

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

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5 April 2023

To: ALL MEMBERS OF PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

I hereby give notice that the Meeting of Ponteland Town Council will be held on **WEDNESDAY 12th APRIL 2023 at APPROXIMATELY 7.15 PM (following the Annual Town Meeting of Electors) IN MERTON HALL.**

Yours sincerely



K MAVIN

Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

- 136 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 137 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Councillors are requested to declare any items of interest relating to the business to be conducted.
- 138. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8th MARCH 2023 -
Copy attached
- 139. MATTERS ARISING
Not already covered on the agenda.
- 140. PLANNING
 - i) Planning Committee – Minutes of meetings held on 28 February and 14th March 2023 are attached for information.
 - (ii) Report on recent planning decisions
- 141. GRANT APPLICATION
 - (i) Ponteland Flower and Craft Show – see attached
 - (ii) Ponteland Pickleball – see attached

142. INVESTMENT STRATEGY – Report and draft strategy attached
143. LETTER RE CLASSIC CARS AT THE DUCK RACE – See attached letter from a member of the Rotary Club
144. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY
Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 14th March 2022 are attached for consideration.
145. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT
146. MAYOR'S REPORT
 - (i) No report this month due to cancellation of meetings.
147. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS
 - (i) Newcastle Airport Consultative Committee held on 14-03-23 – copy of minutes attached
148. ACCOUNTS/BANK RECONCILIATION/BUDGET REPORT – Reports Attached

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
Report by Clerk to the Council
Report to April 2023 Council meeting
Report re grant applications

Agenda item number 141

Two grant applications have been received. One from the organisers of the Ponteland flower show for a grant towards the organisation and running costs of holding the event and one from the Ponteland Pickleball group.

The Flower show organisers are seeking a grant of £400 and the Pickleball group have requested a grant of £1020.

Recommendation – The Council is asked to consider the grant applications which are attached.

Attachments

Grant application, background information and accounts from Ponteland Flower Show

Grant application and supporting information from Ponteland Pickleball group

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
Report by Clerk to the Council
Report to April 2023 Council meeting
Report re Investment Strategy

Agenda item number 142

Introduction

Councillors are reminded that in 2018, the Government published statutory guidance on local government investments which has been issued under Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 and effective for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2018.

This guidance applies to town and parish councils and charter trustees, providing their total investments exceed or are expected to exceed £100,000 at any time during the financial year. Where a parish or town council expects its total investments to be between those figures, it is encouraged to adopt the principles in the guidance.

Key Principles

The key principles of the guidance are as set out below:

- (i) For each financial year, a local authority should prepare at least one Investment Strategy which should contain the disclosures and reporting requirements specified in the guidance.
- (ii) The Strategy should be approved by full council.
- (iii) Where a local authority proposes to make a material change to its Strategy during the year a revised Strategy should be presented to full council or equivalent for approval before the change is implemented.
- (iv) The Strategy should be publicly available on the local authority's website.
- (v) Where a local authority prepares a Capital Strategy in line with the requirements of the Prudential Code, a Treasury Management Strategy in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code, or any other publicly available document, the disclosures required to be included in the Strategy can be published in those documents instead of in the Strategy.

The guidance document also includes many other principles relating to contributions; use of indicators; security, liquidity and yield; security; loans; non-specified investments and non-financial investments.

A draft strategy for 2023 has been prepared and is attached to this report.

Recommendation – The Council is asked to consider the report and approve the investment strategy which will be published on the Town Council's website.

Attachment – Draft Investment strategy

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2023-24

1. Introduction

Ponteland Town Council acknowledges the importance of prudently investing the temporary surplus funds held on behalf of the community.

In preparing the investment strategy the council is required under Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2013 to have regard to such Guidance as the Secretary of State may issue.

The current statutory guidance on local government investments (3rd edition) came into effect on 1 April 2018.

2. Investment Objectives

The Town Council's priorities will be on the security of reserves (protecting the capital sum from loss) and then the liquidity of its investments (keeping cash readily available for expenditure when needed).

All investments will be made in Sterling.

The Department for Communities and Local Government maintains that borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return, is unlawful and Ponteland Town Council will not engage in such activity.

If external investment managers are used, they will be contractually required to comply with the strategy

The Town Council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by the review of credit ratings on a regular basis by checking one of the credit rating agencies referred to in the guidance document (Standard & Poor's, Moody's, Fitch Ratings Limited).

3. Specified Investments

Specified Investments are, by definition in the Guidance Notes, those offering high security and high liquidity, made in sterling and with a maturity date no longer than a year. Such short-term investments made with the UK Government or a local authority to town and parish councils will automatically be Specified Investments, as will those with bodies or investment schemes of 'high credit quality'.

For the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, the Town Council will use:

- a) deposits with UK banks, UK building societies, UK local authorities or other UK public authorities and
- b) the Debt Management Office of HM Government.

Ponteland Town Council holds its investments with its banking provider, Lloyds Bank in its Treasury Management accounts, who also provide their day to day banking arrangements.

4. Non-specified Investments

These investments have greater potential risk – examples include investment in the money market, permanent interest-bearing shares from building societies and corporate stocks and shares.

The Town Council does not currently have any non-specified investments.

5. Liquidity of Investments

Subject to retaining sufficient average working capital requirement in the current and deposit facilities giving immediate access, the Clerk as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), will determine the amounts and maximum period for which funds may be prudently invested, in accordance with paragraph 3 above, so as not to compromise liquidity.

The placement of surplus funds shall be delegated to the Clerk as the RFO.

All delegations under this paragraph are subject to the safeguard arrangements in place within the Council's Financial Regulations, including payment signatory authorisations, reconciliations and reporting to Council, as appropriate. Information on the level of funds invested is reported to the Council each month through the bank reconciliation document.

Asset replacement funds are invested in a longer-term management account (less than 12 months) in order to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

6. Long-term Investments

Long term investments are defined in the Guidance Notes as greater than 12 months and it requires that, should any Council wish to invest for periods greater than 12 months, it must identify procedures for monitoring, assessing and mitigating the risk of loss of invested sums.

Using the definition above, the Town Council does not currently hold any funds in long-term investments.

7. Review and amendment of Regulations

This document must be reviewed annually and revised if considered to be necessary.

The Council reserves the rights to make variations to the Investment Strategy at any time subject to the approval of Council. The amended document will be placed on the Town Council's website.

April 2023

Kathleen Mavin (Town Clerk),
Ponteland Town Council,
Unit 1, Meadowfield Court,
Meadowfield Ind. Est.,
Ponteland,
Northumberland,
NE20 9 SD.

Dear Kath,

I hope you are keeping well as I have not seen you since I was President of the Rotary Club of Ponteland during the year of HM Queen Elizabeth II 90th birthday celebrations. I am still a member of Ponteland Rotary and I am the delegated person who is responsible for adding a 'classic car show' to our annual 'duck race day' in an attempt to attract more visitors and thus make even more money for our local charities.

As you are aware, our first event happened last year on the 4th of September in Ponteland Park, along with the Rotary Duck Race Day, but although it was popular with those who visited the car show there were only seven cars there. I am hoping to make the event bigger this year, (whilst competing with several other classic car events on that date) , but I am finding the PTC 'restriction' of twenty cars in the park very limiting as I am worried about exceeding that limit by default.

Trying to secure an accurate number of cars on the day is a bit like herding cats. There are so many variables attached to people displaying their cars, such as the weather, other events, the serviceability of cars at the time, the attraction of the event itself etc. etc.

So, I would like to ask PTC if they could approve a restriction of "No more than fifty" cars on the Park site, rather than the current "twenty" cars?

I know that we are nowhere near twenty cars so far, but word of mouth and enjoyment of the car display will surely increase beyond that number over the next few years? Those who brought their cars last year all said they enjoyed the event. It is also possible that we could move the Classic Car Show element to a larger field in Ponteland in the future, on a different day (say, a Spring event?)

if it develops sufficiently which would be another source of income for Ponteland in general – but all things have to start somewhere. Stamfordham has a late summer car show which started with very few cars but which now attracts well over a hundred cars at their cricket club.

Also, the famous Corbridge Classic Car Show was attracting over 700 vehicles before the Covid era with an income for charity of around £17,000 per annum. That show was organised by a small team from the members of the MG Northumberland Car Club (of which I am a member), and the Rotary Club runs several good car shows across the UK in several areas.

The area of the Ponteland Park which we use is between the area where the Duck Races take place and the Scout hut end. A ‘road’ is maintained for exit and emergency purposes at all times through that area. Marshals and temporary signs, and someone specifically allocated at the western Ponteland Park entrance road near the new flats, help to assist traffic entering or leaving the site.

I believe that there is adequate room for fifty or more vehicles in that section of the park, (I was responsible for parking cars at an event at Launde Abbey some years ago), and I do not think that they will cause any undue damage to the surface as they are usually fairly light weight vehicles. Owners will also be loathe to do any ‘wheel spins’ or ‘standing starts’ as they are usually older, retired persons who have spent a lot of money on their cars over the years (I must have spent over £20,000 on my fifty two year old Austin Sprite since I bought it for £350 in 1985) and are loathe to make them dirty or to over stress them. We do not expect any “boy racers” to qualify to be at the show either.

I hope that from all of the above I have shown that I am serious about running a good, safe event in the interests of charity and in generating a little income for Ponteland traders as well, via our Rotary Club, with a long term outlook to improving this event if we can to make it an annual attraction in the future. I look forward to hearing from Ponteland Town Council soon with a decision on my request for a higher limit on Duck Race day Classic Cars in the park on Sunday the 3rd of September 2023 and beyond.

Thank you so much for your attention to this matter,

Yours sincerely,

Rotarian *Stephen M. Cox*, ATCO(Ret.), F.Inst.P.I.

**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY HELD ON 20 MARCH 2023 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 25 JANUARY 2023

The Minutes were accepted.

Councillor Overbury asked about item 2. As the tree guards had been installed she Queried whether one of the schools be invited to a photoshoot at Dunsgreen.

After some discussion it was suggested that the tree commemorating the life of the Queen which was in the park should be used for photos with a school and it was suggested that Richard Coates school should be approached.

Councillor Overbury and the Clerk would organise this.

3. SPREADSHEET REPORTS

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

(1) Rockery on Main Street.

The new seats at the bus shelter had been installed. The Chair and Clerk had met the contractors on site to determine locations. The Chair explained why the commemorative seat had not been placed on the right-hand side of the bus stop as originally suggested. This was due to a significant slope in the ground. The seat had been installed on the left-hand side and still allowed people to see the arrival of a bus. A commemorative plaque still had to be ordered for the seat.

It was suggested that a new black litter bin should be acquired to replace the current green plastic one. An example of a bin from Broxap was shown to members and it was agreed that the Council be asked to approve the purchase of one of these bins with two gold bands included and a stubber plate on top.

To retain the black theme for the site, the gardening contractor had agreed to provide a black soft wood frame for the pele tower information sign in the rockery which was in need of updating.

There was a suggestion to have a black sign erected on the front fascia of the bus shelter stating 'Main Street bus stop' in gold lettering. The Clerk was asked to get prices for recommendation to the Town Council.

The Clerk was asked to investigate installing a sealed frame in the bus shelter listing local taxi firms for when buses were late or did not arrive.

Members looked at various options for a black planter to be installed near to the bin on the right-hand side of the shelter. The preferred option was from GE Views and was a scenic rectangular planter in black with gold trim that included a display panel for the coronation emblem at a cost of £325.00.

For the area to the right of the Peel House entrance, a green planter had been ordered. The Clerk had been asked to change this to a black planter and the company involved had offered two planted black planters to be delivered in the summer which would be left with the Council when the other hired planters were collected. This was a gesture due to the delays with the green planter and there would be no additional costs for the two planters. Councillors were pleased to accept this option and the green planter could be used elsewhere.

They also felt that another black Wave seat should be installed in that area and the existing brown seat could be used elsewhere.

It was recommended – The Council be asked to approve the following:

- (i) The installation of a Derby black metal bin at the bus stop area. The total cost was £402.00 including delivery.**
- (ii) The installation of a sign on the bus shelter and the Clerk would report on total costs at the meeting.**
- (iii) The installation of the scenic planter to the right of the bus shelter at a cost of £305.89.**
- (iv) The installation of a further black Wave seat to the right of the Peel House entrance at a cost of £406 plus delivery. Note – the existing seat can be reused at the Cemetery.**

(2) Sensory garden

This area was much tidier than previously but required further work.

Members of the Working Party were asked to visit the area and provide some feedback with their thoughts for improvements.

It was agreed that this area would be one of the next projects for the EWP meeting once the rockery project was completed.

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

The order had been placed for the work with NCC. A start date was awaited.

(ii) Report re items discussed at previous meetings

(1) Allotments

The Clerk reported that all but one of the new plots had been let.

(2) Allotment tenancy agreements

Following on from the last meeting, the Clerk had amended the Northern Counties Allotment Association (NCAA) tenancy agreement to tie in with PTC arrangements. She had sent this to the NCAA adviser for comments.

Councillors were asked to read this and submit any comments to the Clerk as soon as possible.

Members did agree that keeping of animals or having fires on plots would not be allowed on the site.

Under item 4 – plot and boundary fences, the Clerk was asked to add in some wording to state that the boundary or plot fences could not be changed in style or height.

It was agreed –

- (i) That the amendments outlined above be made to the tenancy agreement.**
- (ii) That members of the Working Party submit any comments to the Clerk in relation to the agreement that was circulated at the meeting.**

4. Information received from Northumbria in Bloom (NIB) re 'It's Your Neighbourhood' awards

The Clerk had been contacted by an NIB judge asking if the Council knew of any small voluntary or community groups who may be interested in putting their projects forward for an It's your neighbourhood award. Entries had to be made by 11 June 2023.

It was agreed – The Council would publicise the competition but could not get involved in assisting groups with entries

5. Replacement bin at Waitrose bridge to replace the burnt-out plastic bin

Information had been circulated to members for suggested replacements for the above bin. The Working Party did not want to replace the bin with a plastic one due to the continued damage of these bins.

There were funds available for the replacement of this bin.

It was recommended – That the Council agree to the replacement of the bin with a Derby bin, the same as the one for the Main Street bus stop but without the banding. The total cost would be £402 which includes delivery.

6. Correspondence

(i) Email from Mr D Butler re the rockery on Main Street

An email had been received from Mr Butler which included alternative suggestions for the rockery on Main Street. He had included a suggestion for totally renovating the beds to make them attractive and resilient.

Councillors discussed the suggestions but felt that significant improvements had already been made to the area. There was further planting to be carried out and contract labour had been allocated to this area to ensure it was kept in good condition.

The Clerk was asked to write to Mr Butler and thank him for the suggestions but advise him that the Council had already decided to update the rockery rather than carry out a full renovation. This was mainly due to the safety issues which would be needed for renovation which include closing the path, allowing for a temporary bus stop and possible traffic management as well as costs involved.

It was agreed – The Clerk write to Mr Butler as outlined above.

7. Report re FOPP

There was nothing to report.

8. Any other business

(i) Litter picks

The Clerk reported on several litter picks that had been organised by Jane Hodson-Hamilton in conjunction with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

The Town Council were loaning the equipment for these and other litter picks.

It was reported that a litter picking group was to be set up to hold regular litter picks in and around Ponteland.

It was suggested that the Town Council agree to provide the group with 20 litter pickers and hi-viz tabards to assist the group with their endeavours.

It was recommended – That the Council agree to the provision of 20 litter pickers and hi-viz vests. The Clerk would report on costs at the meeting.

(ii) Visit to the allotments and the Park

The Clerk was asked to organise a visit for the EWP to the allotments and the Park in the next few weeks.

(iii) Item for next meeting

It was agreed that the proposal for a community orchard in Ponteland park be discussed at the next meeting.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Monday 22 May 2023 at 10.00 am. at the Town Council offices. This would be after the Annual Meeting in May, but it was agreed to hold these meetings bi-monthly on the fourth Monday in the month.