

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM ON 21 APRIL 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 and Mrs K Woodrow.

86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Edwards-Clay and A Shanley.

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hall declared an interest in Minute 95 and took no part in the discussion or voting.

88. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 10 MARCH

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 March 2021 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved

89. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 85 – Street Trading Application – Main Street

Councillors asked if there was an update re queries raised in the above minute. The Clerk reported that an update had been sent out to Councillors after the meeting however no further information on various traders operating in Ponteland had been received. She reported that an objection had been sent to NCC in relation to the application considered at the meeting and it was likely that a Councillor would have to attend the Licensing meeting when arranged. Councillors continued to express their concern at the amount of street traders operating in the area which could have a detrimental effect on existing businesses in Ponteland.

Councillors mentioned the latest ‘pop up’ premises that were operating over two weekends in Ponteland with a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) from NCC. The Clerk had written to the Licensing Manager at NCC and had reported details of a phone call she had had with the officer on 16th April to Councillors. The event would be taking place again on the weekend of 24/25 April.

90. PLANNING

Minutes of meetings of the Planning Committee held on 16th February, 2nd March and 16th March 2021 had been circulated for information.

91. PROPOSED LETTER TO NCC RE FORMER HIGH SCHOOL SITE

A draft letter relating to the above had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The letter be approved, and the letter be sent to the Director of Planning at Northumberland County Council.

92. PONT NEWS & VIEWS

A report by the Clerk relating to Pont News and Views and how it would operate following the demise of the Ponteland Community Partnership (PCP) in April 2021 had been circulated.

The background setting out how the Town Council and the PCP had worked together on PNV was set out within the report.

The routine management of the publication was devolved to an editorial board although the Town Council retained the right to prevent publication of any matter which the Council considered to be illegal, of a libellous nature or if it infringed the rights of any third party.

It was reported that an agreement had been made with the PCP in December 2011 to formalise the editorial board which comprised of two representatives of the Town Council and 2 members of the PCP. It also mentioned the appointment of representatives from the business community and the voluntary sector; however, they must also have been taken from the PCP as there was no other external membership other than via the PCP.

The agreement was made following the publication of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity in March 2011. Details of the agreement were set out in the report which involved the appointment of 2 residents of Ponteland to be selected by the Town Council in the event of the discontinuation of the PCP. It also referred to the appointment of the Town Clerk and the person who managed the accounts which were now held by PTC and were managed by a current member of staff as non-voting members of the group.

Details of the principles included in the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity were set out in the report.

The first principle led the Clerk to believe that some external involvement with PNV was advisable.

The Clerk reported that she had sought advice on how the Council proceeds with PNV following the dissolution of the PCP. The Society of Local Council (SLCC) had advised the Council to take guidance in relation to the agreement reached with the voluntary body.

92. PONT NEWS & VIEWS (Continued)

The Clerk suggested that the Council should follow the agreement made with the PCP in December 2011 and advertise for two residents as outlined in the report to be part of the editorial board together with two or three Councillors. The Clerk and member of staff responsible for the PNV finances would also sit on the board as non-voting members. An advert would need to be included in the June edition of PNV and on the website.

RESOLVED – The Council agreed to following the guidance outlined above to seek two residents to sit on the editorial board of PNV with an advert to be included in the June edition of PNV and on the PTC website.

93. PTC INVESTMENT POLICY

A report by the Clerk regarding the above had been circulated for consideration. An amendment to the report had been made in the second sentence of paragraph 2 which made the report easier to understand.

A copy of the draft investment policy had been circulated with the report and this had been prepared in line with the Government’s statutory guidance issued under Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003. If agreed, the strategy would be placed on the PTC website.

RESOLVED – The investment policy be approved and published on the PTC website.

94. INFORMATION RELATING TO A RURAL MARKET TOWN GROUP SPANNING ENGLAND

A report by the Clerk had been circulated. Contact had been made with the Town Council by the Director of the Rural Services Network requesting the Council to consider becoming a member of the Rural Market Towns Group. The Town Council already received regular emails and bulletins from the Rural Services Network.

The letter from the Director of the Group had been circulated for consideration and a link to the website had been included in the report.

Councillors discussed the request but decided that they did not wish to join the Group at this time. The Clerk was asked to reply to the Director of the Group advising him of the decision.

RESOLVED – It was agreed that the Council did not wish to join the Group at this time as outlined above.

95. CHRISTMAS EVENT IN PONTELAND

A letter had been received from the Secretary of the Ponteland Rotary Club seeking the Council’s views for a Santa Sleigh event in Ponteland in

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95. CHRISTMAS EVENT IN PONTELAND (Continued)

December 2021. They were also in discussions with the County Council and Northumbria Police with a view to securing their agreement for this event.

These discussions were ongoing.

Several queries were raised with Councillor Hall who replied to them as points of information.

In relation to the query re possible litter, Councillor Hall stated that the Rotary Club would be concerned if litter was left behind and they would deal with that issue if it arose.

A query re whether the event had taken place previously was raised.

Councillor Hall replied that the Ponteland Rotary Club had not arranged one of these events but other Rotary Clubs across the country had held these events successfully.

A question regarding the route for the event and whether the Rotary Club could cover all roads was raised. In reply Councillor Hall stated that it was unlikely every road could be covered but this event would likely take place over two evenings covering the Ponteland village area and then Darras Hall in the west. It was suggested that the Rotary Club should consider giving out sweets to children on the route. Some funding for this may be available from the Town Council.

The timing of the event was raised. Councillor Hall stated that the detail had not been arranged yet as the Rotary Club wanted to gauge the views of the Town Council and NCC. It would be timed to miss the high volume of traffic in Ponteland around school closing time.

Finally, Councillor Hall was asked if road closures would be needed. He replied that Rotary had been advised they weren't necessary.

RESOLVED – The Council were in favour of the event being held and looked forward to receiving further details in due course.

Councillor Hall declared an interest in Minute 95 above and took no part in the discussion or voting but did provide points of information on request as outlined above.

96. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 15th March had been circulated.

There were two recommendations to consider, one of which was to be withdrawn.

In relation to Minute 3(i)(b), the Council agreed to accept the offer from Karbon Homes in relation to the land at Twizell play area.

Further to Minute 9, the Chairman reported that the Working Party wished to withdraw the recommendation at this time. She informed members that the Council's Environmental Enforcement Officer, David Foy had joined their April meeting and had explained the situation relating to Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) in detail. Rather than agree to the proposal to move towards making an application to NCC for a PSPO to exclude dogs from the Park the Working had agreed that the Environmental Enforcement Officer and the

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Animal Control Officer would undertake regular patrols through the Park for four months and write an article for the June edition of PNV in order to try education and engagement first. This would be reviewed at the end of the four-month period.

Members expressed their views regarding the Park and the issues relating to dogs in the facility but agreed to the proposal outlined about which would be presented to the May meeting for formal approval.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The minutes be approved.
- (ii) The recommendation outlined in Minute 3(i)(b) be approved.
- (iii) It was agreed that the recommendation set out in Minute 9 be withdrawn at this time and the proposal for education and engagement as set out above would be formally agreed at the May Town Council meeting.

97. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd stated that as the Council was in Purdah due to the forthcoming elections, there was nothing to report at this time.

98. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor had circulated details of his diary engagements for March, April and May 2021 for the information of Councillors. He also asked members to include the presentation of the Meritorious service award to Derek Deans on Monday 19th April on Coates Green which had been a good event and he was pleased to see so many supporters there for Derek. He amended the date of the April Town Council meeting to the 21st April and he amended the agenda briefing meeting on 4th May to 'PTC agenda briefing meeting'

99. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- (i) **PCP meeting**
Minutes of a meeting of the PCP held on 17th March had been circulated together with a copy of their final AGM minutes dated 7th April.
- (ii) **Newcastle Airport Consultative Committee**
Copies of the agenda and associated papers from the Newcastle Airport Consultative Committee held remotely on 2nd March 2021 had been circulated for information.

100. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORTS

Details of payments approved by the Accounts Committee in March in the sum of £33,619.21 had been circulated. A copy of monthly budget reports for March were also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation document for the same month.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING – IT WAS AGREED THAT IT APPEARED LIKELY THAT THE NEXT MEETING IN MAY WOULD NEED TO BE HELD IN PERSON. MEMBERS AGREED THIS WOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE MEMORIAL HALL ON 19TH MAY 2021 AT A TIME TO BE AGREED.

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