

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

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

Present: Councillor C Greenwell (in the Chair)

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

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Two questions had been received from a resident of Jameson Manor who had attended the last meeting. The resident could not attend the meeting but had been informed that responses to the questions could only be given after consideration of item number 128 on the agenda.

“Wonderful news about SIDs being installed on North Road. Would the council be able to give Jameson Manor and Fields residents any idea on timescales of when budget approval might be given? And after then when the SID is likely to be installed? And also the proposed location of the SID on North Road (Kirkley direction) please?”

Would it be appropriate to set a time limit for some speed monitoring to take place, once the SID is installed too? We would like to get some bench marking figures to see if the SID has any impact on speed reduction on this stretch of road. If the council is happy with this, could they help pointing us in the right direction on any agencies that might be able to help with this please?”

DISCUSSION WITH ACTING INSPECTOR BENSON FROM NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

Acting Inspector Benson was in attendance at the meeting to discuss issues which the Council wished to raise in relation to Ponteland.

She reported that concerns had been raised in relation to the loss of the two officers in Ponteland recently. She assured the Council that those posts would be filled but, in the meantime, policing was being provided from Hexham or Prudhoe. She assured members that the officers had the necessary knowledge to deal with any issues in Ponteland.

She updated members on the various incidents that she had been asked to report on and assured members that there were regular police patrols in Ponteland at the weekends which she hoped reassured Councillors and residents.

Acting Inspector Benson was thanked for her attendance.

122. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Darwin, A Varley and K Woodrow

123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

124. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2023

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 February 2023 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

125. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 118 – Northumberland County Council report

The Clerk referred to the discussion at the last meeting about the ramp leading to the football pitch from the coach park at the leisure centre. Councillor Darwin had asked if the Town Council would be willing to make a contribution of £2000. Councillors were advised that the pathway would cost in the region of £16,000 and the Town Council were being asked to provide £3000 towards the cost of this work instead of the sum mentioned at the last meeting. Members agreed that this amount could be allocated for this purpose.

126. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 31 January and 14 February 2023 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

127 GRANT APPLICATION

A grant application has been received from the organisers of the annual Party in the Park event which was to be held on Sunday 11 June.

The Events Working party had discussed the Town Council’s involvement in the event. In previous years, PTC staff had ordered toilets etc and the Council had paid some of their invoices as VAT could be claimed back from HMRC. The legalities behind this decision had been checked with HMRC.

Due to ongoing resource issues, the organisers had been asked to carry out their own bookings for toilets etc and meet the costs themselves and in turn, the Council had offered to give a grant to cover some of their costs which would save on staff time.

The Clerk reported that there was currently £1345 left in the small grants budget.

RESOLVED – A grant of £1000 be approved.

..... DATE

CHAIRMAN

127A REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

A report by the Clerk had been circulated.

Councillors were reminded that a review of the above documents had to be carried out on an annual basis.

It had been agreed at the November meeting that the Mayor and Councillors Hall, Overbury and Varley would examine the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and report back to the Council before the end of the financial year.

Suggested amendments were set out within the report and these related to Standing Orders 2(k), 5xxv and 7.

RESOLVED - The Council approved the suggested amendments to Standing Orders as set out in the report.

128. HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 15 February 2023 were circulated.

In relation to item 2 in the minutes, the Chair reported that a further question had been received from the resident who lived close to the A696 which asked about the repairs to the west side of the footpath and outstanding issues with road drainage being carried out. The question was received too late for this meeting and would probably be raised at the April Annual Town Meeting.

In relation to item 6, there was a recommendation to install a further speed indicator display sign (SID) at an appropriate location on the road leading out of Ponteland towards the Jameson Manor estate.

Councillor Greenwell mentioned that as discussed at the meeting she had offered to raise this with County Councillor Jackson who had agreed to meet the cost of the sign from his small schemes allowance.

The cost was in the region of between £5,000 to £6,000 depending on who carried out the installation of the post.

Councillor Greenwell had recently been advised that it was possible to download data from the SIDS and further information on this had been received from Swarco who supplied the signs.

There was some discussion regarding traffic entering Ponteland from Belsay and it was agreed that this issue would be discussed further at the next Highways Working Party.

Councillor Greenwell also mentioned that Councillor Jackson had offered funds to assist with extending the swan neck lighting. A report on this issue would be submitted to the Council at a later date.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The minutes be approved.
- (ii) The Council agree to the installation of a SID on the North Road at an appropriate location leading out of Ponteland towards Jameson Manor.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – Councillors agreed 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.

134. MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

A nomination had been made to present the award to David Usher in 2023. Mr Usher had been greatly involved in the organisation of the Wheelbarrow Race for the last 7 years and had chaired the meetings involving all of the various organisations who assisted with this event.

RESOLVED – The award be made to Mr David Usher for all his work in organising the Wheelbarrow Race each year. The award would take place at the Annual Town meeting to be held on 12 April 2023 at Merton Hall.

135. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 1 March had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The minutes be received.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL 2023 AT 6.15 P.M. FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FOLLOWED BY A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL AT APPROXIMATELY 7.15 P.M. TO BE HELD AT MERTON HALL.

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CHAIRMAN DATE