

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR POOLE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 January 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr P Miles – Mayor

Present: Cllr M Howell (Sheriff), Cllr M Andrews, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr P Cooper, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr M Earl, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr E Harman, Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr S Moore, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr P Slade, Cllr T Trent, Cllr C Weight and Cllr G Wright

24. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Julie Bagwell, Judes Butt, Jo Clements, John Challinor, Peter Sidaway, Vikki Slade and Oliver Walters.

25. Declarations of Interests

None.

26. Confirmation of Minutes and matters arising

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

Voting: Unanimous.

27. Charter Mayor's Communications

The Mayor reported the deaths of former Poole Borough Council Cllr Ray Parish and former Mayor and Sheriff of Poole, former Cllr Ron Parker. Trustees were upstanding for a moment of silence.

The Mayor updated Trustees on his activities since the last meeting, including school visits, including special schools. The Mayor highlighted the importance of the office of Mayor and the support for the Mayor in the local community.

The Mayor requested that Mayoral Boards were overdue to be updated and requested that this be looked into.

28. Report of the Poole Civic Working Group

The Sheriff and Chair of the Poole Civic Working Group, Cllr Mark Howell, introduced the report and moved the recommendations therein.

In support of the recommendations, it was highlighted that as a result of the advice received from the King's Counsel (KC), the Charter Trustees' remit was limited to:

- Appointing a Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Sheriff;
- Ensuring the safe custody of the Charter of Incorporation; and
- Acquiring, holding, administering, maintaining and improving historic property of a ceremonial nature.

It was confirmed that the Charter Trustees were only able to fund events that supported this remit.

The Standing Orders had therefore been reviewed for amendment to reflect this more limited remit, though as part of the review additional changes were recommended, including:

- Addition of explicit permission to appoint support from outside of the Council;
- Addition of the option to appoint a Ceremonial Advisor to advise on ceremonial matters and also engage with the community.

The Sheriff updated Trustees on accommodation and the previously discussed Mayor's Parlour at the Guildhall. Trustees were advised that work following the resolution passed at the Council meeting on 15 October 2024 was still underway and a further update would follow once completed.

Concerns over support to the Charter Trustees had been raised and officers were currently drafting a Service Level Agreement which would allow for Trustees to agree the support to be provided.

Some Trustees remarked that under the new remit the Charter Trustees would be unable to offer grants such as those previously given to the Twinning Association and Society of Poole and suggested this was a compelling argument for the Community Governance Review that was currently underway.

Other Trustees suggested that considering that the lifespan of the CT could be limited as a result of the Community Governance Review, Trustees should be cautious regarding time and costs of undertaking any legal challenge to the KC advice.

The Sheriff suggested that support for events would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis taking into account of what other Charter Trustees were doing.

In response, officers advised that they were required to advise on what was lawful, and other Charter Trustees elsewhere in the country could be undertaking actions that were unlawful. While the Civic Team was absolutely dedicated in supporting the Mayoralty and the Trustees, caution

would need to be exercised to ensure Trustees were not seeking expenditure that was deemed to be unlawful.

Trustees queried the consequences of a challenge on expenditure. Officers suggested that any challenge could result in reputational damage due to unlawful expenditure paid for by the residents of Poole.

Trustees queried whether BCP Council could empower the Charter Trustees to carry out events on its behalf. In response, Trustees were advised that the proposed Standing Orders section 1(a) set out the right for the Charter Trustees to “carry out any business permitted by law.” The CWG would therefore review events as required and negotiate with officers on how to deliver them. For example, the Beating of the Sea Bounds had been agreed as permissible under the new remit.

Some Trustees suggested that contrary to the KC advice, twinning should be a matter for the Charter Trustees. The Sheriff advised that the KC advice on twinning had been accepted, though Trustees would hold BCP Council to its twinning support obligations.

The reason for the proposed removal of ‘Charter’ from ‘Charter Mayor’ in the Standing Orders was queried. In response, it was confirmed that ‘Charter’ was proposed to be removed to clarify the role of the Mayor, though this could be reverted if Trustees were minded to do so. Trustees agreed to remove the word ‘charter’ as proposed.

Trustees sought clarity on the updating of the Mayoral Boards, as previously referred to by the Mayor. Officers agreed that the Boards would be reviewed for updating.

Some Trustees suggested that the full KC advice should be shared with all Trustees. The Sheriff advised that the CWG was initially refused sight of the KC advice, which was subsequently shared with all members of the CWG. The CWG had also refused to pay for the KC advice, as Trustees had not commissioned it, and the budget set out in agenda item 6 reflected that BCP Council was now paying for this.

Officers advised that the KC advice was BCP Council’s advice and was protected by legal privilege.

Trustees suggested that the proposed Order of Precedence should remove reference to Aldermen, as creation of Aldermen was not a Trustee function, and to add ‘freewoman’ alongside ‘freeman’ (or make the wording non-binary).

It was agreed that Aldermen would be removed, and that officers would review the legislation to ensure inclusion of the correct wording as permitted by regulations.

RESOLVED that:

Following acceptance of legal advice regarding the remit of the Charter Trustees, and subsequent review of the Standing Orders, that the proposed amendments to the Standing orders be approved subject to the removal of the reference to Aldermen from the Order of Procession and the inclusion of appropriate wording regarding freemen and freewomen.

Voting: Unanimous.

ACTION: Officers to review Mayoral Boards for updating.

(Councillor Trent left 18:49)

29. Budget and Precept for 2025/26

Matt Filmer, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), introduced the report, highlighting that The Charter Trustees were required to set the budget for 2025/26 and any subsequent precept for submission to BCP Council by 31 January 2025.

The RFO highlighted:

- An underspend of £21,002 for 2024/25, as BCP Council had now agreed to pay for the King's Counsel (KC) advice;
- The in-year position had resulted in carrying forward reserves of £90,502.
- Two meetings of the CWG had been held which had afforded Trustees the opportunity to review and shape the budget for 2025/26.
- Budget lines removed included the Remembrance events, Civic awards and grant funding in line with the revised CT remit following acceptance of the KC advice;
- The budget for hospitality had increased due to an expectation of increased regalia talks and other such events;
- Increased Communication budget at the request of the CWG to further help promotion of the Mayoralty;
- Overall staffing costs had reduced despite an increase in recharges for insurance, IT, accountancy, and internal audit services;
- It was proposed to draw-down £65,065 in 2025/26 to support the budget;
- The Council Tax base had grown following an increased number of Band D properties and introduction of the second home premium, allowing for the recommendation that the Band D precept to be frozen at £2.14 per annum.

It was recommended that the proposed budget 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A be approved; and that the council tax requirement and precept of £132,324 be approved.

Trustees welcomed the freezing of the precept in light of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis etc.

Trustees queried the planned use of the increased budget for Communications. The Sheriff confirmed that the CWG had not yet developed a work plan and was still reviewing whether to engage Council services or go elsewhere. The budget figure had been proposed to avoid having to dip into reserves once a plan was decided.

RESOLVED that

(a) The proposed budget for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A be approved; and

(b) The council tax requirement and precept of £132,324 be approved

Voting: Unanimous/Nem.

30. Review of the Risk Register - Poole

Neil Fraser, Deputy Head of Democratic Services, presented the report which provided Charter Trustees with the opportunity to review the Risk Register attached as Appendix 1 to the report, taking account of updates to existing risks and any new and emerging risks.

Trustees were advised that following a recommendation by the Council's Audit team, the Register had been changed to the Audit Team's preferred format.

All categories from the previously reviewed Register remained present, with the addition of an identified Risk regarding the drafting of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the provision of support between BCP Council and the Charter Trustees. The SLA was currently being drafted for proposed adoption at a future CT meeting.

It was recommended that Trustees review and approve the Risk Register.

Trustees referred to the storage of civic regalia and requested confirmation that concerns previously reported had been addressed. Officers confirmed that the concerns raised had been addressed, and it was suggested that Councillor Rampton be invited to view the new storage arrangements.

Trustees suggested that the gross score for risks relating to storage of regalia should be increased via expansion of the risk criteria to include 'social', 'reputational', 'political' etc. Trustees also requested that the Risk Register be reviewed for additional risks relating to climate change, such as extreme heat, flooding etc.

Trustees requested that regalia should be displayed where possible and that appropriate measures be put in place to allow members of the public to handle such items safely. In response, officers advised that the team was in conversation with Poole Museum regarding the display of regalia and the holding of regalia events, and that officers were taking advice from professionals regarding the handling and storage of assets.

Trustees suggested that reserves should be used for securing appropriate and/or custom storage for high value items, though many items could be disposed of. Officers advised that disposal of assets should be reviewed after the Community Governance Review as, if new council was established, assets would be transferred to that new council who could then review which assets they wished to keep.

RESOLVED that: -

The risk register, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved subject to proposed review and revisions relating to:

- 1. Risk criteria and scoring of risks relating to the storage of regalia, and**
- 2. Climate change.**

Voting: Unanimous/Nem. Con.

ACTION: Invite Councillor Rampton to view the storage of civic regalia.

31. Nominations for the appointment to the office of Sheriff of Poole 2025/2026 and subsequent Mayor of Poole 2026/2027.

Neil Fraser, Deputy Head of Democratic Services, presented the report, confirming that following a request to Charter Trustees for nominations to the position of Sheriff of Poole 2025/2026 and subsequent Mayor of Poole 2026/2027, two nominations had been received. Following a secret ballot, Cllr Karen Rampton was confirmed as Sheriff elect for 2025/2026 and subsequent Mayor of Poole for 2026/2027.

Cllr Rampton, Sheriff elect, thanked Trustees for their support and the Mayor for his service. Cllr Rampton announced she was delighted to be Sheriff elect and was looking forward to fulfilling and upholding traditions of the role. Trustees congratulated Cllr Rampton on her appointment.

Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services, provided Trustees with an update on the Community Governance Review currently underway, and its implications to the Charter Trustees.

Trustees were advised that, in the event that a new town council was established for the whole or a part of the former Borough of Poole, elections would be held in May 2026. As a result, if the current Sheriff elect did not stand for election, or was not elected, they would not progress to be Mayor. However, should the Charter Trustees co-exist with a new parish council, they would still cover the whole of Poole, and Cllr Rampton would continue to be Mayor, as one of two Mayors.

Trustees sought clarity on previous advice that, at the conclusion of the CGR, the Charter Trustees would retain authority over any unparished areas only. In response, it was confirmed that new advice had been received which suggested that if the outcome of the CGR was that there

remained unparished areas of Poole, the Charter Trustees would retain authority over the whole of the Poole area.

The meeting ended at 7.27 pm

MAYOR