

Royal Burgh of North Berwick Community Council

Minutes of the 467th Public Meeting held at 19.30 on Tuesday 05 May 2015

in The Fire Station, Station Road, North Berwick.

Present: Cllr S Sinclair Chairman

Cllr K Smith Secretary

Cllrs E Danks, P Hamilton, G Johnstone, D Kellock, W Macnair, D Ritchie, J Scott, H Smith, I Watson

In attendance: ELC Cllrs D Berry, T Day, J Goodfellow (part of meeting), representatives from Fair Trade, members of the public, local Press, Mrs A Turgoose.

1 Apologies: Cllr M Baker.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th April 2015.

8.1 Area Partnership. Cllr H Smith suggested an amendment to the second sentence to read "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, a self-employed or retired person which could be excluding rather than facilitating and result in a narrow field of applicants". The adoption of the revised Minutes was proposed by Cllr J Scott and seconded by Cllr W Macnair.

3 Matters Arising.

3.1 New Quality Street Noticeboard.

(3.1) Cllr Macnair reported that he had heard nothing further but would follow up. The Chairman commented that independent access by the public was important.

3.2 Polystyrene containers

(12.3) The Chairman reported that she had spoken to the owner of North Berwick Fry who currently had a supply of alternative, crushable containers. She reiterated that other take-away food outlets in the town use polystyrene containers and she encouraged Councillors to raise the issue with traders whenever possible.

3.3 Improvements to road/ pavement on Dirleton Road

(13.1) A query was raised regarding this item. ELC Cllr Berry confirmed that the concern related to cones being placed on the road to enable work on the pavement to be undertaken, creating a potential safety issue.

4 Police Report

4.1 The Chairman expressed disappointment that, for a second consecutive month, there was no Police presence. The Secretary reported that a Police Report had not been received. The CAPP report was available and had been circulated.

4.2 Three CAPP Priorities were identified for the Coastal area:

- Parking issues in both North Berwick and Gullane High Streets

- Antisocial behaviour in and around Law View
- Dog fouling around Gullane Primary School.

ELC Cllr Berry, as Chair of CAPP, welcomed feedback on the priorities. Cllr Kellock was pleased to note the positive response to speeding complaints. ELC Cllr Berry believed that the presence of a Police Office on the High Street was helping to reduce congestion. Parking bays were being kept clear and parking generally appeared more disciplined. Cllr K Smith was aware of rumours that it was a Warden, not a Police Officer, who was on duty.

4.3 Date of next CAPP meeting: Wednesday 27 May at a venue to be confirmed.

5 Fairtrade Town Presentation.

5.1 At a meeting of the Fairtrade Partnership attended by Cllr Ritchie it had been agreed that, as part of the process to secure renewal status, endorsement from the Community Council would be helpful. Two local representatives explained that Fairtrade status had to be renewed every two years. As part of the renewal process, they had to demonstrate that they had a plan to promote awareness of Fairtrade. Replying to a query from Cllr Danks, they provided information regarding local groups which had endorsed Fairtrade, for example religious organisations, local traders, guides, schools. Following a suggestion that the Community Council could promote Fairtrade by using products at meetings and functions, the Chairman advised that Councillors did not have refreshments at their meetings. A Fairtrade representative then suggested that North Berwick in Bloom could consider using Fairtrade products at their fundraising events.

Cllr Ritchie asked about the advantages of being a Fairtrade town. The fact that North Berwick was supporting some of the world's poorest producers of food was accepted to be positive action. The town already advertised that it supports Fairtrade. The Chairman asked about current steps to raise the profile. The representatives referred to development of web pages, local publicity, coverage in the local Press and the Community Council Newsletter. They were keen to secure mention in the Newsletter on a regular basis. Cllr H Smith suggested that they contribute an article to the Newsletter and the Chairman advised that the deadline for the next edition was contained within the current publication.

5.2 The Community Council acknowledged the commendable aims of Fairtrade and was pleased to endorse the renewal of Fairtrade status. The Chairman would also write a letter in support.

