

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR POOLE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr J Clements – Mayor

Cllr T Trent – Deputy Mayor

Present: Cllr P Miles (Sheriff), Cllr S Aitkenhead, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr M Earl, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr E Harman, Cllr M Howell, Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr S Moore, Cllr Dr F Rice and Cllr P Slade

25. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A Chapmanlaw, P Cooper, M Haines, P Sidaway, V Slade and O Walters.

26. Declarations of Interests

Cllr M Andrews declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5 as he was chair of the Poole Cherbourg Twinning Association (PCTA). Cllr Andrews advised that he would take no part in the debate on the item.

Cllr T Trent declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5 as he had attended meetings of the PCTA and of the Society of Poole as an observer. However, Cllr Trent confirmed that he was not a member of either group.

27. Confirmation of Minutes and matters arising

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting, which were agreed subject to amendment to correctly include Cllr M Earl's attendance.

Cllr Le Poidevin requested an update on the previously agreed action regarding membership of the Civic Working Group. Trustees were informed that an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the above amendment.

28. Charter Mayor's Communications

The Mayor reported the news that former Sheriff and Mayor of Poole, Randolph Meech, had passed away. Trustees marked Mr Meech's passing with a minute's silence.

The Mayor reported on her activities since the previous meeting, which included attendance at events including:

- Launch of poppy appeal;
- High Sheriff of Dorset annual service;
- Various Remembrance events ;
- Firework display at Talbot Primary School;
- Bournemouth University graduation ceremony;
- Parkstone Sea Cadets Awards ceremony;
- PCTA event;
- Guildhall London Rifles Regiment dinner;
- Many Christmas themed events.

29. Report of the Poole Civic Working Group

Cllr P Miles - Chair of the Civic Working Group, presented a report summarising the issues discussed at the meeting held on 9 January 2024. Trustees considered the recommendations from the Working Group, which included:

- granting the officers and crew of HMS CATTISTOCK the freedom of Poole;
- approval of a new grant funding policy;
- approval of a payment of £5k to the Society for Poole for support of the Beating of the Sea Bounds event, (taken from the 2023/24 reserves); and
- a recommended grant to the Poole Cherbourg Twinning Association as part of the budget for 24/25.

Regarding the proposed Grant Funding Policy, Cllr Mark Howell suggested the following amendments:

1. Amendment to Policy paragraphs 1.1 & 2.3 to add “and charter rights’.

This was put to a vote and unanimously approved, subject to confirmation that the amendments were not beyond Charter Trustee powers;

2. Amendment to the policy to allow individuals to apply for lower value grants, with suggested wording: ‘that grant funding scheme be opened up to individuals as well as organisations, but with a maximum grant amount of £500, and be subject to confirmation by Council of it being legal to proceed’.

Trustees were mindful that the suggestion would conflict with the Policy’s proposal to instigate a minimum grant value of £500.00 and highlighted that anti-fraud actions could be difficult to manage when determining applications from individuals with personal bank accounts. To mitigate such concerns, it was suggested that Trustees could instead encourage such individuals to work with existing organisations for submission of grant funding applications.

Trustees sought clarity on the suggested rules around funding for new events, review of reserves, and repayment of unused funds. Officers confirmed the policy's proposal that "funding of events would only be considered if the event had been in operation prior to 2019 or marked a significant historic event or anniversary." Reserves were expected to be set out within an organisation's annual accounts for consideration as part of the application. Repayment of unused monies would follow post-event accounting.

Trustees were eager to avoid delaying the implementation of the policy, and suggested that:

1. the policy be approved, as amended;
2. officers review the suggestion to allow individuals to submit applications and provide further detail at a future meeting.

This was agreed by consensus, with one abstention.

Following a query on the use of the Coat of Arms, it was agreed that details of the Royal Charter be forwarded to Cllr Howell.

All other matters were approved by consensus.

RESOLVED: that

- a) Trustees note the intent to grant the officers and crew of HMS CATTISTOCK freedom of Poole;**
- b) Trustees approve the grant funding policy, as amended, for implementation as of 1 April 2024;**
- c) Officers review the suggestion to allow individuals to submit applications and provide further detail at a future meeting;**
- d) Trustees approve a payment of £5k to the Society for Poole for support of the Beating of the Sea Bounds event, taken from the 2023/24 reserves;**
- e) Trustees note the recommendation from the Civic Working Group regarding the PCTA.**

30. Budget and Precept for 2024/25

The Responsible Financial Officer presented a Budget and Precept report, highlighting:

- An allocation of £20,000 for grant funding;
- An allocation of £400 for work commissioned from the BCPC Council's Communication team;
- Increased costs for staffing, including a charge for the honorary clerk;
- An allocation for supporting the freedom of the Borough for HMS CATTISTOCK;
- An allocation for the Poole Cherbourg Twinning Association (PCTA);
- An allocation for support for D-day anniversary events;
- An increased budget for Mayor-Making.

Reserves at 31 March 2025 were forecasted to be £54,591, following a proposed draw-down of £67,269 in 2024/25. It was confirmed that as reserves were used, the council tax precept would likely require an increase in future years.

The Council Tax base was confirmed to have increased by 741 Band D properties. The Band D council tax charge was proposed to be frozen at the 2023/24 figure of £2.14 per annum.

Trustees highlighted the need to retain sufficient reserves to cover unanticipated costs and raised concerns over the premises costs outlined. The Responsible Financial Officer advised that premises charges for the Charter Trustees of Poole totalled £15,790, made up of two parts:

1. Storage at Upton House for the Regalia - £3.5k a quarter – Total per annum £14k;
2. The use of the Guildhall for an assumed 5 events, c. £358 per event.

Use of Upton House for storage was confirmed to have replaced an income generating meeting room.

Trustees agreed that the Civic Working Group be delegated authority to review the Upton House storage room venue and associated costs.

Some Trustees raised concerns over the use of The Guildhall as a Mayor's reception venue and drew comparisons to the Charter Trustees of Bournemouth's access to dedicated Mayor's Parlours. It was suggested that use of the Old Bridge House premises should be considered as an alternative. The Honorary Clerk advised that a viewing of the Old Bridge House venue could be arranged upon request.

Some Trustees raised concerns over staffing costs and suggested that monies should be withheld until a suitable Mayor's reception venue, which was felt to be a statutory requirement, was provided.

Trustees referred to the 'vertical slice' at Poole Civic Centre previously proposed as a venue for the Mayoralty. The Honorary Clerk confirmed that while such a proposal had been economically viable at the time, an alternative proposal had been tabled by BCP FuturePlaces which had not been taken forward and since then, no viable proposal had been made to BCP Council. It was confirmed that any such proposal to bring the building back into use would likely take circa 5 years.

Other Trustees felt a wider review of the governance arrangements of the Charter Trustees was required. The Honorary Clerk reminded Trustees that the Charter Trustees had been set up to maintain the Mayoralty as a temporary measure when BCP Council was formed, pending a more permanent decision. It was suggested that some of the frustrations outlined could be solved by having a more powerful Parish/Town Council, though such an entity would not have support of council and would therefore need

to source independent staffing, etc. Further dialogue around such a review would need to be undertaken outside of the meeting.

Trustees requested that future budget reports be expanded to provide a greater level of detail.

The recommendations were put to a vote, and it was:

RESOLVED: that

- a) The proposed budget for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A be approved;**
- b) The council tax requirement and precept of £127,684 be approved.**
- c) the Civic Working Group be delegated authority to review the Upton House storage room venue and associated costs.**

Voting: Unanimous.

(Cllr Hadley left the meeting at 19:09)

(Cllr Aitkenhead left the meeting at 19:12)

31. Review of the Risk Register - Poole

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services presented a report detailing the annual review of the Risk Register for the Charter Trustees of Poole, highlighting the downgrading of risk relating to the safety of civic dignitaries.

RESOLVED: that the risk register, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

Voting: Unanimous

32. Appointment to the office of Sheriff of Poole 2024/2025 and subsequent Mayor of Poole 2025/2026

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services confirmed the appointment of Councillor Mark Howell as the Sheriff of Poole for 2024/25, and subsequent Mayor of Poole for 2025/26.

Cllr Howell advised that his main focus as Sheriff, and subsequent Mayor of Poole, would be to work with other civic holders to an organisation that worked for them and the residents of Poole.

The meeting ended at 7.22 pm

MAYOR