



Penrith Town Council

Unit 1, Church House, 19-24 Friargate, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7XR

Tel: 01768 899 773 Email: office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of

PENRITH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on **Tuesday 27 July 2021**, at 6.00 pm, at Penrith Methodist Church.

PRESENT

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Cllr. Bowen | Pategill Ward | Cllr. Jackson | North Ward |
| Cllr. M. Clark | South Ward | Cllr. Kenyon | North Ward |
| Cllr. S. Clarke | Carleton Ward | Cllr. Lawson | Carleton Ward |
| Cllr. Davies | West Ward | Cllr. C. Shepherd | East Ward |
| Cllr. Donald | North Ward | Cllr. M. Shepherd | North Ward |
| Cllr. Hawkins | East Ward | | |

Acting Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk

The Town Council resolved from 20 May 2019, until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council, that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, to adopt the General Power of Competence.

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL 27 July 2021

PTC21/47 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Knaggs, Snell, Fallows.

Councillor Burgin had given his apologies at the previous meeting of Council.

PTC21/48 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

Members were asked to disclose their interests in matters to be discussed whether disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interest, and to decide requests for dispensations:

Councillor Donald declared that he was a member of the Penrith Refugee Network.

Councillor M. Clark declared that she was a member for Eden District Council South Ward.

Councillor Lawson declared during the meeting that he was a member of the Friends of Penrith Beacon.

PTC21/49 Public Participation

a) Public Representations

Members were asked whether they were content to suspend the Council Standing Orders and allow Mr Dawson representing the Friends of Penrith Beacon to speak during Agenda item 6.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Standing Orders be suspended, and Mr Dawson be permitted to speak for a period of up to three minutes as part of Agenda Item 6, Beacon Hill.

The Deputy Town Clerk read out the following question received by Keep Penrith Special.

'Keep Penrith Special's campaign team strongly supports Penrith Town Council's creation of a policy to protect Beacon Hill from development.

While supporting the policy in principle, we have some suggestions for wording changes that we consider would make the policy more robust and we have detailed these in a separate letter to the council.

We are deeply concerned that the policy is proposed to cover only a section of Beacon Hill, not the greater area to the north whose terrain would be more

suitable for development. We have concerns that any development here would be the thin end of the wedge for development spilling out into the surrounding fields, and crucially into those on the Eden Valley side as was once marked out on the Masterplan. Development here would mean the loss of nearly everything this policy is trying to protect: the cultural and iconic significance, the views to and from the Beacon, flora and fauna, woodland character, and so on.

On that basis, we ask the Town Council if they would consider going further and find ways to protect the *entirety* of Beacon Hill. Otherwise, this policy merely protects the wellbeing of the local community and even that is not a certainty being dependent on the goodwill of the landowners.'

Councillor Jackson responded as follows:

'I would like to thank Keep Penrith Special for their question.

Throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process and consultations, Penrith Town Council has given great consideration to the Beacon as it was obvious it held a very special place in the affections of the residents of Penrith and the surrounding area. The size of the whole area was always of concern as Local Green Space has to meet the criteria for designation as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which states that it should not be an extensive tract of land. The Town Council agreed that the area for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Development Plan should be the 'front' of the Beacon away from the commercial forestry although there was always concern about the size at 45 ha.

At this point the Independent Examiner has accepted that the area included by the Town Council is demonstrably special although he has expressed concern about the size of the area. This is why he asked the Town Council to explore the development of a policy specifically for the area without frustrating the commercial aspirations of the landowner. The examiner would not accept extending the area beyond that already identified'.

PTC21/50 EXCLUDED ITEM: Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

Members were informed that there were no items on the agenda that should be considered without the presence of the press and public, pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960.

NEW BUSINESS

PTC21/51 Motion from Councillor Jackson supporting 'Together with Refugees'.

Members were asked to consider a motion from Councillor Jackson requesting that the Council signs up to being a member of the Together with Refugees Campaign and that the Council writes to the MP Neil Hudson to request that the rewriting of the Immigration Bill does not discriminate against refugees.

Cllr Lawson joined the meeting at 18:17.

Cllr Hawkins joined the meeting at 18:20.

RESOLVED THAT:

- i. The Council signs up to be a member of the Together with Refugees Campaign.
- ii. The Council sends a letter to Neil Hudson MP to request that the rewriting of the Immigration Bill does not discriminate against refugees and ensures that refugees are treated fairly.

PTC21/52 Beacon Hill

Members were asked to consider and approve a policy specific to Beacon Hill for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Development Plan as recommended by the Town Council's Planning Committee.

Members received a presentation from a representative of Friends of Penrith Beacon.

The Deputy Town Clerk read out a statement from Keep Penrith Special.

RESOLVED THAT:

- i. The policy for Beacon Hill be approved with some minor modifications for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Development Plan (attached to these minutes as an appendix).
- ii. The policy be forwarded to the Independent Examiner for inclusion in the Penrith Neighbourhood Development Plan as a new policy.

PTC21/53 NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next meeting of Council would be held on 27 September 2021 at 6.00pm with the venue to be determined.

CHAIR:

DATE:

**FOR INFORMATION FOR ALL
MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

POLICY - Beacon Hill Protected Landscape Feature

Beacon Hill is a valued and prominent local landmark forming an elevated, wooded backdrop to the north-east of Penrith. The area **identified on the Policies Map as PN14 (attached)** will be a protected landscape feature and any new development will only be permitted when it clearly demonstrates that it conserves and enhances the existing landscape, character and function of this important woodland area.

Proposals for development within the area identified on the Policy Map should conserve and enhance the recreational value (including the extent of public access), biodiversity value, heritage and cultural value, woodland character, important views (to and from the Beacon) and contribution of the area to a wider landscape character and sense of place.

The following types of development in principle may, subject to detailed proposals, be considered to be compatible with these aims:

1. the construction of narrow well screened permeable footpaths, including a permeable path suitable for disabled access to the top of the Beacon from the south eastern end of the site adjacent to the Roundthorn Hotel;
2. the erection of interpretation boards to provide information for walkers and other users;
3. the erection of a suitable open sided structure suitably screened that could be used as a forest school area by local schools and community groups;
4. the development of a forest art or sculpture trail;
5. the construction of narrow well screened permeable tracks suitable for cycling that are separate from footpaths; and
6. the construction of a small suitably screened off road parking area at the southern end of the site

Development proposals that would provide accommodation for overnight stays (e.g. chalets, pods or camping) will not be permitted.

Necessary forestry operations involved in the maintenance and management of the woodland will be supported.

Background Justification

1. Beacon Hill makes an important contribution to the character of Penrith and the surrounding area. It is an iconic and most valued feature of the local landscape providing an elevated, attractive, distinctive and wooded backdrop to the north-east of Penrith and provides important recreational and wellbeing opportunities for local residents and visitors.
2. Beacon Hill is an unspoilt green space and wildlife area, plainly visible from both short and long-distance views from the northern and southern approaches to the town from the M6 and A6, the eastern approach along the A66 and from many feature locations within the town itself, such as the Railway Station and Castle Park. Rising some 286m (937 feet) above sea level to the north of the town, Beacon Hill provides an unmissable wooded backdrop with a special place in local people's affections.
3. Beacon Hill is also home to Beacon Tower, a Grade 1 listed monument built in 1719, on a spot where beacons have been lit in times of war and emergency since the time of Henry VIII. From here there are open views north and south across the Eden Valley and westwards to the Lake District National Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The PNDP seeks to protect the landscape, character and function of the area of Beacon Hill identified on the Policies Map from development which would have an adverse impact on its intrinsic beauty. Currently used by local residents, and those from further away, for informal recreation, the access to the area is limited to one permissive path. The Town Council would like to pursue, with the agreement of the landowners, wider public access and better facilities for informal recreation such as walking, cycling, dog walking, and jogging. In addition, the Town Council would seek to work in partnership with the landowners to assist with applications to appropriate funding bodies to develop this area for the benefit of the community.

Relevant District Planning Policies

Eden Local Plan 2014-2032

ENV1 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity

ENV2 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Trees

ENV4 Green Infrastructure Networks

Penrith Town Council Strategic Priorities

Health and Wellbeing, Growth, Community Engagement