

Royal Burgh of North Berwick Community Council

Minutes of the 470th Public Meeting held at 19.30 on Tuesday 04 August 2015

in The Fire Station, Station Road, North Berwick.

Present: Cllr S Sinclair Chairman

Cllr K Smith Secretary

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

In attendance: ELC Cllrs D Berry, T Day and J Goodfellow, Lilian Pryde (ELC), Carleen Macnair (Chair of Business Association), members of the public, local Press, Mrs A Turgoose.

1 Apologies: Cllr G Johnstone, Police Scotland.

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

2.1 The adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Cllr J Scott and seconded by Cllr M Baker.

3 Matters Arising.

3.1 The Chairman asked ELC Cllr Day for an update regarding the meeting with Police Scotland.

(4.11) ELC Cllr Day confirmed that he had been invited to tour the Centre at Bilston and to see how calls were graded.

3.2 20's Plenty: the Chairman noted that this initiative was under review.

(4.12) Cllr Hamilton reported that this had been discussed at CAPP and that speed checks at school times would be undertaken. The signage was now painted on the road but he still believed that further signage was required at the junction of Dunbar Road and Glenburn Road.

3.3 Cllr Ritchie asked to make a constructive comment in response to minute point 6.1 as a matter arising. She proposed that we needed to state and make clear to our community that the views of all were welcome and represented by NBCC and we would continue to encourage the engagement of all the community. However, the NBCC would encourage people to represent their views in a constructive way on Facebook. It was understood that some issues could generate a lot of passionate feelings, but people were urged to remain civil. In turn the NBCC was open to exploring further how it could engage more effectively with the community and respond constructively to any criticisms.

She suggested that as a community council we should reflect upon the processes we had engaged with over the Glebe Field planning application, and suggested that there was room for improvement. This was of particular importance when there was the potential for serious conflict within the community over an issue. While the Glebe was a particular issue the experience had indicated that our learning could be applied to a wider reflection about our processes and decision-making and our shared core values.

The Chairman considered this to be an inappropriate item under Matters Arising and suggested that it should be remitted to a future date. Cllr H Smith believed that it should be tabled for discussion in the near future, as a matter of urgency. She had received thanks

from the public for the inclusion of the “Three Wishes” survey on various Facebook links. The Chairman accepted the importance of gauging a broad range of views but was not prepared to engage in debate at this meeting.

3.4 Community Rail Partnership

- (9.1) The Chairman reported that work to extend the platform was expected to be authorised in late August and undertaken in mid/ late September.

4 Police Report

- 4.1 In the absence of police representation for the third month running, the Secretary read out the Police Report which was based on incidents between 06/07/15 and 04/08/15. There may be other incidents but, due to their nature or ongoing investigations, it was not possible to divulge full details.
- 4.2 There were 144 calls to the Police in the month. The calls had been broken down in terms of the agreed priorities for the Ward.

Road Safety

Parking tickets have been issued at various locations, including High Street, Bank Road and Victoria Road. Officers will continue to monitor during the summer.

19 July – a male driver was issued with a fixed penalty ticket for driving without an MOT.

A Vulnerable Road Users Campaign will take place 24-26 August. It will target parking and speeding issues around schools.

Antisocial Behaviour

There were numerous noise and loud music complaints in relation to a property in Gilbert Avenue. The Council ASB team have been working hard on this matter and an Interim Social Behaviour Order was granted. This should be served on the individual by Sheriff Officers in the near future. Among various conditions, no music should be audible outside the property and no more than two persons, plus the occupier, can be within the property.

12 July: a large group had gathered outside the Ship Inn where an altercation took place between two males. Both were arrested, taken to Dalkeith and charged with minor assault.

13 July and 16 July: Police received several calls regarding a male sleeping rough outside the Blenheim Hotel. He was taken to homeless accommodation in Edinburgh. No further calls to suggest that he had returned to the area.

19 July: altercation within the Auld Hoose where a male was assaulted with a pint glass resulting in a minor head injury. A male was arrested and charged with minor assault.

Substance Abuse

7 July: a Misuse of Drugs warrant was executed at a dwelling house but no drugs were found and no offences detected.

Theft

8 July: report of the theft of a skateboard from Sports Centre. Two female culprits caught on CCTV – enquiry ongoing.

11 July: between 9am and 10am on 10th July an insecure house on Marmion Road was entered and various items including cash, digital camera and alcohol were stolen. Male suspect traced and charged with theft.

13 July: a resident in Fidra Road reported that 3 males had been disturbed within the back garden before they made off. It appeared that they had tried to force a rear window. Officers searched the area with a negative result - enquiry ongoing.

13 July: shoplifting in Coop on High Street - 3 bottles of vodka and 24 packs of steak were stolen. A male and a female were identified as culprits who are well known to the Police - enquiries ongoing.

19 July: shoplifting in Coop on High Street. Two males entered and stole 4 bottles of Jack Daniels - enquiries ongoing to identify males.

21 July: overnight 20 and 21 July, an insecure dwelling house at St Baldred's Road was entered and a quantity of cash stolen from a wallet - enquiry ongoing.

22 July: an insecure property on Marmion Road was entered and a wallet containing £200 stolen. Male suspect traced, arrested and charged with the theft.

30 July: Officers conducted a stolen property search warrant at a house on Gilbert Avenue and found several stolen items from a couple of the above mentioned thefts. A quantity of controlled drugs was also found. A male occupier was charged with a number of offences and detained for Court.

Should anyone have information in relation to criminality, they should contact Police Scotland on 101 or Crime Stoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

4.3 **CAPP PRIORITIES**

1) Tackle speeding motorists on A198 east of Aberlady, just before the step up to 60mph.

2) Carry out high visibility patrols of the new 20mph area in Lochbridge Road, tackling speeding and parking problems, especially during the first week of the new school term (19 August).

3) Tackle anti-social behaviour in relation to "Fringe by the Sea" festival, Yellowcraigs car park/ beach and licensed premises in North Berwick.

4.4 The date of the next CAPP meeting is 26 August 2015 at 19.30 hours.

4.5 Please email any feedback to NorthBerwickCoastalCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

4.6 **Blenheim Hotel**

The Chairman expressed concern regarding the unsightly condition of the hotel which had a prominent position on the High Street. A resident stressed the negative impression it gave of the town and asked whether action could be taken to paint the building which she described as appearing derelict. As it was judged not dangerous and, though unsightly was not derelict, ELC Cllr Berry said it was not appropriate for ELC to intervene. Cllr Macnair asked if planning restrictions could be lifted to broaden the appeal of the building to potential buyers. ELC Cllr Berry replied that as ELC wished to retain commercial property, not private accommodation, an application for change of use would be required. Cllr Danks understood that the owners

had rejected an offer to buy as a hotel. It was agreed that the Community Council would approach the owner regarding the condition of the building.

5 Business Association (BA) Update.

5.1 Carleen Macnair, BA Chair, provided an update on the structure and priorities of the remodelled Association which had been in position since May 2015. She explained that it had a small but active Committee of five members with approximately 50 paid up members and 50 lapsed members. It met every month and had identified 6 priorities. First, a revamp of the website which needed an upgrade to ensure that it was customer focussed, optimised for mobile devices, had links with Twitter and Facebook and could act as a platform for information and to promote members. A second priority was to ensure that BA Members could use social media to best effect. To that end, capitalising on internal talents, basic instruction and guidance was provided at monthly events. The third aim was to create a customer focused logo. The BA had identified the need for a centrally positioned tourist information service and with some funding from ELC hoped to establish an unmanned, self-service facility based in Why Not? A desk, computer and leaflets/ brochures were core elements of the proposed service with a phone available for people to make bookings and enquiries. ELC would be monitoring usage of the service and it was hoped that in 2016 there might be consideration for funding a part time post during busy periods. The fifth priority was to increase membership, once the website was revamped. She highlighted the need for more local information which promoted facilities and activities during the “shoulder” season e.g. walking, wild life interests, food and drink and concluded by expressing the hope that the Community Council might assist with printing costs.

5.2 The presentation attracted very positive comments with particular support for the tourism initiatives. It was recognised that the Library did what it could within resources available. Cllr H Smith was complimentary about the website and the idea of evenings for businesses to share ideas and offer support to colleagues. She was aware of funding sources which could be helpful to the BA and offered to provide this. Cllr Ritchie appreciated the benefits of a central position and wondered if the Library based service was no longer required. She was advised that the Why Not? Service would be additional and independent. The Chairman commented that there was room for both. ELC Cllr Berry welcomed local information as the Library sources tended to be Scotland wide with only 5% having a local emphasis. He also admitted to being one of the 50 lapsed members and welcomed the new proactive approach from the BA. In the past, having paid his fee, he heard nothing for 18 months but was now encouraged to consider re-joining.

6 Community Resilience.

6.1 The table top exercise would take place 6pm - 9pm in the Community Centre on October 27th. Participants would include those who were involved in the planning process, the Community Council and people who were listed on the asset register. Cllr Ritchie and the Chairman would be meeting Sandy Baptie from ELC on 7 September to plan the event. The Chairman had received an invitation from Sandy Baptie to attend a national conference to be held at Victoria Quay on 23 September.

7 Area Partnership – 3 Wishes Exercise

7.1 The Chairman introduced the item by expressing surprise that Councillors had failed to circulate ideas, as had been agreed. She accepted Cllr H Smith’s offer to provide information

on the 25 public responses to the online survey. These included a central resource to coordinate information on services, fair and transparent decision making processes, toilets at East and West bays, changing facilities / showers, signage improvement, an Arts/ Cinema complex, better parking, greater connectivity between transport services, opportunities for young and older people, more play areas, dog free areas, office space, bigger Health Centre, a pedestrian High Street at weekends, affordable housing, curling rink, improved coastal defences. Cllr H Smith's personal project was a longer term proposal to save resources by installing public water fountains which would reduce reliance on commercial water bottles. The Chairman reminded Councillors that they would need to put forward both small and larger projects for consideration. ELC Cllr Berry advised that the signs at the Harbour would be replaced after the replacement railings were in place. Cllr H Smith queried the delay in beach cleaning, suggesting that the Amenities budget could be used for this. ELC Cllr Berry explained that the tractor driver had retired and had not been replaced. Regarding pedestrianisation of the High Street, Cllr Ritchie invited the Business Association view on this. The Chairman reminded Councillors that the closing date for the survey was in September and informed the meeting that all food outlets had been approached to encourage greater use of biodegradable packaging. The benefits of using solar bins were clear and ELC Cllr Goodfellow added that there would be savings for ELC in the longer term.

- 7.2 In response to Cllr H Smith's view that responses did not have to be prioritised at this stage, Cllr Ritchie suggested that, nevertheless, it would be helpful to collate Wishes under broader headings e.g. transport, ecology. Cllr H Smith agreed to do this, for Facebook and Council data, also noting whether wishes were short or longer term. Cllr Ritchie offered her support with this task. Both the Chairman and ELC Cllr Berry reiterated that it was important to retain a coherent Area perspective, not just focus on North Berwick. Both Cllr H Smith and Lilian Pryde emphasised the role of matched funding.

8 Coastal erosion at North Berwick Golf Club.

- 8.1 The Chairman reported on a meeting she had attended with Chris Spencer, Managing Secretary and colleagues to consider findings from a report in respect of coastal erosion and the NB Golf Club. Nothing would be happening immediately but options were being discussed. ELC Cllr Day confirmed that the report dealt only with the impact on the golf course. Cllr Macnair expressed concerns about the West Bay and the need for an ongoing focus on erosion while Cllr Watson drew attention to the potential hazards should problems occur in the area of the sewage works. All ELC Cllrs accepted the need to protect the sewage works. As funding would be limited and labour costs would be significant, there would be a need to prioritise.

9 Calder and Crawford Cup Review.

- 9.1 In the absence of Cllr Johnstone, Cllr K Smith reported that the event had attracted the lowest number of entries ever. The fact that the event was split over two days had ruled out some potential competitors who were not in town for the second date. The poor state of the green was noted by Cllr K Smith who was aware that grass cutting took place on the day after the finals. There was some suggestion that timing with the Tennis Championships week should be reviewed and that more advertising might have helped. Both Cllrs J Scott and K Smith commented that Cllr Johnstone had a range of good ideas and that further discussion should be left until he was present. The Chairman thanked all who had helped with the organisation.

