injuries.

There were several parking complaints over the last month (parking /obstruction). As a result of these calls, numerous parking tickets have been issued.

2] Anti-Social Behaviour: You told us that there were problems with littering, violent conduct, young people causing disturbance, antisocial behaviour and rowdy drunken behaviour.

On 7 March 2 separate calls were received regarding a group of youths causing a disturbance at Sainthill Court. Police attended but there was no trace of the youths.

On 10 March a resident from Sainthill Court reported damage to his vehicle on 8 March. The damage is believed to have been caused by a person being thrown onto the bonnet of the vehicle.

On 19 March a male was issued with an ASB fixed penalty ticket for causing a breach of the peace at his home address.

On 2 April a male was seen by a passing Police patrol to be urinating outside Abbey Church. He was issued with an ASB fixed penalty ticket.

3] Substance Misuse: You told us you were worried about people using and dealing drugs in the area and their subsequent behaviour.

On 19 March possible drug dealing was reported from residential property. On Police arrival, there was no evidence of criminal activity - Possible hoax call.

On 24 March a report was received about a male and female in their 30's allegedly smoking cannabis at Trainers Brae. When officers attended, there was no trace of the couple.

4] Theft: You told us you were worried about security and the theft of personal possessions such as power tools, bicycles and money.

Overnight, between 4 and 5 March, approx. 100 litres of diesel were siphoned from a lorry parked within the Rugby Club car park, Dunbar Road.

On 15 March a vehicle was reported stolen from Lady Jane Gardens. After extensive enquiries, this was found not to be the case. The owner was later questioned in relation to wasting police time and enquiries are ongoing.

On 22 March an elderly lady filled her vehicle at Dalrymple Petrol Station and drove off without paying. Enquiries are ongoing into this theft which could well be a genuine mistake.

On 26 March Gelateria Alandis and Howard Selby Autos were broken into and items stolen from within. Suspects made off in a stolen motor vehicle which was later recovered near Aberlady. A search of the area by local officers and specialist support from Police Dog resulted in 2 males being arrested and detained for court in relation to numerous other house breakings across East Lothian.

On 31 March a North Berwick resident received telephone calls from a male and female purporting to be from Talk Talk claiming there was an issue with her computer router. The callers asked numerous questions and knew some bank details. The resident identified a scam and suffered no financial loss.

On 6 April a male filled his vehicle with fuel and drove off from Dalrymple Petrol Station without paying. The registered number of the offending vehicle was noted and enquiries are ongoing into this theft.

4.2 **CAPP priorities for North Berwick: Three issues were highlighted for the Coastal Area.**

- Youth related antisocial behaviour in the car park in the boarded up CO-OP premises on Dunbar Road, both pedestrian ASB and also vehicle.
- Speeding vehicles in and out of the road to Yellowcraigs. Alleged racing two a breast, speeding through the car park area and also motor cycles speeding on the pathway to the beach
- Concerns regarding speeding vehicles on the A198, especially between Gullane and Luffness Golf courses.

Date of the next CAPP meeting: Wednesday 29 April 2015 at 19.30 at the Council Chambers Quality Street.

Feedbackto:NorthBerwickCoastalCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

4.3 ***Other incidents of note***

The incident raised at last month's meeting in relation to 2 girls who were followed by an Asian male in the High Street was investigated. It is not thought to be linked to the indecent exposure in Dirleton around the same time. The male did not speak to them or make any form of advance. Reassurance patrols were carried out and no further reports of this nature have been received.

Operation Monarda 3

Between 23 and 29 March Police Scotland, with other partner agencies, carried out a campaign specifically focusing on Doorstep Crime. There was increased Police activity in areas of prevention, intelligence, engagement, enforcement and reassurance. Longer term planning is also in place for other initiatives throughout the year. Doorstep Crime affects some of the most vulnerable within society and our local communities. Victims are targeted due to perceived vulnerability – age, gender, disability - with many becoming repeat victims. Police Scotland is committed to reducing the number of individuals affected by Doorstep Crime, ultimately keeping vulnerable groups safe and empowering local communities.

Operation Andromeda

This operation has been ongoing over the last month in various towns in East Lothian. It is a test purchase operation for the sale of alcohol to underage drinkers. All premises in North Berwick passed.

- 4.4 The Chairman, while noting the detail contained within the report, expressed disappointment, on behalf of the Community Council, at the absence of Police

representation at the meeting. ELC Cllr Goodfellow agreed to take these comments back to CAPP.

- 4.5 The meeting was made aware of a written apology circulated among neighbours by some new residents who had accepted responsibility for their unacceptable behaviour and hoped that changes would help their integration within the community. The Council welcomed this initiative.
- 4.6 Cllr Watson drew attention to the gaps in yellow lines on Law Road which attracted parking and caused obstruction, despite a police presence on several days. A busy holiday period had exacerbated the problems here and elsewhere in the town. The yellow lines needed to be clearly reinstated.
- 4.7 Cllr H Smith commented that the Community Centre carpark had not been used.
- 4.8 Cllr Hall, on behalf of Cllr Baker who was not present, raised the question of illegal parking on Anchor Green.
- 4.9 The issue of parking was discussed more generally. The Chairman noted the changes which would increase seafront parking and the plans to increase parking within the town, e.g. at the Glebe carpark. She still had concerns regarding signage to help direct people. North Berwick had attracted a lot of positive attention in the media and the likelihood of increasing numbers of visitors and the addition of new housing would have an impact on the town. Cllr K Smith had circulated details of the proposals from ELC regarding the new parking areas and the Chairman suggested that these were revisited before the next meeting. Several Councillors, who had not previously favoured a Park and Ride Scheme, were of a view that it should be revisited with a view to longer term planning. Car parking spaces would remain, perhaps with the consideration of a time limit. Cllr Johnstone was familiar with the Park and Ride system operating in Dunfermline which appeared to work effectively. Cllr Ritchie drew attention to coastal areas in Devon and Cornwall where Park and Ride was the only option as cars were banned from the towns. Cllr H Smith believed that identification of good practice elsewhere could help develop a North Berwick strategy. The Chairman welcomed any information on Park and Ride schemes

5 New Community Councillor

The Chairman officially welcomed George Johnstone whom she believed would make a strong contribution to the work of the Community Council. Cllr Johnstone replaced Cllr Hall who had retired. Cllr Hall was thanked for her efforts over many years and for her expertise in dealing with planning matters which would now be handled by Cllr Kellock. Cllr Hall drew attention to the many pressures and changes facing the town with increasing workloads for the volunteer Community Councillors. She expressed her belief that the Community Council would continue to ensure that the changes did not damage the town.

6 Budget for 2015/2016

- 6.1 The Treasurer set out the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2015. He provided details of the income and expenditure, assets and liabilities and also provided information on the Local Priorities Budget.
- 6.2 Cllr H Smith asked if the Newsletter, funded from the Local Priorities Budget, could be discussed. The Chairman advised that the Council was contractually committed to two

further publications. She acknowledged that it was a major expenditure but had a print run of 4600 copies, going to households and businesses in the town. She had recently been approached by a member of Tranent Community Council who were planning to introduce a Newsletter. Cllr Macnair commented on the high quality of the Newsletter which was appreciated by residents, visitors and businesses. He saw no need to change and was supported in this view by Cllr K Smith. The Treasurer confirmed that it was affordable from the budget. Cllr Ritchie reminded Councillors that, at a previous meeting when the topic of Facebook had arisen, it had been agreed to have a discussion about community engagement in broad terms which could include the role of the Newsletter. She believed that a broad swathe of people did not engage with the Community Council and that it was worth looking at other potential initiatives such as surveys, round table discussions, perhaps at a midmonth meeting. Cllr Watson was not opposed to the idea of improving effectiveness but was not convinced that there was scope to do much else, given the amount of time Councillors already spent on volunteer activities. He wondered who would take on any extra roles. The Chairman asked the Press to remind members of the public that they were welcome to attend Council meeting although Cllr H Smith commented that attendance at evening meetings was not possible for many people. It was agreed to review engagement with the community at a future midmonth meeting.

