

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTELAND ON 15 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillor A Varley (in the Chair)

Councillors S Ahmed, Mrs C Caisley, R Dodd, Mrs C Greenwell, A Hall, Mrs S Johnson, Mrs K Overbury, A Shanley and Mrs K Woodrow.

115. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Darwin and T Edwards Clay.

116. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 11 DECEMBER 2019

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 December 2019 were submitted for approval. Councillors agreed to an amendment to Minute 107(i) – risk management report and the inclusion of the word ‘no’ between the words ‘further’ and ‘action’ in resolution (ii).

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved subject to the above-mentioned amendment being made.

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

118. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 110 – Environment Working Party – Councillor Mrs Overbury asked if dates for the two community events could be agreed as soon as possible. This would be discussed by the Environment Working Party.

Minute 111 – Northumberland County Council report – Councillor Mrs Overbury asked if a tour of the new school and leisure complex for Town Councillors could be requested and arranged. Councillor Dodd agreed to follow this up.

119. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 26th November and 10th December 2019 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

120. GRANT APPLICATIONS

(i) Ponteland Beer Festival 2020

A request for a grant of £250 had been received from the organisers of the Ponteland Beer Festival. The funds were to go towards the costs of holding the event in 2020.

RESOLVED – A grant of £250 be approved.

(ii) Tynedale Hospice at Home – volunteer delivered patient transport service

An application had been received from the above organisation for a grant of £500 towards the cost of providing a volunteer delivered patient transport service.

RESOLVED – A grant of £500 be approved.

121. PROJECTS REPORT

The projects report had been circulated for the consideration of Councillors. In relation to item 1 on the report the Clerk was asked to make contact with the Council's Solicitor to seek progress on the land survey.

RESOLVED – The report be accepted, and the action outlined above be agreed.

122. PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES

The report set out the current level of reserves held by the Town Council for general purposes, and those set aside for asset replacement, Cemetery reserves and tree replacement.

Councillors were further reminded that in January 2019, they had agreed to revise the figure they should hold in general reserves (minimum of 6 months operating expenses) to £165,000.

At the end of this financial year, a report would be presented to the Council listing any necessary transfers and unexpended amounts and it would be recommended that any available funds that weren't already earmarked for other purposes should be transferred to the General Reserves.

A query was raised in relation to the amount set aside for the tree reserve. It was reported that the sum of £100 for each tree was agreed some time ago and this was a guide figure only. There was some discussion regarding several offers of trees that the Council had received, and the issues of land availability and maintenance were mentioned. This would require further deliberation at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Council note the information relating to reserves.

122. PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES(Continued)

(ii) It was agreed to examine the situation at year-end when there may be non-earmarked funds that could be transferred to the general reserve.

(iii) It was agreed to transfer appropriate funds to the Cemetery and tree reserve funds in April 2020.

123. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2020-21

The Town Council had carried out an initial review of the budget for 2020-21 on 13th January and a draft copy of the budget from that meeting was submitted for approval.

As reported at that meeting, NCC had given prior notification of the indicative tax base figure for Ponteland for 2020-21 which was 5712.98.

Various options in relation to the budget and precept had been presented to the 13th January meeting and members who had attended were in favour of levying a precept of £422,018 on Northumberland County Council which represented a zero increase on a band D property.

The Council also needed to consider the situation regarding fees and charges. In relation to the allotments, previous practice has been to increase the rents by £1 across the board. However, the issue of water provision was still unresolved and Councillors were asked to consider whether they wished to agree to the £1 increase or defer any increase until the outcome of the water supply was resolved. In response to a query, the Clerk reported that little progress had been made in relation to this issue. The suggestion for a piped water supply had not been agreed by all tenants and those who had attended the EWP meeting in November did not feel the water container option would be suitable. The Environment Working Party were asked to discuss this at their next meeting and submit a recommendation to the February meeting for a decision.

In relation to the Cemetery fees, it was reported that the Cemetery Committee would be considering the fees and charges at their next meeting when members of the Committee would consider and determine the percentage increase. It was noted that the fees had no impact on the budget however, the recommendations of the Cemetery Committee would be presented to the Council for formal approval.

RESOLVED –

(i) The draft budget for 2020-21 as presented be approved and the Council agree to levy a precept request of £422,018 on Northumberland County Council.

(ii) The Council agree to increase allotment rents by £1 across the board resulting in fees of £38, £43 and £48 respectively. The Council would consider the recommendation of the EWP regarding water provision at the February meeting.

(iii) It was agreed to await the recommendations of the Cemetery Committee in relation to any increase in fees for 2020-21.

124. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – IDEA FOR POPPY DISPLAYS

A report relating to the above had been circulated.

There had been some comments made by residents in 2019 regarding the lack of poppies on display for Remembrance Sunday.

Councillor Mrs Overbury had had some initial discussions with the Council’s contractor regarding ideas for displays at locations such as Coates Green, the sensory garden and outside of the Pele tower. The idea was for a large ‘lollipop’ structure to be made for each location and a request for knitted poppies would be made to the community to fix onto each item.

The Clerk would have to check with NCC to see if any permissions for temporary displays were required.

If this was agreed, then a request for knitted poppies would be made in a future edition of PNV asking for assistance from the schools, local organisations and residents. Copies of patterns would be made available from the office for anyone interested in this project.

The project would be funded from the Remembrance budget heading.

RESOLVED – The Council agree to the suggestion for the displays at the locations mentioned above during November 2020 and agree to an article being included in a future edition of PNV as outlined above.

125. THIRD PARTY INDEMNITY – PTC BANK ACCOUNTS

It was reported that there had been some occasions when cheques payable to Pont News and Views had been returned due to the ‘payee’ details not being acceptable.

This was discussed with the Council’s banking providers and they had stated that a third-party indemnity form must be completed and approved by the Council. The form had been received and completed showing the possible variations for cheque payee details. The following resolution was required to be made by the Council before it was sent to the bank:

“The Chairman explained to the meeting the arrangements which had been made with the Company’s bankers, Lloyds bank plc (“the Bank”), whereby the Bank be instructed to collect and credit to any account of the Company credits of whatever nature payable to any of the payees (or their respective trading names) listed in section 1 and the continuation sheet (if applicable).

A draft of the indemnity to the Bank was produced to the meeting and approved.

It was resolved that any one director be authorised to sign the indemnity and to advise the Bank of any payee to be added to or deleted from the indemnity from time to time.

..... DATE

CHAIRMAN

125. THIRD PARTY INDEMNITY – PTC BANK ACCOUNTS(Continued)

We certify that the foregoing resolutions have been duly entered into the Minute book of the Company and are in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association (Standing Orders) of the Company”

RESOLVED – The resolution be approved and made as set out above for submission to the Council’s banking provider.

126. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 29th November were submitted. There were no recommendations for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

127. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that the County Council were currently going through their budget process for 2020-21. He reported that he had a meeting with the Highways Manager to discuss various works to be carried out at the Merton Way north car park. He also reported that by the end of the four-year term of the current administration, over £100million would have been spent on roads and potholes in the County.

128. MAYOR’S REPORT

The Mayor submitted details of his diary engagements for December 2019 and January and February 2020.

129. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Ponteland Community Partnership

Minutes of a meeting of the PCP held on 16th October were circulated for information.

130. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £45,918.29. A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation document for December 2019.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2020 AT 6.45 P.M.
AT THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE