

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices
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27th July 2015

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend an **ADDITIONAL MEETING** of **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**, to be held in the **EASTON METHODIST CHURCH HALL, EASTON, PORTLAND**, on **MONDAY, 3RD AUGUST 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. Appointment of Chairman of Council**
- 3. Apologies for Absence**
- 4. Declarations of Interest** – to receive from Councillors or Officers any declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests regarding matters to be considered at this meeting, together with a statement of the nature of those interests
- 5. Public Participation** – to hear and consider comments and questions from members of the public for up to three minutes each for each speaker. These should refer to agenda items only.
- 6. Council Offices** – to decide whether to proceed with acquiring the building (see attached)
- 7. Exclusion of Press and 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.”
- 8. Date of Next Meeting**
The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 19th August 2015, starting at 7.00 pm.

COUNCIL OFFICES

This item is brought for Council's consideration because the Borough's Management Committee meets on Tuesday, 4th August and the Offices are featured on the agenda. The Borough therefore requires some indication of the Town Council's view.

To date we have received details of the Borough's budget and costs for the Offices (appended) and draft heads of terms for the sale of the Offices to the Town Council (confidential appendix).

It could well be argued that the Offices, in the popular phrase, are not fit for purpose. They have been much neglected from a building maintenance point of view since 1974 and seem to have received only the minimum attention and expense necessary. Only part of the building currently has heating and lighting. Damp, though partially arrested, shows its presence throughout. The building requires redecoration inside and outside. Crucially disabled access is not up to modern standards, which has caused the Council Chamber to cease being used for meetings. One could therefore say there is a case either for the Borough to bring the building back to a reasonable standard of maintenance and usefulness or it providing money for the Town Council to do so.

At this point it seems worth noting that when all the assets of Portland Urban District Council were passed to the Borough in 1974 they apparently included liquid assets amounting to £40,000. According to the website Measuring Worth.com this equates in today's terms to something between £346,300 (historic opportunity cost) and £812,600 (economic cost).

Members will be aware that there is no financial provision in this year's budget for the upkeep of the Offices. Additionally of course Council has already decided to increase the salaries of the staff, which this year will have to be funded from reserves. Potentially therefore the Council could be looking to increase its precept next year to finance both the salary rises and the cost of the Offices without yet being able to offer residents any more of the standard parish council services.

It may be possible to raise some income from other organisations making use of the Offices and indeed there have already been some expressions of interest. However those remain to be converted into practical commitments.

While the Borough for some years has demonstrated its intention to sell the Offices for development it lately has shown a willingness to pass them to the Town. While it would not immediately receive the return it might expect from a commercial sale it would over the years save the expense of financing its present agreement to support the Town Council.

Borough representatives have also shown recently a willingness to transfer some parish council powers to the Town, which seems to have been welcomed by Town Councillors. However no guarantees have been made and if these do not materialise the Town could be left in a potentially undesirable situation.

Therefore one concludes that the acquisition of the Offices cannot be considered in isolation from the responsibilities the Council might wish to take on. The Borough could demonstrate its good intentions by giving priority to the transfer of services before a deal is reached over the Offices.

Members are recommended to welcome the purchase of the Offices without making a binding agreement and to press ahead with examining the wider strategy the Council wishes to pursue in the future. This debate may need to be assisted by outside sources, as has already been mooted, but should take place sooner rather than later while the political climate remains favourable. Council has already indicated October as a likely date to do so.

Code Level Enquiry

Name ad-hoc

Desc

Date 29/06/2015 09:12:15

Dimension 1 Cost Centre

Dimension 2 Detail Code

Dimension 1 Code b1598

Portland Council Offices

Current Budget

BF

P13 - Closedown 2014/15

2014/15
Current Year 2016 Period 3

Code	Description	Budget	Actual	Commitment	Variance	Variance PC
	Totals	45,082	43,555.25	0.00	1,526.75	
0104	Portland Caretaker Cleaner	3,750	2,454.63	0.00	1,295.37	34.54
0801	Building Planned Maintenance	3,030	909.18	0.00	2,120.82	69.99
0802	Building Response Maintenance	1,590	902.09	0.00	687.91	43.26
0820	E and M Planned Maintenance	828	952.70	0.00	-124.70	-15.06
0821	E and M Response Maintenance	1,292	910.68	0.00	381.32	29.51
1001	Electricity	2,205	2,554.22	0.00	-349.22	-15.83
1002	Gas	1,930	1,645.94	0.00	284.06	14.71
1200	Rates	9,892	9,867.45	0.00	24.55	0.24
1301	Metered Water	347	320.00	0.00	27.00	7.78
1500	Cleaning	152	2,196.09	0.00	-2,044.09	-1,344.79
1502	Bulk / Commercial Waste	0	785.65	0.00	-785.65	0
4200	Insurance	1,091	1,085.92	0.00	5.08	0.46
4709	Accountancy & Performance Recharge	271	269.00	0.00	2.00	0.73
4719	Legal Services Recharge	254	256.00	0.00	-2.00	-0.78
4721	Property Services Recharge	6,554	6,553.00	0.00	1.00	0.01
4748	Exchequer Recharge	229	226.00	0.00	3.00	1.31
7301	Depreciation	12,667	12,666.70	0.00	0.30	0.00
9402	Other Rents	-1,000	-1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00