

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR POOLE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 June 2021 at 5.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr J Bagwell – Mayor

Present: Cllr M Andrews, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr D Butler, Cllr M Earl, Cllr M Haines, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr S Moore, Cllr T O'Neill, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr V Slade, Cllr A M Stribley and Cllr M White

10. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Broadhead, D Butt, J Butt, B Dion, L-J Evans, S Gabriel, M Howell, M Le Poidevin (Deputy Mayor), C Matthews, K Rampton and T Trent.

Councillor L-J Evans wished to be recorded as not being able to attend due to Covid legislation.

11. Declarations of Interest

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

12. Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 January 2021 and 21 May 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor Butler advised the Charter Trustees that the Poole Civic Workshop was formed at the meeting in January and had met on 12 March 2021.

13. Charter Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported on her activities since her election as Charter Mayor for Poole on 21 May 2021.

She advised the Charter Trustees that she had attended the following engagements:

- Opening the play area at Poole Park which was her first event – she welcomed the event and thanked the volunteers that had helped.
- Royal Visit on 9 June 2021 by Prince Charles to the RNLI which she was honoured to attend.
- Visit to Millennium House on 11 June - she congratulated BCHA on the work they do in helping the residents move forward with their lives and in particular their life skills.
- Surgery at Sainsbury's Alder Hills on 12 June where she had the opportunity to thank the staff and volunteers doing the work to vaccinate everyone.
- Armed Forces Day on 21 June 2021.

14. Charter Trustees 2020-21 Internal Audit Report

The Responsible Financial Officer - RFO, Dan Povey presented the Internal Audit Report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Trustee and a copy which appears as Appendix 'A' to these minutes in the Minute Book.

The RFO explained that the report was a summary of the review undertaken by internal audit on the internal controls and governance of the Charter Trustees. He explained that the report would aid the Charter Trustees when considering agenda item 7 which sought approval of the Accountability and Governance Return which included the Annual Governance Statement which was an assessment built on the internal audit's review of the governance arrangements of the Charter Trustees.

The Charter Trustees were referred to the internal control objectives. The RFO reported that the list of applicable controls that audit were asked to assess had resulted in either a substantial or reasonable audit assurance which means that in the main the Charter Trustees was operating well. He explained that the only control that provided a partial assurance was risk management. The Charter Trustees were reminded that the risk register was approved at the January meeting and the reason it was a partial assurance was because it was not in place for the entire 2020/21 financial year.

Councillor Brooke asked for clarification relating to the issue raised concerning credit cards and the submission of evidence and the potential risk. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that operational arrangements were subject to continual review and in respect of that particular recommendation it was a general reminder to staff to ensure that when they were using the credit card for transactions that all relevant receipts and paperwork was completed and submitted.

RESOLVED – that the 2020-21 Internal Audit Report be received and adopted.

Voting - Unanimous

15. Budget Outturn Report 2020/21

The Responsible Financial Officer presented a report on the budget outturn for 2020/21, a copy of which had been circulated to each Trustee and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The RFO explained that this report provided the detail of the budget before the Charter Trustees were asked to approve the Governance Return. He reported that throughout the year there was a significant underspend forecast due to the pandemic with the activities of the Charter Trustees seriously curtailed. The Charter Trustees were informed that the year-end outturn position was £28,647 underspent which was mainly savings against supplies and services, hospitality and civic budgets with Appendix A providing the full detail of the spend against the budget which shows expenditure of £77,303 which was reflected in the annual governance return. The RFO referred to the table at the bottom of page 24 of the report and explained that there was a total contribution to reserves of just less

than £48,000 which means at the end of March 2021 the Charter Trustees had just over £85,000 of reserves at their disposal which has been carried forward into the 2021/22 financial year.

The Charter Trustees were advised that there would be approximately 70% of the annual precept in reserves. The RFO reported that when the budget was set for the current financial year, he advised that a prudent level of reserves would be approximately 20% of the precept which was about £25,000 explaining that 2/3rds of the budget was allocated to recharges to BCP Council which may not be subject to fluctuation. The Charter Trustees were advised that there was a significant amount of reserves at their disposal which they could take the opportunity to consider how they wish to utilise.

Councillor Slade sought clarification on the latest position relating to reclaiming VAT and asked if the situation had been resolved. She also asked about the provision of transport explaining that at the BCP Council O&S Scrutiny Board the previous week it had been reported that it was ok to purchase the new mayoral cars proposed for 2022/23 because the Charter Trustees would pay to use the vehicles being purchased by the Council. Councillor Slade referred to the budget for vehicle hire of £750 for this year which was not the amount that she would have expected in the budget as a recharge for the use of Council vehicles and highlighted that this would not be the expectation in a normal year of mayoral activity. Councillor Slade asked about the timeline if the Charter Trustees wanted to undertake a one-off spend from reserves for a memorial for Covid or the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the governance arrangements to make that decision including appropriate consultation. The Honorary Clerk suggested that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Charter Trustees which set out the procedures and governance arrangements. He reported that Charter Trustees would not want to see the reserve being used for general spend if there was an opportunity to spend on a particular project. A report to the next meeting would give options on how projects could be progressed. The RFO reported on the VAT position and explained that the outturn figures set out in Appendix A included VAT that the Charter Trustees would be incurring up to November 2020 which was when the section 33 status for the Charter Trustees was achieved. He confirmed that none of the reserves needed to be set aside for VAT. The RFO reported on the use of cars by the Charter Trustees. He explained that this had not been a normal year for car usage. The budget for the current financial year in total for transport was £2,500. The Charter Trustees would not own the car and vehicle maintenance could be vired into the vehicle hire budget head. The RFO reported that the budget can be rebalanced going forward for next year if the current budget provision was not enough.

Councillor Slade indicated that if the car was going to be used at the same level that was reported at the O&S Board the public purse should expect that BCP Council would get a reasonable hire rate from the Charter Trustees. She highlighted that the budget provision does not represent a reasonable hire arrangement. The RFO in response reported that in 2019-20 £2,174.00 was spent on fuel and vehicle hire. He highlighted that the Charter Trustees was a new organisation and the budgets can be adjusted to ensure that there was provision to pay an equitable charge.

Councillor Andrews referred to the establishment of a working group to consider reserves and how they may be allocated. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that the working group had not yet met, and arrangements can be made to set up the group to ensure that the options for the use of the reserves can be considered.

Councillor Stribley referred to the disposal of the previous Poole Mayoral Car and also sought clarification about the registration plate APR 1. The Head of Democratic Services reported that in terms of the vehicle it had been scrapped and the number plate was held unregistered to a vehicle so had not been disposed of. He explained that in 2019 all assets were transferred to BCP Council and Officers were trying to clarify the history of APR 1 which was still being investigated. The Mayor indicated that she did not believe that the number plate or any funds from its disposal should be held by BCP Council.

Councillor Brooke referred to the printing and photocopying for the Charter Trustees and the associated costs under that budget head. The RFO reported that these costs related to the purchase of receipt and order books in light of the approval of its Financial Regulations and bank mandate in January 2021 which was one-off expenditure at this stage.

RESOLVED that the Charter Trustees note the budget outturn position for 2020/21.

Voting: Agreed

16. Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

The Charter Trustees considered the Annual Governance Statement and Accountability Return, which had been circulated to each Trustee and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book which included the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21.

The RFO report referred to page 29 of the agenda pack which set out the Annual Governance Statement. He explained that this was a set format and any organisation who spends more than £25k and less than £6.5m was subject to external audit. The Charter Trustees were asked to approve the submission as set out on page 31 of the agenda pack which included the internal audit report signed off by the internal auditor which fed into the formal Annual Governance Statement that confirmed to the external auditors that the internal auditors view was that controls were operating.

Clarification was sought regarding the documents made available on modern.gov in comparison to the information published on the website.

RESOLVED that the Charter Trustees approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21.

Voting: Agreed

17. Statement of Accounts for 2020/21

The RFO presented the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 as set out in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which showed expenditure

of £77,000 and reserves of £85,577.00 with comparatives from the previous year. The RFO reported that he had signed the statement of accounts to certify that it represented a true and fair view of the financial position. Once approved the Mayor and Honorary Clerk would be asked to sign it.

Charter Trustees referred to versions of the documents in modern.gov compared to the website. The Head of Democratic Services reported that he had provided a link to the document on the website as it appeared that the modern.gov app version did not include the detail but the version on the website did. The Charter Trustees adjourned to read the relevant document from 17:43 – 17:46.

Councillor Brooke referred to section 3 and the certificate which was not complete. The RFO reported that the AGS and Statement of Accounts once agreed would be sent to the external auditors. The external auditors would then review the documents along with the supporting evidence and they would only fill in section 3 and the certificate once they had completed their audit. The RFO confirmed that the certificate should be blank at this stage.

The RFO, in response to a question, confirmed the vehicle number plate APR 1 was not included in the value of assets. He explained that with regard to the value of this asset on the balance sheet Officers would undertake further checks and provide a written response.

