

# **PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTELAND ON 13 MARCH 2019**

**Present:** Councillor A Varley (in the Chair)

Councillors S Ahmed, Mrs C Caisley, L Darwin, Mrs C Greenwell, T Edwards-Clay, Mrs S Johnson, A Shanley, and Mrs K Woodrow

### **159. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Dodd, A Hall and Mrs K Overbury

### **160. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs C Caisley declared an interested in Minute 168 (i) and took no part in the voting.

### **161. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 13 FEBRUARY 2019**

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

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

### **162. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **(i) Minute 149 (i) – Grant application - PCP**

The Clerk reported that a letter of thanks had been received from the PCP in respect of their recent grant applications.

#### **(ii) Minute 151 – Northumberland Local Plan**

The Clerk reported that a supportive submission had been sent to NCC in relation to the above document.

### **163. PLANNING**

#### **(i) Planning Committee**

Minutes of meetings held on 22 January and 5 February 2019 were circulated for information.

#### **(ii) Report on recent planning decisions**

There was nothing to report.

### **164. GRANTS**

#### **(i) Darras Hall Estate Committee**

A grant application had been received from the Darras Hall Estate Committee in respect of the upkeep and maintenance of the bridle path. The sum of £600 had been included in the budget in respect of this payment.

RESOLVED – A grant of £600 be approved.

**164. GRANTS (Continued)**

**(ii) North East War Memorials Project**

A grant application had been received from the above organisation in respect of updating their computer equipment to enable them to continue their work on research and cataloguing war memorials in the North East.

The organisation had included details of 15 war memorials within the Ponteland area on their website.

The Clerk reported that £1350 was remaining within the small grants budget heading.

RESOLVED – A grant of £700 be approved.

**(iii) Northumberland Pride**

A letter had been received from the above organisation requesting donations towards their forthcoming Pride events. The main event was being held in Alnwick in June. A further 20 events were being held in the county.

It was reported that the event held last year had been exceptionally well-attended and enjoyed by all. Various other bodies had attended such as health professionals etc.

Councillor Mrs Jones stated that the County Council had appeared in the Stonewall top 100 employers this year for promoting equality in the workplace. Their involvement in the Pride event last year had helped to achieve this rating.

Some Members expressed concern at the lack of information included with the application.

It was suggested that the Clerk be asked to contact the Treasurer of Northumberland Pride and request additional information. The matter could then be deferred to the April meeting and the remaining funds from the small grants budget could be carried forward.

RESOLVED – The Clerk be requested to contact Northumberland Pride and request more information as outlined above. It was agreed to defer the application to the April meeting and to carry forward the remaining £650 in the small grants budget.

**165. PROJECTS REPORT**

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

The Clerk reported that the visit to a sign design company in Hexham had not taken place and was being reorganised.

Progress was being made with the lighting of the Pele tower and a pre-application had been submitted to the County Council.

The order for the tree survey outside of the Park had been placed and a quote in respect of work inside the Park was awaited. A positive response had been received in respect of the pre-application for the adult fitness equipment and this would be discussed further at the Environment Working Party to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> March. The results of the pre-application for a new access from the West Road into the Park was still awaited.

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RESOLVED – The report be accepted.

**166. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Councillors were reminded that a review of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had to be carried out on an annual basis.

The October Town Council meeting had appointed a small working party comprising of the Mayor, Councillors Darwin, Mrs Overbury and Shanley to review the documents and report back to the Council before the end of the financial year.

The suggested amendments were set out within the report for consideration and on various pages that were attached to the document.

Once agreed, a revised copy would be issues to all Councillors.

RESOLVED – The amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be approved as set out in the report and attachments.

**167. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY**

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 15 February had been circulated. There were no recommendations for approval.

One of the main items discussed was gully cleansing in Ponteland. The Highways Manager had attended the meeting and explained that a new digital audit processing system was currently being brought in that would provide information regarding recommended cycles for areas in order of priority going forward. It was envisaged that this system would ensure that areas that were of high priority i.e. on a strategic route and susceptible to blockages and subsequent flooding would be attended to on more regular basis. The Mayor reported on a recent useful meeting he had had with the Highways Manager to discuss various problem areas in and around the centre of Ponteland.

RESOLVED – The Minutes be approved.

**168. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY**

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 18 February 2019 had been circulated.

In relation to the recommendation relating to lighting levels at Thornhill Road car park, Councillor Mrs Caisley reported on correspondence received from a resident of Peel House.

The Clerk reported that the Deputy Clerk had met with the electrician who had quoted for the work and he had recommended lights on a timer (between 7 and 11 pm) to reduce any impact on nearby residents. This would cover up to the middle of the car park.

RESOLVED –The minutes and the following recommendation be approved:

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**168. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY (continued)**

**Item 3v – Light pollution – sensor light at toilets**

The Council approved the installation of a floodlight at the public toilets at a cost of £590 plus VAT as discussed with the installing company subject to discussions with the County Council regarding the need for planning permission as the toilets were in the Conservation area.

**Note - Councillor Mrs Caisley declared an interest in the above matter and took no part in the voting.**

**169. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Councillor Mrs Veronica Jones reported that an announcement had been made regarding the Borderland Partnership. A £345 million deal had been announced by the UK and Scottish Governments. This funding would increase job opportunities, lead to additional tourism, improve digital connectivity and unlock investment in towns. She reported that the Borderlands Partnership was a collaboration between the five cross-border local authorities - Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and the Scottish Borders Council.

She reported that the Step into Spring event would be held at Merton Hall on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

She informed members about a 'Daily Mile' initiative that was being introduced in local schools. This meant that pupils were getting out of the classroom and walking a mile each day to improve their health and wellbeing. To date, a total of 37 schools in the county had agreed to take part.

Councillor Mrs Jones also raised her concerns in relation to Medburn, in particular the condition of the road on the Avenue. This was an unadopted road and as such, NCC would not carry out any repairs until it was brought up to standard. She was hoping to have a meeting with the newly appointed Director of Planning to discuss this in more detail.

She reported that conditions were being imposed on approvals for properties on the Avenue to carry out work at staggered times in an attempt to minimise the impact on residents.

The problems were being caused by several developers receiving approval which increased the amount of construction traffic on the road.

**170. MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor submitted details of his diary engagements for March and April 2019.

**171. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

**(i) Ponteland Community Partnership**

Minutes of the January PCP meeting which was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 had been circulated.

**171. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS (Continued)**

**(ii) Coates Educational Foundation**

Minutes of a meeting of the above held on 1 February 2019 had been circulated.

Councillor Mrs Greenwell represented the Town Council on the Foundation and reported that she had suggested that the mosaic being produced by the children in recognition of their 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary could be placed at the sensory garden. This had been reported to the Environment Working Party who agreed. The Clerk had informed the Headteacher.

**(iii) Newcastle Airport Consultative Committee**

Councillor Mrs Caisley reported on her attendance at the above Committee on 8 March 2019.

Concern was expressed at the recent increase in parking charges at the Airport. Members felt that this was leading to increased litter issues in the vicinity of the airport.

**172. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT**

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £25,295.44. A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for February 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.**

**173. MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD**

Councillors were reminded that nominations were required for the above award which was presented to the nominated recipient at the Annual Town Meeting held in April. Two nominations had been made at the last meeting.

RESOLVED – The award be made to Mr Gordon Allan for all his work in relation to mental health issues and exercise for those who suffered from this condition.

**174. YOUTH SERVICES**

The Clerk had circulated a report to Councillors in relation to the above.

The NCC Youth service were unable to provide any assistance in Ponteland at this time.

#### **174. YOUTH SERVICES (Continued)**

The Clerk had met with an alternative provider who had been suggested and the Clerk had met with the Chief Executive on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

The organisation was keen to work with Ponteland Town Council. They were already working with other Town and Principal authorities.

Details of a proposal received from the company was outlined in the report and a copy of the offer was included with the report.

The offer included a residential element however Members were not willing to proceed with that suggestion at present. They were interested in the outreach work outlined in the document and it was generally felt that they should meet with the Chief Executive of the organisation before agreeing to the proposal.

Councillors were informed of the budgetary position.

To avoid any unnecessary delays, Councillors agreed to delegate authority to the Clerk to allow the project to proceed, if they were satisfied following their discussions with the organisation.

The Clerk was asked to organise a meeting in the following week if possible.

RESOLVED –

(i) The report be accepted.

(ii) The Clerk be asked to organise an early meeting with the organisation and if Councillors were in agreement, the Clerk be given delegated authority to proceed with the proposal.

#### **175. PONTELAND WAR MEMORIAL**

Councillors were reminded that an email had been received from Historic England on 8<sup>th</sup> March stating that an application had been made re the listing of the Ponteland War Memorial. Historic England acted as advisers to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and he had asked them to assess whether the memorial holds special architectural or historic interest.

Comments were required by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

The description of the listing could be designed to show that it was just the memorial that was listed and not any structures within its curtilage.

The Memorial Hall were considering their position on this proposal at their next meeting to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

The Clerk had been informed that listing did not affect day to day maintenance and cleaning.

RESOLVED – The Council supports the application for listing the Ponteland War Memorial.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 2019 AT 7.00 P.M. FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FOLLOWED BY A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL AT APPROXIMATELY 8.00 P.M. TO BE HELD AT MERTON HALL.**

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