

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 15th JANUARY 2020
AT PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Four members of the public.

4003. 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.

4004. Prayers

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

4005. Presentation by Portland for the Planet (Laura Baldwin)

A presentation was provided by Laura Baldwin on the issues of global warming, the consequences of inaction and the declaration of a climate emergency by many Councils. She went on to explain those actions that were now to be undertaken on Portland and expressed a desire for Portland to be carbon zero by 2030.

Cllr Kimber requested that Portland Town Council (PTC) consider the generation of a strap line for use with the Council's logo which supported the Portland for the Planet's campaign. Cllr Draper agreed to pass this to the IT and Comms Working Group for further discussion.

4006. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs S West and D Thurston

4007. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared

4008. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 13th November 2019

With the exception of one amendment (inclusion of the date (16th October 2019) at minute 3990) the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4009. Minute Update and Matters Arising

Cllr Saunders sought clarification on the motion relating to the Deck Chair concession with Weymouth Town Council (minute 3982). The Chair explained that the Policy and Resources Committee had, following evaluation of the evidence, decided not to continue with the concession. He added that Weymouth Town Council had been notified.

4010. Democratic Public Half Hour Open Forum

- a. Mr Paul Snow asked, 'when did the Council intended to resolve the issue of the lights being left on in Easton Gardens toilets for 24 hours a day', and in addition asked when the leaks were to be sorted. Cllr Kimber provided an update explaining that the Council were in the process of sorting it out and that a meeting of the Car Parks and Toilets Working Group was to be held shortly.

Cllr Kimber agreed that an update of the toilets would be provided with the next minutes.

- b. Mr Snow also noted that there had been a year on year increase within the precept budget for staffing costs and asked how the increased budget for the year 20/21 was to be spent. Cllr Draper explained that it was the intention of the Council to not only increase the number of office staff with a further assistant town clerk, but also to employ an apprentice.
- c. Mr Matthews wished to take the opportunity to advise of two up-coming meetings of the Portland Community Land Trust to explain the trusts involvement in the Sweethill Gardens development project.

4011. Chair's Update

The Chair reported the following:

- a. It was unfortunate that both the ladies and the gent's toilets in Easton Gardens had been vandalised and due to that extra expense was now being incurred to undertake repairs.
- b. A letter had been received from Weymouth Civic Society commending PTC on floral displays in both Victoria and Easton Gardens. He added that it was pleasing to see that the hard work put in by the gardening team was being noticed. He also advised that Castle Court had received the top award and that the windmills had also received an award.
- c. He advised that, following a discussion, the Conservation Officer had reconsidered his comments and now intended to support the planning application for the Jack Mantle memorial to be sited at Beacon Hill. The Conservation Officer had previously objected to the proposed siting suggesting that the Naval Cemetery would be a better position. He now recognised that Beacon Hill provided better access than the Naval Cemetery.
- d. Public Meeting for Local Government Review. The Chair acknowledged that it had been the intention to hold a further public meeting on the transfer of assets in January 2020 but regretted that this would now need to be delayed. He explained that action was with Dorset Council who had arranged, and then cancelled several meetings. The next meeting was planned for early February and it was hoped that an update could be provided following this meeting.

4012. Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that she had no formal announcements to make other than she had attended numerous events over Christmas and was looking forward to continuing to attend events in the New Year.

4013. Receive written reports from and County Councillors

No written reports were received from County Councillors.

4014. Financial Matters

- a. Payments for Authorisation – A list of payments totalling £19,181.04 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**).

Authorisation of the payments was unanimously approved.

- i. Pre-approval for the purchase of five memorial benches (see Annex B to the Agenda)

Cllr B Parkes explained that there was a waiting list of people waiting to take up memorial benches and that sites for all five had been identified. It was agreed that the upgrade offered (at the cost of an additional £100 per bench) should not be taken up.

Resolved that purchase of five memorial benches at a cost of £2,500.00 be undertaken.

- b. Ratification of the 3rd Quarter Update of Finance

Cllr Draper referred the Councillors to Annex C of the Agenda, being the 3rd Quarter Finance Update. He added that the Policy and Resource Committee had discussed the report in depth and had recommended its acceptance. There were no questions from the Councillors.

Resolved to accept the 3rd Quarter Finance Update.

- c. Approval of draft budget and precept for financial year 2020/2021

Cllr Draper provided an explanation of the proposed budget of £380,000.00 for 2020/21. He explained that the anticipated income generated throughout the year had been taken into consideration and that there was a reduction in the number of cost centres being shown. He added that this was in line with the recommendations of the external auditor. For clarification he stated that in accepting the budget figure of £380,000 it would result in an increase in the Band D Council Task figure of 5p taking it from £1.91 per week to £1.96 per week (see **Annex B** to the minutes)

Cllr Kimber felt that Dorset Council had some money which could be made available in support of the Museum and asked that consideration be given to writing to DC asking for a donation to support the Museum.

Resolved that a letter be sent to Dorset Council seeking financial support for the Portland Museum.

For this item, as in previous years a recorded vote was required. The vote was unanimously in favour and it was recorded that the following Councillors voted in favour: C Flack, S Harpley, J Draper, C Atkins, S Cocking, R Hughes, P Roper, C. Parkes, B Parkes, G Lewis, P Kimber and L Saunders.

