

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD AUGUST 2015 AT 7.00 PM EASTON METHODIST CHURCH HALL, EASTON

PRESENT: Councillors R. Wild (Chairman), Ms J. Atwell, G. Chadwick, Mrs S. Cocking, J. Draper, C. Flack, Mrs S. Reynolds, D. Symes and D. Thurston

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Cllr. Paul Kimber (Dorset County Council & Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Mrs Margaret Leicester, Ray Nowak and Jason Webb (all Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Mr Andy Matthews (Portland Community Partnership), together with four members of the public

2925 – PRAYERS

The Clerk led the meeting in prayer.

2926 – APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL

It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** – that the appointment be deferred until the vacancy on the Council had been filled.

2927 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs. C. Gover, Ms S. Lees and Mrs S. West.

2928 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2929 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

John Thorner questioned whether it was appropriate for the Council to acquire a costly building in a time of austerity. He went on to itemise the problems associated with the Council Offices. The cost of maintaining them, now borne by all Council taxpayers in the Borough, would fall just on Island residents.

Cllr. Margaret Leicester said the meeting notes were incorrect because the Offices had been refurbished in 1985. The members of the Council had no business experience in running properties, as illustrated by its neglect of Cheyne Weares. A shop in Easton was sufficient for the Council's needs.

Cllr. Ray Nowak admitted responsibility for the Council Offices being on the meeting agenda. He and several other Borough councillors thought the transfer of the Offices was an option that should be considered, bearing in mind the difficulty of selling them with a sitting tenant. In spite of its efforts the Borough had been unable to offer the Town Council suitable alternative accommodation at a reasonable price.

Cllr. Paul Kimber referred to other town councils that had difficulty in meeting the cost of maintaining elderly buildings. He suggested the need for a survey of the Council Offices.

Andy Matthews thought the Council needed to consider that there will be a review of the public sector land holding sooner rather than later. By having control of an asset the Town Council would be in a stronger position in that review. Regarding the offer the building should be viewed as an asset rather than a liability, but negotiations should continue to obtain a better arrangement.

2930 – COUNCIL OFFICES

Several members expressed concerns over the current maintenance state of the Offices and foresaw heavy expenditure necessary to bring them back to a more acceptable condition. Some felt rushed into a decision by the Borough without being given sufficient time to consider the various options available. Those more sympathetic to the building being transferred to the Town still thought the Borough was not providing sufficient financial support to help the Town take on this new responsibility.

It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick and **RESOLVED** – that the Council thank Weymouth & Portland Borough Council for its offer of the Council Offices, but after due consideration has decided to decline it. (For: Cllrs. Atwell, Chadwick, Cocking, Draper, Flack, Symes, Thurston and Wild, Against: None, Abstentions: Cllr. Reynolds)

2931 – NON-AGENDA ITEM: MINOR INJURIES UNIT AT PORTLAND HOSPITAL

From the chair Cllr. Wild said he had received a letter about the Unit from Richard Drax MP. Mr Drax had been told the hospital had not been able to recruit sufficiently qualified staff. The authorities were trying again and if they were successful this time, the Unit would reopen on seven days per week.

2932 – 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.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm.

Signed Dated
(Chair)