

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTELAND ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor A Varley (in the Chair)

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

50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

51. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 10 JULY 2019

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 July 2019 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

53. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 44 – August Recess

In view of the success of the August recess, Councillor Mrs Overbury suggested that this be a permanent arrangement. All Members agreed with this proposal.

Minute 45 – Environment Working Party

Councillor Hall asked if an appropriate update could be provided in relation to the use of banners to promote local events. This was causing some concerns locally. The Clerk agreed to produce a paper on this and report back.

54. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 11th and 25th June 2019 and 23rd July and 6th and 20th August were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports

55. GRANTS

(i) Ponteland Memorial Hall

A grant application had been received from the Memorial Hall. Members were reminded that the amount of £6400 had been included in the budget for this purpose.

Copies of the accounts for the Hall and a statement by the Chairman had also been provided.

RESOLVED – A grant application of £6400 be approved.

56. PROJECTS REPORT

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

An additional report had been provided to members in relation to two items which required discussion and approval as follows:

(i) Tree Surveys

Following the completion of recent tree surveys both inside and outside of the Park, some urgent works had been identified. Several were for inside of the Park and one for the area outside.

Quotes had been obtained and the Clerk had placed orders for work under delegated authority to remove a Beech tree at the top of Fox Covert Lane and to remove a Sycamore growing out of the riverbank near to the Darras Road bridge. A further order for work just outside of the Park to remove a tree on Darras Road, on the grass verge near to the Memorial Hall had also been placed and the work completed.

There was one additional urgent item for work to the park side of a property in Runnymede Road. There were complications with the location and access. One quote for work on a day rate basis had been received. The work would cost £650 a day for three men plus machinery and it was unclear how many days this would take. Further quotes had been sought but it was likely that only one more quote will be received.

(ii) Request for installation of water supply at Prestwick allotments

The Environment Working Party had been considering a request for the above installation. The request was made by one tenant and a letter had been sent to all tenants requesting their views. Not all tenants wanted the supply, and some did not reply.

A quote had been sought from Northumbrian Water and a price of £1664.40 was received in June 2019. Further works to dig a trench to the site of the new supply would also have to be met and it was likely the supply could be installed for approximately £2,500.

The Environment Working Party members would like to meet with tenants to discuss this in more detail, however they felt it was important to seek the views of the Council prior to any discussions taking place. If agreed, this could be included in the budget for 2020-21.

There were various matters to discuss with tenants such as how the water charges would be apportioned etc.

Some members were in favour of the proposal whilst others had mixed views and were concerned about recouping the water costs.

56. PROJECTS REPORT (Continued)

RESOLVED –

(i) In view of the urgency of the tree works set out in item (i) above, the Council agreed to proceed with the work for the trees on the park side of the property on Runnymede Road. The Clerk would report back to Councillors on the eventual cost. This would be met from the Park tree budget and/or contingencies.

(ii) The Council agree in principle to fund the capital cost of installation of the water supply at Prestwick subject to positive discussions with tenants and all allotment holders being in favour of the project. This would be included in the budget for 2020-21 if a positive outcome was achieved.

57. VE DAY 75

Members were reminded that a report was considered by the Town Council at their July meeting (Minute 42 refers) when it was agreed to defer consideration to this meeting following a further meeting with the Vicar of St Mary's Church to determine what the Church had planned for the weekend of 8-10 May 2020.

Following a further meeting with the Vicar on 22nd August he stated that he hoped an event would be held in the Church on Friday 8th May at 2.30 p.m. which would include a singalong of WW2 music and refreshments in the Church. The Nation's Tribute to the Heroes of WW2 would be read out. It was not anticipated that the Town Council would be involved in the organisation of the event.

The Vicar also intended to ask the St Mary's Bell ringers to 'ring out for peace' at 7.00 p.m. on the evening of the 8th May.

It was also suggested that a celebration and commemoration of peace would be incorporated into the Church service on the morning of the 10th May. The Vicar would like a local dignitary to read out the Tribute to the Millions and lay a wreath at the WW2 memorial in the Church. He also suggesting putting something on each of the Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard.

In addition, it was suggested that the Town Council should write out to all pubs and clubs in the area urging them to take part in the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2 at 3.00 p.m. on Friday 8th May. They would also be told how to register their involvement with the official VE Day 75 website.

The Council was also asked to consider the suggestion made at the July meeting to offer a modest donation to organisations wishing to hold a celebration party to mark the occasion of VE Day 75.

RESOLVED –

(i) The Council agree to contribute towards refreshments for the event being held at the St Mary's Church on the afternoon of Friday 8th May.

57. VE DAY 75 (Continued)

(ii) It was agreed to write out to all pubs and clubs etc asking them to take part in the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW3 on Friday 8th May at 3.00 p.m.

(iii) The Council noted the information regarding the Church service on Sunday 10th May and agreed to meet the cost of a floral tribute on each of the Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard and to lay a wreath at the WW2 memorial in the Church.

(iv) Councillors agreed in principle to make modest grants to organisations towards the cost of holding celebratory events over the weekend of 8-10th May. This expenditure would be included in the budget for 2020-21.

58. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

A report relating to the preparations that were underway in respect of Remembrance Sunday was circulated. Remembrance Sunday was on 10th November this year. There were some items that required the Council's consideration.

Information regarding attendance at the event had been included in the report.

An approach had been made by a local WW1 Re-enactment group asking if four of their members could be part of the parade and service on horseback. The pros and cons of such involvement were included within the report. Members considered the matter carefully but on balance, felt that this was a potential health and safety risk, particularly in view of the increasing numbers in attendance.

The Clerk reported on the situation in Ponteland since the retirement of the Poppy Appeal organiser for the area last year. The Royal British Legion (RBL) had confirmed that a replacement had not yet been found.

