

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT MERTON HALL ON 9th MARCH 2022

Present: Councillor C Greenwell (in the Chair)

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

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Darwin, J Ford and K Woodrow.

124. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Greenwell declared an interest in items 135 and 136 and took no part in the discussion or voting.

125. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9th FEBRUARY 2022

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9th February 2022 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

126. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 122 – Meritorious Service award

The Clerk asked if the relevant information could be supplied in respect of the suggested recipients of the award.

127. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 1st and 15th February 2022 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

128. REQUEST TO HOLD A 3 DAY CIRCUS EVENT IN PONTELAND PARK

The Clerk circulated a report relating to a request that had been received to hold a circus in Ponteland Park over a three-day period.

Councillors were reminded of a similar request that had been considered in March 2014 which was refused as the Council at that time did not feel this

128. REQUEST TO HOLD A 3 DAY CIRCUS EVENT IN PONTELAND PARK (Continued)

was a suitable location for several reasons which included possible damage, access issues and impact on nearby residents.

Information about the timings of shows and the requirements of the company were set out in the report which included access to water.

The Clerk reported that there was no source of water available to the company and there would be difficulties with access as the Scouts had to agree to anyone who wanted entry via their gate.

Councillor Varley stated that he had looked at the access and felt that it would not be possible to have large vehicles using the Mill Rise entry road as an entrance and exit.

The disruption to the park, the possibility of damage caused by the number of vehicles and lack of parking were also causes of concern.

Councillors recognised that this would be a good event for Ponteland but in view of the problems outlined the request to use the park would have to be refused.

Councillors asked if it would be possible to direct the company to some other suitable location such as Higham Dykes who had suitable space and parking arrangements

RESOLVED – The Clerk be asked to advise the company that their request was rejected for the reasons outlined above. She was also asked to direct the company to another suitable location.

129. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Clerk circulated a report relating to the annual review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

A group had been set up in November 2021 to examine the documents and report back to the Council before the end of the financial year.

The suggested amendments to Standing Orders were set out within the report for consideration and on various pages that were attached to the document. There were no suggested amendments to Financial Regulations.

Due to other work pressures, it had been difficult to schedule a meeting to discuss the documents in detail. The Clerk suggested that this task be programmed in earlier in 2022-23 when a face-to-face meeting could be arranged.

.....
CHAIRMAN

.....
DATE

129. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (continued)

(i) The Council approve the suggested amendments to Standing Orders as set out in the report and on the circulated pages and note the situation with regard to Financial Regulations.

(ii) The Council agreed to carry out an earlier review of both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in 2022-23 in September/October 2022.

130. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Highways Working Party held on 17th February 2022 had been circulated. There were no recommendations.

Councillor Caisley reported that the speed watch group was operational again and volunteers had been positioned at the Beeches and other locations in the parish area recently.

RESOLVED – The Minutes be approved.

131. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that a governance review was currently taking place at NCC.

He mentioned the number of complaints that were being made regarding speeding and traffic.

He also mentioned that he had received a report of unsuitably large traffic using the small road between Berwick Hill and Kirkley. It appeared that there may be a weight restriction on that road and Councillor Dodd said he was looking into that. He had been advised that breaches of using a weight restricted road by vehicles above the limit had to be dealt with by the Police.

There was some discussion on the use of the car parks at the new Leisure centre and at the schools on Callerton Lane. Councillor Dodd stated that some action was being taken to involve NCC parking services to deal with the misuse of disabled parking at the school. He agreed to look into the comments raised and report back.

Issues of inconsiderate parking were also discussed. Some of this related to airport parking and one vehicle had received at least 2 parking tickets after parking at Prestwick Road Ends.

132. MAYOR'S REPORT

A report by the Mayor had been circulated. The report related to two events she had attended remotely. A summary of those meetings was included within the document.

RESOLVED – The report be accepted.

.....
CHAIRMAN

.....
DATE

133. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Meeting of the Richard Coates Educational Foundation

Councillor Greenwell had attended this meeting on 10th February 2022 and a summary of the discussions had been circulated.

134. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £23,657.80
A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for February 2022

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – Councillors agreed 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 on the agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of schedule 12A in the 1972 Act.

135. STAFFING COMMITTEE.

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 1st March had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

136. 2021-22 PAY SCALES

A report by the Clerk relating to agreement of the pay scales with the National Joint Council had been circulated. The rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2021 had been received which represented a 1.75% increase across all spinal column points. The National Association of Local Councils had asked that payment including backdated pay to April 2021 be made as soon as possible. The above information affected the salaries of the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Assistant Clerk and the Receptionist/Clerical Assistance who were paid in line with the Local Government Pay Scales (LGPS).

A query was raised as to whether the Council could agree to a bigger increase than 1.75% but it was stated that this was a national agreement. The Council's Staffing Committee were currently examining the job descriptions of staff and posts could be regraded if appropriate.

There was some discussion on annual leave for staff which had not been taken in full for various reasons.

136. **2021-22 PAY SCALES (continued)**

RESOLVED – The implementation of the pay award in accordance with Town Council staff contracts be approved.

Note – Councillor Greenwell declared an interest in Minutes 135 and 136 and took no part in the voting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 2022 AT 6.15 P.M. FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FOLLOWED BY A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL AT APPROXIMATELY 7.15 P.M. TO BE HELD AT MERTON HALL.

.....
CHAIRMAN

.....
DATE