

# **PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM ON 13 JANUARY 2021**

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

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

County Councillor Mrs V Jones and a resident were also in attendance.

### **43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There had been no apologies received.

### **44. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 9 DECEMBER 2020**

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 December 2020 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved

### **45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **46. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **47. PLANNING**

Minutes of meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> November and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 had been circulated for information.

### **48. FUNDING FOR GIANT POPPY DISPLAYS**

A report by Councillor Karen Overbury had been circulated for consideration. The report requested the Council to agree to fund three more giant Poppies for the Remembrance displays in 2021. The 2020 displays had been very well received by the community and many residents and those further afield had contributed to the displays. Locations would need to be determined however, initial suggestions included the War Memorial at the Memorial Hall and Broadway. A Councillor suggested the Darras Hall Primary school may be a better location than the shopping area.

Due to ongoing restrictions it was felt that creating more Poppies would give people a purpose during these difficult times. It was also felt that this would allow more time for the creation of Poppies which had to be done in a relatively short

**48. FUNDING FOR GIANT POPPY DISPLAYS (Continued)**

space of time last year and would give the Council’s contractors more time to acquire the frames for the Poppies and mount them.

The Poppies from last year had been taken down and stored, dried and inspected by Councillor Overbury and the gardening contractor. They only require minimal repairs to the frames.

The gardening contractor was keen to be involved in any extension of the scheme as he had heard a great deal of praise for the project which had strengthened residents’ pride in the village area, particularly those who had contributed to the displays

It was estimated that a further £900 to £1000 was needed to complete three additional Poppies. It was reported that there were enough funds available from the current Remembrance budget heading which could be carried forward to 2021-22.

Councillor Overbury had written to Councillors in December last year asking for their support for this project and for permission to place an article in the January edition of PNV asking people to help with the Poppies again this year. She also asked if the Council could acquire stocks of wool as she felt this would be necessary when it was difficult to obtain supplies when shops were closed. The article had been included and there had been a good response with over 12 requests for wool being made to date.

The report referred to different coloured Poppies that had been received as part of the call out for help last year. These Poppies all represented categories such as peace, horses etc. They had not been used last year and Members were asked for their views on whether these should be used in the new displays.

After some discussion, Members agreed that they would prefer to continue with tradition and go for red Poppies only.

All Councillors were in agreement to the extension of the project and all agreed that it had been a wonderful display in Ponteland last year.

RESOLVED –

(i) It was agreed to extend the display and create three additional giant Poppies for 2021 with locations to be decided, the costs would be met from funds carried forward from the current Remembrance budget.

(ii) It was agreed that the displays would continue with the traditional theme of red Poppies with black centres.

**49. REQUEST FROM ST MARY’S CHURCH RE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH PATH WORKS**

A report by the Clerk relating to the above request had been circulated. Councillors had been copied into an email request from one of the

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**49. REQUEST FROM ST MARY’S CHURCH RE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH PATH WORKS (Continued)**

Churchwardens from St. Mary’s church for financial assistance towards improving the path from North Road opposite the Blackbird up to the porch of the church. Some clearance works had been carried out recently and this had shown the poor condition of this path. The path was being used more than usual by children making their way to and from the new schools on Callerton Lane.

A request for assistance had been made to Northumberland County Council as the responsible authority for closed churchyards. Councillor Dodd had been copied into the email. The County Council felt that such works did not constitute an appropriate use of funds available for closed churchyards as they usually covered items such as management of vegetation, headstone maintenance and repair of boundary walls. Councillor Dodd did not currently have any funds available from his small schemes allowance having used it all for the Merton Way car parks.

The path was not a public right of way although it arguably should be with the amount of use.

Councillor Dodd suggested the use of road plainings would be a cost-effective way to improve the path but this may not be acceptable to the church.

The Clerk reported that there were funds remaining in the small grants budget which could be carried forward and a sum be set aside for a contribution towards the work. She also suggested that prices could be obtained from some local contractors which would help the project to progress.

Ultimately a decision re the type of path and surfacing lay with the church.

The Council invited Mr David Butler who was observing the meeting to speak on the matter.

Mr Butler was very appreciative of the Town Council’s support. He had suggested to NCC that a ‘hoggin’ type path would be suitable and felt unsure that the suggestion re road plainings would fit in with the environment. He hoped that the County Council would get involved and carry out the work although he appreciated that there may be cheaper alternatives that could be examined. He appreciated the Town Council’s willingness to assist with this project.

Councillors were in favour of making a financial contribution to the project.

RESOLVED – It was agreed to make a financial contribution to the project outlined above and this would be funded from a sum taken from the small grants budget heading which would be carried forward to 2021-22.

**50. LETTER FROM PCP RE PEDESTALS ON THE BRIDLE PATH**

A report by the Clerk to the Council regarding the above had been circulated for consideration.

Members were reminded that at the October PCP meeting, a decision was taken to dissolve the Partnership after the AGM in April 2021. A statement that had been prepared by the Chairman of the PCP had been circulated to Councillors in October 2020.

The issue of allocation of assets was referred to in the report. The Chairman had asked if the Council would be prepared to take responsibility for the pedestals and

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**50. LETTER FROM PCP RE PEDESTALS ON THE BRIDLE PATH(Continued)**

way markers that had been installed on the bridle path from Callerton Lane as part of their bridle path project.

Members were reminded that they had previously been asked to take responsibility for these items in July 2019 but had rejected the request for reasons outlined in the report.

It seemed unlikely that the County Council would take responsibility for the pedestals on their bridle path however, they had been approached.

The Clerk reported that if the Council agreed to the request the items would need to be included in the insurance schedule and in the asset replacement register for possible replacement at some point in the future. She did state that they would become part of the Council’s inspection and maintenance schedule but pointed out that any issues raised may not be dealt with immediately due to other demands on contractors’ time.

Councillors agreed that they should take responsibility for the items on the bridle path but with the caveat that if they began to require excessive amount of maintenance for various reasons, they would review the situation. The Council agreed with the comments of the Clerk regarding inspection and maintenance. A further suggestion was made to request the PCP to provide the Town Council with any surplus funds they had available once the Partnership was dissolved. This would help with insurance and maintenance costs.

**RESOLVED –**

(i) It was agreed that the Council would take responsibility for the items on the bridle path as outlined above after the Partnership had been dissolved and these would be added to the Council’s insurance policy and asset replacement scheme.

(ii) The above decision would be reviewed if the items were found to be costly in terms of maintenance and/or repair at some future time. The points relating to inspection and maintenance were noted and agreed.

(iii) The PCP be asked to provide the Town Council with any surplus funds once the Partnership was dissolved to assist with the additional costs of insurance and maintenance.

**51. PLAY AREA – INSTALLATION OF CCTV**

Councillors were reminded that they had considered a report at their last meeting relating to issues at the new play area on Callerton Lane. It had been agreed that the situation would be monitored, and any further issues would be discussed at subsequent meetings.

Following the meeting a suggestion was made regarding the early installation of CCTV at the play area.

Funds were available for CCTV as a sum was allocated some time ago for CCTV at the former skate park and this had been carried forward each year.

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**51. PLAY AREA – INSTALLATION OF CCTV (Continued)**

A quote had been sought from the Town Council’s current CCTV providers, details of which were set out in the report.

There were two options for the transfer of data to the Town Council offices which required further investigation. The camera would be sited on a new lamp post adjacent to the play area and permission would be required from NCC before the project could proceed. Planning permission might also be required.

The 12 guiding principles taken from the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice would have to be met if applicable, before progressing with the installation. Policies would need to be prepared.

Members were informed that other Town Councils had installed CCTV at their play areas in order to protect their assets. Berwick Town Council had recently installed equipment at their play areas without any issues being raised by parents/carers/users.

In summary Councillors were advised that if they wished to proceed with the installation of CCTV then this would not happen immediately. The various issues outlined above had to be completed before it could proceed.

A Councillor asked if the Clerk could ensure the firm were confident the suggested camera would provide suitable images and if a more advanced camera was available this should be the chosen option. This was agreed.

Councillors agreed with the proposal to install CCTV at the play area subject to the various issues outlined above being dealt with successfully. The Clerk would advise members of any problems encountered.

RESOLVED – It was agreed to progress the installation of CCTV at the play area on Callerton Lane subject to successful outcomes of the issues outlined above.

**52. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Councillors Dodd and Mrs Jones were in attendance at the meeting. Councillor Dodd reported that the main item that dominated the work of the County Council was the Covid-19 situation with vaccinations being a prominent feature at present.

Work was ongoing on a recovery plan for the county for when life returned to some normality. There were concerns at the impact of the pandemic on businesses and people with mental health issues.

Councillor Dodd stated that the May elections may be postponed until later in the year although this had not been confirmed yet.

Councillor Mrs Jones reported that the Northumberland Communities Together team had been working hard during the pandemic and were doing well with helping those that were shielding and those who found themselves in a vulnerable condition.

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## **52. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT (Continued)**

She reported that 32,000 vaccinations had been administered by the start of this week. In response to a query she stated that everyone who was able to be vaccinated in care homes had had the injection.

Councillor Mrs Jones mentioned that she was hopeful that street lighting would be installed at Dene Park/Burnside in the near future. It had taken a considerable amount of time to deal with the consultation.

She also asked if there was any progress with the speed indicator sign at Medburn. Councillor Mrs Greenwell stated that the Clerk was dealing with this issue and she continued to follow this up with Northumberland County Council. It appeared as though the delay was down to the utilities checks.

Councillors thanked the County Council for the excellent work they had undertaken during the pandemic.

## **53. MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor had circulated details of his limited diary engagements for December 2020 and for January and February 2021 for the information of Councillors.

## **54. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

### **(i) Newcastle Airport Consultative Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the above Consultative Committee had been circulated for information. Councillors Mrs Caisley and Dodd had been in attendance.

### **(ii) Ponteland Memorial Hall**

A report relating to the meeting of the Trustees and general meeting of the Memorial Hall held on 11<sup>th</sup> December had been circulated by Councillor Hall as the Town Council's representative.

## **55. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORTS**

Details of payments approved by the Accounts Committee in December in the sums of £48,138.65 had been circulated. A copy of monthly budget reports for December were also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation document for the same month.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – IT WAS AGREED THAT MONTHLY REMOTE MEETINGS WOULD NOW BE HELD VIA ZOOM. THE NEXT MEETING WOULD BE ON WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY AT 3.00 P.M. (2.45p.m. for public questions)**