

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH JULY 2015
AT THE PETER TRIM HALL, ST. GEORGE'S CENTRE, REFORNE

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hughes (Chairman), Ms J. Atwell, Miss A. Barnicoat, G. Chadwick, Mrs S. Cocking, J. Draper, C. Flack, C. Gover, Ms S. Lees, Mrs S. Reynolds, D. Thurston and Mrs S. West

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Rev James Menzies (Mayor's Chaplain), Cllrs. Paul Kimber (Dorset County Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), PS Christine Gould (Dorset Police) and Mr Andy Matthews (Portland Community Partnership and Neighbourhood Plan Working Group), together with eleven members of the public.

2902 – PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

2903 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs. D. Symes. R. Wild and Penny McCartney (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council).

2904 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2905 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

From the chair Cllr. Hughes proposed that Agenda Item 16 – Letter Concerning Former Member of the Council be taken with the exclusion of the press and public. This was **RESOLVED**. (For: 12 votes, Against: 0 votes and Abstentions: 0 votes)

2906 – OPEN FORUM

a) Police Question Time

Sgt. Gould introduced herself, deputising for Sgt. Yeoman, and apologised that she had no police statistics with her. She said that the section had now moved into their new offices on the fire station site.

Cllr. West asked what times the police offices would be open to the public and what services would be available to the public.

Sgt. Gould said three officers would be based there, but ad hoc visits by the public were not encouraged. On the other hand appointments to speak to police officers could be arranged.

Cllr. Hughes praised the Police for their recent handling of an incident at Portland Bill.

Answering a question from the public Sgt. Gould said they were aware of a man seen defecating in Wakeham.

Cllr. Hughes also drew attention to a spate of graffiti incidents at various locations.

Cllrs. Wild and Chadwick mentioned a new initiative for people to report hate crimes.

Cllr. Lees reported cases of parking on the pavement and blocking access along Avalanche Road. This was duly noted.

b) Public Half-Hour

Mr Matthews reported that the public consultation on Underhill School the previous evening had drawn in about thirty-six people. As a result several different approaches had been made about using the building. The Community Partnership had established a good working link with the officer responsible at the County and had asked to be kept informed of all such sites on the Island.

There was a question from a member of the public about the possibility of the Council taking over ownership of its Offices. From the chair Cllr. Hughes said the upkeep of the Offices would need to be self-financing. The Council had also been asked by the Borough to produce a business plan.

c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. Kimber spoke about the possible closure of the local Minor Injuries Unit. He was advocating the extension of its service to seven days a week and a list had been drawn up giving eleven reasons to support this contention.

He also queried the withdrawal of the search and rescue helicopter, noting the increase in dangerous sports practised on the Island. Cllr. Kimber noted the events concerning Underhill School. He had requested the County to end the sale of Council buildings since the Government intention to make more use of the voluntary sector pointed the need for community buildings.

Asked by Cllr. Chadwick about Foylebank residential home, Cllr. Kimber said each resident would receive an assessment of their suitability. This practice had been adopted in three homes as part of a plan to introduce a fairer charging system, partly by the users and partly by the government.

Cllr. West reported that the housing application for Avalanche Road had been approved by a single vote. She said the government was planning to relax planning rules still further, which would make refusal more difficult.

Cllr. Chadwick asked how much attention the Borough's Planning Committee gave to the Town's recommendations. Cllr. West assured him it was the first thing they looked at.

2907 – MINUTES

a) Town Council Meeting, 17th June 2015

Cllr. Lees said she should have been included in the list of apologies. With this change the minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (7-0-5)

b) Additional Town Council Meeting, 24th June 2015

Cllr. West said her name had been omitted from the list of apologies. With this change the minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (8-0-4)

2908 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING

a) Town Council, 17th June 2015

i) Minute 2876(c), para 2 – Westcliff Grass Cutting

Cllr. Flack reported that he had contacted the Chief Executive of Bournemouth Christian Housing. One grass cut would be made pending the agreement on ownership of the land there. He and Cllr. Kimber will try to resolve this by the next Council meeting.

ii) Minute 2876 (c), para 5 – A-Boards Outside the New Inn

Cllr. West said she had met the folk at the New Inn, who had not realised causing an obstruction with the A-boards was illegal. A solution had been agreed.

b) Additional Town Council, 24th June 2015

There were no matters arising.

2909 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr. Wild said he was trying to organise a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of VJ Day, taking place on 15th August. Rev. James Menzies elaborated on this to say a peace stone had been carved as a reminder to be located at All Saints Church.

2910 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR

There were none.

2911 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments for Authorisation

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 3306 - 3319) in the sum of £4,300.03 including VAT be authorised for payment. (12-0-0)

b) 2015/16 Financial Report to 30th June 2015

The Clerk said that on further examination he thought the projected figure for salaries in the budget would be closer to £31 – 32,000 in view of the recently approved salary increases.

It was proposed by Cllr. West and **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted and an amended version brought back to Council. (12-0-0)

c) Internal Audit Report, 2014/15

Cllr. Chadwick advised that some of the issues raised in the two parts of the report would be discussed later in the meeting under Risk Assessment.

It was proposed by Cllr. West and **RESOLVED** – that part 1 of the report be accepted. (12-0-0) Likewise it was **RESOLVED** – that part 2 of the report be accepted. (12-0-0)

d) Investment of Council Funds

The Clerk explained that with a new undertaking from the Treasury to safeguard the cash assets of parish and town councils the need for financial advice provided within a local consortium had reduced and for smaller councils like Portland the benefit of advice for the fee requested by the consultant was not cost-effective.

Mr Matthews informed members about the possibility of the Council providing social funding, advising against it for the present. It was proposed by Cllr. Gover and **RESOLVED** – that £28,000 be invested with Lloyds in a fixed term account for about nine months at a rate close to those quoted recently. If that were not possible the Clerk should liaise with Cllr. Cocking who would seek alternative quotations. (12-0-0)

e) Budget & Precept, 2016/17

Members indicated that they favoured a longer process of budget formulation similar to the one last year. It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** – that the Finance Working Group undertakes some preparatory work and reports back to the Council in September. (11-0-1)

f) Financial Regulations

It was proposed by Cllr. Gover and **RESOLVED** – that the NALC model be accepted in total as a working draft and that members of the Finance Working Group advise on specific paragraphs where alternatives are presented.

2912 – STANDING ORDERS

Members thought that the Council's new version took account of the advice presented in the legal briefing and therefore it was sufficient simply to take note.

2913 – RISK ASSESSMENT

Members considered the higher risk items individually as presented in the agenda report.

a) Fly-Tipping

To be considered under Agenda Item 13 – Cheyne Weares.

b) Inadequate Insurance Cover

To be reviewed by the Finance Working Group, the Clerk to provide members with a copy of the current schedule. Cllr. Lees raised the question of whether volunteers were currently covered.

c) Inadequate Budgetary Provision

It was suggested there might be a need to treat the Offices and Cheyne Weares as separate budget heads. Finance Working Group to review.

d) Failure to Maintain Appropriate Signage

To be considered under Agenda Item 13.

e) Access to Buildings

RESOLVED – that this be reclassified as a low-low risk for a quarter. (12-0-0)

f) Failure to Comply with Employment Law

Currently being worked upon.

It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** – that the Finance Working Group carry out the 2015/16 risk assessment.

It was also agreed in this context that Mr Andy Matthews be co-opted to the Group.

2914 – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Mr Matthews discussed the invitation for quotations to assist in producing the final draft version of the Plan. Consultant A had proposed a full analysis. Consultant B's approach had a narrower focus, but subsequently the consultant had withdrawn. A response from a third source, the Borough Council, was still awaited.

Cllr. Draper, chairman of the Management Group, advised that the Group proposed to accept the quotation of Consultant A, but wished to review it first.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gover and **RESOLVED** – that the Plan Management Group be given delegated authority to engage a consultant. (11-0-1)

2915 – CHEYNE WEARES

Cllr. Lees detailed some of the current problems at the site: overgrown grass making some of the picnic tables inaccessible, the need for a financial allocation to enable the grass to be cut, fly-tipping, much of it over the cliff edge and therefore difficult to retrieve, the need for a skip and a check on insurance cover. Other Councillors noted further difficulties.

It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** – that budget provision of £5,000 be made for Cheyne Weares to be overseen by a Working Group of four members. (12-0-0)

It was agreed the Working Group should comprise Cllrs. Atwell, Chadwick, Gover and Lees.

2916 – ISLAND BUS SERVICE

Cllr. Reynolds put forward her proposals and suggested that businesses at Easton might be willing to help subsidise a new bus service.

Cllr. Lees supported the provision of new routes that would include the Grove and the Bill.

Mr Matthews suggested a possible conflict with existing services, which had a legal status.

It was proposed by Cllr. Reynolds that the Council addresses the need for an improved bus service on the Island.

Cllr. Atwell proposed an amendment adding the words, "and explores the possibilities of reaching areas not currently provided for." This was **CARRIED**. (9-2-1)

Cllr. Chadwick proposed a further amendment, “that the Council sets up a sub-committee, with Cllr. Reynolds as chairman, to pursue this.” This was **CARRIED**. (6-0-6)

RESOLVED – that the Council addresses the need for an improved bus service on the Island, explores the possibility of reaching areas not currently provided for and sets up a sub-committee, with Cllr. Reynolds as chairman, to pursue this. (10-0-2)

2917 – GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

Because of time constraints this item was deferred.

2918 – HUMAN RESOURCES / IT COMMITTEE MEETING, 7TH JULY 2015

a) Councillors’ Training

Members’ attention was drawn to the list of DAPTC courses available. The clerk was asked to check on the availability of the Monitoring Officer for code of conduct training in September.

b) Staff Resources

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 Item 17(b) by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

2919 – COUNCILLORS’ NEWS FROM THE WARDS

Cllr. Flack raised the subject of the Minor Injuries Unit, which has had to close at the weekend for lack of staff. He asked that the Council write to express its concern as representatives of the residents about the lack of consultation.

Cllr. West mentioned Verne Common, which has grassed areas badly in need of cutting. She is hoping to rectify the situation. She also referred to the properties at Vindelis Way (formerly Court). Residents have moved in and are very pleased with the new premises, though the outside lighting is not working yet.

Cllr. Atwell raised the question of a right of way at Mantle Close. Cllr. West agreed to help investigate.

2920 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS

The Clerk commended his two written reports for the members’ attention.

(The press and public left the meeting.)

2921 – LETTER CONCERNING FORMER MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

The Clerk reported on the latest events and the issue was debated.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gover that the Council engage a solicitor to deal with the matter.

Cllr. Flack proposed an amendment, that the Council approach the Borough to advise on an appointment. This was **CARRIED**. (12-0-0)

RESOLVED – that the Council engage a solicitor to deal with the matter and approach the Borough to advise on an appointment. (12-0-0)

2922 – STAFF RESOURCES

It was proposed by Cllr. Thurston and **RESOLVED** – that the Council proceed with the appointment of a permanent Assistant Town Clerk. (12-0-0)

2923 – CHAIRMAN

Cllr. Hughes announced his resignation as Chairman of the Council.

2924 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is due to take place on Wednesday, 19th August 2015, starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 10.40 pm.

Signed Dated
(Chair)