

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9TH JANUARY 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs J Collinge (Chair), L. Ames, T. Munro, Mrs S. West and R Wild, together with Mr Michael Kelly and Mr Andrew Matthews (Portland Community Partnership)

NON-MEMBERS: Councillors Mrs R. Barton and Mrs S. Bradley

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

32 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

33 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

34 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2012

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

35 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Cllr. Munro expressed his bemusement as to how a Sub-Group could be formed and questioned its necessity. He added that he had no idea of the interests of the Sub-Group members, and that as only one Councillor was a member it lacked accountability.

A number of the Working Group members who had been present at the meeting when the Sub-Group had been established explained that it had been considered necessary in order that those with sufficient “time and energy” could progress the various tasks necessary to ensure that all appropriate action could be taken within the tight timescale imposed for the initial consultation process. Cllr. Munro’s concerns were noted.

36 – OPEN FORUM

There were no questions or comments from the public. Cllr. Wild stated that he was impressed with the amount of work done by the Sub-Group.

37 – DEPUTY CHAIR

In view of the Chair’s concerns about her availability to attend all future meetings it was **RECOMMENDED** – that Cllr. Wild be appointed Deputy Chair.

38 – REGISTRATION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Consultation on the Plan area had finished in December and just one objection had been received from Portland Port, asking to be excluded from the area, and citing a

number of reasons for its objection. These included the special nature of its operation and not wanting another layer of bureaucracy.

Whilst noting that it could be difficult if Portland Port was not a willing partner, the Group discussed briefly the implications for the use of the water, foreshore and breakwaters.

Messrs. Kelly and Matthews had met recently with Sandy Wilson of Portland Port and explained that the Port's operation was very sensitive, it also operated under a wide variety of regulation. It was felt that the exclusion of the Port could damage the credibility of the Plan, accepting that it would have little influence in the area. The matter would be considered by the Borough Council in March.

39 – COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Working Group minutes and agenda were now available online.

40 – PLANNING AID SEMINAR

This recent seminar, aimed at providing support to Neighbourhood Planning Groups, had been attended by Cllr. Ames and Mr Matthews. The two attendees drew particular attention to the following:-

A Neighbourhood Plan application had been refused recently as there had been no clear evidence to back up the level / extent of consultation which had led to the recommendations.

There needed to be a strong element of contingency planning and forward thinking.

The Council needed to be clear and transparent with its evidence trail.

It was crucial to ensure that nobody was left out during the consultation process and that constant involvement was maintained with all interested parties.

Mr Matthews distributed notes from the seminar which supplemented the above guidance. Cllr. Munro stressed that the presentation during the consultation should be about process and that if that was not understood there would be a lack of response. Cllr. Barton added that there was a need to ensure that local people were fully aware that their views would make a difference.

41 – INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS

Jane Nicklen reminded the meeting that arrangements had been made for two initial events, on 14th and 21st January, and that these should be seen as a start to the process to stimulate interest with local residents and businesses. Whilst outside influences might mean that attendances might not be large, the events were not the only means of consultation.

The events had been advertised widely on the Island by means of posters, press releases and specific targeting of community groups to whom invitations had been sent. The established communications strategy would need to be widened when the

Plan was considered ultimately. The initial events had been designed as a drop-in session and the importance of explaining the process was acknowledged – this would be the subject of a slideshow which would run continuously and which would be available in hard copy if requested.

The Working Group proceeded to consider some of the paperwork that would be available at the events and made some amendments to the wording. Any further amendments should be advised to Jane Nicklen by lunchtime on 11th January.

Particular consideration was then given to the six prompt cards that would be available and once again a few amendments were made. Cllr. Munro expressed his concerns that the views of young people, who would be unable to vote at any referendum, were known.

Jane Nicklen explained how the views of attendees were to be obtained and added that there was no reason why young people could not be polled on the Plan's content, school workshops were also a possibility. At this stage it was not necessary to specifically identify the under 18's on the comment cards.

42 – PUBLICITY THROUGH THE FREE PORTLAND NEWS

In noting that the £5,000 budget for the Plan had yet to be approved, the Group was pleased to learn that Jane Nicklen had underwritten expenditure so far in her budget and that Borough officer time was therefore “free” to the Town Council.

The Group recognised the effectiveness of press releases and the involvement of all local media. Mr Matthews would revise and re-issue via the Borough's Press Team the last release used by Free Portland News. The revised version would include positive and encouraging quotes from the Chair. The Town Clerk would be asked to e-mail all Town Councillors encouraging them to attend either or both of the initial consultation events. Cllr. Barton referred to a three-page questionnaire intended for use during the consultation process and it was agreed that the content should be discussed at the next meeting.

43 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Working Group will take place on Wednesday, 13th February 2013 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 8.32 pm.

Signed: (Chair) Date: