

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR POOLE

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

Present:-

Cllr J Bagwell – Mayor

Cllr M Le Poidevin – Deputy Mayor

Present: Cllr T Trent (Sheriff), Cllr M Andrews, Cllr S Baron, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr D Butt, Cllr B Dion, Cllr M Earl, Cllr L-J Evans, Cllr S Gabriel, Cllr N Greene, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr M Haines, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr T Johnson, Cllr D Mellor, Cllr S Moore, Cllr T O'Neill, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr V Slade and Cllr A M Stribley

22. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors J Beesley, D Butler, J Butt and M White.

23. Declarations of Interests

The Honorary Clerk reported that no declarations of interest had been received for this meeting.

24. Confirmation of Minutes and Matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

25. Charter Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported on her activities since the last meeting of the Charter Trustees. She outlined the 49 engagements that she had attended highlighting that she had met some amazing people and visited some great places.

26. Responsible Financial Officer

The Charter Trustees were advised that Matthew Filmer, Acting Assistant Chief Financial Officer would undertake the role of Responsible Financial Officer replacing Nicola Webb with effect from 1 July 2021.

RESOLVED that the above report be noted.

27. Budget Monitoring Update Report

Matthew Filmer, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), presented a budget monitoring report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The RFO reported that the forecast for the 2021/22 financial year was that the Charter Trustees of Poole would underspend against the budget set.

He explained that this was due to reduced activity caused by Covid-19 restrictions and ongoing caution as restrictions were lifted. The RFO reported that the forecast surplus for the year was approximately £22,656. Charter Trustees were advised that the reserves were forecast to increase to a closing position of £108,233. The RFO reported that this represented approximately 80% of the overall budget and explained that a more prudent level would be 20-25%.

The RFO reported that to facilitate the budget setting process for next year it was recommended, like last year, that a budget workshop was held this would look to provide clarity and direction in respect of levels of budget required for 2022/23, the Charter Trustees ambitions with regards to precept levels and therefore implications for council tax, a review of the tax base for the Charter Trustees of Poole, a review of recharges made to the Charter Trustees which would include agreeing a charge for the use of vehicles from BCP Council and an appropriate level of reserves for the Charter Trustees to maintain.

RESOLVED that the Charter Trustees note the in-year budget position for 2021/22 and the proposed arrangements for a budget workshop.

Voting: Agreed

28. Appointment of Charter Trustee for Bank Statement Verification

The Charter Trustees were advised that the Financial Regulations state as follows:

2.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Mayor shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all 6 accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Charter Trustees at the next appropriate meeting.

The Charter Trustees were asked to confirm an appointment to fulfil the above role.

RESOLVED that Councillor Ann Stribley be appointed to fulfil this role.

Voting: Agreed

29. Outcome of External Audit for 2020/21

The RFO reported that at the meeting on 23 June 2021 the Charter Trustees approved the Annual Governance Statement and Accountability Return which included the statement of accounts for 2020/21. Following an external audit by PKF Littlejohn LLP the accounts were certified on 12 September 2021 and both the final submission and audit certificate can be found on the Charter Trustees website.

RESOLVED that the above report be noted.

30. Future Banking Arrangements

The Charter Trustees were advised that the Financial Regulations state: "The Charter Trustees' banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Charter Trustees. They shall be regularly reviewed for control and efficiency."

The RFO reported that BCP Council had recently retendered for its banking supplier and Barclays was the successful contractor. The proposal was for a bank account for the Charter Trustees to be set up on 1 April 2022 with the successful contractor. The Charter Trustees were advised of the potential advantages for the Charter Trustees in using BCP Council's banking supplier.

Charter Trustees in considering the proposals raised a number of issues including:

- was it possible to have a different banking provider from BCP Council – what was the logic in having one supplier and what was the benefit? The RFO explained that having one supplier enabled the administration process to be simpler.
- as a separate organisation should the Charter Trustees stand alone. Issues were raised relating to the successful contractor known as one of the "dirty dozen". The Charter Trustees should be provided with options for consideration before selecting its banking supplier whilst ensuring the security of public funds.
- making the decision based on sound financial evidence
- there were national banks with better ethical credentials
- scaling the environmental parameters and considering the size of the budget and the tender.
- that BCP Council has followed due process and the successful tender should be accepted

Councillor Slade highlighted the lack of reports for each item on the agenda and the need for the Charter Trustees to have relevant information to make informed decisions. It was suggested that the matter was postponed.

The RFO outlined that potential cost implications for the Charter Trustees. He explained that if the Council's banking supplier was not used the Charter Trustees would not benefit from the economies of scale and may be subject to considerable banking fees.

The Honorary Clerk suggested that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Charter Trustees to outline the issues raised and the available options.

RESOLVED that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Charter Trustees in January 2022 to outline the issues raised and the options to enable the Charter Trustees to make an informed decision on its banking supplier from 1 April 2022.

Voting: Agreed

31. Use of Reserves - Procedures and Governance Arrangements

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services presented a report on the procedures and governance arrangements on how one-off projects for the use of reserves were considered and approved, 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 at its meeting on 23 June 2021 were advised that reserves of £85,577 had been carried forward into the 2021/22 financial year. A Civic Working Group has been established and part of its role was to consider the options for the use of the reserves and the associated process.

Charter Trustees in considering the proposal raised a number of issues including:

- referencing within the procedures who can submit proposals for one-off projects
- how the reserves should prudently be used ensuring community value for the benefit of Poole
- assessing any risk and making the process transparent
- that there should not be a rush to spend reserves without due consideration
- reference to the future of the Civic Centre and how the Charter Trustees contribute. The RFO reported that there was a fixed charge for the use of the building, but the maintenance costs were the responsibility of BCP Council
- highlighting the need to bring the civic boards up to date. Officers reported that action was being taken to address this issue.

The RFO explained that the budget workshop would provide the opportunity to understand the budget provisions and the expected level of reserves.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the proposed procedure and governance arrangements as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report be agreed subject to the inclusion of the relevant comments detailed above; and**
- (b) subject to the outcome of (a) above a form be developed for submission of one-off projects to be considered in accordance with the agreed process.**

Voting: Agreed

32. Feedback from Civic Working Group

The Charter Trustees were updated on feedback from the Civic Working Group held on 11 October 2021 relating to flag flying. To assist with the discussion on the adoption of a flag for the Charter Trustees illustrations of the two options, namely the Poole Coat of Arms and the Historic Poole Arms were circulated with the agenda.

The Charter Trustees in considering the options raised a number of issues on the proposals for the Charter Trustees to agree its flag including:

- the adopted flag should be simple and clear, and the Historic Poole Arms was consistent with the Insignia Charter of 1200.
- the Coat of Arms was too complex.
- there was no exclusivity with the Poole Arms and the use of the Coat of Arms would provide control.
- the flag should be identifiable as representing Poole – it was felt that the shells and dolphins were distinctively Poole
- it was key to preserve the pride of Poole
- the use of the Coat of Arms was for the Mayoralty

Councillor Stribley moved, and Councillor Rampton seconded that the Coat of Arms be used as the Charter Trustees adopted flag:

The above motion was lost – For – 10; Against – 14; Abstentions – 0

Councillor Slade moved and Councillor Brooke seconded that the Historic Poole Arms be used as the Charter Trustees adopted flag:

The above motion was carried – For 18; Against – 4; Abstentions – 2

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the agreed use of the Historic Poole Arms included the motto.

RESOLVED that the Historic Poole Arms be used as the Charter Trustees flag.

33. Proposed Rifles Freedom Parades 2022

The Mayor reported that the Rifles had approached the Charter Trustees to request the opportunity to exercise their Freedom Rights and parade in Poole in 2022.

The Charter Trustees were advised that this was the first opportunity to formally report this and that the Civic Team was working with the BCP Council Events Team on the proposed arrangements and associated costs and would feedback to the Charter Trustees at the earliest opportunity.

The Charter Trustees, at this stage, were asked if they were supportive of the parade taking place if it was financially viable.

RESOLVED that the Charter Trustees were supportive of the parade taking place subject to the outcome of the issues raised above.

Voting: Agreed

34. Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations - City Status

The Mayor reported that she had received a letter from Councillor Drew Mellor, the Leader of BCP Council, to ask her to consider at the next meeting of the Charter Trustees, whether Poole as a town would like to put forward a bid for city status.

The Charter Trustees discussed the implications of submitting a bid for Poole, including the potential advantages and disadvantages, that there were no background papers provided to the Charter Trustees and no indication of the implications of the bid. The Honorary Clerk reported that there was no funding associated with achieving city status but the prestige

for the town. Charter Trustees highlighted the historic credentials of Poole, key facilities in the Town and the opportunity to enhance its historic status. Clarification was sought on the cost of making a bid. A Charter Trustee indicated that she did not see any benefit or gain of being a city. Councillor Mellor explained that as Leader of BCP Council he had written to the Mayor to request that the item be considered as it was a matter for the Charter Trustees to consider. He confirmed that there was no cost in submitting the bid. It was suggested that residents were not supportive of a bid, however a case should be developed to test the views of residents. A Charter Trustee highlighted potential divisions that could be created across the BCP conurbation.

The Mayor reported on two emails that she had received from local residents asking the Charter Trustees not to pursue a city status bid.

The Charter Trustees voted on whether they wished a bid to be made for city status for Poole.

The proposal was not supported For – 5; Against – 18; Abstentions – 2

RESOLVED that no action be taken on the submission of a City Status Bid for Poole.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

CHAIRMAN