RESOLVED that the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 be approved.

Voting: Agreed

18. Responsible Financial Officer

The Charter Trustees were advised that in accordance with the Standing Orders the Responsible Financial Officer from 1 July 2021 following the resignation of Daniel Povey, would be Nicola Webb in a temporary capacity.

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank Mr Povey for his support to the Charter Trustees and wished him well in the future. In particular she thanked him for his advice and guidance in supporting the Charter Trustees as a new organisation.

Councillor Iyengar referred to Nicola Webb taking over the role of RFO in a temporary capacity and asked if the intention was to have an officer on a permanent basis and dedicated to the role. Mr Povey reported that the intention was to have an officer who was responsible for this role on a permanent basis. However, the temporary arrangements would be in place while a replacement for Mr Povey was recruited.

19. Remembrance Day Events - Poole

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Trustee and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Charter Trustees were asked to determine whether to allocate the sum of £2,000 in the 2022/23 base budget and from the 2021/22 in-year unallocated reserves to provide financial support towards the Remembrance activities in Broadstone.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the report was before the Charter Trustees at their request which outlined the current activities supported by the Charter Trustees and asked Members to consider whether to support financially the activities in relation to Broadstone. He explained that the current activities included financial support for the civic events in Poole Park, the two-minute silence at the civic offices and the laying of wreaths in Broadstone and Hamworthy. The Head of Democratic Services reported in respect of the supply of wreaths that there could be activities throughout the Charter Trustee area therefore it would be right and proper to have representation at such events. Therefore, it was suggested to reduce wreaths to one per ward upon request.

Charter Trustees were advised that the report set out the history relating to road closures which in the past had been relatively informal and undertaken by volunteers. However, there had been changes for a number of reasons including compliance with regulations and increased traffic volumes and the arrangements have had to be formalised with formal road closures, marshalling by professionals and liability insurances which involved costs for organisers creating an impact on community and charitable events. He referenced the position in Broadstone. The Head of Democratic Services set out the option for the Charter Trustees to consider providing financial support to Broadstone as detailed in the report. The Charter Trustees were advised that there was guidance from the national Royal British Legion suggesting that RBL branches cannot organise remembrance events and it should be up to the local authority to organise. The Head of Democratic Services reported that having checked with the events team and the road traffic team that any organisation could organise and make an application for a road closure for any event. However, a local community group could be formed working with the RBL Branch to undertake that activity. The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Civic Team do not have the capacity to organise remembrance services in local areas. He confirmed that if the Charter Trustees supported the recommendations it would be to fund the work of others to formalise the road closures and for that particular event to take place.

Councillor Mike White proposed an amendment to recommendation (b) which was supported by the three Hamworthy councillors. He explained that for 10 years the ward councillors had supported the Remembrance Service at St Michael's and the laying of two wreaths in a major public ceremony at the war memorial. The amendment proposed was as follows moved by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Slade:

Recommendation (b) replace a single wreath with up to two wreaths

The Charter Trustees discussed the proposals and the implications of providing financial support for the Broadstone Remembrance Service event.

Councillor Slade reported on the proposal before the Charter Trustees to provide financial support for Broadstone Remembrance activities which included a full Remembrance Parade which had been a long established event including servicemen, key dignitaries and many hundreds of local residents which was followed by a church service. Councillors expressed their views on utilising Charter Trustee funds for road closures which included suggesting that the proposals should be looked at again particularly in light of long-term budget implications. Councillor Slade clarified the cumulative costs of staff time for the road closures to be manned. She explained that the report indicated that it would pay on invoiced costs and highlighted the opportunity to use volunteers referring to the forthcoming BCP Council Volunteers Strategy.

Councillor Andrews proposed the recommendations as set out in the report incorporating Councillor White's amendment as set out above which was seconded by Councillor Brooke. The Head of Democratic Services clarified that in respect of recommendation (c) the Charter Trustees were being asked to determine whether they wished to support the proposal so the words "determine whether to" would need to be deleted. Councillor Andrews confirmed his approval for the advice as detailed above.

Charter Trustees considered each of the recommendations separately

- (a) The Charter Trustees continue to organise and fund the Remembrance and Armistice Day events at the Mayoral Office and Poole Park.

The above recommendation was agreed by the Charter Trustees

- (b) Up to two wreaths be supplied upon request to ward trustee members to lay at local events on behalf of the Charter Trustees.

The above recommendation as amended was agreed by the Charter Trustees.

- (c) The Charter Trustees allocate the sum of £2,000 in the 2022/23 base budget and from the 2021/22 in-year unallocated reserves to provide financial support towards the Remembrance activities in Broadstone.

Councillors then debated recommendation (c) as detailed above. Councillor Brown in supporting the proposal did not have an issue with the allocation of funds. He referred to paragraph 13 of the report and proposed an amendment to the above recommendation as follows which was seconded by Councillor Moore:

- (c) The Charter Trustees allocate the sum of £2,000 in the 2022/23 base budget and from the 2021/22 in-year unallocated reserves to provide financial support towards Remembrance activities in Broadstone organised by an established branch of the Royal British Legion for example Broadstone RBL.

The Charter Trustees considered the above amendment which included commenting on the role and purpose of the Charter Trustees and the legality of the request. The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Charter Trustees for the purpose of this issue was the equivalent of a Town or Parish Council and the support given to Remembrance Services fell on

the lowest level of local authority which in this case would be the Charter Trustees. He explained further that where there was no Charter Trustees, Town or Parish Council it falls on the District or Unitary Authority. Councillor Earl indicated that this raises an issue in the longer term on how funds were allocated to Remembrance Day events, explaining that Poole was a large town of diverse communities explaining that there was scope now for the creating of branches so that such events could be held in communities. The Mayor reported that the Poole Branch of the British Legion do attend the ceremony in Poole Park and therefore in her opinion it was necessary to look at the whole of Poole and all Councillors have a right for a wreath to be laid as every ward lost people through the war. She asked the Charter Trustees to come up with solutions for the long term that were beneficial to everyone. Councillor Butler suggested that as BCP Council had signed the Armed Forces Covenant this approach should be supported across the whole of the town and she highlighted her support for funding the Broadstone event as it was a significant parade as well as the ceremony in Poole Park. Councillor Brooke made a couple of comments relating to the parade, including the impact for youth groups, the residents of Broadstone and attendance at the event by BCP council officers. He highlighted the contribution that the Broadstone residents make to the precept and the potential serious risk and damage referenced in the report not only to BCP Council but also to the Charter Trustees if the response to the proposal was not positive. Councillor Haines indicated that she would be unable to support the amendment. She referred to the reserves whilst highlighting the Charter Trustees have had an unusual year in 2020 due to the pandemic including the inability to attend events and offer hospitality. She emphasised the need for sustainability whilst offering help it should be undertaken in such a way that eventually the event would be self-sustaining. Councillor Iyengar felt that the merits of the case were there but the issue of concern was the precedent for other events so what should be understood was that the Charter Trustees should retain complete flexibility in future years and even if such funding was in the base budget have the right to reduce the budget or cut the funding. Councillor Slade in acknowledging the point made by Councillor Iyengar emphasised that every line of the budget was subject to review each year. Councillor Brown in summing up highlighted that the amendment he had proposed addressed the concerns that had been raised.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed the amended wording as follows:

- (c) The Charter Trustees allocate the sum of £2,000 in the 2022/23 base budget and from the 2021/22 in-year unallocated reserves to provide financial support towards Remembrance activities in Broadstone organised by an established branch of the Royal British Legion for example Broadstone RBL.

In response to a question the Head of Democratic Services reported that this request related to the Broadstone event and any further requests would need to be considered by the Charter Trustees.

Voting: For – 12, Against - 1, Abstentions – 2

Substantive motion – Voting: For – 13, Against – 0, Abstentions – 2

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Charter Trustees continue to organise and fund the Remembrance and Armistice Day events at the Mayoral Office and Poole Park.**
- (b) Up to two wreaths be supplied upon request to ward trustees' members to lay at local events on behalf of the Charter Trustees.**
- (c) The Charter Trustees allocate the sum of £2,000 in the 2022/23 base budget and from the 2021/22 in-year unallocated reserves to provide financial support towards Remembrance activities in Broadstone organised by an established branch of the Royal British Legion for example Broadstone RBL.**

20. Flag Flying Arrangements for the Charter Trustees for Poole

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported on the opportunity for the Charter Trustees to consider the adoption of its own flag. She highlighted the Borough of Poole Coat of Arms that was in the ownership of the Charter Trustees and could be an option. The Charter Trustees were also asked to consider its own flag flying arrangements as a separate organisation which could include identifying specific events when a flag would be raised together with the provision of a flagpole for use by the Charter Trustees.

A question was raised on recognising former Borough of Poole Councillors who had passed away but were not Charter Trustees. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that recognition for former Councillors was reflected in the BCP Flag Flying Protocol agreed by Cabinet earlier in the day and there was an opportunity to recognise former Charter Trustees in the same way.

Councillor Haines referred to the approval of the BCP Flag Flying Protocol at the Cabinet meeting earlier in the day. She emphasised the need for synergy between the Council and the Charter Trustees arrangements. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the aim was for the BCP Council Flag Flying Protocol and any arrangements put in place by the Charter Trustees to be complimentary and work together. Councillor Slade referred to a potential conflict of interest between the Coat of Arms and the Poole Flag highlighting that the Poole residents feel strongly that Charter Trustees should be flying the Poole flag, but it has no official status. She emphasised that she would be uncomfortable if the Charter Trustees adopted its own flag that was then in conflict with the historic people of Poole. She highlighted the need for discussions on any proposals including the reasons for pursuing a particular option and requested that Charter Day be included in the list of events when the adopted flag was flown. Councillor Stribley suggested that it was necessary to determine what we were referring to by the Poole Flag and to agree what we adopt as the Charter Trustees flag. She explained the use of the coat of arms and potential changes since 1996 and in doing so expressed her preference for the coat of arms as the Charter Trustees flag. The Deputy Head of Democratic

Services referred to the suggestion of a small working group to look at this issue and report back to the Charter Trustees.

RESOLVED that a working group be established to consider the flag flying arrangements for the Charter Trustees for Poole and the adoption of a flag.

Voting: Agreed

21. Twinning Association

The Charter Trustees were asked to consider the allocation of funding under the Twinning budget head in 2021/22 to the Twinning Association taking account of 5.8 of the Financial Regulations.

Councillor Iyengar reported on the role and history of the Twinning Association and the request for £1,500 for grant funding in the base budget subject to annual scrutiny by the Charter Trustees. He reported that he had been the Chairman of the Cherbourg Twinning Association since December 2019. He referred to a trip to Cherbourg taken in February 2020, which he financed and the reception that he received which he described as magnificent. He reported that nothing had diminished in respect of the warmth of the relationship and the engagement between the two towns which included sport, cultural activities, a celebration of what the two towns have in common, the farmers market and relationships with the health service. He reported that the funds that have been requested would be to develop the online content to enable more information to be shared together with regular contact and the second option was for events.

Councillor Slade indicated that she was delighted to support the proposal which she highlighted was really important to maintain cultural, business and leisure links. She reported that Poole only had one place that it was linked with but suggested that the Charter Trustees could build on the relationships with places that have historic and cultural links.

Councillor Haines seconded the proposal from Councillor Iyengar for the request for £1,500 to be allocated to the twinning association and welcomed the potential for other contributions from partner organisations.

Councillor Stribley reported on previous proposals by the Borough of Poole to twin with St Johns in Newfoundland due to the potential close links but it was deemed to be too far for a twinning visit. Councillor Stribley referred to the active Wessex Newfoundland Society. Councillor Brooke supported the request from Councillor Iyengar. He also updated the Charter Trustees on the Wessex Newfoundland Society. Charter Trustees were advised that the Society had now been disbanded and was part of another organisation. Councillor Brooke reported that it would be a real tribute if a twinning relationship could be established with St John's Newfoundland and made a move on that basis which was seconded by Councillor Stribley. The Head of Democratic Services reported that creating and establishing twinning towns was actually a BCP Council function. He explained that there would be nothing to prevent the Charter Trustees from starting that dialogue and establishing some communications and making a recommendation.

Councillor Brooke in light of this advice suggested that a recommendation was submitted to BCP Council.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that ordinarily the Twinning budget would cover other incidentals of the Charter Trustees. He sought clarification on the funding of travel and accommodation costs for future events and asked if the grant was made to the Association there would be no further costs to Charter Trustees. Councillor Iyengar confirmed that if the £1,500 was granted to the Association there was no intention for them to come back to request additional funds. The RFO referred to paragraph 5.8 of the Financial Regulations on the allocation of grant funding confirming that if the £1,500 in the base budget for twinning becomes a grant to the Twinning Association paid on an annual basis subject to review that would be the only cost that the Charter Trustees incur on twinning.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) £1,500 in the base budget under the Twinning budget head be allocated to the Twinning Association as a grant in accordance with Paragraph 5.8 of the Financial Regulations for the purposes detailed above subject to annual review by the Charter Trustees.**
- (b) The Charter Trustees recommend to BCP Council that consideration be given to establishing a twinning relationship between Poole and St John's, Newfoundland**

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at 7.16 pm

MAYOR