

## **Ponteland Town Mayors Annual report for 2021 -22**

Please note this is just a summary of Ponteland Town Mayors full Annual report which is attached, with all the facts figures and information included.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Mayor of Ponteland Town Council for the last year and to represent the town at various functions, accompanied on occasions by the Deputy Mayor, Councillors and Staff. I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for their help and support during this year. It has been two years since a report was given as the last two Annual Town Meetings had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.

### **Looking Back.**

I congratulate all Councillors, Staff and Contractors for keeping everything together during COVID-19 & the aftermath of Storm Arwen, it shows dedication, passion and loyalty.

- a. Councillors continued to carry out their responsibilities during this very difficult time. Zoom meetings became the norm. They assisted residents in lots of different ways during Covid, communicating & shopping for residents, food bank support, sewing PPE etc. Once again as with Covid, Councillors came to the aid of residents in the aftermath of Storm ARWEN.
- b. Staff: Carried on as normal. Not many residents were even aware that the offices were closed, and staff were working remotely, setting up meetings, answering phones etc. They were a great asset in communicating to residents what help was available to them in lockdown and the aftermath of Storm ARWEN giving advice where it was needed. It was business as normal.
- c. Contractors: Once again they carried on regardless, the floral displays along with bulb planting, Remembrance Sunday displays, Christmas lights, Park upkeep etc. Everywhere looked lovely at all times.

Our Thanks also go to:-

- d. FOPP who during the pandemic managed to cut and re seed the wild meadow.
- e. The Rotary and all volunteers for the work they do including litter picks.
- f. Last but not least our residents and retailers who all came together as individuals or part of a group, delivering groceries, prescriptions, making phone calls to the vulnerable, collecting food for food banks, putting together hospital care kits, sewing PPE equipment for hospitals and care homes. Setting up a face book page to keep everyone informed and up to date as to when collections would be made for the boxes of 'Our Street Can' and so many other numerous pieces of information. We thank them all.
- g. Then came Storm Arwen and once again everyone pulled together. Merton Hall opened as a hub and warm place for residents, who were welcomed and served by councillors, council staff and volunteers. Local shops, restaurants, take away venues, and residents provided hot meals and biscuit treats. We have a community to be proud of. We thank everyone involved.
- h. Looking forward it is important we promote local shopping; our retailers are a great asset and were brilliant delivering supplies during lockdown. anything from a weekly shop to a one-off loaf of bread. It is so important we support our retailers and remember how good they were to us during lockdown and storm Arwen.
- i. Then came Project Ukraine and once again everyone came together collecting necessary equipment which was dispatched to an NCC warehouse and made ready to go to Poland and other areas where it is needed. Our hearts go out to all the people suffering in the Ukraine. It should not be happening.

What more can I say except I am so proud to be part of the Parish of Ponteland. We are surrounded by a wonderful caring community. We have a lot to be thankful for.

### **Completed Projects:-**

- j. All CCTV cameras have been replaced to give a higher resolution and clearer picture of offenders. 3 new ones are installed outside one stop. The children's play area also has a new camera. All cameras can now be accessed remotely and have assisted the police in catching vandals.
- k. The new Swan Neck lighting is to be installed very soon. These will go up as far as the golf course. It is hoped with the councillors support they can be added to in the future to extend up to the Dobbies roundabout and heading west along the A696. They give a much better light on the roads and footpaths. They also send a message you are entering an area of significance.
- l. The Purple crocus bulb planting carried out by Councillors, volunteers & Contractors is complete and is a reminder of COVID and how the community came together.
- m. Two new speed indicator display signs have been installed one on Thornhill Road. This is situated beside the school and states the speed limit is 20mph the whole of this estate is 20mph. The new one in Medburn was funded by County Councillor Veronica Jones. County Councillor Peter Jackson has also contributed towards the SIDs & Swan neck lighting.
- n. The New children's play park is well used. The play equipment is designed to suit a number of needs children have including the able bodied and not so able bodied. The play area is situated in front of the new school and leisure centre

which is a wonderful addition to Ponteland. In the last few years, we have had not one, but two wonderful new schools built.

- o. Merton Way car parks, these were extended, and part funded by County Councillor Richard Dodd and Ponteland Town Council. Disc parking was introduced and has cut out the abuse of the car park & thanks to it being made bigger parking is not an issue.
- p. Remembrance Sunday was bigger in 2021 with lots of attendees. The large poppy displays throughout our small town were magnificent. A lot of knitting and crochet work was carried out by residents and friends making the poppies.
- q. All of the efforts that went into the completed projects is much appreciated and I thank everyone involved.

#### **Future Events.**

- a. Queens Platinum Jubilee weekend of celebrations.
  - b. This is being organised by the Events working party and will take place in June from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - c. Detailed plans are in place for the four days encouraging schools, Churches, organisations and community groups to make their own plans.
  - d. A grant is available towards an event of between £25-£100. Application forms are available on the PTC web site. These are subject to approval by the Events working Party and the closing date is 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
  - e. PTC have asked the community to come together on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June for the lighting of the Beacon on Coates Green and to hear performances from the North Tyneside Steel Band. A Piper will play at 9.35 p.m. and the Beacon will be lit at 9.45pm on top of St Marys Church.
  - f. Ponteland beer festival returns on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> June.
  - g. The climax will be on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June with Party in the Park this will be organised with a Royal theme.
  - h. It would be appreciated if you know of any groups to please encourage them to start planning now.
  - i. Shops & businesses are encouraged to do a Royal Themed window display. A prize will be awarded to the best dressed window – judging takes place on the 30<sup>th</sup> May.
- b. **EASTER TREASURE HUNT** will be held in Ponteland Park on Easter Saturday. This will also have a Royal theme and is being organised through the Environment working party. This is always a very popular event.

#### **Additional Services**

- a. The Environmental Enforcement Officer patrols the park, encouraging people to walk safely with their dogs & pick up dog waste. He looks out for fly tipping etc. He is an asset and responds to problems quickly. PTC pay NCC for the work he carries out, two days a week.
- b. North East Youth PTC meets the cost of two outreach workers who work in Ponteland two evenings a week, they are making good progress with the young ones building relationships, and hold a youth meeting on Thursday evenings in Merton Hall. They follow a structured format laid down by NEY.

#### **Grants.**

- a. PTC allocates a small amount to help local organisations in their work in the parish. We had 8 recipients of grants in 2021-2022 the full list is in the Annual report attached.
- b. The Mayor has a small fund from which I can allocate donations:  
I took a decision not to send out Christmas Cards in 2021 and instead donations were given to the following:  
The Methodists Food Bank £50.00 & The Peoples Kitchen £100.00.  
Cooked and Take Away Food was provided for residents during storm ARWEN which totalled £449.20.  
A Pop-up gazebo was purchased for PTC to use for party in the park, the Easter treasure hunt, litter picks etc at a cost of £98.98  
Ponteland Rotary received 2 x gazebos for the Duck Race £75.00  
And the Meritorious gift was purchased at a cost of £103.90  
Total for Year = £877.08

#### **What PTC do & what we are responsible for** not mentioned previously-

- a. Prestwick Cemetery, Pont News & Views, Public Conveniences, Ponteland Park, three play areas and Prestwick allotments.
- b. We have three Committees - Planning, Cemetery, & Staffing.
- c. Four Working parties; Highways, Environment, Events, PN&V. All Working Parties have a chair and members are made up of Councillors except PN&V which has a chair and members of the public on its working party.
- d. Councillors also sit on 9 outside body groups they are Newcastle Airport, Richard Coates School, Merton Hall, Memorial Hall, NALC, NCC Parish Liaison Group, FOPP, Fair Trade & Ageing Well.
- e. My thanks go to all Staff & Councillors for the time taken & dedication in which you carry out these duties.

#### **Looking to the Future** – PTC are working to improve the environment and reduce our carbon footprint.

- a. A grant will be given to all schools this month to help towards a nature project.
- b. Wild Meadow seeds have been planted around the Merton Way car park.
- c. Meadow seeds will also be planted in troughs and at Merton Way shopping centre.

**Future Potential Projects** - Once a feasibility study has been carried out and with the approval of the full Town Council, the environment working party are also looking at developing Community Allotments and a Community Orchard.

### **The Budget**

We achieve and look after all the above and it is thanks to the prudence and diligence of our Councillors & the Clerk as once again the Council Band D amount has not risen for the coming year and has remained the same for the last two years.

We have a healthy budget in which to continue with the good work at no extra cost to the community.

### **Meritorious Service Award.**

Last but by no means least it is time to present the Meritorious award for this year:

- a. The effort required to make the Parish of Ponteland a success cannot be achieved by the Council alone. We rely on groups of people, individuals and organisations to enrich the quality of life in the Parish.
- b. Each year a meritorious award is made to an individual who stands out for all the time and effort they give to the community.
- c. It is now time to add a new name to the recipient's plaque hanging in the Council offices and to acknowledge the great work carried out by Leslie Dodd who has worked tirelessly over the years for the Boys Brigade.

From information I have been given Leslie had previously helped out with the Air Cadets and in the late 1990s he was invited along to the Boys Brigade to teach drill as his sons were members

He became the Boys Brigade captain on 1st January 2005 and remains in this position today

When Leslie first started there was more focus on drill and inspection (as in the armed forces) with a few games and activities added in, there was also a Boys Brigade bugle and drum band.

Now the focus is on activities, crafts, and games. The young people learn not only about the world but also themselves - learning respect, teamwork, self-worth, and building confidence. The Boys Brigade is a Christian organisation and though its purpose isn't to preach, there is regular Christian input in the form of a 2 minute thought, parable, or a short prayer. Highlights include leading camps and outdoor activities and seeing the confidence in the boys grow.

In 2022 The First Ponteland Boys Brigade changed to become a Boys Brigade with Girls Association - it now accepts both boys and girls.

Leslie works as a funeral director at Dodds of Hexham, is married to Susan and they have 2 sons, Johnny and Chris.

On behalf of the Town Council, it is an honour and a privilege to thank Leslie and present to him on behalf of the Councillors the Meritorious Service award for 2022 in recognition for all of his hard work and dedication over the years to the Boys Brigade in Ponteland and the newly formed Girls and Boys Brigade.

### **Conclusion.**

I speak for all Councillors when I say a big THANK YOU to everyone involved in making the Parish of Ponteland a place to be proud of and thank You all for your hard work and dedication it is greatly appreciated.

Town Mayor  
Christine A Greenwell.