6 Community Resilience Plan

6.1 Cllr Ritchie had already circulated a draft Plan, compiled using feedback from a range of local organisations and individuals, including Sandy Baptie from East Lothian Council. The Chairman acknowledged the key role of Cllr Ritchie in taking the lead on development of the Plan. Cllr Ritchie explained that the Plan outlined a process and should not be viewed as a template for responses in all situations. It would be revised as required. A table top exercise, based on an emergency scenario, was planned for the Autumn. This would help assess how systems would work and identify the need for any amendments. She had some outstanding issues for Councillors to consider. The first related to the Distribution list (page 2) and she invited additional names. Cllr Watson suggested the Coastguard and Lifeboat organisations. Cllr Ritchie stated that the Emergency Coordinator had been identified as the NBCC Chairman but she needed the contact telephone numbers of all Councillors and requested

that this information was supplied as soon as possible. She highlighted that a section on Alternative Arrangements (page 19) was still outstanding. Cllr Macnair drew attention to the fact that emergency services all have radio systems and also suggested the use of local radio to convey messages to the public. Cllr Watson added that the Coastguards have a public announcements system and, in addition, hold ten mobile handsets.

- 6.2 The question of the purchase of a mobile phone to be used in an emergency was raised. Councillors were already aware that, to remain live, the phone would need to be activated within a six month period. It was agreed to purchase a “pay as you go” phone with an appropriate sim card. Cllr Watson suggested the use of a sim card with world coverage which could pick up a wide range of networks, rather than be restricted to specific company coverage. Cllr H Smith offered to programme the numbers into the mobile phone. It was agreed that Cllr Watson would check out costs.
- 6.3 The Chairman asked if there were plans to publish the Asset Register. In response, Cllr Ritchie said that people understood that the Register would be made public, being available, for example, on the Community Council website. Cllr Scott’s suggestion that a copy was retained in the Library was approved.
- 6.4 Regarding insurance cover, the Treasurer confirmed that NBCC insurance was provided through East Lothian Council. Cllr Ritchie asked for details of what the policy covered.
- 6.5 The Chairman recorded thanks and appreciation for the all the detailed work Cllr Ritchie had undertaken in addressing this task.

7 North Berwick News and Views

- 7.1 The Chairman introduced this topic in the context of exploring ways to communicate with the Community. She asked for clarification on the benefits for North Berwick of using Facebook and News and Views, accepting that her knowledge of both was limited. Cllr Ritchie reported that research indicated the clear benefits of using social media as it allowed people to have their voices heard and to have a dialogue about issues. There were currently 529 members using News and Views which was good uptake for a relatively new site. It was used to inform members about events in the Community, gave very immediate news and allowed for an exchange of views. She believed that people were using this site and not Facebook. Cllr H Smith apologised that she had not updated Facebook recently. Cllr K Smith queried why sites were “closed” and was advised that it was common practice to have to join in order to gain access to social media sites including Facebook. ELC Cllr Berry, highlighting the presence of overlapping media, including Blogs and Twitter, stressed that having a website which is not updated with good usage could prove counterproductive e.g. the North Berwick Business site which was potentially good but now moribund. He believed that Facebook might be the preferable social media route because of its broader coverage rather than using a very localised site. Cllr H Smith encouraged Councillors to look at the Pencaitland Community Council Facebook page as a good example.
- 7.2 Cllr Macnair expressed concern regarding the anonymous, sometimes negative, nature of Facebook comments and raised the need for monitoring. Cllr Watson shared this view, quoting a personal experience. Cllr H Smith offered to take responsibility for monitoring. ELC Cllr Berry believed that Facebook could be used like a noticeboard but, for the good of the Community, would need to be policed.

- 7.3 Cllr H Smith asked for a date when she and Cllr Ritchie could give a presentation to the Community Council regarding social media possibilities, using the internet to illustrate possibilities. The Museum was considered a suitable venue as it had good internet access. Cllr Watson agreed to check if the Museum was available for the next mid-month meeting.

8 Area Partnership

- 8.1 The Chairman and Cllr H Smith had attended meetings where the Area Partnership budget had been discussed. The overall devolved Area Partnership budget was £200,000. The Chairman advised that, as there was scope for direction from the Community Council, it was important to identify and submit suggestions which would benefit the Community, although she had been told that there was not a bidding process Cllrs were invited to feedback ideas to herself and Cllr H Smith as soon as possible. One example was the suggestion to replace the white railings at the approach to the Seabird Centre with galvanised railings, at an estimated cost of £7,000. This had been discussed at a meeting involving the Chairman, Tom Brock, Sandra King, ELC Cllr John MacMillan and Eamonn John and required consideration by ELC. A machine to remove chewing gum was also under consideration.
- 8.2 Councillors expressed their difficulty in making informed decisions regarding local expenditure, in the absence of a steer from ELC Departments regarding their planned expenditure. ELC Cllrs explained that separate ELC budgets remained and that the allocated budget, while not new money, had been ring fenced for Area Partnerships. The Chairman suggested that Sandra King might be able to provide more information regarding planned expenditure by ELC.
- 8.3 The Chairman provided one example where the Area Partnership budget could be appropriate. She drew attention to the benefit of using compacting bins which could deal with eight times the volume of rubbish as a standard issue bin. A second Big Belly bin would be placed near the existing bin and recycling area in the Harbour area in the near future. However, the real benefits of such bins could be realised in more rural areas where the indication that a bin is full could result in more efficient use of staff, while also helping to meet environmental targets. At present, ELC staff routinely travel to check on bins which may or may not be full, using staff time and petrol on what can be unnecessary journeys.
- 8.4 The Chairman restated the importance of identifying North Berwick priorities before the next Area Partnership meeting on the 9th June and asked for ideas to be forwarded to herself or Councillor H Smith.

9 Planning Matters

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

- 9.1 **13 Westerdunes Park EH39 5HJ:** Alterations, extensions to house and formation of hardstanding area. No objection was raised.

The Bungalow, Bonnington EH39 5JQ: Extension to house. No objection was raised.

7, Windygates Road EH39 4NJ: Formation of balconies. No objection was raised.

24 Victoria Road EH39 4JL: Replacement door. No objection was raised.

5 Dirleton Avenue EH39 4AX: Replacement window and door. No objection was raised.

4A & 4B Grange Court EH39 4LN: Alterations to flats, formation of first floor balcony and erection of garage. No objection was raised.

Land adjacent to The Harbour Victoria Road: Erection of storage shed (Class 6) - beach wheelchair project. No objection was raised.

48-52 Dunbar Road – Aldi: Display of advertisements. Questions would be raised regarding the length of time when the signs would be illuminated and their intensity.

An Grianan, 2 Redside Farm Cottages EH39 5PE: Extension to house, erection of garage, walls, formation of handstanding areas and steps. No objection was raised.

Site at 2 Forth St Lane EH39 4JB: Change of use of domestic garden grounds for the erection of building for office (Class 2) use and associated works. An extension of time to enable further discussion would be requested.

Land at the Glebe St Margaret's Road/ St Andrew's St: Planning permission in principle for residential development, covered parking, formation of new vehicular access and extension to car park

This development involved the creation of 36 parking spaces, plus nine apartments. The parking was in line with ELC's preferred option as stated in the Main Issues Report.

A number of residents raised concerns about the proposals with its combination of an agreement for car parking and a housing development. A belief was expressed that success at the "planning in principle" stage meant that the development would happen, despite the lack of detail available. ELC Cllr Berry clarified that outline permission was the first stage with detailed plans being developed only when the initial stage had been cleared by the planners. He explained that parking came within the ELC capital budget while planning was an independent process. Under an "enablement" agreement the apartments would not be built until work on the carpark was completed. ELC Cllr Goodfellow advised that the land for parking would be leased to ELC on a 99 year lease with the car park being built and maintained by ELC. Local residents considered it wrong to combine housing and car parking in the application and were critical of the absence of any reference to the loss of green field space, conservation area status, previous planning history for the site and the incline within the building area among other issues. ELC Cllr Goodfellow suggested that clarification of the term "enabling" from a planner could be helpful and that an extension of the deadline for submission should be requested. All ELC Cllrs stressed that this was the first stage in a planning application which would be subject to full discussion and debate. There would be further opportunities for residents to raise their concerns. The next meeting of the Planning Group is 2 June. The Community Council would request an extension of time in order to seek clarification of the term "enabling" and to allow further consider of the application.

Law Primary School: Alterations and change of use of agricultural land to educational, erection of boundary fencing, formation of landscaping and flat playing surfaces.

Cllr Macnair asked if additional land was to be used to extend the Primary School and ELC Cllr Goodfellow confirmed that this was not the case and that parents had discussed the plans. In replying to Cllr Macnair, ELC Cllr Goodfellow said that the suds area would be open and could be used for educational purposes. No objection was raised.

2, West End Place EH39 4AJ: Alterations, extension to house and formation of hardstanding areas. No objection was raised.

10 Reports from Groups and Societies

- 10.1 **Law Residents Association:** Cllr Hamilton reported that a number of donations had been distributed to local organisations. As Secretary of North Berwick in Bloom, the Chairman expressed thanks from In Bloom volunteers for the generous donation which would be put to good use in local projects.
- 10.2 **Coastal Museum:** The Henry Scott Tuke exhibition had opened on Good Friday. Cllr Watson confirmed that, in the first month, over 1200 people had visited the exhibition which would continue until 17 May.
- 10.3 **Arts Centre:** Cllr Watson reported that discussions were ongoing.
- 10.4 **Putting Competition:** Cllr Johnstone would take over Cllr K Smith's role in organising the annual Putting Competition. The competition would be discussed at the next meeting.
- 10.5 **Kirk Ports Project:** Cllr H Smith would replace Cllr Kellock's on this project.
- 10.6 **Beach Wheelchairs project:** Two wheelchairs were now on order, subject to Lottery funding, with the expectation that they should be available by June. Cllr Ritchie and Jackie Tagg had designed a training programme for volunteers and Cllr Ritchie was pleased to report that training would be delivered on May 23rd from 9am at the Community Centre.

11 Correspondence

- 11.1 The Chairman had received a request from those involved in the planning application for the site at 2 Forth Street Lane to attend a Council meeting. This was agreed and an extension to the deadline had been requested.
- 11.2 Keith Bishop had requested views on the introduction of beach huts which could be rented, with part of the proceeds going to the Community Council. Cllrs were aware that this idea had been suggested in the past. Cllr Macnair commented that the quantity of sand now was less than when the suggestion had first been mooted. Due to exposure to storms, he considered that the West Bay would be unsuitable. ELC Cllr Berry drew attention to the very successful beach huts in Southwold. It was agreed that the Chairman would request further information from Keith Bishop.
- 11.3 The Secretary read out a letter received from a Craigeith Avenue resident who complained about the effect of the change of bus terminus from Quality Street to Church Street. He highlighted that the increase in walking distance in order to access the Post Office and enjoy social outlets presented major problems for someone with mobility or health problems. ELC Cllr Goodfellow agreed that the Dunbar bus no longer went down East Road. One way to alleviate the problem was the creation of a temporary bus stop opposite The Auld Hoose which would shorten the walk to the Post Office. The Secretary would reply to this correspondence.
- 11.4 Cllr Watson drew attention to the queueing of buses on Beach Street/ Church Street, due to the changed bus routes. He also queried if the town should now consider having a taxi rank located at the Quality Street bus terminus. At present, all taxis must be pre booked.

12 Any other competent business

- 12.1 ELC Cllr Berry reported that the plans to introduce a 20 mile speed limit were moving forward. He also advised that the Dunbar rail service would start in 2018 using the new Hitachi trains.
- 12.3 The dilapidated condition of the old telephone booths on the High Street was raised by Cllr H Smith. The Chairman agreed to take action on this matter.
- 12.4 Cllr Macnair thanked ELC Councillors for securing the upgrading of the public toilets at the harbour.

13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Community Council will be held at the Fire Station, Station Road North Berwick on Tuesday 2 June 2015 at 19.30.

