

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON HALL, PONTELAND ON 10 APRIL 2019

Present: Councillor A Varley (in the Chair)

Councillors S Ahmed, Mrs C Caisley, L Darwin, Mrs C Greenwell, Mrs S Johnson, R Dodd and A Hall

176. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Edwards-Clay, Mrs K Overbury, A Shanley and Mrs K Woodrow.

177. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs C Greenwell declared an interested in Minute 192.

178. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 13 MARCH 2019

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 March 2019 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

179. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute 164 – Grant applications

Letters of thanks had been received from Darras Hall Estate Committee and the North East War Memorial Project in relation to grants approved at the last meeting.

(ii) Minute 174 – Youth Services

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting, a productive meeting had been held with NE Youth and subsequent to that, agreement had been reached for the charity to provide some outreach work in Ponteland for the coming 12 months.

(iii) Minute 175 – Ponteland War Memorial

The Clerk had written to Historic England expressing the Council's support for the listing of the War Memorial, subject to the structure itself being listed and not the surrounding walls, garden and the hall. She reported that the Memorial Hall Trustees had not supported listing.

180. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 19 March and 2 April 2019 were circulated for information.

In relation to item 3.1 of the minutes of the 19th February, the Chair reported that the Town Council had attempted to submit further information regarding the appeal made to the Secretary of State in respect of advertising at Dobbies roundabout but had been informed that it was not possible to submit additional comments on a

180. PLANNING (Continued)

commercial application. The original objection had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by NCC.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There was nothing to report.

181. GRANTS

(i) Northumberland Pride

Councillors were reminded that consideration of this application had been deferred at the last meeting pending receipt of additional information regarding location of events and other grants received.

The information had been received and had been circulated to the Council. Councillors were informed that NCC had donated £10,000 last year to provide seed funding for the event at Alwick. A further £10,000 was being provided this year.

In view of the level of funds that had been awarded to the organisation this year from other parish and town councils and the fact that the event was not being held in Ponteland it was suggested that a donation of £100 be approved.

RESOLVED – A donation of £100 be awarded to Northumberland Pride.

182. PROJECTS REPORT

The projects report had been circulated for the information of Councillors.

In relation to the lighting to the Pele tower project, the Clerk reported that a pre-application response had been received from NCC which stated that the works were within the Town Council's permitted development powers. There were some comments from highways that would need to be further discussed.

RESOLVED – The report be accepted.

183. INVESTMENT POLICY - PTC

Councillors were reminded that from April 2018, parish and town councils whose total investments exceeded or were expected to exceed £100,000 at any time during the financial year had to produce an investment policy.

A copy of the document produced for this financial year had been circulated. A query was raised as to whether the Town Council could maximise their returns by investing funds for a longer period than that proposed in the document.

The Clerk stated that she had some concerns about the risks involved. If the Council wished to go down this route, they would need to approve any investments that were for longer than 12 months.

It was suggested that the Clerk could make contact with the Treasury team at NCC.

RESOLVED – The Investment policy be approved.

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184. REQUEST FROM POLICE – ANPR CAMERA

Councillors were informed that a request had been received from Northumbria Police asking the Town Council to fund the cost of providing an ANPR camera in Ponteland. The Police were trying to increase the provision of these cameras in the area. The aim is to maximise the operational benefits whilst ensuring compliance with statute and standards, in particular Home Office guidance, the Information Commissioner’s Officer and the Surveillance Camera Commission.

The cost of the camera was £5000 which would be a one-off payment. The cameras last approximately 5 years and will be covered by a Memorandum of Understanding. Northumbria Police would cover the maintenance and data costs through the 5-year period. The Placing of the camera would need to be decided and the availability of electricity would be a factor as the Police would not meet the cost of laying cables. A site survey would be completed by the ANPR unit.

Councillors were largely agreeable to the proposal, but they felt that additional information was required. The Clerk was therefore asked to arrange a meeting with the Inspector and anyone else from the Police who could deal with their queries.

RESOLVED – The Council agree to the proposal of funding an ANPR camera in Ponteland in principle, subject to a meeting with the Police to deal with the various queries Councillors had regarding the suggestion.

185. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 15 March had been circulated. There were no recommendations for approval. The Chairman referred to items 225 and 335 regarding Merton Way car park improvements. She stated that this had been discussed again at the Highways meeting held on 4 April. In relation to the boundary treatment, she reported that NCC had stated that trees could not be planted in the suggested area due to the amount of underground services. They had agreed to some low level shrubs being planted. The Chairman of the Working Party and the Council’s gardening contractor had met and discussed the situation of shrubs and suitable varieties. In order to get these planted as soon as possible, she asked if the Town Council would approve spending the sum of £500 on the shrubs which would be met from contingencies. A copy of the report that had been circulated to the 4 April Highways meeting had been circulated for information.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Minutes be approved.
- (ii) The Council agree to the planting of shrubs in the suggested area at a cost of £500 which would be met from contingencies in order to allow the work to progress as quickly as possible.

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CHAIRMAN

186. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 18 March 2019 had been circulated. There were no recommendations for approval.

RESOLVED –The minutes be approved

187. CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 26 March 2019 had been circulated.

It was reported that the Cemetery leaflet as mentioned in Minute 4(iv) had been produced by Councillor Shanley. The Clerk had made some amendments and it was agreed that this would be re-circulated for comments prior to publication.

RESOLVED –The minutes and the following recommendations be approved:

(i) Approval of work to tarmac paths

The Council approved the recommendation of the Cemetery Committee to proceed with the work on the tarmac paths in 2019-20 at a cost of £11,180.76. The contract would be awarded to RHD Construction who had carried out the previous work in the woodland area of the Cemetery.

(ii) Fees for 2019-10

The Council approved the suggested list of revised fees for the Cemetery for 2019-20 as presented to Members. The fees would be in force from 1 May 2019.

188. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that NCC were planning to build other schools at Haydon Bridge, Berwick and Astley as well as the Ponteland facility.

189. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor submitted details of his diary engagements for March and April and one for May 2019. He stated that he had not attended the Cemetery Committee on 26th March as stated but that he would be attending a Scouts St. George's Day parade in Morpeth on 23rd April.

190. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Ponteland Community Partnership

Minutes of the January PCP meeting which was held on the 20th February 2019 had been circulated.

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CHAIRMAN

191. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £31,389.83. A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for March 2019.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEM ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED.

192. 2019-20 PAY SCALES AND AWARDS

A report by the Clerk relating to the above had been circulated. Agreement of pay awards applicable from 1 April 2019 had been reached from the National Joint Council (NJC). Alterations to spinal column points (SCP) had been made due to various factors at the lower end of the pay scales. This affected the SCPs for each of the Council's staff.

Sufficient allowance to accommodate the pay increase had been included in the budget for 2019-20.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Council formally approve the implementation of the pay award in accordance with staff contracts from 1 April 2019.
- (ii) The Council agree to include the new SCP information in the staff contracts.

Note – Councillor Mrs Greenwell declared an interest in the above item and took no part in the voting or discussion.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEM ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED.

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