

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR POOLE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2021 at 5.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr M Le Poidevin – Mayor

Cllr B Dion – Deputy Mayor

Present: Cllr J Bagwell (Sheriff), Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr D Butler, Cllr D Butt, Cllr M Earl, Cllr L-J Evans, Cllr N Greene, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr M Haines, Cllr M Howell, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr T Johnson, Cllr C Matthews, Cllr D Mellor, Cllr S Moore, Cllr T O'Neill, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr V Slade, Cllr A M Stribley, Cllr T Trent and Cllr M White

31. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors J Butt and M Andrews.

32. Declarations of Interest

The Honorary Clerk reported that there were no declarations of interest.

33. Confirmation of Minutes and Matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising from the above meeting.

34. Charter Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported on her activities since the last meeting of the Charter Trustees on 28 October 2020.

Before making her report the Mayor referred to the recent death of Ian Andrews who was the Town Clerk and Chief Executive for the Borough of Poole for 20 years from 1973-1993. She explained that he was a fountain of local knowledge about Poole's history and heritage and had been involved in many local organisations. He wrote several books and articles on Poole and made an immense contribution to Poole.

The Mayor presented her report. She explained that at the time of the last Charter Trustees meeting there was still some uncertainty about the form Poole's commemoration of Remembrance Day would take. The Mayor reported that in the event a short ceremony was held at the War Memorial at 10 am on the Sunday with a limited number of members of the British Legion and the public present. Poppy wreaths were laid there and at the Burma Star memorial. Later in the day the Mayor went alone to lay wreaths in Falkland Square and at the Quay. On 11 November a short ceremony was held on the steps of the Civic Centre at 11 am and although there had

been no publicity a number of people attended in the expectation that the usual practice of the 2 minutes silence would take place.

The Mayor highlighted that the introduction of the 2nd lockdown put an end to further public events but after it was lifted, she was able to go to Upton Bay Care Home in Hamworthy to open the marketing suite. She outlined her attendance at the event and explained that she was interested to be told that the site of the landmark chimney had been marked on the ground to retain links with the former use of the site.

The Mayor reported that it seemed that residents had made an even greater effort to decorate their homes at Christmas, encouraged in some areas by a challenge to 'light up'. The Mayor reported that she had the pleasure of presenting the winners with hampers of goodies, having been asked to judge the competitions in Broadstone and Upper Parkstone from photos. The Canford Heath competition was organised by the Residents Association and the winners (5 of them) were selected in an online poll. The top prize went to a 90-year old resident who had decorated his bungalow and garden for several years, making many exhibits himself from scratch, much to the delight of children passing on their way to school.

The Charter Trustees were informed that the Mayor had attended the Holocaust Memorial Day, taking place this year on Zoom, but following the usual pattern. The Mayor emphasised that the whole event was very meaningful and moving, and at the same time inspiring.

The Mayor reported that just this morning she, the Sheriff and Deputy Mayor had selected the winning photograph in a competition organised by McCarthy and Stone to mark the opening of their new development in Lindsay Road.

35. Budget and Precept 2021/22

The Responsible Financial Officer presented a report on the Budget and Precept 2021/22, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Charter Trustees were advised that the report set out the recommended budget for the 2021/22 financial year which if approved would result in a council tax requirement of £121,920 as set out in the recommendations. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the detail of the budget was set out in Appendix A and built on the discussion and guidance from the discussions at the budget workshop held in December 2020. The Charter Trustees were advised of the main features of the budget which included the individual budget heads being maintained at the current levels so that the base budget was fit for purpose as the Charter Trustees emerge from the pandemic and activity returns to normal. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that some of the budget heads had been reviewed such as premises, post and stationery where the budgets had been reduced to reflect savings and the actual costs that would be incurred. In addition, based on the guidance from the workshop, a Twinning budget of £1,500 had been included. Charter Trustees were informed that a significant review of the salary costs and recharges had

been undertaken and the salary recharge had increased to £59,400 with a detailed calculation set out in Appendix B to the report. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the calculation included time for the Head and Deputy Head of Democratic Services and the percentage allocation of staff time for the Civic Team. The Responsible Financial Officer reported on the review of the accountancy recharges which had increased to £3,400 to reflect the work and support provided by the finance team.

The Charter Trustees were advised that expenditure of £120,600 would be funded from the precept of £121,000 less a modest investment income included this year and a small contribution to reserves. In respect of reserves paragraph 16 refers to £37,000 which was carried into the financial year and because of the pandemic and the reduced activity it was expected that over £50,000 would be added this year from the underspend and therefore it was anticipated at 31 March 2021 the level of reserves would be over £88,000 which would be 73% of the precept. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that a more prudent level of reserves would be 20% and explained that the budget had been constructed removing the base contribution to reserves of £19,000 and replaced with £1,400. He referred to recommendation (c) of the report and forming a working group on how to spend the reserve for one-off activities with the initial focus on the £37,000.

The Responsible Financial Officer reported on the Tax base and explained that this had gone down from 58,609 to 56,971 which was due to the pandemic with the cost of Council Tax Support increasing and amendments to the collection rate which would affect BCP Council as a whole and the Poole Charter Trustees.

The Charter Trustees reported that paragraph 27 of the report set out the actual calculation of the precept of £121,900 which would equate to £2.14 for a Band D property which would be a freeze on any increases on Council Tax.

The Responsible Financial Officer explained that in respect of the draft settlement for local government Charter Trustees were not subject to referendum limits for any Council Tax increases which would need to be confirmed in the final settlement which was expected to be released in February but it would be unusual for this to be changed in the final iteration.

The Charter Trustees were advised that the external audit of last year had been completed and signed off.

The Charter Trustees in considering the budget and proposed precept raised a number of issues including:

- Concerns about the approach to spending the reserves and setting up a working party for that purpose. The Mayor referred to various suggestions that had been made eg bringing the mayoral and sheriff's boards up to date and possibly restoration work. Concern was expressed that such work had not been budgeted for which was disrespectful to the office holders. In addition it was highlighted that the Queens Platinum Jubilee would be held in 2022 and it was expected that there could be a Coronation which should be

considered and budgeted for so that Poole Charter Trustees can determine how to mark these events.

- A Charter Trustee expressed her extreme disappointment that there was nothing in the budget which allowed for other formal Remembrance Day Events to take place elsewhere in Poole eg Broadstone which has for decades had a parade which was supported by the Council, with attendance by Council Officers, provision of a wreath and that the resources for these events should be included in the budget.
- Suggestion that some of the reserves were spent on helping the people of Poole recover from Covid.
- A Charter Trustee explained that the Mayoral and Sheriff's boards were normally updated every four to five years when there were sufficient names to complete a section of the panel. It was suggested that until it was known where the Boards will be located that may be difficult. In addition, it was suggested that the Mayor and Sheriff and incoming Mayor could identify special items that the reserves can be used for and then put to the Charter Trustees for support.
- The calculation of staffing costs. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the costs to Poole Charter Trustees was a 40% split
- That the proposed freezing of the precept was welcomed. Acknowledging the proposed budget for 2021-22 was for a full year of activity but that the impact of the pandemic was likely to continue during 2021-22 and there would not be a full year of activity.
- Remembrance Services - A Charter Trustee referred to £4,500 that was included in the budget and asked for clarification on whether that included funding for other Remembrance Events or just the event in Poole Park. He asked that if it was just for the event in Poole Park if a decision could be taken on whether funds for the other events could be identified. It was reported that the British Legion in Broadstone had been advised that they cannot organise these events anymore and if support was not forthcoming these parades would stop. The Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the budget did not include funding for any other events. He explained that if the Trustees wanted to fund additional services this year one suggestion would be to use some of the reserves and look to address the issue in the base budget next year. The other option was for the £1,400 base budget contribution to reserves to be rebadged as additional Remembrance Service budget which would not change the precept or Council Tax freeze but instead of contributing the £1,400 into reserves it could be directed to Remembrance Parades. A view that the focus of the Charter Trustees should be for the event in Poole Park. A Charter Trustee outlined the costs associated with the event in Broadstone and the associated insurance issues.

In respect of the Remembrance Day Events eg in Broadstone Councillor Brooke moved that the £1420 contribution from reserves be moved to the other events contingency making that budget head £1920 to support other remembrance events.

Charter Trustees discussed the above including waiving the costs associated with such events whilst needing to be consistent across Poole. The Honorary Clerk suggested that it be noted that the Charter Trustees ask the BCP Council to consider where it could waive fees for community-based remembrance events. He indicated that if such costs were waived at Broadstone there would be a number of other events across the BCP area, so it had to be considered on a wider basis. It was highlighted that there was no need for BCP Council to charge its residents for them to be able to honour the dead in the way they have done for decades and the simplest way around this was for the Council to do the right thing and waive the fees knowing that if that takes time there was a reserve that could be used so that parades were not missed this year.

Councillor Brooke withdrew his motion detailed above.

Richard Jones, Head of the Democratic Services reported that there was actual expenditure incurred for the Broadstone Road closures it was not just about the fee for the advert. He suggested that a paper be brought back to the Charter Trustees on the road closures outlining the costs that were incurred. The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Charter Trustees do raise a precept in the same way that other Parish and Town Councils do for that purpose and therefore the Charter Trustees were similar to those authorities and the paper could include the costs and the consequences.

The submission of a paper as suggested above was proposed by the Mayor and Councillor Mike White. Councillor Broadhead as Deputy Leader of the Council indicated he would raise this issue with the Council. Charter Trustees commented on the timeframe for the submission of the paper

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) A report be submitted to the Charter Trustees on the costs and consequences associated with arrangements for Remembrance Day Events other than the event held in Poole Park and that such a report be submitted to the Charter Trustees at a meeting in June 2021 to enable such events to be arranged for 2021.**
- (b) The draft budget for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.**
- (c) The council tax requirement and precept of £121,920 be approved.**
- (d) The Charter Trustees form a working party to identify how best to utilise reserves in excess of the recommended prudent level.**
- (e) The Charter Trustees note the conclusion of the external audit of the 2019/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.**

Voting: Agreed

5 Councillors voted against the decision at d above

The Mayor requested that Charter Trustees be asked for expressions of interest to serve on the Working Party. The Mayor reported that key people that should be involved were the budget signatories, her as the Mayor, the deputy Mayor and Sheriff plus any interested Charter Trustees.

Councillor Mike Brooke left the meeting at 18.02

36. Mayor's Award

The Mayor reported that during the last few months she had been developing proposals for the Mayor's Award. She reported that she had worked with the Deputy Mayor and Sheriff to draw up draft criteria which she had circulated for comment.

The Mayor reported that five Charter Trustees had responded to her request for comments on the draft criteria: of these one gave wholehearted support and the other four made suggestions or raised queries. The Mayor reported that no Charter Trustees had argued against the principle of the awards and she had since re-drafted the criteria document incorporating the points raised.

The Mayor explained that she had contacted potential suppliers for the Mayor's Award which was proposed to be dolphin lapel badges and had now received costings. The Mayor reported that as there would be a lead-in time of at least 6 weeks she was keen that the order was placed at the earliest opportunity. Charter Trustees were informed that the budget signatories had already agreed to the purchase of 250 badges at a unit cost of £5.25 including a set-up charge of £195, making a total of £1,507.50. The Mayor moved that the Charter Trustees of Poole also give their consent for this expenditure from reserves.

RESOLVED that in support of the Mayor's Award the expenditure for the lapel badges of £1,507.50 be funded from reserves.

Voting: Unanimous

Councillors Mellor and Rampton left at 18.08

37. Financial Regulations

The Responsible Financial Officer presented a report on bespoke Financial Regulations for the Charter Trustees, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Charter Trustees were advised that the Financial Regulations which govern the financial conduct, internal control and financial management of the Charter Trustees apply equally to the Trustees and the Officers who were supporting the Charter Trustees. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that since their establishment on 1 April 2019 the Charter Trustees had used the BCP Council's financial regulations and accounting systems. The Responsible Financial Officer outlined key elements of the proposed Regulations as detailed at Appendix A to the report, including appointment of officers and responsibilities of Charter Trustees and Officers, which would be supported by the scheme of delegation set out at Appendix B to the report. The scheme of delegation was derived from the authorities which were set out in the financial regulations which defines what officers can do and what were reserved matters for the Charter Trustees and sought to separate duties to ensure sound internal controls. The Responsible Financial Officer explained that Appendix C set out the banking arrangements. The Charter Trustees were referred to paragraph

11 of the report. The Responsible Financial Officers reported that instead of using the BCP Council bank account the Charter Trustees would have their own bank account and part of the BCP Ledger so that they were separately identified which would aid transparency and reporting whilst balancing cost efficiencies by being under the BCP Council Banking umbrella.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Charter Trustees approve the financial regulations as presented in Appendix A to this report.**
- (b) The Charter Trustees approve the scheme of delegation presented in Appendix B to this report.**
- (c) The Charter Trustees approve the bank mandate as presented in Appendix C to this report.**
- (d) The Charter Trustees note the other arrangements being made to further improve financial processes and procedures.**

Voting: Unanimous.

38. Risk Register

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that an initial draft of the risk register was submitted to the Charter Trustees in August 2020 as part of the outcome of the internal audit report. The Charter Trustees had agreed to establish a small group to look at the risks facing the Charter Trustees. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that this work had been undertaken and comments from the Charter Trustees inserted into the updated document. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services highlighted that the risk register was an evolving document which needed to be kept under regular review and if there were future risks or changes the Charter Trustees would be updated.

A Charter Trustee suggested that an additional column be added to the register to identify what date the issue was actioned/completed. Other authorities use red, amber, green.

The Health and Safety Risks were highlighted and the associated risk score emphasising that the mitigation does not reduce that hugely. It was suggested that consideration be given to the lone working policy and any equipment that may be needed to mitigate the risk. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that the existing lone working policy would be regularly reviewed and adapted as appropriate to see how the risk can be mitigated further.

RESOLVED that the risk register as submitted to the Charter Trustees be agreed subject to the above suggestion and the comments on lone working with the register being reviewed on a regular basis as appropriate.

Voting: Agreed

39. Poole Civic Centre - Civic Space

The Charter Trustees were asked to approve the establishment of a workshop comprising of Charter Trustees to consider options and provide feedback to the project team on requirements for the civic space at the Poole Civic Centre.

RESOLVED that the establishment of the workshop be agreed comprising of the Mayor, Councillors Bagwell, Butler, D Butt, J Butt, Howell, Moore and Trent.

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at 6.23 pm

MAYOR