

## **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2010, COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D. Thurston (Chair), L. Ames, Mrs J. Collinge, R. Denton-White, M. Gosling, R. Hughes, T. Munro, I. Munro-Price, R. Paisley and Mrs S. West.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Barry Morfett (Asst. Town Clerk), Rev. Chris Briggs (Mayor's Chaplain) and Mr Stuart Cave.

#### **1817 – PRAYERS**

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

#### **1818 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs S. Bradley, N. Charlton, G. Duncan and Mrs E. Munro-Price, and Sgt Neil Wood (Dorset Police.)

#### **1819 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **1820 – OPEN FORUM**

##### **a) Police Question Time**

A member expressed his disappointment that the Police were not represented at the meeting. An appropriately worded letter would be sent to them.

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

There were no members of the public wishing to address the meeting.

#### **1821 – MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010 AND THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

The minutes of the meetings were formally agreed and signed as a correct record.

#### **1822 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING**

A member speaking on minute 1802(a) remarked that it appeared that Finance & Projects Committee had asked for a typed copy of the latest accounts from the Boscawen Lifesaving & Rescue Club, although the Council had not asked for them to be typed. He added further that there was no reference to Portland United Youth Football Club producing their accounts. The Mayor agreed to investigate. Another member expressed the view that the requirements for grants in terms of documentation could perhaps be clearer. The application form would be revised, if necessary.

A member then queried the total cost of producing the Town Crier's uniform. It was later clarified that Mrs Cave was to be paid £200 for making the uniform, with materials costing up to £450.

Speaking on minute 1804 a member expressed his view that the minute was ambiguous and as a result possibly inaccurate. He asked why certain items had come to Council for approval despite the fact that the Finance & Projects Committee had delegated authority to agree them viz grants.

Other members disagreed with the criticism of the minute writing and accused the member concerned of “nit-picking” for the sake of it.

A member queried the lack of progress on the provision of administrative accommodation (Minute 1806). The Asst. Town Clerk replied that a report was awaited from a Borough officer who, unfortunately, was on long term sick leave. It was generally agreed that in the absence of a report confirming the suitability of the room in health and safety terms, it should not be used for any purposes.

The Deputy Mayor agreed to telephone the Borough to arrange for an inspection of the room by an Environmental Health official.

The Asst. Town Clerk confirmed that as far as he was aware staff were complying with the instruction to work no more than their contracted hours. He added that he was certainly following this edict.

The Asst. Town Clerk declared his interest in the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> October and left the meeting whilst a discussion took place.

On his return the Asst. Town Clerk advised that arrangements for advertising the vacancy were to be made on 18<sup>th</sup> November, and he confirmed also that it would be advertised extensively, yet inexpensively. In addition to the media quoted in Minutes 1815(c) the use of the dorsetforyou website would be pursued and the cost of utilising News and Views would be investigated.

### **1823 – TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reminded Council that the joint Civic Carol Service would be taking place on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> December at Easton Methodist Church at 6.30pm. Indications were that there would be a very good attendance and the Mayor hoped that as many Town Councillors and their families as possible would be attending.

### **1824– WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR**

There were no written questions.

### **1825 – 2012, MARINE AND ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP, 6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

#### **Minute 733 – Provision of Public Conveniences on the Island**

A member was critical of the report referred to in this minute not being attached to the agenda. It was pointed out that the report had been sent to all Councillors with the agenda for the 2012, Marine & Environment Partnership meeting in early October, and that they had doubtless read it at that time.

**RESOLVED** – that the report and any necessary addenda be passed to the Borough Council for comment with a request for details of any Borough plans to close further sites.

**1826 – PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

**Minute 1789(b) – Future Agenda Procedure**

Consideration was given to the Committee's recommendation concerning agenda items. A member expressed his concern that the absence of "Information Items" would preclude the raising and consideration of matters that arose between the issue of the agenda and the meeting itself.

A motion proposing acceptance of the resolution was not seconded and the recommendation therefore "fell."

**1827 – FINANCE AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE, 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

**a) Minute 1019(a) para 1 – Payments for Authorisation**

**RESOLVED** – that the sum of £50 be paid to the Royal British Legion.

**b) Minute 1019(a) para 2 – Payments for Authorisation**

The Asst. Town Clerk read extracts from a letter from the Network Traffic Manager of Dorset County Council in which the Town Council was asked to pay £300 for what the Manager described as a roadside sign, in the absence of payment the County Council would, unfortunately, remove the sign.

A member stated that he had received an assurance from the County that the sign would not be taken down. He added that the Town Council had agreed previously to pay for having its crest/logo on the sign, he thought £50 had been agreed. The member concerned had discussed this issue with the Network Traffic Manager and his Director and he felt sure an offer of £50 would be accepted.

**RESOLVED** – that an offer of £50 be made to the County Council to cover the cost of having the Town Council's crest/logo on the new sign, this having been agreed previously with the County's former agents, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.

**c) Minute 1019(a) para 3– Payments for Authorisation**

**RESOLVED** – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 2452 – 2454 and 2458 - 2470) in the revised sum of £2,307.41 including VAT be authorised for payment.

**d) Minute 1019(b) para 1 – 2010/2011 Financial Report to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

**RESOLVED** – that having discussed in depth the implications and operation of the scheme, the Lengthsman Working Party report its findings direct to the Council.

**e) Minute 1019(b) para 3 – 2010/11 Financial Report to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

**RESOLVED** – that the report be accepted.

**f) Minute 1021 para 1 – Council Grants 2010/11**

**RESOLVED** – that the Boscawen Lifesaving & Rescue Club be asked to provide a typed copy of their audited accounts.

**g) Minute 10 para 3 – Council Grants 2010/11**

**RESOLVED** – that Portland United Youth Football Club be awarded a grant of £250.

**h) Minute 1022 – Fairfield Centre**

**RESOLVED** – that a letter be sent to the Partnership advising them to apply for a grant next year through the Council's standard procedure.

**i) Minute 1023 – Town Crier Uniform**

**RESOLVED** – that the Working Group's suggestions for the colours of the uniform, a cloak and the anticipated ceiling cost of £450 for the uniform be accepted.

**j) to s) Minute 1024 – Finance & Projects Committee Terms of Reference, Paragraph 1**

Council discussed at some length a series of recommendations. A member was critical of the "cribbing" from the 2004 Terms of Reference, and raised a number of other concerns on the detail. Members were reminded that the majority of them had attended the meeting of the Finance & Projects Committee when this matter had been discussed last, and at that meeting there had been a lengthy debate on all the issues involved. At the end of the debate the Committee had agreed recommendations now presented to Council.

**RESOLVED** – that the revised Terms of Reference as detailed in the agenda be approved and implemented forthwith.

**t) Minute 1025(a) – Franking Machine**

**RESOLVED** – that no action be taken.

**u) Minute 1025(b) – Internet Account**

**RESOLVED** – that no action be taken for the time being.

**v) Minute 1029 – Portland Flag**

Discussion took place on the opportunity that had arisen for the Council to facilitate the purchase of flags by members of the public, local organisations and companies.

**RESOLVED** – that subject to clarification from the Flag Institute on the question of exclusivity, and having identified an available power to permit Council involvement, the Town Council make arrangements for facilitating the purchase of copies of the flag on the basis of a prior ordering and payment procedure.

**w) Minute 1030 – 900 Years Tapestries**

**RESOLVED** – that no action be taken for the time being to hang the recently framed tapestries at the Council offices.

**x) Minute 1031 – Red Telephone Boxes**

**RESOLVED** – that no action be taken in response to the BT e-mail about a telephone box on Grove Road.

## **1828 – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **a) Payments for Authorisation**

A member was critical of receiving an envelope from the Council bearing a first class stamp. The member failed to respond to the comment of the Asst. Town Clerk that it was a pity that the member concerned had failed to raise the matter with staff as the envelope concerned had been sent out some time ago. The Mayor assured Council that first class stamps would not be used for Councillors' envelopes in future.

**RESOLVED** – that the schedule of invoiced (cheque refs. 2471 – 2481) in the sum of £2,856.02 including VAT be authorised for payment.

### **b) 2010/11 Financial Report to 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

In response to members' queries the Asst. Town Clerk explained that hopefully, and subject to the views of the Lengthsman Working Party and Council, the £10,000 shown as income from the County would be spent on the scheme in the current financial year.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be accepted.

### **c) External Auditor's Report on Annual Return, 2009/10**

Consideration was given to this report and the comments thereon of the Town Clerk. Discussion took place on the nature of the risk assessment being undertaken by Cllr. Hughes.

**RESOLVED** – that the report and responses thereto be noted.

### **d) Toshiba**

This company had supplied the Town Council's photocopier and had requested future payments for copies being made by Direct Debit. The implications were discussed.

**RESOLVED** – that an appropriate Direct Debit be set up forthwith.

## **1829 – TOWN CRIER**

Consideration was given to the amendments made to the Terms of Reference at the previous Council meeting in the light of advice concerning the legality of the delegation arrangements proposed. A member queried the interpretation of that advice, but did not have the support of a majority.

**RESOLVED** – that the following revised elements of the Terms of Reference be approved:-

“3(a) The Town Crier is free to take on commercial work as a Town Crier at a rate to be set by the Crier in negotiation with the organisation concerned. This commercial work is **only** to promote businesses on Portland and activities concerning the Island.

[*New paragraph*] 3(c). The Town Crier shall not undertake any work or display any behaviour that the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would consider brings the Council into disrepute or makes it subject to ridicule.

4. The prior approval of the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor is required for all activities for other organisations which are to be restricted to those of a non-political and non-contentious nature.

5. The Crier may on occasion be requested to participate in other events that may be thought appropriate at the discretion of the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on a very occasional basis.”

### **1830 – PORTLAND FAIR**

Members reviewed the arrangements for the future negotiations between the Town Council and the Fair operators. The Mayor remarked that the recent event had been successful.

**RESOLVED** – (a) that as far as possible all issues concerning the operation of the Fair on the Island be brought to Council for decision including guidelines for negotiations, (b) that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be delegated authority to pursue the Council’s decisions and guidelines in the course of negotiations with the Fair operators.

### **1831 – TOWN LENGTHSMAN**

Members noted that the officers had been undertaking further research in order to assemble a comprehensive report for consideration by the Working Party. It had become apparent that an electric vehicle as envisaged might no longer be suitable, for reasons of performance and cost. The officers were therefore working on an alternative diesel driven vehicle, probably pre-owned and, in order that its purchase was not delayed, had sought authority to seek a single tender for the supply of the vehicle and its secure garaging.

A member expressed his concern that a single tender would not provide opportunities for comparability of price, but the Asst. Town Clerk pointed out that it was intended to approach a single supplier who would be asked to submit prices for a range of vehicles.

**RESOLVED** – (a) that in accordance with Standing Order 72 and in order not to delay the introduction of the lengthsman scheme, Standing Order 69(a) and Financial Regulation 11(b) be suspended and the officers be authorised to approach a single supplier for quotations for the supply of a suitable vehicle, and its secure garaging, (b) that the officers investigate and report to the Working Party on opportunities for, and likely cost of leasing a vehicle.

### **1832 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS**

Cllr. Denton-White had recently attended the AGM of DAPTC and he provided members with a brief summary of the major topics and issues discussed as follows:-

- (i) There had been an interesting presentation for the newly appointed Chief Executive of the Weymouth & Portland Borough Council/West Dorset District Council Partnership.
- (ii) The implications locally of the “Big Society” Government initiative and the possibility of additional powers for local councils.
- (iii) Two major conference motions, one expressing concern at the cost and effectiveness of the external audit process, and the other relating to powers to claim for compensation against contractors/companies whose vehicles damaged highways.

With regard to the latter a member expressed the view that contractors and companies were already paying for maintenance through the HGV licences they had to acquire.

Cllr. Denton-White was asked whether he had voted on the motions, but he replied that the Council would have to devote time to consider the roles and responsibilities of all of its representatives on outside bodies to ensure that the views of the Town Council could be expressed externally. He added that in these circumstances he would always vote as mandated.

**1832 – WEST WEARES**

Consideration was given to the Mayor’s suggestion that ownership and responsibility for the upkeep of Chiswell Earthworks should be passed to Chiswell Community Trust. It was recognised that the Town Council had spent nothing on the upkeep over the years, but a member contended that the Earthworks should be owned and maintained by the Town Council. Another member stated that he had documents which set-out the Town Council’s responsibilities and it was,

**RESOLVED** – that consideration be deferred for the Mayor to carry out further investigations with the benefit of examining the documents referred to above.

**1833 – IT SUPPORT**

Consideration was given to a report on the current arrangements with the Borough Council for IT Support. As a result of the Council’s reluctance to pay the annual maintenance fee, and a request for invoicing of the work not being well received, the Borough had withdrawn its interest in providing future support.

**RESOLVED** – that the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor be authorised to seek tenders for IT Support from suitably experienced local firms, and that an appropriate advertisement be placed in News and Views.

**1834 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting of the Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011 commencing at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 9.42pm.

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