

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL ON 21 JULY 2021

Present: Councillor Mrs C Greenwell (in the Chair)

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

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mr L Darwin and Mr J Ford.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hall declared an interest in item 37 and Councillor Greenwell declared an interest in items 41 and 48.

34. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 9 JUNE 2021

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 June 2021 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

35. MATTERS ARISING

In relation to Minute 25, the Clerk informed the Council that the Audit has been submitted and was available on the Town Councils website until 30th July 2021. The Clerk also informed the council that the replacement CCTV has been ordered. She provided an update on the CCTV for the play area and informed Councillors that a licence has been offered to the Council for the supply of electricity and other issues. Members agreed to proceed with this. (Minute 26 refers)

36. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 8 and 22nd June 2021 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports. Councillor Caisley asked about the digital map and updated Medburn map. The Assistant Clerk was still looking for prices for the digital map and Steven Hedley was looking into updating the Medburn Map.

37. ROTARY CLUB OF PONTELAND – PONTELAND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN

A report by the Clerk had been circulated to the Council for consideration. The report included the Rotary Club Environmental action plan for Ponteland which had previously been circulated to Councillors. An updated copy of the report had been received from the President of Ponteland Rotary Club and this had been circulated to Councillors with the agenda.

A report summarising the detailed discussions held at the recent agenda meeting between the Mayor/Deputy Mayor and the Clerk had also been circulated to Councillors for information.

It was reported that NCC were also looking at the report and it was understood that a virtual meeting was being held between Rotary and NCC in the following week.

Councillors generally felt that this was a very good document that was ambitious in what it was trying to achieve. It was not felt that the Town Council could be a key player at present, and it was keen to avoid any duplication. However, there were several ideas included that would be examined in more detail by the Environment Working Party.

Councillor Hall commented that the document had been well received nationally and locally by the Rotary movement.

Councillors asked about the situation with trees. Councillor Hall replied that the Woodland Trust were keen to give trees to organisations and Rotary would give them to schools and community groups for planting.

The Clerk stated that the Town Council were already responsible for a very large number of trees in the parish area which all required monitoring and maintenance.

The situation regarding maintenance should be discussed with any community groups who were wishing to plant more trees in the area.

In summary Councillors felt that the conclusion included in the document prepared by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor and Clerk should be sent to the President of the Rotary Club as the PTC response to the document.

RESOLVED – It was agreed that the conclusion set out in the document referred to above be submitted to the President of Ponteland Rotary Club as the PTC response to their document.

Councillor Hall declared an interest in the above item and took no part in the decision-making process.

38. REPORT FROM EVENTS WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON 21ST JUNE TOGETHER WITH A REPORT RE PROPOSALS FOR THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

A report by the Events Committee had been circulated.

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38. REPORT FROM EVENTS WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON 21ST JUNE TOGETHER WITH A REPORT RE PROPOSALS FOR THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE (Continued)

The Events Committee were seeking approval to organise and facilitate a series of events over the bank holiday weekend of Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th June 2022.

Various suggestions were made within the report to encourage and facilitate Ponteland organisations, businesses, groups and individuals to organise events which PTC would support and publicise using the usual methods.

The Town Council would arrange to supply bunting, red, white and blue planting and encourage people to decorate windows in a royal theme. Various suggestions would be made to organisations to organise events including sporting matches, celebration dinners, etc. The detail was set out within the report.

The Town Council would be organising the lighting of the beacon on the evening of Thursday 2nd June. There would need to be early involvement of St Mary's Church as access would be needed to the Church tower to light the beacon.

It was suggested that any Councillor who had ideas for the event should contact the Committee direct.

The Town Council agreed to change the name of the event to Ponteland's Royal Platinum Weekend.

RESOLVED –

- (i) Approval be given to organise and facilitate a four-day celebration from 2-5 June 2022 to be known as the Ponteland Royal Platinum weekend.
- (ii) The provisional budget of £5000 for expenditure relating to the above be approved.
- (iii) It was agreed to have a contingency fund of £5000 to be used if the provisional budget had been fully utilised and the Council was satisfied that the use of the contingency fund was necessary.

39. UPDATE REPORT RE POPPY DISPLAYS FOR REMEMBRANCE IN PONTELAND

A report from Councillor Overbury on the current situation re the above displays had been circulated.

Members were reminded that a further six circles of Poppies had to be completed to have three more displays in November. The work was ahead of schedule.

The suggested areas for display were, Coates Green, the Sensory Garden and beside the Pele Tower (same as last year). Suggestions for the new displays were one at Broadway, Darras Hall (site to be determined), one in the

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39. UPDATE REPORT RE POPPY DISPLAYS FOR REMEMBRANCE IN PONTELAND (Continued)

Triangular bed at the bottom of Merton Way and one on the grass on the left of the entrance to the Memorial Hall car park. This had been agreed with the Memorial Hall Chairman and Treasurer.

Members were reminded that a budget of £1000 had been agreed at the January 2021 Council meeting and costs to date totalled £430.

Councillor Overbury thanked the gardening contractor for his assistance to date with this project.

RESOLVED – Councillors agreed to the locations of the Poppy displays as set out below:

Coates Green, the Sensory Garden, the Pele Tower, the triangular bed, one beside the Broadway shops and one close to the Memorial Hall

40. REPORT RE POLICY FOR USE OF PONTELAND PARK FOR EVENTS

A report by the Clerk had been circulated. The Clerk reported that she had been asked to produce a policy for the use of Ponteland Park following recent events that had been held without prior notification to the Town Council.

The Clerk reported on the written agreement that was in place for the park which was for commercial outdoor sports activities. This had been formulated some time ago. A copy was attached for information.

A suggestion was made that a cut off time for noise should be written into the Policy and it was agreed that this would be 9.00 p.m. in order to minimise disturbance to nearby residents.

Councillor Hall mentioned that the document would not cause any difficulties to the Rotary Club when holding the annual duck race in the Park.

The Clerk stated that the formulation of a hiring agreement for the Park was underway and would be completed shortly.

RESOLVED – The policy be approved subject to the inclusion of a cut off time for noise being included under item (f) of the terms and conditions for hiring the Park. It was noted that a hiring agreement would be circulated to Councillors as soon as possible.

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41. SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

A report by the Clerk had been circulated. The Clerk had produced a policy and had been asked to have the document checked by an HR professional prior to presentation to the Council.

The policy had been circulated for consideration. The wording in red related to suggestions made by NCC HR for possible inclusion in the document.

Some of the items in red such as that included under 'What to do if you are unwell' would be left in but would be decided at the discretion of the Clerk. There was considerable discussion in relation to the 'long term absence' section and it was agreed that the following should be included '*you will be expected to maintain regular contact with the Clerk to the Council and attend regular meetings when requested.*' This would be in place of the text in red.

It was noted that amendments to this policy and the preparation of additional policies would be required in relation to further instances of absence, redeployment and health & wellbeing.

RESOLVED – The policy be approved subject to the amendments set out above.

Councillor Greenwell declared an interest in the above and took no part in the discussion or decision-making process.

42. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting held on 21st June 2021 were circulated.

There was further discussion on item 5(l)(n) in relation to dogs in the Park and this was explained to Councillors in more detail.

Councillors were asked to approve the recommendation set out in item 6.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved, and the recommendation set out below be agreed:

(i) Agree to the proposal for a crocus planting day to be held on 9th October and the expenditure of £500 to include the cost of equipment, bulbs, hall hire and refreshments be approved. This cost would be met from the projects fund.

43. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting held on 28th June 2021 were circulated.

Councillor Caisley asked for an update on item 14 speed humps and school zebra crossing on Thornhill Road. Councillor Dodd informed the Council it is on the to do list at Northumberland County Council.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

44. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

County Councillor Veronica Jones reported that the Community Chest was open for applications again. She advised that the streetlights had been installed at Dene Park/Burnside. She mentioned the recent accident near to the Birney Hill triangle and said she was awaiting the police report. She planned to visit the site with the safety officer from Northumberland County Council and Councillor Peter Jackson. The Town Council were keen to see improvements made to this area.

Councillor Dodd reported that he was looking into additional signage for Thornhill Road for residents as they were affected by the closure of North Road due to the work being carried out by Northern Gas Networks. He reminded Councillors that the Northumberland Local Plan Proposed modifications was currently out for consultation and the Clerk reported that she would be sending out details of relevant modifications to Councillors in the next few days. Responses had to be submitted by 5.00 p.m. on the 4th August 2021.

Councillor Dodd also reported that a new white paper has been released on the NPPF. The Assistant Clerk assistant agreed to investigate this consultation and report back.

45. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor asked for any questions on her report. None were received.

46. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Richard Coates Educational Foundation

Notes of a meeting of the above Foundation held on 24th June 2021 had been circulated. Councillor Greenwell had attended on behalf of the Council.

47. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £37,730.53
A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for June 2021.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the disclosure of the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of schedule 12A in the 1972 Act as indicated below:

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48. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 5th July 2021 had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The Minutes and the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 6.15 P.M.
AT MERTON HALL**

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CHAIRMAN

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