In relation to wreaths, it had been agreed with the RBL to include an order form with the letter sent out to organisations regarding the event and the parade. They could then get their wreath delivered to an address of their choice. The RBL had stated they would send the Town Council some spare wreaths for purchase in an emergency on the morning of Remembrance Sunday if organisations had failed to order one. The Clerk suggested it may be worthwhile ordering some extra just in case these did not materialise.

A suggestion had been made for the Town Council to purchase three additional wreaths for the Commonwealth War Graves in St. Mary's Churchyard which was carried out for the first time in 2018.

A further suggestion was made to ask the High School for two pupils to read out the names on the War Memorial.

It was unclear at the present time whether collection tins would be made widely available in Ponteland although there was a member of staff from a

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local business who was involved with the RBL was providing some to schools and businesses.

58. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY (Continued)

RESOLVED –

- (i) The attendance of the representative of HM the Queen at the event be noted.
- (ii) The request received from the WW1 Re-enactment group be rejected for the reasons outlined above and they be thanked for their interest.
- (iii) The information regarding ordering of wreaths be noted and the Council agree to the purchase of additional wreaths as outlined above.
- (iv) The Clerk write to the head teacher at the High School asking if two pupils would be available to read out the names on the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

59. POPPY PROJECT – APPLICATIONS

Members were reminded of their agreement to launch the Poppy project at the June meeting (Minute 28 refers). A budget of £2500 was made available for the project and it was launched on social media, the Council's website and in PNV.

A copy of the launch draft was attached to the report for information. A grant application had been received from the 1st Ponteland Girls Brigade. They wanted to host a 1940s themed afternoon tea party to celebrate and remember the veterans and families in the community who made sacrifices during the War. This would be held around the time of Remembrance Sunday. A grant of £500 was requested.

The upper limit had been set at £250 but Members agreed to approve the grant for £500.

RESOLVED – A grant of £500 be approved.

60. MUSIC IN THE PARK/EVENT WORKING PARTY

Members were reminded that a group had been set up in December 2018 to discuss the above event and whether it should continue in its current format. The Group had met on 10th July and had discussed the event. The consensus was that after 10 years, the event had run its course and it should not continue. A recommendation to that effect was included in the notes of the 10th July meeting.

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The Group would continue to look at other suggestions for a replacement event in Ponteland.
It was agreed to write to those who had been involved in the organisation and running of the event expressing the sincere thanks of the Town Council.

60. MUSIC IN THE PARK/EVENT WORKING PARTY (Continued)

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Council agreed the recommendation of the Working Party that Music in the Park should not be held in future years and members of the group would report back with suggestions for a new event in due course.
- (ii) A letter be sent to those involved with the MIP event thanking them for their help over the last 10 years.

61. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 12th July had been circulated.

An additional report had been produced in relation to the Council's response to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2020-21. Various items had been suggested by the Town Council and also by residents and the Darras Hall Estate Committee. All of the items were included within the report. The Deputy Clerk provided some additional information relating to some of the items listed in the report and this explained what could and could not go forward for consideration. This information was noted by members.

RESOLVED – The Clerk write to NCC with the following first three priorities in respect of their LTP submission and one reserve item as follows.

- (1) Pedestrian crossing at North Road - The advice from NCC stated that a request for a feasibility study for this project should be included in the LTP. A suitable location would have to be found and it would need to meet the crossing criteria.
- (2) Proposed installation of 100 metres of footpath on Linden Way – This would require a consultation with residents first as it was thought some were against the idea.
- (3) A request for a dropped kerb at the bus stop near to Glebe Close.

Reserve item

- (1) Request for a raised bus stop at Cheviot View near to Dobbies on the A696 for reasons of accessibility.

As usual the Town Council would reaffirm their request for a Ponteland bypass or Relief road in the major road schemes.

62. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 15 July 2019 had been circulated.

62. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY(Continued)

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

(i) Installation of a bin at Prestwick

The Council agreed to proceed with the installation of a bin at Prestwick near to the seat and notice board at an approximate cost of £300 on the proviso that NCC agreed to empty the bin.

63. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that some thought was being given to the Merton Way car park North. A redesign of the car park would be produced. He reported that the construction of the school and leisure complex was ahead of schedule.

Councillor Dodd was asked about what would be included in the new leisure facilities and he agreed to obtain some information on this matter and report back to members.

64. MAYOR’S REPORT

The Mayor submitted details of his diary engagements for July, August, September, October and November 2019.

65. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) **Ponteland Community Partnership**

The Minutes of the PCP meeting held on 19th June and 17th July had been circulated.

(ii) **Coates Educational Foundation**

Notes of a meeting of the above held on 20th June had been circulated for information.

66. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £37,843.11. A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation documents for July & August 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

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FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEM ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED.

67. REQUEST TO PURCHASE LAND IN PTC OWNERSHIP

A report by the Clerk in relation to a request from a resident to purchase land in PTC ownership had been circulated. The resident had also provided written and photographic information to back up his request.

The Clerk reported on a meeting she had had with the applicant on site on 29th August.

Councillors were reminded of a policy decision that had been taken by PTC in August 2014 whereby it had been agreed 'to refuse requests of this kind due to the likelihood of creating a precedent for any future requests and also the wishes of the Town Council to retain the areas as green spaces within estates. A similar request from a resident had been rejected in November 2017.

It was suggested that if future requests of this nature were received, the Clerk be give delegated authority to inform applicants of the Council's policy on this matter and refuse requests on their behalf.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The request to purchase land at Dunsgreen be refused.
- (ii) The Council delegate authority to the Clerk to inform any future applicants of the Council's policy on this matter and to refuse requests on their behalf.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2019 AT 6.45 P.M. AT THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

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