- d. Formal approval to award grass cutting contract

Cllr Draper stated that this item had been recommended for acceptance by the Policy and Resource Committee and that it be accepted.

Resolved to accept the proposal for award of the Grass Cutting Contract as recommended by Policy and Resource Committee.

- e. Formal approval to award waste management contract

Cllr Draper asked that this item be removed from this agenda and proposed that it be returned to the Policy and Resource Committee for further discussion.

Resolved that this item remain unactioned and that it be returned to the Policy and Resource Committee for further discussion.

- f. Formal approval to award contract for replacement of West Cliff Play Park

Cllr Draper stated that this item had been considered for acceptance at the December 2019 Policy and Resource Committee and recommended that it be accepted.

Resolved to award a contract to Sovereign at a value of £33,800 for the replacement of the West Cliff Play Park.

- g. Update on grants awarded in 2018/2019

Cllr Flack provided an update on those grants that had been awarded for 2018/19.

- h. Ratification of grants to be awarded in 2019/20

The Chair advised the proposal to award grants for 2019/2020 totalling £3,091.53– See **Annex C** attached. A vote was taken on the award of the grants with a majority vote being returned; Cllr Saunders abstained having a non-pecuniary interest in Friends of Victoria Gardens.

Resolved that the grants for 2019/202 be awarded as proposed.

- i. PTC Website – approval to award contract for re-design of website.

Cllr Roper provided background on how the procurement process had been undertaken and how the final decision had been made – see annex F to Agenda). Following questions from the Councillors it was resolved (by a unanimous vote) to accept the proposal for the award of the contract for the re-design of the PTC website at a one off cost of £3,000 and an annual cost of £400 for ongoing hosting and support.

Resolved to appoint a contract to Sites by Simon for the re-design of the PTC Website.

4015. Royal Garden Party

As outgoing Mayor, Cllr Cocking had expressed an interest in being nominated to attend the Royal Garden Party in May 2020. Her nomination was unanimously agreed.

Resolved to support the nomination for Cllr Cocking to attend the Royal Garden Party.

4016. Twinning with Holzwickede

Cllr Cocking explained that a letter had been received from Holzwickede expressing an interest in re-generating the twinning relationship. Cllr Kimber stated that Portland had long been associated with Holzwickede and added his agreement to

the proposal. Cllr Lewis asked how much a twinning agreement was likely to cost, the general consensus was that whilst the exact costs could not be quantified the costs could be kept to a minimum and it would ultimately be up to the Council to determine how much would be spent. Cllr Roper added his positive experience to the discussion.

Resolved that twinning with Holzwickede be re-established.

4017. Adoption of Gender-Neutral Terminology

Cllr Harpley requested that the Councillors consider the adoption of gender-neutral terminology as proposed in her motion issued as Annex I to the Agenda.

Following a short discussion, a vote was taken on the motion which returned a unanimous response for the adoption of gender-neutral terminology within Council documentation.

Resolved to accept and include gender-neutral terminology when the current standing orders are revised.

4018. The Giant Wall

Cllr Saunders referred the Councillors to Annex J of the Agenda which provided a history of the Giant Wall art piece. She suggested, that if the Council were in agreement that PTC take ownership of the piece and that two of the four pieces be offered to Weymouth Town Council, one to Munsty's and that one should stay in Portland Community Venue (PCV). Cllr Harpley suggested that any that were not held at the PCV should be on loan to other people rather than a permanent gift.

A question was raised on whether the originator would be happy for the art piece to be split and it was agreed that Cllr Saunders would seek advice on this issue.

Resolved that in principle the Council were happy to take ownership of the Giant Wall, but that Cllr Saunders would explore the issue further with regard to splitting it up.

4019. Portland Youth Council – Update

Cllr Cocking provided an update on the progress being made of the Portland Youth Council at Portland Academy. She was pleased that the students had taken a decision to be called Atlantic Youth Town Council – Portland, but consideration was being given to including pupils from the other school on the Island and as a result it was possible that the name this might change. She advised that a national press release was to be issued aimed, at advertising the Youth Council. She also stated that the Youth Council were to hold elections on 2nd April and that PTC Councillors would undertake counting of the votes.

4020. Hedge Planting – Royal Manor Playing Field – Update

Cllr Roper provided an update on the tree planting project on Portland. Portland for the Planet had been provided with 850 saplings free of charge and the decision had been taken to use some of these saplings to fill in the gaps in the hedge around Weston playing field. To date they have planted 358 saplings and, whilst a few gaps remained they hoped to complete the task before the end of winter. Cllr Roper added that there had been a fantastic public turnout to support this project. A question was asked regarding maintenance of the saplings including watering. He felt that given the close proximity of the cemetery, that a water supply from there could be a solution.

4021. Church Ope Theatre Pocket Park – Update

Cllr Kimber provided an update on what he believed to be an exciting project being undertaken by Portland Quarry and Sculpture Trust (PQST). Cllrs Draper and C Parkes added their positive comments and confirmed that they are also supporting the project. It was requested that PTC send a letter of support to PQST in support the application.

Resolved that the Clerk send a letter of support from PTC to PQST in support of the application.

4022. Exclusion of Press & Public (discretionary)

There were no matters to discuss.

4023. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 12th February at the Portland Community Venue at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 20.45 hours.

Signed Dated.....
Chair