

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2020 AT PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE

PRESENT:

Councillors: Charlie Flack (Chair), S Harpley, J Draper, C Atkins, S Cocking, P Roper, C. Parkes, B Parkes, G Lewis, P Kimber, L Saunders and D Thurston

IN ATTENDANCE: Four Members of the Public

4024. Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and advised that there was no planned fire alarm testing and indicated to those present the various fire exits.

4025. Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain Mrs Paula Brown led the meeting in a moment of reflection and prayer.

4026. Presentation by Helen Persey – Update on Portland Hospital

A presentation by Helen Persey had been planned, regrettably however Helen had to cancel but has agreed to deliver the presentation at the April 2020 Full Council Meeting.

4027. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cocking and Hughes

4028. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared

4029. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15th January 2019

With the exception of one amendment as detailed below; the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Page 1 - Present 'four members of the public were in attendance' was added.

4030. Minute Update and Matters Arising

Item 4011a – Vandalism. Cllr Thurston requested that any instances of vandalism be reported to the police and a crime number be obtained. Cllr Roper added that at a recent meeting with Inspector Barry Gosling he had also made the same request as reporting crimes allowed for the police to generate a better picture of where, and what type of crime was occurring. It was requested that this message be passed to the rest of the staff.

Item 4017 – Cllr Harpley noted that following the acceptance of a gender-neutral terminology that the agenda still referred to Chairman. The Clerk apologised and agreed to ensure that this was rectified for future agendas.

4031. Democratic Public Half Hour Open Forum

- a. Mr Vincent; acknowledged that Cllr Kimber was to provide an update on public toilets but wished it to be noted that many of the toilets were still being left open long after their advertised closing times.

Cllr Kimber responded that the toilets contractor had quite a few toilets to close; believing that he starts his round in Lyme Regis, and therefore it was not possible for all toilets to be closed concurrently. He also advised that there was currently a trial in place to leave the accessible toilets to be left open on a 24-hour basis.

Resolved that the Clerk speak to the toilets contractor and understand the issues preventing the agreed closure times being adhered to.

b. Report from PCSO Nick Bool

PCSO Nick Bool thanked the Council for aiding the removal of the old shelter at Southwell which he felt, not only made his life much easier but was also a good example of teamwork.

He was aware that the Council had had a meeting with Inspector Barry Gosling and Sergeant Billy Taylor. He reiterated that the statistics showed that Portland was generally a safe area, but that there had been a big increase in the incidents of shop lifting at Tesco's. He asked that everybody be aware and report any information that they may have on the perpetrators.

Cllr Draper asked whether PCSO Bool felt that the shoplifting was organised. PCSO Bool felt that this was the case and suggested that it may be being organised from outside of the area.

PCSO Bool informed the meeting stated that there was a scheme in place to provide him with an electric bike to aid his patrol of the Island.

Cllr Thurston asked whether PCSO Bool was making any progress identifying those responsible for the local graffiti, reminding him that he had sent him photographs. PCSO Bool responded that alas he had had no joy at the moment but hoped that it was a temporary problem and that nothing further would occur.

Cllr West ask whether there were any updates on the ram raid of the Fortuneswell Co-op last year. PCSO responded that at this point he had nothing further to add.

c. Mr Matthews advised the meeting that he was available to speak on Item 13 if required.

Mr Matthews wished to bring it to the attention of the meeting the Dorset Council Local Plan and in particular the peer review that was being undertaken. He advised that under Strong Healthy Communities, importance was being put on a good working relationship between Dorset Council and Parish and Town Councils. The plan stresses that a good working relationship is imperative and, he believed that where a relationship with Dorset Council was not working productively then it needed to be pointed out that this was not in accordance with the Plan.

Cllr Kimber suggested that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive of Place referring to the peer review and asking how Portland Town Council could work more effectively with Dorset Council.

Resolved that the Clerk write a letter to Dorset Council seeking advice on how a better relationship could be achieved.

4032. Chair's Update

The Chair reported the following:

- a. A meeting with the Assets team had been held and, whilst there was progress, it appeared to be slow, although it was hoped that the proposal would go to cabinet in April 2020. The delay was due to the fact that some of

the larger items needed to be valued externally because of their high value. The MoU would remain in place until such time that the legal transfer was complete.

- b. The Chair reported that he had been surprised to receive a social media message relating to Portland's lack of support for Koala bears; upon further investigation he realised that the message had been intended for the Chair of Portland Council in Australia and not the UK.

4033. Town Mayor's Announcements

There was no report from the Mayor.

4034. Receive written reports from Dorset County Councillors

One written report had been received from a Dorset Councillor and this had been attached as Annex A to the Agenda. Cllr Kimber advised the meeting that he had included the report as he felt if highlighted some of the issues that Dorset Council were dealing with now.

4035. Financial Matters

- a. Payments for Authorisation – A list of payments totalling £34,096.22 was submitted for authorisation. The list of payments had been circulated before the meeting and the Chair of the Policy and Resource Committee answered a series of questions from Councillors on the payments listed. (A copy of the list of payments is held at **Annex A** to these minutes).

Authorisation of the payments was unanimously approved.

- b. It was requested that where an Amazon payment was made that the payments list show what the payment was for.

4036. Acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

Cllr Draper explained that the NP had been reviewed by the examiner and, whilst there were two requested amendments, he requested that the plan be supported and accepted.

The following statement was made by Cllr C Parkes:

I have been charged with making the following statement on behalf on the Labour Group.

Whilst accepting the need for the plan to be approved, we wish to have it minuted our disappointment and dismay that modifications made by the Examiner removes our capacity to apply a second homes policy, and a policy to allow us to deal effectively with Hardy Block. Portland Town Council Labour Group will use its good offices to consistently raise these issues and will look to include them in future reviews of the plan.

A vote was taken on the whether to accept the Neighbourhood Plan which was carried unanimously.

Resolved to accept the Neighbourhood Plan

4037. Request for a letter to be sent to St Georges School

Cllr Atkins explained that parents dropping off and picking their Children up at ST Georges school were doing so with their car engines running and asked that a letter be sent to St George's school asking them to send a letter to all parents asking them to refrain from this practice. Cllr C Parkes stated that she fully supported the action as she felt that this was a serious problem which needed to be resolved.

Cllr Saunders added that she felt that exercise was good for the children and that this should be pointed to all of the parents.

Resolved that the Clerk write a letter to the school requesting that a letter be sent to all parents desist from waiting for children with their engines running.

4038. Chat Benches

Cllr Harpley stated that there was a slight amendment to the proposal issued as Annex E to the agenda in that it now included all benches on the Island not just those that were managed by Portland Town Council.

She explained that her aim was to try and combat loneliness by inviting people to sit and chat with specifically designated benches appropriately signed to encourage this. She reiterated that she was not looking for funds to purchase the benches just the signs to be attached to the benches.

The Chair asked that this proposal be presented to the Forward Planning Working Group first and then to come back to Full Council.

4039. Portland Food Bank – Update from Cllr Cocking

In the absence of Cllr Cocking the Clerk provided an update on the request from Portland Food Bank for the Council Offices to hold Food Bank vouchers. She advised those present that a meeting (which had included Cllr Cocking) had been held with the Foodbank who explained that before a member of the public could access the foodbank they needed to obtain a voucher; and that to achieve the greatest level of accessibility they were looking to expand the number of places from where a voucher could be acquired. It was this that had prompted the request for the Council Officers to consider holding and distributing vouchers. The Officers had generally been in agreement, but with one proviso; that the Officers would provide vouchers to whomever asked and that they would not be required to make a decision on whether or not the recipient was entitled to a voucher.

It was asked that the provision of this service be included in the Councils monthly report to the Free Portland News.

A vote was taken which returned a unanimous agreement that the Council support the action.

Resolved that the Council Offices hold Portland Food Bank Vouchers

4040. Public Toilets – Update from Cllr Kimber

Cllr Kimber provided an update on the public toilets. He thanked the Officers for their hard work in progressing the necessary repairs required to the toilets.

He acknowledged that there had been an ongoing issue with the lights staying on in the toilets in Easton Gardens and was pleased to announce that a contract had been let with a local electrician to rectify this issue with the work being undertaken imminently. In addition, a contract has been let for the legionella testing, which is a legal requirement, will commence on Monday 17th February and will continue on a monthly basis.

He added that he had submitted 13 recommendations as part of the five-year plan and asked that these be reviewed at the next P&R meeting.

He was keen to point out that only one complaint had been received to date about the cleanliness of the toilets, but as this had been received from a toilet cleaning company its legitimacy could be questioned.

He remained concerned about the high cost of water usage at Portland Bill toilets and recommended that financial assistance be sought from Dorset Council.

Cllr Roper cautioned that, having met with Dorset Council in the previous week they were not likely to support the request. A discussion ensued regarding the potential to

hand the toilets back, although Cllr Kimber felt if this was to happen then they would simply be closed. Cllr Lewis felt that this was an option that should be explored further, and Cllr Draper suggested that it would be better to start slowly and see what could be accomplished.

Resolved that the Clerk write to Dorset Council seeking financial support for the management of Portland Bill Toilets.

4041. Exclusion of Press & Public (discretionary)

There were no matters to discuss.

4042. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 11th March 2020 at the Portland Community Venue at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 19.45 hours.

Signed Dated.....
Chair