

**Minutes of a meeting of Silloth Town Council**  
**Held 16 April 2012**

**Present:-** Cllrs. I. Baty, G. Wilkinson, C. Graham, S. Graham, R.W. Allison, M. Snaith, E. Wannop & A. Weightman. Also Eric Telford, Jimmy Lettice, Peter Cusack, David Wise, Jennifer Rowlands & Wendy Jameson (Town Clerk).

**078**    **Apologies**

Cllrs. D. Wallace, C. Baty & A.J. Markley.

**079**    **Declaration of Interest**

Cllr. R.W. Allison - re: Albion Inn.

Cllr. I. Baty - re: Squash court.

**080**    **Exclusion of Press & Public**

There was no reason to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting.

**081**    **Silloth Sports Hub**

The football team have been successful and the rugby club are also doing well. There is also a lot of interest in tennis. The time seems right to see if improvements can be made to the facilities and encourage more sports facilities in the town. The football and rugby have got together under one organisation. Neither is incorporated or as a limited company and therefore any member of the committee could be liable. Currently getting help from CMS to set up as a proper legal entity. The current sports facilities are limited. The clubs decided to come up with a concept and the best way to start was to put something on paper. A concept diagram was put together to show what could be achieved and provided. The facilities are to compliment what is already there and are not intended to take trade away but to improve the facilities. There would be a clubhouse to accommodate 200 people, a bar, a gym and training room, swimming pool and storage. It would also provide viewing and shelter on the upstairs balcony. The tennis club have not got a base at the moment and the club is suffering as a result. This would provide facilities for them and also incorporate a tennis bubble. Mr Telford has spoken to Jennifer Rowlands about trade at the Sports Hall which could be impacted. The will is there from the sports teams but they need support from the Town Council. They need moral support from the Town Council, as landowners and are not wanting financial input but the Council would be party to the applications for grant aid. The clubs want an agreement in principle from the Town Council. The proposed tennis bubble would be right in front of houses and would need to be sited somewhere else. There would be a conference/clubroom to provide a facility, as people are currently going out of town to hold functions. The Golf Club has expressed an interest in it. The proposals would bring economy back into the town. Hotels could be part of the package and also benefit. The clubs were under the impression that Colin was leaving and hence why the building was sited in the location of the Squash court. Need to provide a dance facility and it would also include a spa pool which is good for physic. The plan is designed to generate income. It would be run be a management committee on a not for profit basis with an profits ploughed back into the facilities. It could conflict with what is going on at the

Sports Hall. They don't want to take trade away, as this would not be the same type of facility. It has been costed out at £1.92m at present but may come down as there are a lot of assumptions but it may also go up as more things are included in the plans. Looking at grants and sponsorship rather than loans so there is no millstone. The football club, rugby club and tennis club are behind the plans and want the Town Council's support. There was no mention of the demolition of the rugby club and squash court. The Rugby club would stay. The plan was to convert the rugby club into changing rooms and maybe provide a laundry and bunk rooms etc for cyclists. The Town Council receive revenue from the Squash court. There needs to be a business plan for the whole sports complex which is self sufficient. The Town Council would get a formal lease. There would need to be a lease in place to get any funding. They would be responsible for the management of the whole site. A right of way/footpath from the Harvest estate is going in which needs to be taken into account. There has been some ill feeling about it around the town due to the lack of consultation. Needed agreement from the clubs before coming to the Town Council. The plan is to bring income back into the town to benefit the hotels and businesses. There is currently no formal lease with the gym. The OAP hut belongs to the OAP's but is on Town Council land. It was questioned where the feasibility studies are. To be a conference centre there needs to be an infrastructure in place and places for people to stay. The building will hopefully generate trade and facilities. The feasibility studies will not be done until they have the backing of the Town Council and the principle has been accepted. Then the feasibility study and business plan can be put together. They are not looking for financial assistance as it will be self-sustaining. Jennifer Rowlands from Solway Community Technology College also attended the meeting. The Sports Hall was built with lottery funding and is run by the school. The rents don't cover the costs of the building at present and there are concerns that it can't be sustained. 60% of the income for the Sports Hall is from people who will use the new facility. If the project is right for the community then the school will back it but it was questioned whether it is sustainable and whether it has an adequate catchment area. The facilities need to compliment each other. The new facility would be more commercial, based on membership. It would have to be run as a business and be able to support itself but it still needs the support in principle before it can move forward. The town is not big enough for competition but the facilities could be run as a sports campus for the town. Sports Hall are concerned how the 60% of their income can be replaced as people will inevitably be attracted to using the new facility. As sporting clubs, they need to provide facilities for their members and this would give them that. The majority of tennis over the winter months would still be played in the sports hall. nether hall is not far away, offering the same sort of facilities. Already had interest from Wigton tennis and Abbeystown football clubs.

The Town Council own the football pitch but the other side of the sports area is leased from the County Council. The Town Council maintain the land at present and the new complex should cover the cost of maintenance. They would not want to give the contract to an outside contractor. The intention was to get rid of the gym but plans can be altered, the squash court left and the internal layout changed. A management committee would run the facilities and it would provide employment to a manager, reception, bar staff, catering facilities etc. There would be a small management company to run the enterprise. Looking to do it without loans, so there are no repayments to be covered. The

squash court currently provides an income to the person running the gym. The cost of water rates would also need to be covered. A lease would cover the loss of income from the rent received from the gym. Income the facilities generate will pay for the management of the building and the staff employed. It would be a co-operative type organisation with profits ploughed back into the facilities. Anne Sowerby is currently putting packages together for the clubs and getting grant and getting the grant funding together. They will be meeting with funders and sponsors. The clubs have been looking into where sponsorship can come from. As a Town Council, we are responsible for the well being of our residents and it was questioned what residents will get from this. The outputs would be in providing health and well being, employment and facilities for the town as a whole. The facility will be there for people if they want to use it. The Town Council needs time to consider it and discuss the implications etc. This is not just about the rugby and football club, there are implications for the town as a whole. The clubs want an agreement in principle before feasibility studies will be done. Some of the land may be an issue as it does not belong to the Town Council. There are concerns about whether it could sustain itself. There were a lot of feasibility studies and consultations done for The Green project. The Council would want to see more information about the finances and where the income would come from. There was concern about how it will affect other businesses i.e. bowling club, social club, pubs etc. Want to make sure the whole thing is sustainable before it can go ahead. Need to know of any issues that need sorted out . If the Council are agreeable in principle, then it will involve a lot more meetings in the future. The Golf Club is run on a management committee basis but it has been there for over 100 years. The tennis club lacks changing facilities and a clubhouse. It would be a win win situation as it provides the facilities. The bubble would provide an indoor tennis facility.

Item to be included on the next Agenda.

It was questioned whether the building would fit onto the land available. Need to look at what income it will generate the Town Council. It would need to be sustainable.

The plans seem very ambitious. Some of the land is leased from the County Council, who would also need to be involved and consulted on any development. The existing sports hall is not being used to its full potential. There will need to be a proper feasibility study before funders will consider it.

Signed..... Date.....