

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT MERTON HALL ON 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Present: Councillor C Greenwell (in the Chair)

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

DISCUSSION WITH RESIDENTS OF JAMESON MANOR RE THEIR E-PETITION LODGED WITH NCC

Two residents from Jameson Manor were in attendance to discuss the e-petition they had recently lodged with Northumberland County Council regarding their concerns about speeding traffic going out of Ponteland.

A letter from residents had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

It was reported that the petition currently had 226 signatures.

Residents were requesting help from the Town Council with measures to deal with the speed of vehicles passing the estate entrance.

They wanted to start a dialogue with the Town Council as to whether any additional signage or speed monitoring equipment could be implemented. Ideally they would hope a crossing could be installed to allow pedestrians to access the pavement on the left hand side of the road. It would also help to slow down traffic.

They were aware that speed surveys carried out as part of the highways programme had shown that 85% of vehicles were travelling northbound at 39.1 mph and 36.4 mph southbound. It had been confirmed that this met the criteria required by Northumbria Safety Roads Initiative for consideration of additional enforcements.

Residents had real concerns that there would be an accident or worse and they did not want to become road traffic statistics. Several near misses had been reported over the last few months.

The Mayor suggested that it may be possible to install another speed indicator display sign between Grange Lea care home and the estate. This would need to be discussed and agreed by the Town Council.

The Town Council was unable to install a crossing, this would have to be agreed and implemented by Northumberland County Council as the Highways Authority. The Mayor could not understand why a mini roundabout had not been installed when the estate was built. She also mentioned other locations for a path at the back of the estate but this was Green Belt land.

Councillor Dodd stated that each new development resulted in problems and these issues should have been dealt with some time ago. There was Section 106 funding which could possibly be diverted for road improvements.

He explained that these things take time and residents should not expect this to be dealt with quickly however, the Town Council's Highways Working Party would discuss the issue and see what support could be provided. He pointed out that the installation of a crossing would now cost in the region of £100,000 although this did not mean it wouldn't happen. Surveys would be needed before this could be progressed.

Residents were asked whether the Police had been contacted about speeding traffic and he strongly suggested contacting them but also recording incidents of speeding in that area.

Councillors also raised other issues such as the availability of the Police speed watch campaign and the speed of some traffic leaving the estate.

Councillor Hall stated that as Chair of the Highways Working Party, he appreciated that residents had taken the time to come to the meeting and had handled their approach in such a measured way. He echoed the comments made by Councillor Dodd and assured residents that this issue was already on the agenda for the Highways Working Party meeting being held on 15 February. The Town Council were fortunate that a senior officer from NCC Highways attended these meetings, and he was skilled at looking at various possibilities and options.

Councillor Darwin also mentioned the possibility of additional signage on this stretch of road.

The Clerk was asked to write to the residents following the meeting on the 15 February and advise them of the discussions that had taken place on this issue.

The residents were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

110. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K Woodrow

111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hall declared an interest in Minute 116.

112. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY AND A SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2023

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 January and also the minutes of a special meeting held on 24 January 2023 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

113. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

..... DATE

CHAIRMAN

114. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 10 and 17 January 2023 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

115. GRANT APPLICATIONS

Two grant applications had been received. One was from the Ponteland Rugby Club for a grant towards the cost of holding the Beer Festival to be held on the weekend of 2 and 3 June 2023. They had last received a grant in December 2021.

The second application was from Dalton Village Hall. An amount was included in the budget each year to assist the hall. They had also last received a grant in December 2021.

Copies of both applications were circulated to members.

RESOLVED –

(i) It was agreed to donate the sum of £250 towards the cost of holding the Beer Festival.

(ii) It was agreed to provide a grant of £1500 to Dalton Village Hall.

116. REQUEST FROM PONTELAND ROTARY CLUB TO USE THE PARK FOR THE DUCK RACE ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2023

A request had been received from the Ponteland Rotary Club to use Ponteland Park for the annual Duck Race on Sunday 3 September 2023. Rotary had indicated that the event would be similar to that held last year although they were hoping to attract more classic cars.

RESOLVED – It was agreed that permission to use the Park on Sunday 3 September be granted to the Rotary Club.

Note – Councillor Hall declared an interest in this item and took no part in the voting or discussion.

117. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 25 January 2023 were circulated.

The Chair stated that the Working Party had made progress with the scheme to improve the rockery area of Main Street. The Working Party were keen to install a commemorative seat for Queen Elizabeth II and wanted to install a WAVE seat at a

..... DATE

CHAIRMAN

cost of £450 which included the plaque. The seat would be located to the right of the shelter at an angle so those using it could see buses arriving.

117. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY(Continued)

It was reported that approval was given by the Council in October 2022 to purchase two seats for inside of the bus shelter and the sum of £1500- £2000 was agreed for this purpose.

The Clerk reported that this amount would be sufficient to purchase three seats.

Discussion had also taken place regarding placing a notice board in the shelter however, the Chair wanted to discuss this further with the Working Party at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

118. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Three County Councillors were in attendance at the meeting. They indicated that there was little to report as NCC were in the middle of their budget deliberations.

It was noted that the application for the removal of trees lodged by the Ponteland Rugby Club had been refused by the Strategic Planning Committee.

Councillor Darwin stated that he had been campaigning for various issues to be dealt with at the new leisure centre.

He mentioned the gate from the coach park leading to the football pitch which had a steep drop when it was accessed. A gentler ramp was needed which would cost several thousands of pounds. Three of the County Councillors were allocating some of their small scheme allowance to this project. He asked if the Town Council would be willing to make a contribution of £2000. He agreed to send out an email to Councillors with the details and this issue would appear on the agenda for next month.

119 MAYOR'S REPORT

A report by the Mayor relating to events she had attended since the last meeting had been circulated.

It was mentioned that Ponteland now had a new Acting Inspector who had been invited to attend the March meeting. Details of timings etc would be notified to Councillors at a later date.

120. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports.

..... DATE

CHAIRMAN

121. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £47,702.97 for January and a copy of the monthly budget reports were also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for January 2023.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – THE NEXT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
WOULD BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH 2023 AT 6.15 P.M. AT MERTON
HALL**

.....
CHAIRMAN

.....
DATE