

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT MERTON HALL ON 13TH JULY 2022

Present: Councillor C Greenwell (in the Chair)

Councillors S Ahmed, L Darwin, R Dodd, A Hall, K Overbury, N Sehgal, A Varley and K Woodrow.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Caisley, J Ford and S Johnson.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

40. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8th JUNE 2022

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8th June 2022 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

41. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27th JUNE 2022

The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 27th June 2022 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

42. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

43. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 24th May and 7th June 2022 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

44. INCREASE IN COSTS OF 74 BUS SERVICE

A report by the Clerk to the Council in relation to the above had been circulated for information.

Councillors were reminded that discussions on the continuation of the above service took place at the 11th May meeting when it was agreed to continue with the payment of the subsidy for the evening bus service for the remainder of the current financial year.

Since then, the Clerk had been informed that NCC were in the process of re-negotiating all their Tyne Valley bus service contracts with Go North East which included the 74 service between Newcastle, Ponteland and Hexham. This had resulted in the costs of the service paid for by PTC to increase significantly from £4973 to £7649 from the 24 July.

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders a decision taken within 6 months could not be rescinded unless at least 4 Councillors signed a special written motion. The process to do this had been sent to all Councillors on 5th July and only one reply was received within the timescale given, which was in favour of retaining the service.

Councillor Varley expressed his various concerns regarding the continuation of the service, particularly with the increase in costs but without support from other Councillors, he recognised the decision could not be changed.

County Councillor Veronica Jones was invited to speak on this item. She stated that this service had a subsidy of £89,000. Nexus paid £12,000 and NCC paid the remainder other than the portion paid by the Town Council for the Saturday evening service. She felt it was important to retain the service as a whole but was not seeking to influence the Town Council.

It was felt to be important to retain the service for the remainder of this year as it provided residents of Medburn with the ability to return home using a bus service on Saturday evenings.

RESOLVED – The information contained with the report be noted.

45. REPORT OF A MULTI AGENCY MEETING HELD ON 16TH JUNE 2022

Councillor Dodd had circulated a report relating to problems with anti-social behaviour in Ponteland on the above date.

The meeting was held to discuss the escalation of ASB in Ponteland in certain areas on evenings and weekends.

The Police had been in attendance and were asked if an increased Police presence could be made available. The Police were advising residents to ring the emergency number 999 if they were concerned about ASB incidents that required a fast response. People should be advised to contact the Police themselves rather

45. REPORT OF A MULTI AGENCY MEETING HELD ON 16TH JUNE 2022(Continued)

than contacting the Town Council after the event as if the numbers were higher then a larger Police presence may be considered.

It was agreed that a further meeting would be held in Autumn.

Councillor Dodd has asked Councillor Gordon Stewart from Prudhoe to talk to the Council about the issues that had been faced in the town and various initiatives that had been introduced.

Councillor Stewart introduced himself as the cabinet member for Community Services at NCC who represented Prudhoe.

The town had a youth club which was run by NCC which wasn't working and had a lot of issues. A new youth service was established in Prudhoe which had attracted a lot of funding from NCC and other organisations including the Town Council.

Councillor Stewart reported that incidents such ASB and graffiti were now virtually non-existent in the town.

A community facility was delivering a range of activities for young people and regular fun days were organised. The building also housed the local food bank and other services. Other community facilities such as the Spetchells Centre and the fire station were also providing services.

There was a Fire Cadets initiative starting in Prudhoe which would be a new style of working with young people.

Youth work was more structured. They were working with the organisations already available such as football clubs who were reducing their fees in some cases to allow more young people to join.

They worked with NE Youth on the 'Happy Faces' initiative which involved parents working with children who had more complex needs. NE Youth staff supported the project with parents and children organising the sessions.

The Mayor asked more about the Fire Cadets and Happy Faces.

Councillor Stewart said if an email could be sent to him seeking more information on the proposal. He would then contact the Chief Fire Officer to see if this was possible in Ponteland.

Councillor Stewart stated that the youth workers were employed by the Prudhoe Community partnership which included several partners who had formed a charity that could attract funding. He invited the Councillors for a visit to Prudhoe to see what was taking place.

Councillor Dodd felt that Ponteland TC needed to select some of the ideas mentioned and examine them further.

Councillor Hall felt it was important to carry out a mapping exercise of what was available for young people in Ponteland. There were a range of organisations offering support and events to young people. As an example, the Council had just previously heard from the Rugby and Football clubs who engage with many young people on a weekly basis.

RESOLVED – The report and the information be received.

46. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Highways Working Party held on 5th July 2022 had been circulated.

The meeting had been held to discuss the Local Transport Plan (LTP) submission to NCC for 2023-24. The deadline for submissions was 29th July 2022.

The Chair of the Working Party outlined the three priorities listed in the minutes. A draft letter to NCC had also been circulated.

In relation to priority 2, the Chair had provided a list of bus stops at Darras Hall which were not raised and did not have dropped kerbs and they would be prioritised as requested.

Councillors asked if the information regarding the LTP submission could be included in the next edition of PNV for information.

RESOLVED – The Minutes be approved together with the draft letter setting out the three priority items for the LTP submission for 2023-24.

47. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd stated that there would be some forthcoming road closures in the area during the coming weeks. These were essential to improve the road network. Councillor Darwin asked about including information on the County Council surgeries held at Waitrose in PNV monthly. He was advised to get in touch with the editor of PNV.

Councillor Jones mentioned the discussion held with Councillor Stewart. She said that the NCC Locality Co-ordinators would be able to assist with the mapping of activities available for young people.

48. MAYOR'S REPORT

There were no reports from the Mayor.

49. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports to present.

50. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £41,899.41.

A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for June 2022.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – THE NEXT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
WOULD BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 6.15 P.M. AT
MERTON HALL.**

DRAFT

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE