

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTELAND ON 12 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillor A Varley (in the Chair)

Councillors S Ahmed, Mrs C Caisley, R Dodd, T Edwards-Clay, Mrs S Johnson, A Hall, Mrs K Overbury, A Shanley, and Mrs K Woodrow

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Darwin, and Mrs C Greenwell.

20. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 8 MAY 2019

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 May 2019 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Hall declared an interest in Minute 27, requests for use of Ponteland Park.

22. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

23. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 16th April and 1 May 2019 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports

24. GRANTS

A report relating to two grant applications received from the following organisations had been circulated.

(i) Holy Saviour Church, Milbourne

A request for the annual contribution of £350 towards ground maintenance works at the church had been circulated. The funds had been included in the budget for 2019-20.

24. GRANTS (Continued)

RESOLVED – A grant of £350 be approved.

(ii) Richard Coates CE Primary School

A copy of a letter received from the head teacher of the above Primary school had been circulated.

The letter included details of various events being held to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the school which Town Councillors had been invited to attend. Members were reminded that the school was proceeding with the creation of a mosaic in commemoration of their anniversary and it had been agreed that this would be placed in the sensory garden.

The cost of the artwork was £3000. A donation of £1000 had been made by the Richard Coates Educational Foundation and it was hoped that a further £500 could be raised from their summer fair in July.

The Council were asked to consider making a donation towards the shortfall. The Clerk advised that the funds could be carried forward from last year and this would be discussed later in the meeting.

RESOLVED – A grant of £1500 be approved towards the creation of the mosaic.

25. PROJECTS REPORT

The projects report had been circulated for the information of Councillors. An additional report had been circulated regarding two of the current projects. Item 3 on the report related to the power supply for the pele tower lighting. Details of a revised quote from Northern Power grid was reported. This was to cover the cost of works to install a new service cable including excavation works. The quote was only valid for a limited time period and the Clerk therefore requested that the Council agree to delegate approval of work on this project to the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor. There were sufficient funds in the budget to complete the project which would cover the costs of other necessary work in addition to the item listed above.

It was necessary to complete the project as soon as possible as the owner of the verger's cottage was keen for the supply to be moved.

Councillors were reminded that it was agreed to carry out a tree survey outside of the Park in February 2019. This task had been completed and some analysis of the document was required. A limited amount of urgent works were required. At the February meeting it was agreed to obtain a quote from the same contractor to carry out a survey for the trees inside of the park. A quote of £1000 plus VAT had been received and the Clerk sought the approval of the Council to enable the works to be carried out.

RESOLVED –

(i) It was agreed that the Clerk can proceed with the Pele tower lighting project in consultation with the Mayor, provided that the works were within the available budget.

25. PROJECTS REPORT (Continued)

(ii) The Council agreed to the tree survey work inside of the Park being carried out at a cost of £1000 plus VAT.

26. ANNUAL AUDIT 2018-19

A report by the Clerk had been circulated. Members were informed that the Annual Audit Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had to be sent to the Town Council's external auditors, PKF Littlejohn by 1st July 2019. This related to the annual audit of accounts for 2018-19.

A copy of the AGAR form had been circulated with the report. The annual internal audit report (page 3) had been completed by the Council's Internal Auditor, Mr Peter Basnett. A copy of his separate internal audit report was also circulated. He had not raised any issues of concern to the Council. A copy of the Annual Governance Statement (page 4 of the AGAR) had been circulated and Councillors reviewed the information and responded to the various questions included in the Statement.

The Accounting Statement (page 5) was approved and was signed by the Mayor at the meeting. The Clerk had already signed the Accounting Statement prior to circulation to the Council. The Council also reviewed the explanation of variances from 2017-18 to 2018-19 and the draft annual accounts.

Members were informed that the process for the exercise of public rights must include the first 10 working days of July (i.e. 1st – 12th July). The exercise of public rights would start from Monday 17th June until Friday 26th July.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Council approved the Annual Internal Audit report (page 3 of the AGAR) and the separate internal audit report as presented.
- (ii) Following a review of the Annual Governance Statement set out on page 4 of the AGAR, the Council approved the Statement.
- (iii) The Council approved the draft final accounts as presented.
- (iv) The Council approved the Accounting Statements set out on page 5 of the AGAR which was signed by the Mayor at the meeting.
- (v) Members approved the explanation of variances as circulated for submission to the Council's external auditors.
- (vi) The Council noted the process for the exercise of public rights starting from Monday 17th June until Friday 26th July. It was noted that the relevant information would be posted on the Council's website on 15th June.

