

# PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

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5 October 2022

To: ALL MEMBERS OF PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
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I hereby give notice that a Meeting of Ponteland Town Council will be held on **WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2022 at 6.15 p.m. IN MERTON HALL. THE MEETING WILL BE PRECEDED BY PUBLIC QUESTION TIME WHICH WILL COMMENCE AT 6.15 P.M. PLEASE NOTE IF THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS THE COUNCIL MEETING WILL COMMENCE AT 6.15 p.m. PLEASE NOTE THE REVISED MEETING TIME AND VENUE.**

Yours sincerely

  
K MAVIN

*Clerk to the Council*

## AGENDA

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
53. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2022. Copy attached.
54. MATTERS ARISING
55. PLANNING
  - (i) Planning Committee – Minutes of meetings held on 21 June, 5 July, 19 July, 2 August, 16 August 2022, 30 August and 20 September. Copies attached for information.
  - (ii) Report on recent planning decisions
56. GRANT APPLICATION
  - (i) Sport Tynedale – application form and accounts
57. LETTER FROM ROTARY CLUB OF PONTELAND RE SANTAS SLEIGH EVENT IN DECEMBER – Copy of letter attached.



- 58. COST OF LIVING AND ENERGY CRISIS – A 15-minute discussion re possible assistance in respect of the above will take place at the meeting. Any suggestions made will be examined for legalities and other implications for a report to the October meeting. A report by the Mayor on a suggestion for consideration is attached.
- 59. NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2021-22 – Report attached
- 60. EVENTS WORKING PARTY – Minutes of a meeting held on 20 July are attached for consideration.
- 61. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY – Minutes of meetings held on 25 July and 28 September are attached for consideration.
- 62. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT
- 63. MAYOR'S REPORT
  - (i) Mayor's Diary - attached
- 64. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS
  - (i) Minutes of Newcastle Airport Consultative Committee dated 6 September 2022 – see attached
- 65. ACCOUNTS/BANK RECONCILIATION/BUDGET REPORT - Reports attached

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC – Councillors are asked to pass the following resolution** - 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.

- 66. STAFFING COMMITTEE – Minutes of a meeting held on 27 July are attached.



**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**

**Agenda item number 58**

**Report by the Mayor**

**Report to October 2022 Council meeting**

**Report re discussion on cost of living/energy crisis**

The Mayor had had a meeting with Reverend Jona Sewell on 30 September 2022 to discuss the warm spaces initiative and to discuss what Merton Hall and the Council could do to assist residents over the winter months.

After a lengthy discussion the Mayor and Reverend came up with one or two suggestions. See below:

1. To do some work on producing a what's on leaflet for Ponteland showing where the warm spaces were open during the winter months. These could be displayed at various locations.
2. To suggest to the Town Council to purchase two sheds either 2ft x 2ft or 3ft x 2ft to provide a mini food bank. These would be painted red - insulated and shelved. This could be promoted in PN & V as the RED FOOD SHED initiative. One would be placed outside the Methodist Church and one at the corner of the Mayor's drive due to the lack of suitable space at the Town Council offices. These locations were suggested as the structures would need locking and unlocking morning and night.

The time when the sheds would be open is suggested as from 9am - 5pm - Monday to Friday.

Residents would be asked to place donated food and other non-perishable items in the shed and anyone in need could take food, toiletries etc. Collections should be limited to 5 or 6 items per visit per person.

It was also suggested that the Town Council provide £50 each to stock the sheds to begin with.

Total cost to the council would be approximately no more than £250-£300 per shed including stock, insulation etc.

The Methodist Church would have to agree to take a shed however the Reverend was keen on the initiative.

**Recommendation – The Council is asked to consider the suggestion outlined above.**



**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Report by Clerk to the Council**  
**Report to October 2022 Council meeting**  
**Annual Audit 2021-22**

**Agenda item number 59**

Councillors will be aware that the Annual Governance and Annual Return (AGAR) and associated documentation was sent off to the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn on 29 June 2022.

The External Auditors Report and Certificate for 2021-22 was received on 22 September. A copy of the Certificate is attached. A copy of sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR are also attached.

The external auditors, PKF Littlejohn did not raise any issues with the Town Council.

The required information was put on display on notice boards for a period of 14 days from the 27 September and is also on the Town Council's website. The information had to be published before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

**Recommendation – The Council is recommended to approve and accept the External Auditors Report and Certificate for 2021-22 and sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR.**

Attachments –

External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021-22  
Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Annual Return (AGAR)



**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER  
2022 VIA ZOOM**

**Present:** Councillors C Greenwell, S Ahmed, K Overbury and N Sehgal.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that Councillor S Johnson had stepped down from the Working Party.

**2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 25 JULY 2022**

The Minutes were accepted.

**3. SPREADSHEET REPORTS**

**(i) Report covering three main priorities of EWP for 2022-23**

**(a) Rockery on Main Street.**

The Clerk reported on progress made regarding the rockery.

Substantial clearing and cutting back work had been carried out by Calum Sherlock over the past few weeks.

Following the site visit held in July, concerns had been raised regarding the condition of the wall behind the bus shelter which was owned by PTC. The Clerk had sought quotes for repairs. Only one response had been received and this was in the total sum of £3332.00 plus VAT. This related to re-pointing and re-bedding of the loose flag coping stones. The work would be carried out by a stonemason working for Shaun Nichol. Members felt that it was important this work was carried out as soon as possible and agreed to recommend this to the October TC meeting for approval. There were funds already in the budget for the rockery.

There were recommendations included in the July minutes which would hopefully be approved at the October meeting. If agreed, the painting of the inside of the bus shelter and the replacement of the seating would be carried out as soon as possible. The addition of a new hexagonal green planter at the entrance to Peel House would cost in the region of £350. The new seating and paint would cost around £1500 to £2000 depending on the type of seats required.

The Clerk had been in touch with NCC regarding the timetable case and replacement bus stop sign which was damaged. She had been advised that it was the responsibility of the Town Council to provide the timetable case as NCC no longer provided this service. She was still waiting for a response regarding a new bus stop sign and would follow this up. There was some discussion regarding a proposal for a memorial seat outside of the bus shelter once all works had been completed and it was agreed that this should be a recycled plastic seat with a plaque commemorating the life of Queen Elizabeth II. The Chair suggested planting some Platinum Jubilee roses behind the seat

**Recommendation – The Council is recommended to approve the quote for repairs to the wall at the back of the bus shelter on Main Street in the sum of £3332.00 plus VAT. This would be funded by the budget sum set aside for works to the rockery.**

**(b) Sensory garden**

This area was also being cleared and cut back by Calum Sherlock.

The Chair asked if anything could be done to brighten up the dark corner at the cut through to North Road. She had suggested a bin for the waste from the cutting back, but the Clerk



had been advised that it would not be emptied by NCC. The Chair asked if it was possible to paint the paving stones to lighten the area. This would be discussed with the gardening contractor.

(c) Project for resurfacing path between Callerton Lane and the Waitrose bridge in the park

The Clerk reported that the Footpaths officer had provided a price for this work to be carried out. The quote was from the NCC internal Technical Team for a full width tarmac overlay of the path from Callerton Lane to the bridge also covering the parts that were widened last year. The quote was in the sum of £24,878.02 however, it was unclear whether NCC would be making a contribution towards this, and a query had been raised with the officer. Other quotes were being sought from other suitable companies to see how they compared to the in-house price.

The officer had been asked to look into a 'star path' finish which would make the path glow in the dark. The product was now sold as an additional material to contractors to add and roll into the surface as it was laid. It could be bought direct from the supplier and at the recommended rate of addition the cost would be £14,750. This sum would have to be met by the Town Council as NCC would be unable to fund it.

The replacement of the path had been discussed by the Working Party in January 2022 when it was agreed that this should be funded from the projects fund if it proceeded. A recommendation would be submitted to a future Council meeting to progress this work when a discussion could be had relating to the 'star finish' and other quotes had been received. **A copy of a map of the park is attached. The path to be resurfaced is shown with a red line on the right hand sign of the map.**

It was agreed – To discuss this issue further once all of the information was available in relation to prices and potential contributions from NCC. A debate on the use of the 'star path' finish would be held at that time.

#### **(ii) New list of watching brief items**

The list of watching brief items had been circulated together with comments where necessary.

In relation to the Twizell play area lease, the Clerk had been contacted by Karbon Homes to ask if this item could be progressed. The Clerk had contacted the Council's solicitor several times and had been promised a copy of the queries relating to the lease. She would continue to follow this up as a matter of urgency.

In relation to the request for a bin on the North Road on the splay of the junction leading to Jackson Avenue/Pont View, the Clerk reported that she had not yet had permission from NCC to site the bin. There were currently no bins in stock although there were funds available from the asset replacement fund from last year which had been carried forward. Members felt that the request should be approved pending approval from NCC to site and empty the bin.

The Clerk mentioned that a further bin had been damaged by fire in the park next to the Waitrose bridge. She reported that in future she would order all bins with a 'fire expire' plate fitted which worked by releasing a metal plate if flames were detected effectively



extinguishing the fire. She was asked to find out if these plates had to be replaced each time there was a fire and whether they could be fitted retrospectively. It was suggested if they could be fitted retrospectively then a quote be sought to include these in all bins which did not already have them included. The Clerk agreed to investigate this query and report back.

**Recommendation – The Council be asked to approve the purchase of two new bins, one to be placed at the North Road location outlined above subject to permission from NCC. The second could be used at the location identified in item 7(iv) below or retained as a spare. The cost would be around £700 which would be funded from the residual amount in asset replacement.**

**(iii) Items discussed at July meeting**

An update on items discussed at the July meeting had been circulated.

*Allotments* – Plots 3a, 3b and 6 had been divided up but not yet fenced. It was previously agreed that a quote be sought for materials and labour to carry out this work. Various quotes had been received from timber firms however, the cost of labour to carry out this work was prohibitive. The cheapest quote was in the sum of £6568 plus VAT. For materials only, the cost would be in the region of £2500. The work would create another 10 allotment plots from 2 existing areas. Another two plots would be available from one on the other side of the road providing a further 12 new plots in total. It was proposed that the fencing work would be carried out internally by the Council's contractors over the Autumn/Winter months once planting up of winter/spring bedding had been completed.

The Clerk also reported that she had been asked by tenants to have the hedges cut back on the left-hand side of the road heading to Dinnington. There was a long area of hedge that was usually cut each year however, it was becoming difficult to obtain quotes for the work from tree surgeons and it was last carried out in 2020.

The Clerk had asked the company who carry out the work for the cemetery hedges each year to provide a quote to use a flail on the allotment hedge and they had quoted the sum of £855 plus VAT. The Working Party felt it was important to have the work carried out and agreed to submit a recommendation to the Council to approve the quote.

The Clerk was asked to provide a larger sum in the budget for the allotments in 2023-24 but it was felt that the expenditure this year should be met from the projects fund due to the creation of 12 new allotments.

**Recommendations**

**(i) The Council be asked to approve the sum of £2500 to acquire the wood to fence off the new plots at the allotments.**

**(ii) The Council be asked to approve the sum of £855 plus VAT for the cutting of the hedges at the allotments and also to agree that both items be funded from the projects budget heading.**

*Allotments Tenancy Agreements*

The Clerk had been asked to include some new additions to the allotment tenancy agreement which included a clause on termination of the agreement and requests by tenants to alter their plot size. A revised agreement had been circulated to members for



approval. The Clerk reported that from advice she had received, the new agreement could not be imposed on existing tenants, but efforts would be made to obtain agreement with them. The new agreement would be used for all future tenancies. Some minor amendments to the document were made at the meeting.

The Clerk was asked to have this agreement checked by a solicitor prior to circulation to tenants. She was asked to try another local solicitor as the delays from the Council's current solicitors were causing issues. This required discussion with the Council at a later date.

The Chair asked if it would be possible to hold a site visit for Working Party members in the next few weeks and the Clerk agreed to organise a date.

It was agreed –

(i) That the agreement be checked with a local solicitor prior to circulation to tenants and subject to the amendments highlighted at the meeting being made.

(ii) A site visit to the allotments be arranged in the next few weeks. The Clerk would circulate dates.

*Request for funds from Ponteland Red Squirrels group for installation of a rope bridge –*

This project was progressing slowly due to problems with land ownership. The Clerk was still waiting for a response from the Highways manager to confirm if the bridge could be erected over Fox Covert Lane.

*Letter from a resident re suggestion for replacement trees –* It was agreed that this should be removed from the list.

*Request for community orchard on land owned by PTC at Ladywell Way*

No further contact had been made and it was agreed that this would be removed from the list.

The Chair stated that she hoped the Working Party would consider introducing a community orchard in the Park on the bank leading to the easy access entrance off the A696. This would be discussed in November.

#### **4. Platinum Jubilee commemorative tree**

A report by the Clerk had been circulated.

It had previously been agreed to plant a tree to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Dunsgreen later in the year.

It was necessary to order bare root trees which could be planted in Autumn/Winter and needed little maintenance.

The Clerk and gardening contractor had contacted a supplier who had in the past supplied excellent trees to the Council.

The company had bare root Oak trees available at the end of November/early December and three sizes were provided. The Working Party felt that the 10-12cm girth trees which were in excess of 3.5 metres in height would be most appropriate. It was agreed the trees should be ordered as soon as possible.

The report included a photo of one of the Millennium trees with a tree guard and the members were asked if they wanted a similar tree guard for this tree. Members agreed they would like a similar tree guard and quotes would be sought.



The next item dealt with a suggestion to plant a tree in the park to mark the life of Queen Elizabeth II. This was proposed to be just inside the park entrance at the bottom of the slope where the otter was sited. They would like to plant another Oak and have a tree guard.

The trees were £195 each which included VAT, but the price of tree guards was unknown until quotes could be sought. It was unlikely that the tree guards would be ready for when the trees were planted.

It had been previously agreed to include some nursery age children to be involved in the publicity for the planting of the trees. This would be organised although the trees would in all probability already be planted.

The wording for the tree guards was agreed as follows:

Jubilee tree – Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee

Tree in the Park – HM Queen Elizabeth II 1926-2022

#### **Recommendations –**

(i) **The Council approve the purchase of two Oak trees for the locations outlined above at a cost of £195 each including VAT.**

(ii) **The Clerk report on costs of tree guards once quotes had been sought.**

#### **5. Suggestion for a tree in the Park in memory of HM the Queen**

See item 4 above.

#### **6. Christmas lights**

The Clerk had included this item on the agenda as she had read in the press that several councils nationally had decided not to have Christmas lights this year due to the energy crisis.

Members felt it was important to continue with the Christmas lights as the TC displays were all LED which were lower power usage, and they felt the displays had a beneficial effect on residents.

It was agreed – To continue with the Christmas light displays this year.

#### **7. Correspondence**

(i) **Email from a resident requesting NCC/PTC to install a bin at the Ward Bros. entrance site off the Airport roundabout.**

A report by the Clerk had been circulated. This included photos of where a bin had been requested due to the amount of rubbish collected in this area. NCC had also been contacted and the Council's Environmental Enforcement officer was involved. He had advised the Clerk that NCC would not agree to the request as this was private land and was on the boundary of Northumberland and Newcastle. He also felt a bin would encourage illegal parking.

This would mean PTC would have to install and empty the bin.

It was agreed – That the request be refused for the reasons outlined above.



**(ii) Email from a resident re a community garden initiative being run by Hexham Town Council**

The Mayor and the Clerk had received an email from a resident asking if the Council would consider implementing a similar initiative to that being run by Hexham Town Council.

The scheme connected people who wanted to grow food but didn't have the space with people who had gardens they weren't using. Hexham had a community grocery and people were being encouraged to donate excess produce to the store which would then be sold at a reasonable cost.

The Working Party discussed this at some length but were concerned at the safeguarding issues of matching people with those who had large gardens that were unused. The Council also did not have the ability or the premises available to arrange to pass excess produce on.

It was agreed – Due to the concerns above, the scheme would not be progressed at this time. The Clerk was asked to advise the correspondent.

**(iii) Email from Rotary re forthcoming events**

An email had been received from Rotary listing three events that they would be holding this year which included a litter pick, the Santa's Sleigh event and a Christmas market.

The information was noted.

**(iv) Email from NCC via MPs office re request for a bin (for dog waste) on the corner of Ashbrooke Drive and Thornhill Road.**

A report by the Clerk had been circulated.

A request had been received via NCC for a bin to be installed at the above location. A photo of the area concerned had been included in the report. This was the grassed area opposite 119 and 121 Thornhill Road.

The report included information regarding the location of existing bins in the area.

The Clerk stated that this information would be included each time a request for a bin was made. Ponteland had many litter bins which all required emptying, maintaining and replacement.

It was agreed – To defer the request pending receipt of information mapping the existing bins in this area.

**8. Report re FOPP**

There had been no communication from FOPP since the last meeting.

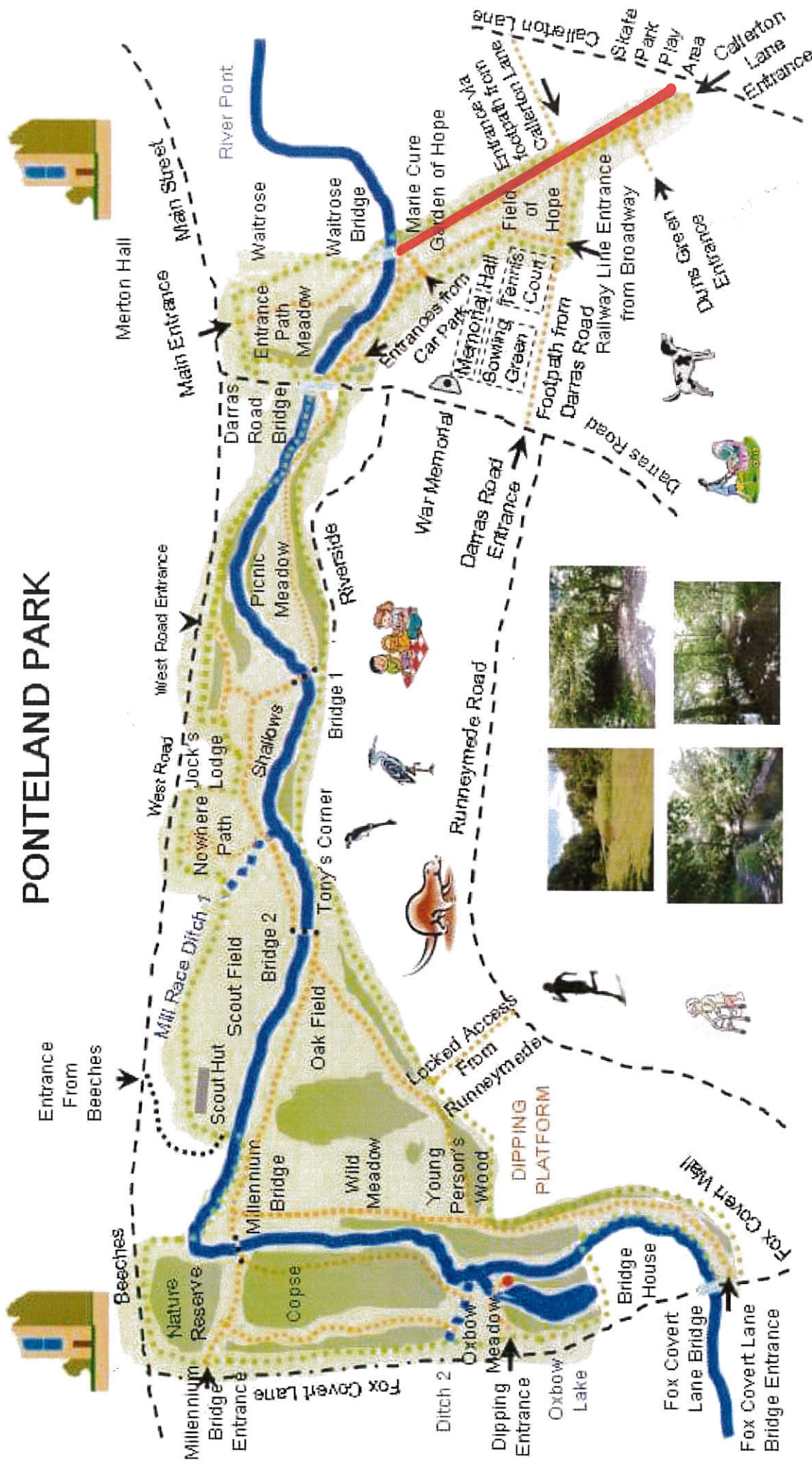
**9. Any other business**

No items were raised by members.

**10. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Monday 21 November at 10.00 am. at the Town Council offices.





Ponteland Park is a "jewel in the crown" for Ponteland Town Council who own and manage it with help from the Friends of Ponteland Park. It is for all-walking or meandering, running or jogging, babies in prams or dogs on a lead [or not], to sit or to meditate. Here you can find otter, kingfisher, heron, wild flowers and trees. See it in sparse winter or abundant summer or from the promise of spring to the colours of autumn. Come for whatever reason, enjoy, observe and learn.



**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Report by the Mayor**  
**Report to October 2022 Council meeting**  
**Mayor's report**

**Agenda item number 63(i)**

Mayors report for October meeting – I have thoroughly enjoyed all the events I attended.

**Ponteland Rotary Annual Duck Race. Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September – 12 – 4pm.**

Once again this was a full event. Lots of family's enjoying the good weather and entertainment.

Lots of very interesting stands, including charity stands and some with homemade products for sale. Bouncy castles etc, hot beverage and food vans.

The young person dressed in the Giraffe costume was a huge success.

The children's entries were very good for the handmade boat competition it was not easy to pick winners. The winners were chosen by Janet Cusworth and myself.

The excitement from the children when the ducks are released and go down the river is infectious.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> Sept 7.00pm – Castle Morpeth District Scouts annual adult awards ceremony.**

Hosted by Castle Morpeth Scout District Commissioner, Neil Fraser.

It was lovely to see so many Scout leaders awarded certificates etc in appreciation for all the hard work they do with young people.

Richard Walker from 1<sup>st</sup> Ponteland Scout Group received a silver Wolf award, this is the highest award made by the Scout Association. 'For service of the most exceptional character,' This award is the unrestricted gift of the Chief Scout. It is only awarded for service of a most exceptional nature.

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September – Ponteland Flower Show.**

I attended the show early and visited every display. Although numbers of entries were down on pre Covid years it was still a very impressive show.

I managed to purchase a very nice display made by the Floral Art Group. It was call the platinum display so it seemed apt to purchase it for PTC to go in the memorial garden.

There were no entry fees this year so instead of winning money each winning entry received a certificate. It was not limited to Ponteland residents but open to all in the wider community.

The guides were serving hot drinks and had a fabulous array of cakes.

The auction at the end was impressive with some huge vegetables auctioned off very cheaply. I was lucky to win 3 prizes in the raffle.

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Sept Service for the Queen @ St Marys Church.**

The service to celebrate the life of HM the Queen was attended by Myself, Cllr Karen Overbury, Cllr Alan Varley & Linda Varley & Cllr Christine Caisley.

The service was very dignified & afterwards we enjoyed Coffee & Biscuits in the Church Hall.