

## PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

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12<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the **MEETING** of **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**, to be held in **EASTON METHODIST CHURCH HALL, PORTLAND**, on **WEDNESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015**, commencing at 7.00 pm when the business set out below will be transacted.

It should be noted that it is the Council's intention that all meetings of the Council and its Committees be recorded aurally.

Yours faithfully

Ian Looker  
Town Clerk

## **A G E N D A**

- 1. Prayers**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Declarations of Interest** – to receive any declarations from Councillors or Officers of personal or prejudicial interests regarding matters to be considered at this meeting, together with a statement on the nature of those interests.
- 4. Open Forum**
  - a) Police Question Time
  - b) Public Half-Hour
  - c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors
- 5. Minutes** – to confirm the minutes of the Additional Town Council Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015
- 6. Minute Update and Matters Arising from the Minutes**
- 7. Town Mayor's Announcements**
- 8. Written Questions for the Mayor**
- 9. Financial Matters**

Payments for Authorisation (to follow)
- 10. 2015/16 Budget & Precept** – to agree the final amounts of the budget and precept, in particular to consider the **recommendation** of Finance & Resources Committee – that there be a nil increase in the present Band D Council Tax charge of £15.02 (see attached)
- 11. Ventnor Road** – at the request of Cllr. Chadwick, to seek clarification of Cllr. Tim Munro's comments on associated traffic flow
- 12. Future Council Accommodation** – to receive reports of a site visit to a possible location (see attached)
- 13. Liaison Meeting with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council** – to receive reports of the meeting (see attached)

14. **Councillors' News from the Wards** – to receive reports
15. **Reports from Representatives to Outside Bodies and Voluntary Posts**
16. **Computer System Back-Up** – to receive a report from the Clerk and seek approvals (attached)
17. **Additional Staffing Provision** – to consider the **recommendation** of Finance & Resources Committee – that a temporary Assistant Clerk be appointed for a period of three months (see confidential attachment)
18. **Exclusion of Press & Public** (discretionary)  
“That pursuant to the provisions of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for Agenda Item(s) ... by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.”
19. **Date of Next Meeting**  
The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015, starting at 7.00 pm.

## PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

### ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015 AT EASTON METHODIST CHURCH HALL

**PRESENT:** Councillors R. Hughes (Chair), G. Chadwick, R. Denton-White, Ms S. Lees, A. Matthews, Miss A. Munro, R. Nowak, Mrs S. Reynolds, J. Thorner and R. Wild.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Rev. James Menzies (Mayor's Chaplain) Sgt Steve Yeoman (Dorset Police) together with Cllr. Penny McCartney (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council) and five members of the public

#### **2735 – PRAYERS**

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

#### **2736 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Mrs S. Bradley, T. Munro, Mrs E. Munro-Price and I. Munro-Price,

#### **2737 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Matthews declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10 – Procurement of External Funding.

#### **2738 – OPEN FORUM**

##### **a) Police Question Time** (additional item)

Sgt Yeoman gave a brief introduction to himself on his first visit to a Council meeting.

Cllr. Thorner expressed the wish for a more visible police on the Island. Sgt Yeoman sympathised with that, but said the Police's primary aim was to bring crime figures down, which was not always compatible.

Cllr. Chadwick complained about the use of sirens in the confines of Fortuneswell in the early hours of the morning. Sgt Yeoman took the point and said that whether it applied to police or paramedics, there was a need to exercise common sense.

Cllr. Denton-White raised the subject of the 101 call system, suggesting the use of texting to follow up on calls. Sgt Yeoman undertook to take the idea further.

##### **(b) Public Half-Hour**

June Morley asked whether next year's precept had been decided and when would the Council notify the amount to residents. Cllr. Matthews explained that the Council had not yet completed its survey of residents regarding their wishes for the precept, the meeting that evening was part of the process and a final decision would be made at Council's meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February.

Paul Snow said he had been told that April was the deadline for submission of the precept amount and drew attention to the fact that the majority of people responding to the survey was against any increase in the precept. Various Councillors sought to give a response.

Peter Sneddon queried whether the final decision on IPACA was an expression of democracy. Cllrs. Wild and Hughes said that both the Town Council and the Borough had voted against the planning application, but the Inspector had found in favour of the Academy at the appeal and there was nothing further that the Town Council could do.

#### **2739 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (For: 9 votes, Against: 0 votes, Abstentions: 1 vote)

#### **2740 – MATTERS ARISING**

##### **a) Minute 2702(b), para 3 – Ventnor Road**

Cllr. Wild asked whether Dorset Highways had replied. The Clerk will check.

##### **b) Minute 2702(b), para 4 – Rubbish Collection**

Cllr. Lees reported that the meeting with Dorset Waste Partnership had been well attended by Portland people.

##### **c) Minute 2704(a) – Fortuneswell Speed Limit**

Cllr. Chadwick asked whether the County had replied. The Clerk agreed to check.

##### **d) Minute 2704(c) – Condor Ferries**

Cllr. Denton-White asked about the repairs sought for Weymouth Harbour. Cllr. Nowak replied that the Borough could not afford the £10m required, but this might lead to an another outcome that was financially more beneficial for the borough.

##### **e) Minute 2707(c) – Fixed Interest Account**

Cllr. Wild asked whether there had been any progress. The Clerk said that with the resignation of the Assistant Clerk and his own recent absence this had not been possible.

##### **f) Minute 2709 – Cheyne Weares**

Cllr. Lees expressed concern that the posts were still in place. Cllr. Chadwick hoped to be able to remove them at the following weekend.

#### **2741 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (8–0–2)

#### **2742 – MATTERS ARISING**

There were none.

### **2743 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2014**

Cllr. Wild asked that the word “District” in Minute 2732, para 2 be amended to read “Borough.” With this alteration the minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (10–0–0)

### **2744 – MATTERS ARISING**

#### **Minute 2732, para 3 – Request for Parish Poll**

Cllr. Lees thanked the Clerk for a correcting note.

### **2745 – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

#### **Payments for Authorisation**

**RESOLVED** – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 3225 – 3232) in the sum of £1,669.44 including VAT be authorised for payment. (10-0-0)

### **2746 – 2015/16 BUDGET & PRECEPT**

Cllr. Matthews presented his report. He said that he had not looked at options within the staffing review, so the figures did not allow for the staffing recommendations that had been made.

Cllr. Denton-White proposed an increase in the precept of £10 in line with the recommendation of the staffing review. Cllr. Matthews commented that part of that increase was earmarked for implementing the staffing recommendations, but not all.

Cllr. Chadwick proposed no increase in the precept, using the council’s reserves to build up its infrastructure and then, having done that, to assess its future needs.

Cllr. Lees asked for clarification of the Island Caretaker situation. Cllr. Matthews answered that provision of £15,000 had been included in the non-core element of the budget.

It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** - that the precept be set within lower and upper limits of zero and £10 Band D increases. This decision would then be referred to the next meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee for further scrutiny. (10-0-0)

### **2747 – GRIT BINS SUPPORT**

Cllr. Lees undertook to refill the Council’s grit bins as required from the beginning of February. She asked to be provided with a list of grit bin sites.

### **2748 – ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED** – that agenda item 10 – Procurement of External Funding be taken after item 18. (10-0-0)

### **2749 – MAYOR’S BADGE**

Cllr. Hughes added briefly to the written report, saying that he was in the process of obtaining two quotations for a replacement badge with the same image for the benefit of the Council’s insurers.

Members then debated the design they would prefer when the replacement badge was actually produced. It was proposed by Cllr. Lees and **RESOLVED** – that the current 1895 image be retained. (8-2-0)

#### **2750 – MAY COUNCIL DATES**

It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** – that the following meeting dates be adopted:-

Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – (Ordinary) Town Council Meeting  
Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – Annual Town Council Meeting (Mayor-Making)

#### **2751 – STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Cllr. Matthews reported that the Clerk had passed to him his (the Clerk's) comparison of the Council's Standing Orders with what is now NALC's old model set, which leaves him to update it for NALC's new model set.

#### **2752 – ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED** – that agenda item 14 – administrative Workload & Additional Staffing Provision be taken after item 10. (8-2-0)

(Cllr. Amanda Munro left the meeting at 8.30 pm.)

#### **2753 – VENTNOR ROAD**

Cllr. Chadwick was seeking an explanation from Cllr. Tim Munro over remarks he had made about traffic (see also Minutes 2686 and 2703(f)). In Cllr. Munro's absence it was agreed that the item be carried forward to the next meeting.

#### **2754 – LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME & DAPTC ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015**

After a short discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the Council proceed to its next item of business. (6-2-0)

#### **2755 – COUNCILLORS' NEWS FROM THE WARDS**

Cllr. Chadwick highlighted an example involving grit bins where poor communication between members had led to problems. He therefore proposed and it was **RESOLVED** – that the above heading be included as a standard item on future Council meeting agendas and that County and Borough Councillors be asked to provide written reports henceforth. (9-0-0)

#### **2756 – "GHOST" TUNNELS**

Cllr. Chadwick was concerned about the bricking up of three tunnels at High Angle Battery. Cllr. Nowak understood the Borough had carried this out to prevent unauthorised parties occurring within the tunnels. Cllr Chadwick said this action had been taken without consultation.

The Clerk was asked to write to the Borough for more details, to express the Council's concern and to ask concerning the Borough's future plans for the site.

**2757 – EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – that pursuant to the provisions of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for agenda items 10 and 14, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

(The aural recording of the meeting ended at 8.50 pm)

**2758 - PROCUREMENT OF EXTERNAL FUNDING**

The consultant concerned had made an unsolicited approach to the Council offering a service. It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** – that the issue be referred to the Finance & Resources Committee for a working group of all Councillors to consider after the elections in May. (9-0-0)

The Clerk was asked to reply formally to the consultant.

**2759 – ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD AND ADDITIONAL STAFFING PROVISION**

**RESOLVED** – that the Council staff proceed with carrying out those of the “Long-Term Outstanding Tasks” allocated to them. Overtime could be charged up to the estimated number of hours without further reporting.

Cllr. Matthews drew attention to the need for a reserves policy in the Risk Assessment and Review list of tasks and was requested to bring it to Finance & Resources.

It was agreed that steps be taken to expedite the second list of tasks in the second section and the Clerk report back for Council’s further consideration.

Off-topic, the Clerk was asked to record the general feeling of the meeting that all members be allowed to speak on the 2015/16 budget and precept item at the next Finance & Resources meeting.

**2760 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Town Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014, starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm.

Signed ..... Dated .....  
(Chair)

## Minute Update

**a) Minute 2740(a) – Ventnor Road**

**b) Minute 2740(c) – Fortuneswell Speed Limit**

To date I have not been able to locate Dorset Highways's responses, but I aim to have them in time for the meeting.

**c) Minute 2707(c) – Fixed Interest Account**

**d) Minute 2709 – Cheyne Weares**

No further information to date.

**e) Minute 2747 – Grit Bins Support**

A list of sites has been provided.

**f) Minute 2749 – Mayor's Badge**

Two quotations have now been received.

**g) Minute 2751 – Standing Orders**

We have given Cllr Matthews a comparison list between model sets 2 and 3.

**h) Minute 2756 – “Ghost” Tunnels**

Cllr. Wild has provided the following information:-

“At the High Angle Battery the tunnels are padlocked and some of the outside buildings bricked up. The partial demolition with piles of rubble, which was done many years ago before money ran out to replace it, remains at the end. The cistern on the Merchants' Railway has been bricked up. At a meeting with the Borough the other day on services generally this was given as an example of Portland Town Council being left out of the loop.”

**i) Minute 2758 – Procurement of External Funding**

A letter has been sent to the consultant concerned.

## **2015/16 Annual Budget and Precept**

At the Finance and Resources Committee meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> February it was agreed to recommend to Full Council that the current Council Tax charge of £15.02 per band D household should remain unchanged for 2015/16 Financial Year.

Members of the Committee noted that based on the current budget this would result in a deficit position of £5,139 and that this was dependent on approval of the Discount Grant of £3,390 by the Borough Council.

As the final position of this will not be known until after the Town Council meeting it is proposed that the drafting of the provisional budget for 2015/16 is referred to the Finance and Resources Committee meeting of March 18<sup>th</sup> and this is based on the final precept figure agreed at this Town Council meeting.

This final provisional budget will then be ratified at the Full Council meeting of April 8<sup>th</sup> or any earlier meeting before the start of 2015/16 financial year if this is deemed necessary.

### **2014/15 Outturn**

The Final outturn position for 2014/15 will be subject to a number of possible reserve releases to reflect grant use, "one-off" items or exceptional items. Currently these are as follows

- Release of Locality grant amounting to £2,066 to match related expenditure in 2014/15 (£700 in cash already having been received)
- Release of reserves to match excess election costs – £4,350

Release to match 'one' off expenditure items of a project nature

- Independent Staffing Review – £960
- Locum clerk's work

### **Earmarked Reserve**

The Council have indicated that they wish to see an earmarked reserve for Maintenance /Caretaker costs established and this should be based on the accumulated underspend on this budget line for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Andy Matthews

## Portland Town Council - Financial Report, 14.1.15

	Budget 2014/15	Expend. 2013/14	Expend. to 31.12.14	Projected 2014/15	Paid / Rec'd to Date (%)
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Salaries	23,287	23,112	17,619	23,000	75.66
Advertising	400	449	283	380	70.75
Audit	805	521	1,234	1,500	153.29
Civic Expenditure	1,541	1,603	606	810	39.33
Computer Equipment	0	0	636	640	-
Computer Software	50	62	0	50	0.00
IT Support	260	200	130	180	50.00
Contingency	1,241	0	0	0	0.00
Elections	1,500	738	5,850	5,850	390.00
Furniture & Equipment	378	376	480	640	126.98
Honorarium	100	100	100	100	100.00
Insurance	1,300	1,287	1,298	1,300	99.85
Mayoral Allowance	700	700	700	700	100.00
Miscellaneous	0	144	0	50	-
Postage	600	822	562	750	93.67
Publications	0	116	18	20	-
Stationery	600	689	553	740	92.17
Subscriptions	1,400	1,676	1,433	1,440	102.36
Telephone / Internet	600	632	462	620	77.00
Training / Conferences	100	105	95	130	95.00
Travelling & Subsistence	100	110	42	60	42.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>34,962</b>	<b>33,442</b>	<b>32,101</b>	<b>38,960</b>	<b>91.82</b>
Gifts and Donations	210	50	50	50	23.81
Grants	3,000	1,994	0	1,000	0.00
Island Caretaker	15,000	7,915	3,884	3,900	25.89
Neighbourhood Plan Projects	5,500	4,234	4,627	5,500	84.13
	0	0	980	980	-
Town Crier	50	35	35	40	70.00
Website	1,500	1,051	1,200	1,200	80.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>25,260</b>	<b>15,279</b>	<b>10,776</b>	<b>12,670</b>	<b>42.66</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60,222</b>	<b>48,721</b>	<b>42,877</b>	<b>51,630</b>	<b>71.20</b>
<b>INCOME</b>					
Precept	50,222	47,910	50,222	50,222	100.00
Discount Grant	4,000	4,726	4,051	4,051	101.28
Fair	3,000	750	2,000	2,000	66.67
Interest	500	644	224	230	44.80
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	2,500	6,300	700	2,500	28.00
Other	0	46	-46	-46	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60,222</b>	<b>60,376</b>	<b>57,151</b>	<b>58,957</b>	<b>94.90</b>
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT (-) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,655</b>	<b>14,274</b>	<b>7,327</b>	

## Island Caretaker

Expend. to  
31.1.15

### EXPENDITURE

Contractor Payments	3,590
Building Materials	92
Equipment	22
Skip Hire	180
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,884</b>

## Neighbourhood Plan

Expend. to  
31.1.15

### EXPENDITURE

Consultant's Fee	2,800
Staff Overtime	290
Advertising	692
Computer Software	260
Printing	104
Stationery	49
Website	500
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£4,695</b>

## **Possible Council Accommodation**

The Mayor and Clerk, together with a Borough property officer, visited a vacant shop property in the centre of Easton. It consisted of one large room, partly subdivided into a retail area and a private area. The latter had a sink unit with a few kitchen units. There was no radiator heating and toilet facilities were separate, a few yards away from the shop and shared with neighbouring shopkeepers.

The possibility of adding adjoining shop units was suggested, although we were unable to view these internally. They contained a large disabled wc, but the rest were retail units with large windows to the public side affording little or no privacy. There is no dedicated parking area available. The nearest parking spaces are those intended for shoppers with parking permitted for one hour only.

Two other properties were considered from the outside only. One was a house in Easton, apparently with a large internal space, not obvious from its frontage. The other was police accommodation at Osprey Quay soon to be vacated. The property officer will try to arrange viewing of both buildings.

## **Liaison Meeting with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council**

Cllrs Byatt and Huckle, the Chief Executive and a Service Director represented the Borough, Cllrs. Hughes, Wild and Matthews with the Clerk represented the Town Council. The Chief Executive of DAPTC was also present. We understand West Dorset and the Borough are holding a number of such meetings with their respective town councils.

In an unscheduled prelude the Borough indicated their support for the County's refuse / recycling facility on Portland to remain open.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Borough's perspective. His points included:-

- Borough has received latest financial settlement details from Government.
- Changing situation at Borough in common with councils nationally.
- Finance is their first corporate priority. This includes their Town Centre plan and updating of their strategic plan.
- They have held talks with Dorset, particularly concerning the "Portland corridor" (Dorchester – Portland).
- They have also held conversations with the business community.

The Chief Executive also talked about the Tri-Council Partnership. Points included:-

- Collaboration agreement to be agreed this month.
- Financial support from the Government for the proposal.
- Matt Prosser to become Joint Chief Executive from 1<sup>st</sup> March.
- Senior management team to be appointed in April.
- Mulberry Centre to house residual staff in Weymouth.
- Their attitude to perishing Weymouth as one remedy for their financial difficulties? Unsurprisingly non-committal.
- Possibility of skyping for public to contact members and officers? "Not there yet."

The Service Director gave an update on the Borough's current service review programme.

- All services reviewed next year will have a common programme, starting in June with stakeholder participation, followed by public consultation.
- Number of savings achieved this year and "transformations." More savings still required.
- Development management will involve town councils.
- Portland parks and gardens unlikely to transfer to Crown Estate. Parks and open spaces across Portland require large element of expenditure. Suggested solution may well involve Weymouth.
- Osprey Leisure Centre may also be offered. Expense of Weymouth pool seen as a problem.
- So too public conveniences. Substantial budget involved.

- Review of CCTV taking place. System covers all of Dorset. Borough looking for near-zero cost. Includes traffic element.

The Borough considers that “quantums” of services could be offered to the Town Council.

Office accommodation was touched on. It seems clear that the Borough would like us to vacate the Offices.

Cllr. Byatt suggested the possibility of a joint meeting with the County Council. We were asked to speak to our County Councillors to help arrange this after May.

A further meeting with the Borough was proposed for early June.

## Computer System Back-Up

The current back-up system was set up in 2010 by the Borough's computer manager towards the end of their informal maintenance agreement with the Council. It involves copying the data files, chiefly in Word and Excel, and Quickbooks data file held on our main desktop computer to a set of flash drives, one for each day of our working week. The Clerk takes them out of the office each evening for security.

The procedure was necessarily interrupted when we dispensed with our old main desktop last year and bought a new one. Quite naturally questions were raised about how we should back up once the new pc was operative. The installation of the new machine by our computer support company included restoration of the flash drive back-up system and I was told by the engineer present that it was perfectly acceptable approach to follow.

This situation could have continued quite happily when circumstances sent us in a different direction. A phone call about a printer problem resulted in another member of the support team casting doubt on the flash drive system. When I made a quick check on one of the flash drives' contents it showed only two folders saved, both bearing 2010 dates. A second flash drive showed a near-identical result. I therefore concluded, erroneously as it happens, that we had gone four years without the memory sticks actually recording the back-up. When our own Communications Co-ordinator came into the office a few days ago I told him this. Broadly the two alternatives to the present system would seem to be saving our back-ups to the Cloud or to an external hard drive, both of us preferring the latter option.

A support engineer came later that day. What he found was that the flash drives had in fact done their job and within the 2010 folders were all the intended files up to the present. However he expressed some misgivings about the memory sticks. Indeed the USB ends on a couple have become unintentionally "retractable" with the passage of time, though still usable with a little attention. I therefore asked him to proceed with installing a new back-up system to a hard drive. This has the additional benefit of recording the files held separately on each of our three computers. It means that when they are operational each pc has now to be backed up instead of just one. However we are advised that one weekly back-up of the three is sufficient rather than the daily back-ups performed previously.

Sharp-minded members will have grasped that the new hard drive we have acquired, cost approximately £60, will, like the new laser printer before it, have to be paid out of the computer equipment budget, set at zero this year. Retrospective approval for this purchase is therefore sought with, I hope, acceptance of the change in back-up procedure.