10 **Law Race - 5 August**

Councillors were requested to be at the Harbour for 7.15 pm. Cllrs Baker, Kellock and Watson confirmed their availability. The medals were ready and the Chairman expected the first medals to be handed out before 8pm. ELC Cllr Berry advised that a traffic order would be in place, prohibiting traffic on Victoria Road.

11 **Website proposals**

- 11.1 Three quotes had been obtained with one person having experience of developing CC and Business Association websites. Two quotes were the same price with the third being more expensive. Cllr H Smith volunteered for involvement in a subgroup to discuss the way forward.

12 **Pedestrian Crossings**

- 12.1 Various concerns had been raised on NB News and Views regarding areas in the town which were deemed to warrant a pedestrian crossing or other traffic measures. Cllr K Smith indicated that Colin Baird (ELC Transportation) was prepared to look at any reasonable proposals, providing they were 'established desire lines all year round' e.g. crossing near the tennis courts. She said one suggestion was to narrow the road between Glasclune Gardens and Greenheads Road to create a footpath which would also help reduce traffic speeds. Cllr Ritchie was concerned about crossing on Dunbar Road, near ALDI, which she considered dangerous now but would become more so with increased numbers of elderly people living in the vicinity. She also said it was important to consider Safer Routes to School, in view of the new housing estates. Cllr Watson thought that the junction of St Baldred's Road and Dunbar Road was worth consideration for traffic lights and a crossing. A crossing at Kirkports/ entrance to the Lodge Grounds would be supported by Cllr Kellock while Cllr Baker believed there was merit in introducing traffic calming measures on York Road. The St Baldred's Road / Lady Jane Road crossing also presented problems. Cllr Danks referred to a review 10 years ago and agreed with others that an update was needed with Transportation being best placed to consider suggestions. A number of Councillors drew attention to the irresponsible behaviour of some pedestrians particularly at the crossing on Quality Street. ELC Cllr Goodfellow confirmed that the road narrowing at Glasclune Gardens was being seriously considered. It was agreed to ask Transportation to look at options.

13 **Planning Matters**

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

- 13.1 **53 Abbey Road EH39 4BP:** Erection of house with first floor balcony, formation of decked area and erection of screen. No objection was raised.

117 High Street EH39 4HB: Display of advertisements. No objection was raised.

Harbour, Victoria Road: Formation of breakwater enhancements and associated works. No objection was raised.

22 Lord President's Road EH39 4RW: Erection of 1 house, change of use of public open space to form vehicular access and associated works. No objection was raised.

Groombridge 11 York Road EH39 4LX: Extension to house. No objection was raised.

Carthouse 4 Redside Farm Steadings Whitekirk: Alterations to building. No objection was raised.

Carthouse 4 Redside Farm Steadings Whitekirk: Replacement windows and doors. No objection was raised.

North Berwick Delivery Office 2 Westgate EH39 4AA: Installation of BT cabinet. No objection was raised.

1-3 Westgate EH39 AE: Installation of extract duct. No objection was raised.

Couper Avenue EH39 4EG: Installation of telecommunications tower and associated works. No objection was raised.

21 Westgate EH39 4AE: Demolition of building. An objection would be raised.

21 Westgate EH39 4AE: Erection of 2 flats and associated works. An objection would be raised.

Concerns were raised by members of the public regarding the proposed demolition and planned development on this site. The need to protect an original coach house within the conservation area was stressed, while acknowledging that the award made in respect of this building was to the architect, not the building itself. Several commented on the consequent loss of character in the Westgate. Cllr Ritchie asked what protection was offered under "conservation." ELC Cllrs Day and Goodfellow advised that any development should preserve or enhance the area, the latter being a subjective judgement. ELC Cllr Berry confirmed that a building did not need to be derelict to be demolished. Cllr H Smith considered the presence of older, individual properties to be part of the town's attraction for visitors. Cllr Danks and some residents highlighted the impact of loss of a commercial property – ELC Cllr Goodfellow confirmed that the applicant would need to have a change of use as part of the application. The planning process was explained and residents were assured that they could make their points at the Planning Committee. ELC Cllr Day concluded that the decision would be democratic with over 20 Councillors needing to be convinced.

It was unanimously agreed that the Community Council would object to the demolition and the proposed development.

23 St Andrew's Street EH3 4NX: Alterations to house. No objection was raised.

31 Westgate EH39 4AG: Alterations and extension to building and formation of dormers. No objection was raised.

31 Westgate EH39 4AG: Alterations and extension to flat and formation of dormers. No objection was raised.

10 York Road EH39 4LX: Alterations to house, formation of dormers, balcony, hardstanding areas and erection of shed. No objection was raised.

Groombridge 11 York Road EH39 4LX: Demolition of gates. No objection was raised.

14 Reports from Groups and Societies

14.1 **North Berwick Environment Trust:** No meetings had been held.

- 14.2 **Esk LEADER programme:** Cllr H Smith drew attention to funding streams available and suggested that the European Marine and Fisheries Fund could be relevant for the Harbour. Cllr Macnair advised that information should be forwarded to the Harbour Trust.
- 14.3 **CAPP:** In reply to Cllr Hamilton's comment that the ticket machine at Yellowcraigs had been vandalised, ELC Cllr Goodfellow noted that no money had been taken. Cllr H Smith queried enforcement of ticketing and both ELC Cllrs Goodfellow and Day confirmed that it was being enforced.
- 14.4 **Christmas Lights:** A meeting to discuss arrangements had been held. Cllr Scott confirmed that the Switch on date was 21 November and encouraged Councillors to reflect on an appropriate celebrity to do the Switch On.
- 14.5 **Coastal Communities Museum:** A total of 1198 people had visited the Museum during July, 925 adults and 273 children. However, Cllr Watson reported a drop in donations. The Chairman asked if there was any information on the level of café business but that was not available.
- 14.6 **Harbour:** Cllr Macnair reported that work on the Harbour wall had stopped for the period of Fringe by the Sea. Work on handrails was ahead of schedule. The Chairman was aware of safety concerns that the railings did not extend to the ground. However, ELC Cllr Goodfellow advised that this would be rectified.
- 14.7 **Beach wheelchairs:** Following the launch, Cllr Ritchie said that charitable status was under consideration as was the possibility of having a paid post to deal with bookings. A second chair had arrived. Cllrs Kellock and Baker asked if the position of the office was causing disquiet, mentioning the impact of vehicles lifting boats into the harbour. Cllr Ritchie invited suggestions of alternative sites.
- 14.8 **Highland Games:** The Games would be held on 8 August. 55 bands were expected.
- 14.9 **Britain in Bloom:** The Chairman advised that judges would be in town from Sunday evening with judging starting on Monday 10th at 9.15am.
- 15 Correspondence**
- 15.1 A meeting of **Relbus** would take place on 25 August at 7pm in the Town House, Haddington.
- 15.2 The Secretary drew attention to the **Easy Read Guide on the SES Plan Main Issues Consultation** and reminded Councillors that consultation closed on 30 September. The Chairman had been trying to arrange a meeting with Gullane Community Council with 7 or 9 September being possible dates at a venue to be confirmed.
- 15.3 **Local Government Boundary Commission Proposals:** Comments on proposals were due by 22 October. Lilian Pryde reported that ELC had issued a Press release, stating opposition to the plans to reduce the number of wards to 6 and the loss of one ELC Councillor. The reduction was unjustified given the rapidly growing population and the proposals would break local Community links. The Community Council had already responded to the earlier consultation rejecting the proposals but would restate their position.
- 15.4 **New Ferry service to Fife:** Timetables for the service to Fife were now available.
- 16 Any other competent business.**

Community Council Elections: Lilian Pryde reminded the meeting that the referendum on Europe had to be held before the end of September 2017. There was some suggestion that it could be held during September 2016. In that case, the Community Council elections would be postponed until 2017.

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 1st September at 19.30.