6.3 Cllr Ritchie raised the potential cost of a pay as you go phone for the Resilient Communities point of contact person. The Treasurer confirmed that funds were available. Cllr Macnair highlighted the importance of choosing the appropriate network as the signal from some providers was very poor. It was also mentioned that, if the phone was not used within a set period, some sim cards cease to operate.

6.4 The Budget for 2015/2016 was approved, subject to audit.

7 Harbour Trust

7.1 The Chairman reported that ELC had now handed responsibility for the Harbour area to the Harbour Trust and that a familiarisation talk would take place. ELC Cllr Goodfellow stated that ELC had not gifted the Harbour but had leased it. The Harbour Trust can now apply for funding e.g. from Viridor. ELC had put in some seed money so it was hoped that, by Autumn, there should be some improvement in sea defences. There was a lot happening at the Harbour and Cllr Macnair welcomed this change and access to funding which could create an exciting way forward.

8 Area Partnership

8.1 Meetings continue on a regular basis. The Chairman had received a paper on broadband, from Haddington, should anyone wish to read it. She reported that the budget had now been devolved to Area Partnerships and that three meetings had been arranged to explain how this would work. Unfortunately, the meeting set for 21 April coincided with a Council midmonth meeting at which Seabird Centre representatives would be present so she would attend one of the meetings due to be held in Tranent and Haddington. Given the importance of the issue which would affect everyone, Cllr H Smith offered to attend the meeting on 21st. The overall devolved Area Partnership budget is £200,000.

8.2 Now that systems are in place, a new Chair for the Area Partnerships is required, to replace David Small. Cllr H Smith noted that the advert is for a voluntary, unpaid role. The role involved attendance at daytime meetings. This would require a very understanding

employer or a self employed or retired person which could be excluding rather than facilitating and result in a narrow field of applications. The Chairman agreed that the role was important, involving for example, negotiation and arbitration and reminded Councillors that they could apply for the post.

9 Community Rail Partnership

- 9.1 Abellio had now taken over the franchise. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Partnership planned to fund a leaflet for stations between Edinburgh - Dunbar and Edinburgh - North Berwick, detailing places to see, cycle tracks etc. She confirmed that the campaign to provide toilets at the station continues. In response to a request from Cllr Macnair for wider distribution of timetables e.g. to hotel and, caravan parks, the Chairman agreed to raise this matter with Abellio.

Planning Matters

- 10.1 **Whitekirk Development Plan:** Cllr Hall reported that the Community Council had been asked for comments on landscaping and policy, although Whitekirk falls within the Dunder area. The proposal involves the development of a 100 bedroom hotel, 42 houses and a number of lodges. ELC Cllr Goodfellow confirmed that no houses could be built until a minimum of 70 hotel bedrooms have been completed. 33 houses could be built at that point with the remainder being built when the 100 bedrooms were in place. The Community Council had concerns that the houses were not integrated within the Whitekirk community and would object on those grounds.

The following new applications were viewed, discussed and commented on, where appropriate:

- 10.2 **Engine Cottage, Abbotsford Road EH39 5DA:** Design changes to extensions, change to steps position and formation of hard surfaces as changes to the scheme of development the subject of listed building consent 12/00905/LBC. No objection was raised.

Engine Cottage, Abbotsford Road EH39 5DA: Design changes to extensions, change to car shelter and steps position and formation of hard surfaces as changes to the scheme of development the subject of planning permission 12/00905/ P. No objection was raised.

41 Keppel Road EH39 4QG: Erection of porch and formation of balcony. No objection was raised.

Parkhead, 18A Westgate EH39 4AF: Demolition of gates. No objection was raised.

Parkhead, 18A Westgate EH39 4AF: Alterations, extension to flat, erection of gates, garden building and formation of hardstanding area. No objection was raised.

25 Dirleton Avenue EH39 4BE: Extension to house, erection of fencing and gate. No objection was raised.

Woodend Cottage, 69 Dirleton Avenue EH39 4Q: Extension to house and erection of shed. No objection was raised.

Grange Road – Walker Homes: Display of advertisements. No objection was raised.

Links Lodge, Links Road EH39 4AP: Alterations and extensions to house, formation of dormer and hardstanding areas, erection of pergola and wall. No objection was raised.

53 Old Abbey Road EH39 4BP: Extension to house with first floor balcony, formation of decking and erection of fencing. Alison Rodgers who lives next door expressed concerns that the balcony would overlook the granny annexe within her garden. There was discussion regarding the need for any windows which overlooked other properties to have obscured glass. An objection would be raised.

1B Fowler Court Forth Street EH39 4HX: Alterations to flat and formation of dormers. An objection would be raised on grounds that the dormers overlooked other properties.

42 St Baldred's Road EH39 4PU: Changes to footprint of utility room and addition of a conservatory as design changes to the scheme of development the subject of planning permission 13/00593/P. No objection was raised.

11 Reports from Groups and Societies

11.1 **Fairtrade Town Status:** Cllr Ritchie had attended to a meeting to discuss the review of the town's Fairtrade status, due to take place in June. The organisers were looking for endorsement from the Community Council and it was noted that they wished to attend a Council meeting.

11.2 **Law Residents Association:** Cllr Hamilton extended an invitation for someone from North Berwick in Bloom to attend a meeting of the Law Residents' Association on 23 April in the Sports Centre at 7pm. The Chairman agreed to take this forward. Cllr Ritchie was also asked to attend in relation to the Beach Wheelchair project.

11.3 **Coastal Museum:** The Henry Scott Tuke exhibition opened on Good Friday. Cllr Watson confirmed that the opening hours were Wednesday to Sunday 11am- 4pm and that the café would be open. An excellent lecture which attracted high attendance had been held in the Seabird Centre on Good Friday. Indications were that this exhibition would prove popular.

11.4 **Friends of the Lodge:** A successful Easter Egg Hunt was held in the Lodge Grounds on Good Friday morning with children finding almost 100 eggs.

11.5 **Kirk Ports:** Cllr Kellock had attended a meeting on 7 April to discuss the way forward on this project which had failed to attract funding from Viridor. There was a commitment to get the roof back on the tower but, first, the tower walls needed to be made secure. There were mixed views about what should be done and a further meeting would take place soon. Cllr Kellock had been obliged to withdraw from the project, due to other commitments.

12 Correspondence

12.1 **Coastal Command Memorial:** An invitation had been received to attend a commemoration service at the Memorial on 3 May at 2pm. The Chairman indicated that she and Cllr Baker normally attended but all were welcome.

12.2 **Tourist Information Signage:** The Chairman had reported to Keith Scott at ELC that the sign outside the Seabird Centre carpark was still pointing towards the now defunct Tourist Office and needed to be adjusted to point down School Road to the Library which houses tourism information. His reply indicated that this was a deliberate policy to encourage passing trade for local businesses, explaining that the sign at the old Tourist Information Office would redirect visitors. The Community Council found this to be an unacceptable, misleading practice. ELC Cllr Goodfellow asked for the email to be forwarded to him and he would follow up this matter.

12.3 **Polystyrene containers:** Cllr Watson had noted an increase in the use of polystyrene food containers and consequent litter issues. On questioning the owner of the take away on Quality Street, it appeared that biodegradable containers were not always readily available. However, it was also drawn to his attention that some cake shops were using polystyrene boxes. There was a need to encourage use of biodegradable products in all take away outlets.

13 **Any other competent business**

13.1 **Improvements to road/ pavement on Dirleton Road:** A complaint had been received by Cllr Ritchie regarding the tarring activities on Dirleton Road. Cllr K Smith advised that this work had been requested by the Community Council five years ago to assist walkers and cyclists.

17 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Community Council will be held at the Fire Station, Station Road North Berwick on Tuesday 5 May 2015 at 19.30.