

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT MERTON HALL ON 12 APRIL 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, A Varley and K Woodrow.

136. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

137. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hall declared an interest in Minute 143.

138. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2023

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

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

139. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

140. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 28 February and 14 March 2023 were circulated for information.

The Chair mentioned application 22/03402/VARYCO which related to the removal of trees from the old Ponteland Leisure Centre site. She had attended the NCC Local Area Council meeting to speak in support of the application.

Unfortunately, the application was refused although NCC planners were working with the applicants to help them obtain approval. NCC had stated that the fact the Town Council were supportive of the application was assisting with the future consideration of an application.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

141 GRANT APPLICATIONS

(i) Ponteland Flower and Craft Show

An application had been received from the organisers of the above show requesting a sum of £400 towards the organisation of the event.

RESOLVED – A grant of £400 be approved.

(ii) Ponteland Pickleball

A grant application had been received from a new group who wished to set up pickleball in Ponteland.

The applicant was in attendance at the meeting and provided some information about the sport and what was needed to start a team. Most of the players were from Ponteland and the group were hoping to start meeting at Ponteland Community Primary school on Wednesday evenings in term time.

The grant application was for the sum of £1020 and included the total cost of nets, paddles and hall hire.

The group were currently meeting at the Tyneside Badminton club who had the equipment already.

There was a lot of debate on this application. Councillors mainly agreed that the amount requested was too much however, the applicant was advised to apply to the Northumberland County Council Community Chest as this area was under-represented in the grant process.

It was eventually agreed to offer a grant of £630 which would cover the cost of the equipment.

Councillor Darwin agreed to provide the applicant with details of the community chest application process.

RESOLVED – A grant of £630 be agreed which would provide the cost of equipment as outlined in the application form.

142. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

A report by the Clerk regarding the above had been circulated for consideration.

A copy of the draft investment policy had been circulated with the report and this had been prepared in line with the Government’s statutory guidance issued under Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

If agreed, the strategy would be placed on the PTC website.

RESOLVED – The investment policy be approved and published on the PTC website.

143. LETTER RE CLASSIC CARS AT THE DUCK RACE

A letter had been received from a member of Ponteland Rotary Club in relation to the above. The member was asking if the Council would agree to increasing the number of cars at the event to 50 rather than the current 20. Only 7 cars had been on site in 2022. The reasons for the request were outlined in the letter but in summary, the restriction was difficult as securing an accurate number of cars on the day was difficult as it relied on variables such as weather etc.

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CHAIRMAN

143. LETTER RE CLASSIC CARS AT THE DUCK RACE(Continued)

Members asked if there were any other venues that could be considered as they did not believe the park was the right location for such an event. There were concerns about damage to the park and the access via Mill Rise. In view of these issues, the Council felt they did not want to continue with permission for this part of the event to be held in the Park and the Clerk was asked to advise the Rotary Club to contact the Memorial Hall for use of their car park which was close enough to be part of the Duck Race event.

RESOLVED – The correspondent be advised of the Council’s decision as set out above, namely that permission to hold the event in the Park had been withdrawn for the reasons outlined above.

Note – Councillor A Hall declared an interest in the above matter and took no part in voting but did provide information.

144. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the above Working Party held on 20 March had been circulated for consideration.

There were various recommendations for approval as set out below:

1. Items re Main Street bus stop and rockery

- a) Agree to the installation of a Derby metal bin at the bus stop area at a total cost of £402 including delivery.**
- b) Agree to the installation of a sign on the bus shelter at a total cost of £66.00 plus delivery.**
- c) It was agreed to install a scenic planter to the right of the bus shelter at a total cost of £305.89.**
- d) It was agreed to install a further black Wave seat to the right of the Peel House entrance at a cost of £406 plus delivery. It was noted that the existing seat could be reused at the Cemetery.**

2. Replacement bin at Waitrose bridge

It was agreed to install a Derby metal bin in green without banding at a total cost of £402 including delivery.

3. Litter picks

It was agreed to provide the new litter group with 20 litter pickers and hi-viz vests at a cost of £130.00.

145. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that the County Council would be receiving additional funding from the Government to assist with potholes. He reported that the new broadband service was now live in Darras Hall. He also mentioned carrying out a survey on the North Road in the near future. Councillor Darwin mentioned that he had been contacted again regarding the former planted area near to Click-em-in which was in poor condition. He was chasing this up with NCC.

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145. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT(Continued)

Councillors Darwin and Dodd would be visiting the Leisure Centre with Councillor Jeff Watson to look at the car parking issues. Councillor Greenwell asked if there was any progress at NCC with relaxing the rules for dealing with Ash trees with Ash dieback. She was concerned at the trees near to the bus stop at the park entrance. The Clerk reported that she was waiting for the tree consultants report on Ash Dieback which was due to be received soon. Councillor Dodd suggested arranging a meeting with NCC once the report had been received. He fully intended looking around the Park to see the extent of the problem.

146 MAYOR’S REPORT

There were no reports as meetings had been cancelled.

147. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Newcastle Airport Consultative Committee

The Mayor reported that the Airport reports would no longer be circulated with the agenda due to the costs involved. A copy would be available for members at the meeting on request.

Councillor Varley reported that the solar farm was now generating electricity. He also reported that there was a large increase in users of the airport opting to use the disability service.

There were a number of jobs available at the airport for those who wanted to work only one or two days a week.

There was some discussion relating to the relaxation of restrictions on liquids etc in luggage. This had not yet been introduced at Newcastle Airport and it was understood that trials were taking place at other airport locations.

148. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £43,241.47 for March and a copy of the monthly budget reports were also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for March 2023.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – THE NEXT MEETING WOULD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 MAY 2023 AT 6.15 P.M. AT MERTON HALL. THIS WAS THE ANNUAL MEETING.

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CHAIRMAN