

## **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2013**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mrs J Collinge (Chair), T. Munro and R Wild, together with Mr Andrew Matthews (Portland Community Partnership)

**NON-MEMBERS:** Councillor R. Hughes

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Barry Morfett (acting Clerk), and Jan Farnan and Jane Nicklen (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), together with four members of the public

#### **44 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors L. Ames, R. Denton-White and Mrs S. West, together with Mike Kelly (Portland Community Partnership).

#### **45 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **46 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2013**

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

#### **47 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Speaking on Minute 42, Cllr. Munro asked whether revised press releases had been issued as he had no knowledge of them. Mr Matthews replied that assistance had been received from the Borough Council's Press Office, but in view of the timescale involved the releases had only been used by the Dorset Echo and Wessex FM. He advised Cllr. Munro where the information could be found.

#### **48 – OPEN FORUM**

Members of the public who attended spoke of their views on the consultation events. They felt that they had been well organised and that a good volume of comments had been received in spite of, perhaps, disappointing attendances. Mr Matthews responded that whilst it would have been nice to have seen more residents, the inclement January weather doubtless affected attendances. The Chair added that those who had visited had shown considerable interest as evidenced by the volume of comments on the various themes.

Cllr. Munro once again commented that he had not seen or heard of the press releases and that there seemed to be a lack of pre-consultation information. Mr Matthews reminded him of the arrangements made.

#### **49 – REGISTRATION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Consideration was given to an e-mail from the Borough's Head of Spatial Policy and Implementation regarding the designation of Portland Port and the possible knock-on effect for the Plan, and for any referenda.

During the course of a lengthy debate a number of concerns and issues were raised, including:-

The Port appeared willing to be considered as part of a Business Neighbourhood Area.

The Port would wish to be involved in a number of issues in Underhill and was a “major player” in recreational tourism on the Island.

Many of the businesses on the Island could benefit from the enactment of some of the suggestions received from the public at the recent consultation events.

The Borough Council would need to agree the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and would handle the referenda.

As much of the groundwork had already been completed, maps prepared etc, costs of future consultation should not increase unduly. In any event funding was from Central Government.

The Neighbourhood Plan could be perceived as weak if it did not include a Business Neighbourhood Plan.

Businesses would be engaged in the process in any event and there was a need to identify and contact them.

Accepting its responsibilities for an extensive area of the harbour, there was a need to define accurately the area covered by Portland Port.

Recognising that there would need to be two referenda, one for residents and one for businesses, the Working Group **RESOLVED** – to inform the Borough immediately that the whole of Portland should be designated a Business Neighbourhood Plan Area.

## **50 – FEEDBACK FROM INITIAL CONSULTATION**

The Chair congratulated and thanked those involved in organising and attending the two recent events. Mr Matthews added his thanks to the Weymouth & Portland Young Organisers for their work. The Working Party noted the significant number of comments received, but Cllr. Munro expressed a view that not all fitted with what the Council was trying to do in terms of Neighbourhood Planning.

Mr Matthews felt that those who had expressed a wish to be involved in the process in the future could be used in the theme by theme analysis that would be necessary.

Jane Nicklen reminded the Working Group that the two events needed to be recognised as very much first stage and that far more extensive consultation would be required in the future if the Plan was to pass inspection. One way would be to address the comments by theming and involving community groups. It was a long, slow and steady process. There needed to be a mechanism for the issues identified to be addressed by the Working Group and then by the Council.

In noting that Borough Council staff could assist by providing their expertise, the Working Group **RESOLVED** – that the best approach would be to consult further on a theme by theme basis.

A member of the public added that the Council should work with those who had submitted comments or who had volunteered their services, they should not be disempowered.

## 51 – NEXT STAGE OF CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report from Mr Matthews detailing the wide range of processes and events that would need to be adopted for future consultation. He added that there was also a need to advise those who had volunteered their services in order that they could be kept aware of what was happening and become involved.

Mr Matthews continued by explaining that where appropriate the issues could be addressed either on a theme or an area basis, or both. Realistic timescales needed to be set and the involvement of Borough officers on the theme-based comments would be valuable. The meeting then discussed the questionnaire devised by Cllr. Barton and **RESOLVED** – that in order to achieve more constructive and informative comments, it required some revision. It was further **RESOLVED** – that Cllr. Munro should be responsible for discussing the matter further with Cllr. Barton, and for reporting back thereon to the next meeting of the Working Group.

The possibility of distributing the revised version via the Free Portland News was favoured.

## 52 – COMMUNICATION WITH INTERESTED PARTIES

The Town Clerk had the information / contact details for those who had expressed an interest in becoming involved in the process. It was **RESOLVED** – that the Clerk should write to them advising of the future consultation proposals i.e. the data being addressed by themes and areas, and keeping them informed of progress.

## 53 – TRAINING

It was noted that Planning Aid only had funding until the end of March 2013 and it was **RESOLVED** – that the Town Clerk, in consultation with Mr Matthews, should contact them to identify a suitable date, in an accessible venue, for a “Preparation Workshop”. The Workshop would be an introduction to, and explanation of the processes involved in Neighbourhood Planning and tailored to address the needs of the Island. In accepting that there was an urgent need to engage more people and spread the workload the Working Group **RESOLVED** – that those who had volunteered their services should be invited to the Workshop, which could possibly be held on a Saturday if that would add to the attendees.

It was **RESOLVED** – that Mr Matthews would use a resume’ of the Group’s decisions as the basis for a press release.

## 54 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Working Group will take place on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 8.47 pm.

Signed: ..... (Chair) Date: .....