

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL ON 9 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillor Mrs C Greenwell (in the Chair)

Councillors Mr S Ahmed, Mrs C Caisley, Mr R Dodd, Mr A Hall, Mrs K Overbury, Mrs N Sehgal, Mr A Varley and Mrs K Woodrow

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mr L Darwin, Mr J Ford and Mrs S Johnson.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations received.

22. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 19 MAY 2021

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 May 2021 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

23. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

24. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 11 and 25th May 2021 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports

25. ANNUAL AUDIT 2020-21

A report by the Clerk had been circulated.

Members were informed that the Annual Audit Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had to be sent to the Town Council's external auditors, PKF Littlejohn by 2nd July 2021. This related to the annual audit of accounts for 2020-21.

A copy of the relevant sections of the AGAR form had been circulated with the report.

25. ANNUAL AUDIT 2020-21 (Continued)

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 draft annual accounts.

It was suggested that the notice of public rights information should start from Monday 21st June and end of Friday 30th July.

It was reported some months ago that this would be the last year that the Council's internal auditor would be carrying out this work. The Clerk was in the process of finding a suitable replacement for the role. A report will be presented when more information was available.

It was suggested that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Basnett for his service to the Council for many years.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The annual internal audit report and the Internal Auditor's separate report be approved.
- (ii) The Annual Governance Statement was considered and approved.
- (iii) The draft final accounts as presented, be approved.
- (iv) The Council approved the Accounting Statements set out on page 5 of the AGAR and this was signed by the Mayor as the person presiding at the meeting.
- (v) The Council noted that the process for the exercise of public rights would start on Monday 21st June and end of Friday 30th July. The information would be posted on the website on Friday 18th June.
- (vi) The Council noted the information relating to the retirement of the Internal auditor and a report on his replacement would be presented to a future meeting.
- (vii) The Council agreed to send a letter of thanks to the Internal Auditor for his many years of service to the Town Council.

26. CCTV REPLACEMENT

A report by the Clerk in relation to the proposed replacement of the CCTV cameras in Ponteland had been circulated. Members were informed that the current CCTV cameras had been purchased in 2010 and were due for replacement in this financial year.

26. CCTV REPLACEMENT(Continued)

A quote had been received from 24/7, the company who currently maintain the CCTV cameras for the Town Council on an annual maintenance contract.

The company had recommended purchasing six Hikvision connect cameras to replace the existing equipment at a cost of £5682.25. The locations of the cameras would be at the existing sites with one additional camera at Merton Way shops. The cameras would have much improved night vision which would be beneficial to the Police.

The company are also suggesting acquiring a secure tablet to assist in the remote usage of the cameras if required. The equipment would be used solely for the CCTV system and information could be downloaded onto a memory stick to be viewed only by the Police.

It was suggested that no other quotes be sought as the company currently maintain the existing cameras and those at Merton Way. They were based fairly locally and they had provided excellent service whenever a problem occurred.

The sum would be met from asset replacement and there were sufficient funds available to cover this cost.

A query was raised regarding the value of the existing cameras and whether these could be sold or passed on to other parish or town councils. Other uses for the cameras were discussed and it was agreed that information on this issue would be reported to a future meeting.

RESOLVED – The Town Council agreed to proceed with the replacement of the CCTV cameras as outlined within the report and the quote from 24/7 in the sum of £5682.25 be agreed. Further information would be submitted at a later date regarding disposal of the existing equipment.

27. APPOINTMENT OF EVENTS WORKING PARTY

A report by the Clerk was submitted for consideration. It was reported that the Council had previously appointed an Events Working Party to decide on a replacement for the former Music in the Park event. The Group had met on few occasions largely due to the Pandemic. This was missed off the list of Committees and Working Parties agreed at the Annual Meeting held in May.

It had been suggested that the Working Party be re-established to allow Councillors to feed any ideas they had into the Group for discussion. It was suggested that the Working Party should comprise no more than five members.

It was suggested that this Working Party could consider events that could take place in June 2022 for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

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CHAIRMAN

27. APPOINTMENT OF EVENTS WORKING PARTY (Continued)

RESOLVED – The reappointment of the Events Working Party be agreed and Councillors Mr S Ahmed, Mr L Darwin, Mr R Dodd, Mr A Hall and Mrs K Overbury be appointed to this group.

28. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that the Annual Meeting of the County Council had been held on 26th May. Ponteland was not represented on the Cabinet. Covid-19 still dominated the situation at the County Council and there had been a slight rise in infections in certain parts of the County. Some County Council meetings were currently being held at the Holiday Inn in Seaton Burn in order to safely comply with Covid-19 guidance.

29. MAYOR’S REPORT

The Mayor reported that she would not be submitting a diary as such but would provide a brief written report of any meetings she attended as Mayor. A report was circulated which summarised attendance at a remote meeting held in relation to a possible development off Western Way, Ponteland. This had been circulated for information.

30. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports to consider.

31. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £24,165.66 A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for May 2021.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 21 JULY 2021 AT 4.30 P.M. AT THE MEMORIAL HALL. The Hall was unable to accommodate a booking on the 2nd Wednesday of the month and therefore the meeting had been put back until the 3rd Wednesday for July only. Another venue would be sought for the September meeting

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE