

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

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7 December 2022

To: ALL MEMBERS OF PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

I hereby give notice that a Meeting of Ponteland Town Council will be held on **WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 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

- 82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
- 84. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2022.
Copy attached.
- 85. MATTERS ARISING
- 86. PLANNING
 - (i) Planning Committee – Minutes of meetings held on 8 and 22 November. Copies attached for information.
 - (ii) Report on recent planning decisions
- 87. GRANT APPLICATIONS
 - (i) Request for a grant towards cost of fireworks for New Year's Eve event – See email attached.
 - (ii) Request for a grant from Ponteland 41 Club for replacement Wheelbarrow wheels for the race to be held on 1.1.23

- (iii) Ponteland Rotary Club – request for grant towards cost of tables
- 88. CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OFFICE CLOSURE – Report by the Clerk attached.
- 89. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY – Minutes of a meeting held on 21 November are attached for consideration.
- 90. EVENTS WORKING PARTY – Minutes of a meeting held on 29 November are attached for consideration.
- 91. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT
- 92. MAYOR'S REPORT
 - (i) Mayor's diary – report attached.
- 93. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS
- 94. 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.

- 95. PAY AWARD FOR 2022-23 – Report by the Clerk is attached.
- 96. PTC OFFICE RENTAL COSTS – The Clerk will report at the meeting.

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda item number 87

Report by Clerk to the Council

Report to December 2022 Council meeting

Report re grant application

Three grant applications have been received for consideration at this meeting. The applications are from the proprietor of Rialto restaurant towards the cost of fireworks, Ponteland 41 Club to cover the cost of replacement wheelbarrow wheels and Ponteland Rotary to cover the cost of purchase of second-hand tables – see attached.

The grants awarded this year were to NE Youth in the sum of £1200 to enable them to pay for the room hire of Merton Hall for the Thursday evening youth club. To date £600 has been paid to NE Youth and the second amount of £600 will be paid this month. A grant to Sport Tynedale in the sum of £250 was awarded at the September 2022 meeting

The total grants budget is £4000, of which £1450 has been awarded as outlined above, leaving an amount of £2550 available for small grants for the remainder of the financial year.

An email request has been received from the proprietors of Rialtos which is what has been submitted in previous years and grant applications from Ponteland 41 Club and Ponteland Rotary are attached for consideration.

For the information of members, a grant of £500 was agreed towards the cost of fireworks in December 2021.

Recommendation – Councillors are asked to consider the three grant applications attached to this report

Enclosures –

- (i) Email from the proprietor of Rialtos restaurant
- (ii) Application form from Ponteland 41 Club
- (iii) Application form from Ponteland Rotary Club

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda item no. 88

Report by Clerk to the Council

Report to December 2022 Council meeting

Report re Christmas and New Year holidays –

Office closure

The Town Council offices has in the past closed the day before Christmas Eve and does not open again until after New Year.

Last year the office closed early in an attempt to allow staff to use up some leave. This has been difficult to achieve again this year, particularly since the loss of two members of staff from the beginning of September. The Clerk is therefore asking members to agree to close the office from Thursday 15 December, reopening on Tuesday 3 January 2023.

If the Council agree to close the office from the 15th, a notice will be displayed giving the NCC number and stating that emails can be sent to the enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk email address throughout the holiday period. If requested, staff are offering to man the phones for Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 December during the office hours of 9.30 – 1.00 p.m. Currently the majority of queries the Town Council receives relate to NCC services. Emails will be monitored at certain times and replied to if considered to be important. As with last year some work will have to be carried out during this leave time on the planning and the budget for 2023-24 so that it is ready for discussion in January 2023.

Recommendation – the Council is asked to agree to close the office from 15 December until Tuesday 3 January and to note the arrangements that will be put in place to ensure urgent issues will be dealt with.

**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER
2022 AT THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor N Sehgal.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 28 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Minutes were accepted.

3. SPREADSHEET REPORTS

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

(1) Rockery on Main Street.

The Clerk reported that significant progress had been made regarding the rockery. The repairs to the wall had been carried out. The bus shelter had been painted and gravel had been laid on one side of the rockery, with the second side being carried out this week. The clearing and tidying of the rockery continued to be carried out by Calum Sherlock who was doing an excellent job.

The new seats for the bus shelter still required a decision on the type of seat to install.

The Clerk agreed to email out alternatives to members for consideration.

The green planter would be ordered, and the seat moved to a central position with tubs at either side on the right hand side of the drive leading to Peel House.

(2) Sensory garden

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

There was still some substantial cutting back to be done in this area.

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

The Clerk reported that the Footpaths officer had been unable to source any further quotes for this work. The cost as reported at the last meeting was £24,878.02 and it seemed likely that a contribution of £7000 could be made by NCC.

There was some discussion regarding the addition of the 'star path' finish which it appeared had to be added to the surface as it was laid. The cost was £14,750 and the total cost would need to be paid by PTC. This path would provide some illumination as the it would glow in darkness. Click on link or see attached examples:

<https://nevanadesigns.com/gallery/>

The Clerk was asked to find out if the surface could be added later.

The Clerk was also asked to source some examples of the star path finish to circulate to members.

It was recommended –

(i) The Council be asked to approve the cost of the new path between Callerton Lane and Waitrose bridge at a cost of £17,878.02 which would be met from the projects fund. This was dependent on a contribution of £7000 from NCC.

(ii) The Council be asked to agree in principle to including the 'star path' material to the new path at a cost of £14,750.

(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 reported that she had been advised by Karbon Homes that the draft transfer document was ready to be signed. She had contacted the Council's solicitor and a copy was to be delivered to the office for signature.

In relation to the two trees for the Queen, these had been ordered and a delivery date was awaited. The Clerk had received a quote from a local firm for tree guards at a cost of £1750 each. These would be the same design as the ones installed for the Millennium trees some years ago. This expenditure was agreed and recommended for approval at the next Town Council meeting.

The Clerk was requested to ask the gardening contractor to mark out the appropriate sites at Dunsgreen and in the park and inform members so they could agree the locations.

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 been given permission from NCC to site the bin although she still needed confirmation that NCC would empty it. As agreed at the last meeting, two bins had been ordered.

In relation to the bin requested at the top of North Road discussed at the last meeting, the Clerk had circulated information to members showing the location of bins in and around the site. This was discussed further, and members decided not to agree to the request due to the location of existing bins in proximity to this area.

Recommendation – The Council is asked to approve the purchase of two tree guards at a cost of £1750 each, a total of £3500. This expenditure would be met from the project fund.

(iii) Items discussed at September 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. This work would be carried out by the Council's contractors during the winter months. The hedges at the allotments had been cut back.

Allotment tenancy Agreements – Members were reminded that the Clerk had been asked to check the amendments to the tenancy agreement with a local solicitor. However, she had become aware of an organisation called the Northern Counties Allotment Association (NCAA) which had been included in a NALC newsletter. She had contacted an adviser and had had a phone conversation and a meeting with the representative of the organisation. This had proved useful, and the Clerk outlined the various suggestions that had been made which included changing the allotment year to start on 1 October, carrying out an annual cultivation review and using the NCAA agreement. The adviser had also offered to produce a new map of the allotments at a cost of around £100 and to attend a meeting of the EWP in January 2023. It was also suggested that the Council should join the NCAA at a cost of £55.

It was agreed – That the adviser be invited to attend the January 2023 meeting to discuss the various issues raised in more detail.

Request for funds from Ponteland Red Squirrels group for installation of a rope bridge – NCC had agreed to the installation of the bridge. The ownership of the land on the opposite side of the bridge had been determined and the Clerk had written to the owners seeking permission to use a tree on their land to site the bridge. No response has been received and a further letter would be sent.

Ash trees in Ponteland Park – the Clerk had obtained the five-day notice for the urgent works in the park but still needed to complete an application for the other works in the park. The Chair stated that she had raised this issue at the last Town and Parish Liaison Group held with NCC to see if the process could be simplified to enable the work to be carried out without the need for an application to be made. She had been advised that NCC were hoping that some of the Ash trees which were healthy could be left which may provide some immunity for the other trees. The Clerk would progress the application as soon as possible as the work was to be carried out in December/January.

4. Discussion re remedial work required at the Pele tower

The Chair reported that she had visited the Pele tower with the gardening contractor in the previous week and it had been noticed that some of the mortar was loose. The Clerk was asked to find out if some maintenance work was required. This was last carried out some time ago.

The Clerk was also asked to examine whether the lighting to the Pele tower could be improved so that multiple colours could be used.

The Chair stated that she had hoped it would be possible to have a curtain of Poppies display at the tower for next November however, there did not appear to be anywhere that a net could be secured to.

She had a further suggestion relating to decorating the gates with a blanket of Poppies and installing one or two silent soldiers. Some examples of what had been done elsewhere were circulated. The Chair felt that knitting Poppies would also give people something to do in the winter months.

Councillor Overbury felt that permission may still be required to attach something to the gates, and this would be investigated. If this was the case, then a frame could be used in front of the gates.

Councillor Overbury had a further suggestion for an installation of Poppies in front of St Mary's Church which she was discussing with the gardening contractor.

Both of these suggestions would be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Events Working Party.

5. Letter from NCC re proposed change to public footpath 27 at Cote Hill, Darras Hall

The Clerk had circulated the above letter to all Councillors for comments. A response was required by 15 December.

One or two comments had been received from Councillors and if any further responses were received an appropriate reply to the letter would be submitted to NCC.

6. Correspondence

No correspondence had been received

7. Report re FOPP

There had been some communication with the Chair of FOPP who had requested a meeting with the Clerk to discuss various issues.

8. Any other business

The Chair asked members to give some thought to an idea to plant a community orchard near to the former easy access path in the park. She hoped that residents could be invited to come along and plant trees which when they had matured, would be available for anyone to come and pick the fruit.

It was agreed this would be on the agenda for the January meeting.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Monday 23 January 2023 at 10.00 am. at the Town Council offices.

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Ponteland Town Council

Events Committee

Notes of a meeting held on Tuesday 29 November 2022

Present: Councillors Karen Overbury (in the chair) and Alan Hall.

1. Apologies: None received.

It was noted that as the meeting was inquorate with only two members in attendance, there would be an informal discussion of the items to be discussed and notes would be sent to the remainder of the members for their views prior to submission to the Council meeting in December.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 July 2022 were noted.

3. Remembrance Service – Feedback of 2022 event

There was some feedback from the event. There were problems with the sound system at the War Memorial and this would be rectified next year. There was a last-minute change for the parade who would now leave the car park from the entrance rather than through the traffic lights. St John Ambulance would be booked each year as three attendees were taken ill this year. There was now a contact at the High school for nomination of pupils to read out the names on the war memorial. The refreshments at the Memorial Hall had gone down well with those attending and it was hoped this could be repeated in future years.

Councillor Hall thought the event had been well organised and he wished to express the thanks of all those involved in organising it.

4. Party in the Park – discussion re approach for 2023 event

This had been discussed at an earlier Town Council meeting when Councillors had expressed concerns at the level of involvement required for the 2022 event.

Councillor Overbury and the Clerk had met with two representatives of the Party in the Park committee and advised them that support would need to be scaled back in view of the current resource issues within the Town Council.

They had been advised that the Council may consider a grant towards the cost of toilets etc. Staff would provide the Committee with a list of suppliers that they could book themselves. The Committee would be able to increase the entry fee if the Council was not involved in payment of bookings. It was agreed that Councillor Overbury and the Clerk would meet with the representatives again later next year if there was anything else to discuss.

5. Further suggestions for Poppy displays

The Chair mentioned that some discussion had taken place at the last EWP meeting re new ideas for additional Poppy displays in November.

The Mayor had been keen to have a curtain of Poppies from the Pele tower however, after a site visit, she had recognised this would not be easily achieved and therefore suggested having a display on or in front of the gate with the addition of a silent soldier.

Councillor Overbury had also suggested having a structure made to go in front of St Mary's church wall covered with Poppies and with the addition of one or two silent soldiers.

There was some discussion on both ideas, and it was felt that prices for the suggestions should be sought prior to a decision being made at a later date. See sketches and photos attached.

6. Easter

There was some discussion regarding an Easter event in 2023.

Councillors felt that the use of Merton Hall had been a benefit to the event and the Clerk was asked to check if a booking could be made for Saturday 8 April 2023. Some thought would be given to simplifying the format of the event. Members asked if it would be possible to have crayons and pictures for children to colour in in Merton Hall after the outdoor activities were finished.

The event would be discussed further at the next meeting.

7. Further discussion re possible event for 2023 spring/summer

It had been suggested that at the last meeting that the Chair of the Working Party and Councillor Darwin discuss the involvement of the leisure centre later in the year. The events held as part of the Platinum Jubilee had been well received in the community.

The Chair would follow this up with Councillor Darwin and arrange a meeting with the manager of the leisure centre in the New Year.

8. Possible Christmas lights switch-on event for 2023

There was a detailed discussion about the possibility of organising an event for the lights switch on.

However, it was felt it would be difficult to attract residents. Thoughts included: there was no illuminated high street plus only the trees on Coates Green would be switched-on, late-night shopping would not be an attraction given the makeup and localities of the shops, something to attract children would be needed (with associated risks) and the potential weather would be a concern.

A suggestion was made that the Rotary club could be approached with a request to ask Santa Claus to switch on the lights on Coates Green as part of the Santa's Sleigh event in 2023. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

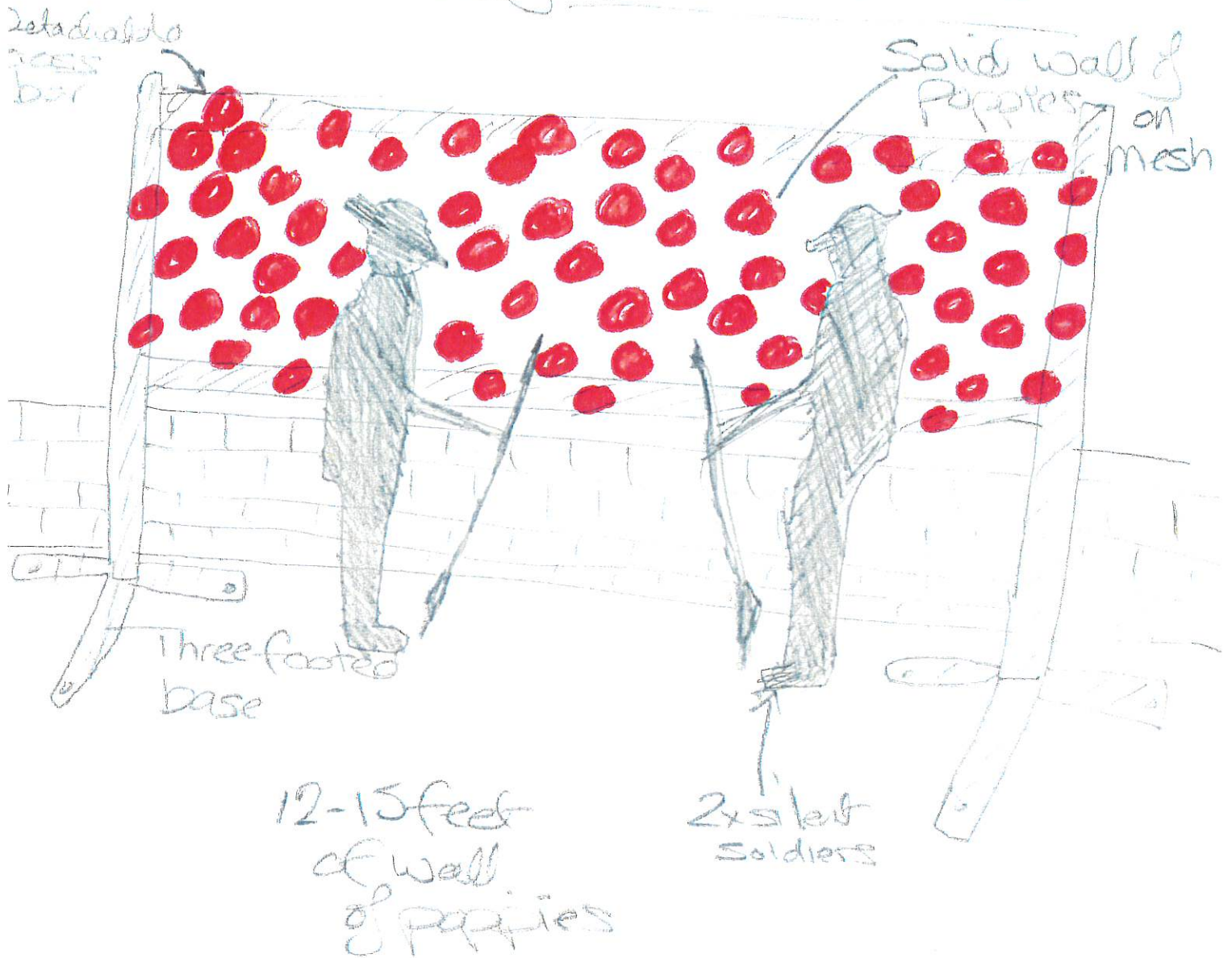
8. Any other business

The coronation of King Charles on 6 May 2023 was mentioned. It was suggested that this should be discussed further once any official guidance on events was published next year.

9. Date of next meeting

A further meeting would be arranged in January 2023.

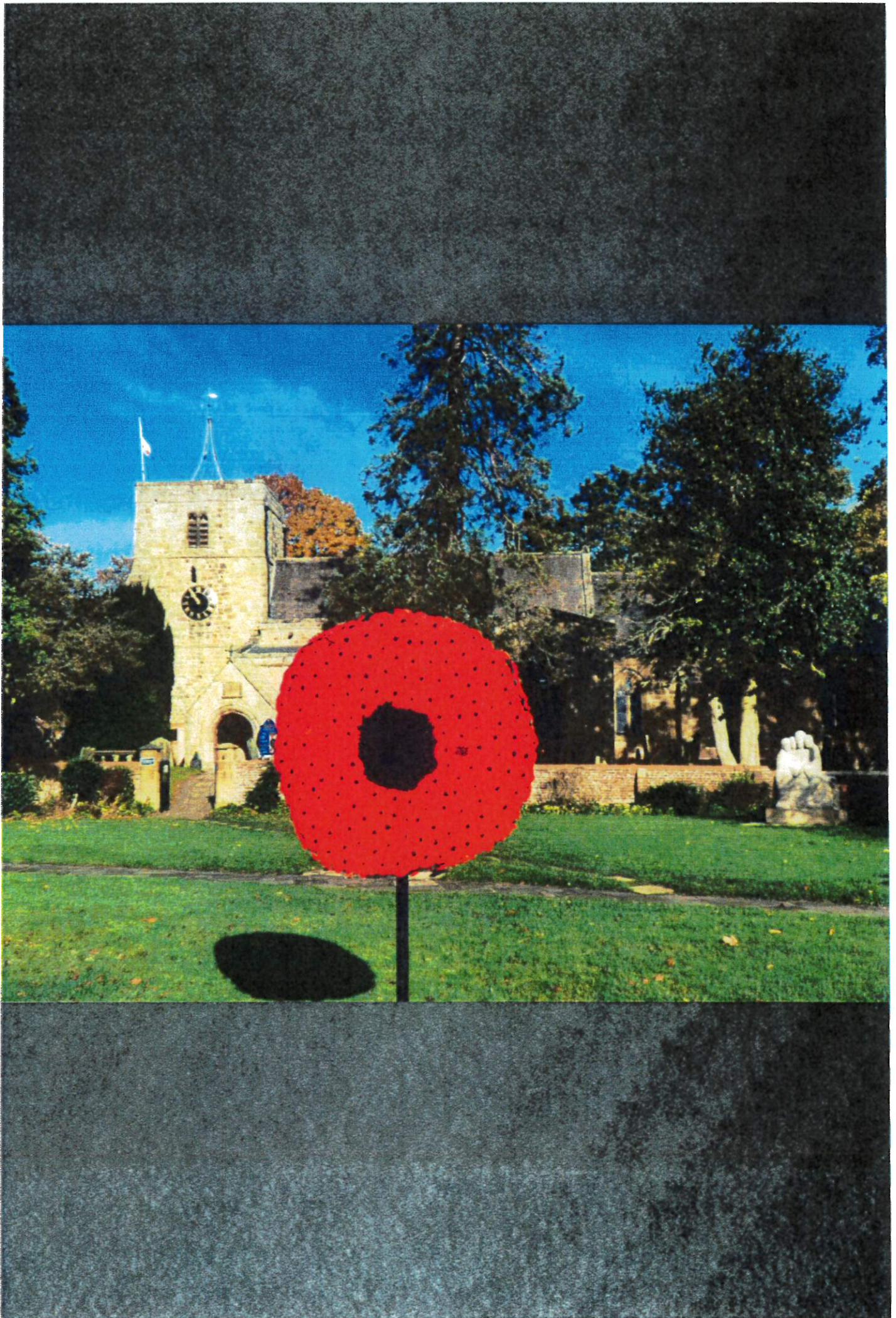
Outside St Mary's, on Coates Green



Pele Tower

Same basic structure, c. 4ft wide
smaller scale
one silent soldier





Report by the Mayor

Report to December 2022 Council meeting

Mayor's report

Town & Parish Council Liaison Working Group.

Points of interest – CA Greenwell – 03/11/22 – 11am – 01.00pm

Cost of living Crisis.

1. Emma Richardson. Senior Manager, Specialist Service. A presentation was given on Communities together & Warm Spaces. Highlights – Loneliness – Food Banks – Warm spaces. Due to the economic climate, it is important we do all we can to assist residents. Booklets, posters are available online and in hard copy format. Giving info on how they can receive assistance and what help is available.

1a Glen Sanderson the Leader of the CC stated there will be 3 summit meetings for all councils in the new year to progress more community work.

2. Local Services update by Paul Jones. A Food Waste recycling pilot scheme in 2022/23. The pilot involves two separate elements: a weekly food waste collection service to 4,000 homes in order to determine the best way in which to collect food waste separately for processing through anaerobic digestion to create a renewable energy (biomethane) and soil improver/compost: and a home-composting trial using new 'Hot Bin' compost bins that are capable of safely processing both uncooked and cooked food waste including animal by-products, to produce a rich compost and liquid fertiliser for home use. These start in November. The evidence gathered through these trials will allow the Council to make informed decisions about the future roll out of weekly food waste recycling collections.

3. Ash Dieback – they don't want to remove all trees as some trees will recover if left and take on a resilience which can be passed on to new Ash trees.

Warm Spaces & Locality Teams meetings x 3 the last one being on 22/11/22

General discussions as to how help and assistance can be given to the residents of the Parish of Ponteland. All suggestions were investigated and found most to be unsuitable for the Parish due to lack of facilities etc. Information leaflets on how to get help etc have been delivered to all the village halls and churches in the Ponteland Parish. My thanks go to our contractors for carrying this out and Kath & Bev for organising this. If you want to see what other Parishes are doing regarding warm spaces and food banks go to the Stobhill link & Morpeth Community link on Facebook.

I asked if anyone had any knowledge of supermarkets who had an area where people could obtain free food – the answer came back no. Morrison's have shelves you can put food on, but you cannot take it away, they decide which food bank it goes to. Most have collection boxes but once again they decide where the donations go to.

Ponteland Primary School 14th November at 1.30pm – 2.15pm. With 60 year 2 pupils

This was one of the most enjoyable duties I have carried out. The questions from these young children were well thought out, for example why do PTC have a Mayor, how did you become a Mayor, why do you wear chains etc.

The teachers were also interested in how you became a town councillor, and a bit taken aback when told we are all volunteers. I laughed for 45mins particularly when they asked how old I was! I have to say they were very kind when guessing my age. They loved the chocolate I left for them to take home.

Christmas thank you & Christmas cards.

I took the decision this year to forgo the above; I have instead made a donation to the Ponteland Youth Groups.

Air Cadets – Army Cadets - Girl Guides, Brownies & Rainbows – Boys & Girls Brigade – Scouts, Cubs & Beavers – Ponteland United Football, Junior & Mini – Ponteland RFC, Junior & Mini – The Youth Club will be provided with Pizza and Chips at one of the December meetings in MH. In a letter to the groups, I have asked that this is spent to assist members who are struggling to pay fees, buy strips/uniforms/shoes and to assist with payments for camp trips etc.

These donations have been well received as some of the young people are from the Ukraine and some parents have had to set up a weekly pay plan for children attending the above groups.

The bank account for the mayor's fund has monthly charges, Kath is looking at the possibility of opening a new account for the Mayors fund in the new year.