27. REQUEST FOR USE OF THE PARK

The Council was informed that two requests had been made for the use of Ponteland Park.

The first request was from the Rotary Club of Ponteland in respect of their annual Duck Race. The plan was to hold the race on Sunday 1st September and they had formally asked for permission to use the Park on that day.

The second request was from an individual who taught yoga. She had asked if it would be possible to provide a free outdoor session in the Park on Sunday 29th June with any donations received being given to Parkinson's UK. She currently taught a weekly yoga class in Ponteland for those who suffer from the disease. The Council would require a copy of her public liability insurance if the request was approved.

RESOLVED –

(i) The request from the Rotary Club of Ponteland for the Duck Race being held on 1 September be approved.

(ii) The request from an individual to hold a free yoga session in the park on 29th June be approved, subject to receipt of a copy of her insurance as outlined above.

Note – Councillor A Hall declared an interest in item 27(i) above and took no part in the discussing or voting.

28. POPPY REPORT

Members were reminded that as part of the budget process, it had been suggested that the Council should consider launching a 'Poppy project' to continue raising the awareness of young people about the sacrifices made during war time. This followed on from the enthusiastic involvement of young people in the WW1 remembrance events that had taken place last year.

A copy of the launch draft was attached to the report. It was suggested that a grant should be offered to groups of friends, Scout or Guide groups, Boys' or Girls Brigades and schools etc as long as they were under 21 years of age. The Town Council would help with the costs of projects if they benefitted the community. Various examples of projects were outlined in the launch draft document.

Some discussion took place on the level of grants to be offered and it was suggested that an upper limit of £250 be agreed and an overall budget of £2500 for this year be made available from the projects fund. The availability of funds would be advertised in PNV and letters would be sent to schools and other organisations advising them of this project.

A decision would need to be made as to how to award the grants. The Town Council could consider them each month or a small Working Party could be created to consider the applications.

28. POPPY REPORT (Continued)

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Council agreed to proceed with the project with the costs being met from the sum available in the budget for projects this year.
- (ii) The launch draft be sent to PNV with the age being limited to under 21 years of age and the upper limit for grants set at £250.
- (iii) The allocated budget for this project would be limited to £2500 for 2019-20 and this be reviewed at the end of the year.

29. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 10 May had been circulated. There were no recommendations for approval. In relation to item 4 (item 125 Merton Way car park scheme), the Clerk advised members that the painting of the garage walls in green would be carried out without further reference to the Council.

RESOLVED – The Minutes be approved.

30. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 13 May 2019 had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved, and the following recommendation be approved:

Item 8 Correspondence – further letter re dog waste bin near to Penny Pieces

The Council approved the installation of a dog waste/litter bin on the bridle path where the three footpaths converge (near to Penny Pieces) at an approximate cost of £300.

31. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Richard Dodd reported that the County Council reported that the Northumberland Local Plan had been submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for examination on 29th May. As mentioned at the last meeting, as part of their Housing Strategy, NCC were considering the provision of up to 1000 council houses in the County. Details of possible sites had not yet been discussed and the Town Council expressed their wish to be involved in any plans for Ponteland.

A meeting had been held with the company working on the new school and leisure complex which was progressing well.

32. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor submitted details of his diary engagements for May, June & July 2019.

33. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Ponteland Community Partnership

The April PCP minutes were not yet available for circulation to the Council.

(ii) Newcastle International Airport Consultative Committee – 4.6.19

Councillor Mrs Caisley presented a report to the Council regarding her attendance at the above-mentioned meeting.

34. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £46,349.69. A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for May 2019.

The Council also considered a report relating to year-end budget revisions. If the various suggestions were approved, this would mean the sum of £65,636.40 could be allocated to general reserves. However, it was suggested that the sum of £1500 for the donation to Richard Coates CE Primary school could be taken from that sum as well as any amount agreed in item 35 below. The Council agreed that the necessary adjustments could be made.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The reports be accepted.
- (ii) The Council agreed the various budgetary adjustments as reported.
- (iii) The Council agreed to fund the two items mentioned above from the sum allocated for general reserves and the sum be adjusted accordingly.

35. REQUEST FROM POLICE RE PROVISION OF TECHNOLOGY

Councillors were reminded of a recent meeting with the Police when they had requested assistance with the acquisition of technology to assist with the detection of crime.

35. REQUEST FROM POLICE RE PROVISION OF TECHNOLOGY (Continued)

The report presented set out details of the costs involved.

RESOLVED – The Council agree to fund two items of equipment as requested by the Police.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2019 AT 6.45 P.M. AT THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE