

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTELAND ON 13 NOVEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor A Varley (in the Chair)

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

83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C Caisley and T Edwards-Clay.

84. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 9 OCTOBER 2019

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 October 2019 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ahmed declared an interest in item 88(i) and took no part in the discussion or voting.

86. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 71 (i) and (ii) – Grants

Letters of thanks had been received from Sport Tynedale and Community Action Northumberland in respect of grants awarded at the October meeting.

87. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 1st and 15th October 2019 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

88. GRANTS

(i) New Year's Eve Firework Display

A grant application had been received from the proprietor of Rialto seeking a grant towards the cost of the New Year's Eve Firework display. Members were reminded that the amount of £500 had been awarded to the organisation in October 2018 for this purpose.

88. GRANTS (Continued)

(i) New Year's Eve Firework Display

At that meeting members had asked if the applicant could consider introducing security and using plastic glasses at the establishment and to pass this request onto other licenced premises in Ponteland. Members still had concerns at the behaviour of some of those who attended the event and at the amount of broken glass that was left in the vicinity. It was suggested that a letter be sent to all licenced premises from the Town Council asking for their co-operation with additional security and using plastic glasses prior to the event.

RESOLVED –

- (i) A grant of £500 be approved.
- (ii) That letters be sent to all licenced premises in Ponteland as set out above.

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

(ii) Request for grant from Dalton Village Hall

A grant application had been received from Dalton Village Hall requesting a grant of £1500. A letter and final accounts had been included with the form. An amount of £1500 had been included in the budget for 2019-20.

RESOLVED – A grant of £1500 be approved.

89. PROJECTS REPORT

The projects report had been circulated for the consideration of Councillors. It was noted that the Pele tower lighting project had been completed.

RESOLVED – The report be accepted.

90. RISK MANAGEMENT/INTERNAL CONTROLS REPORTS

(i) Risk Management Report

A report relating to risk management for the Town Council had been circulated. The report had been updated where necessary. A table covering financial risks to the Council had also been circulated. Members were asked to consider the report.

A concern was raised regarding the security of staff in the office and Councillors queried whether there were any measures that could be taken to improve their safety.

A door entry buzzer in the lobby could be installed as well as CCTV. The Clerk did mention the erection of some signage requesting users of the office to treat staff with respect and courtesy. Councillors agreed this would be helpful and the Clerk agreed to organise this.

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CHAIRMAN DATE

90. RISK MANAGEMENT/INTERNAL CONTROLS REPORTS (Continued)

In terms of the other items suggested, it was agreed that the report be deferred to the next meeting and the Clerk would report back to the next meeting on this topic with some recommendations following discussion with office staff.

RESOLVED – Consideration of the report be deferred to the December meeting pending consideration of items that could improve office safety.

(ii) Review of Internal Audit Report

A report relating to the review of internal audit for the current year had been circulated. The report set out the processes followed by the internal auditor and explained his role in relation to the Town Council. A copy of the internal audit review checklist had also been circulated for consideration.

The Clerk reported that the current internal auditor had indicated that he would be retiring on completion of the 2019-20 audit review.

The Clerk would be making early enquiries to find a suitable replacement.

Members would be kept informed regarding suitable candidates.

The current internal auditor had already been appointed for the year end work for 2019-20 (Minute 106(ii) from November 2018 refers).

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Council approve the report and the checklist.
- (ii) Councillors noted the retirement of the internal auditor next year.
- (iii) The Council noted that the Clerk would be making early enquiries regarding a suitable replacement and that members would be kept informed.

(iii) Review of Internal Controls Report

Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2011 required the Council to carry out a review of their internal controls annually before the end of the financial year.

A report had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The report be approved.

91. POPPY PROJECT

A report relating to a further application that had been received in respect of the Poppy fund had been circulated.

The application was from the 1st Ponteland Scout group who wished to purchase litter picking equipment as part of their project to get all groups (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts) involved in acquiring their environmental conservation badges. The total cost of the project was in the region of £300 and the organisation had requested £250 to enable them to purchase as much equipment as possible.

91. POPPY PROJECT (Continued)

The Council were in support of the application and suggested providing the Scouts with the required sum of £300 and ask if they would be able to have some publicity for the project and the Council on any hi-vis clothing that was acquired.

Councillors briefly discussed Remembrance Day. It was stated that some disappointment had been expressed at the lack of poppies in the village area. Councillor Overbury reported that she had an idea for poppy displays for next year that she had briefly discussed with the Town Council's contractor. A report would be submitted to a future meeting.

RESOLVED – A grant of £300 be awarded to the 1st Ponteland Scout Group with a request to include some publicity on any hi-vis clothing that was acquired as part of their project.

92. BUDGET 2019-20

The Clerk reported that work had started on the budget for 2020-21 and a meeting to discuss this would be arranged for December/early January. A sum would be included for projects that the Council wished to bring forward.

RESOLVED – The information be noted.

93. YOUTH OUTREACH WORK – UPDATE

Councillors were reminded that NE Youth had been engaged earlier in the year to provide outreach work in Ponteland on two nights a week. An update report on the provision had been circulated. This included information on works completed to date; their successes; the topics covered and future plans.

Members were pleased to receive the report and looked forward to future updates.

RESOLVED – The report be accepted.

94. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 11th October 2019 had been circulated. There were no recommendations for approval.

RESOLVED – The Minutes be approved.

95. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 14 October 2019 had been circulated. There were no recommendations for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved:

96. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that there was a Local Transport Programme meeting being held on 15th November to discuss the schemes that had been submitted for 2020-21.

Councillor Dodd hoped to get work completed on the Merton Way north car park and the resurfacing of the roads from his Members small schemes allowance this year.

He stated that a report had been produced relating to the readiness of NCC for winter weather.

He also advised Councillors that parents were being allowed to drop off their children at the Darras Hall Primary school drop off point.

97. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor submitted details of his diary engagements for November and December 2019.

98. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Ponteland Community Partnership

The Minutes of the PCP meeting held on 18th September 2019 had been circulated.

(ii) Town and Parish Council Liaison Group

The Mayor had produced a report relating to his attendance at the above meeting held at County Hall on 31st October 2019.

The report included information regarding waste and recycling. Four Councillors had now attended a tour of the West Sleekburn recycling centre which they had found to be useful and interesting.

Members felt it was important to get the correct message out to residents about this service.

99. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £38,412.37. A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation documents for October 2019.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

Councillors agreed to consider the following item in open session following a request from a member of the press.

100. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN PONTELAND

A report by the Clerk in relation to the above had been circulated. The report summarised the problems that had been faced in the lead up to Halloween and November 5th.

The report also summarised the positive actions that had been taken to deal with the issues faced.

RESOLVED – The report be accepted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2019 AT 6.45 P.M. AT THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE