

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT MERTON HALL ON 10th MAY 2023

Present: Councillor C Greenwell (in the Chair)

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

1. ELECTION OF MAYOR

Nominations for the position of Mayor for 2023-24 were invited.

RESOLVED – Councillor Overbury be elected Mayor for 2023-24

Councillor Overbury took the chair. She thanked her colleagues for nominating her for the position of Mayor. She also thanked Councillor Greenwell for her work as Mayor for the last two years.

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for 2023-24 were invited.

RESOLVED - Councillor Alan Hall be elected Deputy Mayor for 2023-24.

Councillor Hall thanked his colleagues for the nomination.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Caisley, Darwin and Woodrow.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hall declared an interest in Minute 12 and took no part in the voting or discussion.

5. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12th APRIL 2023

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12th April 2023 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

7. APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED - The Town Council approved the appointment of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and 7 Town Councillors to the Accounts Committee for the purpose of authorising all payments made from the Council’s Deposit Account.

8. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

A list of the current appointees to local organisations had been circulated. In relation to the appointments to the Northumberland Association of Councillors (NALC) and the Northumberland County Council Parish Liaison Group, it was noted that these meetings were attended by the Mayor and therefore Councillor Overbury was appointed to those positions.

RESOLVED – The list of representatives on local organisations be approved subject to the appointment of the Mayor to the bodies listed above.

9. TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES

A list of the current appointees to Town Council Committees and Working Parties had been circulated.

Councillor Overbury stated that she was standing down from the Planning Committee whilst she was Mayor.

Councillor Sehgal mentioned that she had been missed from the list of those on the Highways Working Party. She also asked to join the Events Working Party.

Councillor Caisley had asked to be a member of the Highways Working Party.

RESOLVED – The list of Committees and Working Parties be approved subject to the amendments listed above.

10. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee

Minutes of meetings held on 28th March and 11th April 2023 were circulated for information.

(ii) Report on recent planning decisions

There were no reports.

11. DATES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS AND CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2023-24

A list of proposed dates for Town Council Meetings for the forthcoming year had been circulated. Councillors were asked to retain this information and note the various dates.

RESOLVED – The dates be approved.

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CHAIRMAN

12. GRANT APPLICATION – PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL

A grant application had been received from new trustees of the Memorial Hall. A copy of the application, letter and business plan from the trustees had been circulated to Councillors.

The Clerk reported that the application was for the sum of £36,000. She advised members that a sum of £6,600 was available in the budget for 2023-24. This had been agreed at the special Council meeting held on 24 January 2023.

The funds were required to meet the cost of several urgent items to improve the hall for users.

Councillor Dodd mentioned other sources of funding that were available through the County Council. Details of the community chest funding process had been sent to the Chair of the Hall. Councillor Greenwell had also sent him details of another funding source.

Councillors were sympathetic to the Hall and although they did not presently feel able to provide the full amount requested, it was suggested that a grant of £10,000 be made to assist the hall with their plans. This was in addition to the £6,600 in the budget. The Trustees were asked to submit a further grant application for the £6,600. The Council also agreed to maintain a dialogue with the hall trustees.

RESOLVED –

- (i) A grant of £10,000 be made to the Memorial Hall to assist with the urgent works set out within their business plan.
- (ii) The Chair of the trustees be asked to submit a grant application for the amount included in the budget for 2023-24.

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

13. ALLOTMENT TENANCY AGREEMENT

A report by the Clerk in relation to a revised allotment tenancy agreement for Prestwick allotments had been circulated.

It was reported that the Environment Working Party had been involved in revising the current outdated agreement.

The Clerk and the Working Party members had been in discussions with the secretary of the Northern Counties Allotment Association (NCAA) who had been helpful in reviewing the current agreement and providing a template for the new document.

A copy of the revised agreement had been circulated and if agreed, this would be sent out to all tenants. If necessary, the Environment Working party would hold a meeting with the tenants at Merton Hall.

Members were advised that as an interim measure all tenants had been asked to pay half of the current cost of the allotment rent. The new tenancy

13. ALLOTMENT TENANCY AGREEMENT(Continued)

agreement also made a change to the allotment year which would now start on 1 October and end on 30 September.

RESOLVED – The Council approve the revised tenancy agreement for circulation to tenants.

14. EVENTS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Events Working Party held on 26th April 2023 had been circulated. There were no recommendations.

In relation to item 7 regarding Remembrance Sunday, Councillor Overbury advised Councillors that a volunteer would be required to direct the parade at the leisure centre on the Sunday morning.

Councillor Greenwell asked if the Working Party could consider providing some refreshments at the leisure centre after the parade for the young people who took part. This would be considered.

Councillor Overbury also referred to the item regarding Party in the Park and asked if any progress had been made with obtaining the necessary documentation from the organisers. There had been no response to date, but the Clerk would follow up the issue.

Councillor Hall wished to congratulate those involved in the arrangements and decoration of Ponteland for the Coronation weekend.

RESOLVED – The Minutes be approved, and the information reported at the meeting be noted.

15. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that Councillor Darwin had asked him to report that the Northumberland Local Plan group were now consulting on possible sites for the Gypsy and Travellers community to use on their way to and from the Appleby Horse Fair. The closest site to Ponteland was in Cramlington North. He also reported that he and Councillor Darwin had a meeting with the relevant Councillors and personnel at the leisure centre site to discuss parking. They hoped to make changes to the bus parking area for use by other vehicles after a certain time.

Councillor Johnson asked if Councillor Dodd would be seeking the resurrection of the Leisure Centre Users Group. Councillor Dodd agreed to raise that at the meeting on the 16 May.

16. MAYOR’S REPORT

A report by the Councillor Greenwell had been circulated. This was her last report as Mayor.

The report included details of a meeting with NCC Local Services. Several issues had been raised with the officer in charge after the meeting and Councillor Greenwell had agreed to provide him with further details.

It was interesting to note that NCC would supply any groups carrying out litter picking with the necessary equipment. Details were on the NCC website.

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CHAIRMAN

16. MAYOR’S REPORT(Continued)

RESOLVED – The report be accepted.

17. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports.

18. ACCOUNTS/ BANK RECONCILIATION/ BUDGET REPORT

The Accounts Committee approved payments totalling £30,203.47 for April 2023.

A copy of the monthly budget report was also circulated, as well as the Bank reconciliation for April 2023.

RESOLVED – The reports be accepted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – THE NEXT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL WOULD BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023 AT 6.15 P.M. AT MERTON HALL.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE