

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

MARINE & ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs S. Bradley, G. Chadwick, R. Hughes, Ms S. Lees, A. Matthews, (also as Chairman of Portland Community Partnership Board), Mrs S. Reynolds and R. Wild, together with Philip George (Crown Estate), Hannah Sofaer (Portland Stone Quarry Trust from 7.12pm) and Sandie Wilson (Portland Port).

IN ATTENDANCE: Pam Hamblin (Assistant Town Clerk)

1013 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Ray Nowak, Cllr. Kate Wheller, Lyn Cooch, Bob Elliot, Robert Sansom, Geoff Peters and Peter Allam.

1014 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Lees declared that she has a non-pecuniary interest in the footpaths on the Island in relation to her Chesil Equestrian Centre interests.

1015 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH JUNE 2014

Minute 999 – Minute Update and Matters Arising – Minute 992 - Agenda Items by exception (c) Run-Down Areas

Cllr. Lees said that the British Horse Society does not give money for the bridle paths but that they use funding to train people and to check out historic rights. The minute was amended to read "...progress made on the upgrading of paths to bridle paths on the Island and the support by the British Horse Society for this purpose".

Cllr. Matthews stated on behalf of Lyn Cooch, that she would continue to deal with the Coastal Path at West Weares and the footpath at The Grove. There is also funding for a feasibility study for a cycle/bridle path at Underhill and a small amount of funding for use on the Merchant's Incline at the top of The Verne.

Cllr. Chadwick mentioned the kissing gate has not been dealt with.

Minute 1006 – Hamm Beach

Philip George said that the boardwalk had been replaced.

Minute 1007 Tourist Information Centre

Cllr. Matthews informed the meeting that Portland Port is supporting a shuttle bus taking visitors to Portland Castle and possibly to the Portland Heights if additional funding is available from Portland Community Partnership. The PCP is evaluating possible opportunities for tours and local attractions, including those in Weymouth and West Dorset, such as Chesil Beach. Work is ongoing, talking to agents and drivers. Local taxi firms are now offering fixed rates for journeys and tours, for example the Jurassic Coast and it is less expensive for some visitors to use a taxi than to join the cruise ship organised tours. Careful marketing and the use of agents will be necessary to build on this.

The decision by Condor Ferries to relocate their route to France from Poole was discussed. It was suggested that a letter be written to Condor Ferries with regard to the decision and Sandie Wilson offered to look at any draft which is prepared. It was

then decided that the decision has been made and it is no longer negotiable being part of the company's five-year plan. Sandie Wilson added that the PCP is adopting the correct approach with regard to local tourism and that it is not a straightforward situation. Cllr. Hughes asked if flyers for local attractions and tours should be produced in other languages.

Minute 1008 – Dry-Stone Walls

Cllr. Lees indicated that Stone Firms own the land at Eight Kings, Culverwell and Portland Bill Road where the walls are crumbling and causing a hazard. The Assistant Clerk undertook to contact Stone Firms with regard to repairs.

Minute 1009 – Island Caretaker

Cllr. Wild informed the meeting that the barrier at Cheyne Weares can be removed as the insurance company accepted the witness's version of events in that no height restriction was visible on it. Cllr. Chadwick asked if a width restriction can now be added and the pothole repaired. Cllr. Lees offered to take some stone to the site and Cllr. Wild offered assistance with the work. He also said that Cllr. Margaret Leicester had suggested that an ice-cream van be permitted to park on the site.

Minute 1010(b) – Litter and Fly-Tipped Material

Cllr. Wild confirmed that Wessex Water had removed the material behind the Heights Hotel, Stone Firms had tidied the hedges bordering their land, Albion Stone are in the process of doing so and that the Dorset Waste Partnership are cutting back their hedges today.

1016 – COASTGUARD AND HELICOPTER SERVICE CLOSURE

See attached report submitted by Rob Sansom, which was received before the meeting but was inadvertently not made available to the members. It was decided that this item be removed from this agenda as a standard item as there is little input which can now be made.

1017 – OLYMPIC LEGACY

There were no updates to report and it was decided to remove this item from future agendas.

1018 – WEST WEARES

It was agreed by the full Town Council that someone would be paid to cut the grass. With regard to overnight camping, the police have been moving people from the area and one of the new 'No Camping' signs has been removed. Cars have been seen parked on the pedestrian and sculpture area. It was agreed that it remains a difficult area to control and police.

1019 – REVIEW OF SAFETY BARRIERS ON THE ESPLANADE

It was agreed that the area remains dangerous and that the Assistant Clerk write to the Environment Agency to enquire whether a risk assessment has been carried out and whether more barriers could be extended to cover the Chesil Esplanade between the ramps and the Cove Inn.

With regard to this area, Cllr. Matthews had received a complaint concerning the rough surface of the Esplanade from Brandy Row to Quiddles Café. It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would write to DCC Highways Department.

1020 – COMMUNITY SANDBAG SCHEME

It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would make further enquiries with regard to setting up a local facility.

1021 – STANDARD AGENDA ITEMS (by exception)

(a) Disused Quarries

A letter had been sent to all Councillors from the Crown Estate with regard to the setting up of a solar park on a site which includes Independent Quarry, Easton. Cllrs Chadwick and Bradley undertook to attend a public consultation on 11th September 2014 at the Portland Heights Hotel to gain further information and report back to the next meeting of the Partnership.

Cllr. Hughes had no further information regarding 'Jurassica' plans but there is a Visionary Day at the Portland Heights Hotel on 15th September 2014 which he is unable to attend but other councillors could do so.

Hannah Sofaer made the following points from the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan 2014-2019: Tout Quarry is included as a centre for Outdoor Learning; Tout Quarry and the Drill Hall are added as existing visitor interpretation Centres; disused quarries on Portland are identified for their potential to investigate geological interpretation, particularly within Portland Quarries Nature Park; and Dorset Wildlife Trust (leaseholders of Tout Quarry Nature Reserve and Sculpture Park) are working in partnership with Portland Sculpture and Quarry Trust. The Jurassic Coast website, <http://jurassiccoast.org/plan> has a downloadable version of the new plan.

(b) Litter and Fly-Tipped Material

Cllr. Chadwick reported that he had been working with WPBC Parks and Gardens Dept. and had seen very little. Cllr. Lees said that there were bin liners with slates near the site of the old engine shed at Cheyne Weares.

(d) Open Spaces, Hedgerows, Footpaths and Dry-Stone Walls

Cllr. Matthews reported that Natural England are requesting details of landowners from Lyme Regis to Rufus Castle and that a notice was in the September edition of the Free Portland News.

Lyn Cooch reported through Cllr. Matthews the following: West Weares footpath - Dave Ackerley is responsible for internal footpaths and has agreed that work could be carried out and Lyn Cooch will assist him in achieving this as soon as possible. Grove cliff top – there has been some delay due to setting up an agreement with the YOI to realign the path. Again she will assist Dave Ackerley in moving this project forward. West Weares Coast Path - this section is currently being reviewed as part of the next stage of the All England Coastal Path. The first section adjacent to Tout is continuing to drop with new cracks opening up across the path. She would like this area to be reviewed again as well as the Blacknor section. Footpath closures have had to be renewed for a further year, having expired on 1st September 2014. Regarding the "big topple", she met with Tim Clotworthy of Stone Firms who own the land. He agreed that the collapse was unlikely to result in rocks reaching the path or the huts. Lyn Cooch has been in touch with the hut owners association to make them aware of the issue.

1022 – ISSUES RAISED BY PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

Cllr. Wild reported that the grave of the victims of the Forest and Avalanche had been neglected and the Portland Seafarers had cleared it. Portland Stone Ltd had provided 1.5 tonnes of gravel and Hannah Sofaer had offered to place a small stone at the front. The Church is content with the work as memorial to the Merchant Navy on the Island. The Partnership thanked Ms Sofaer for her contribution to this.

Cllr. Matthews reminded the Partnership that the AGM of the Portland Community Partnership will take place on 24th September 2014 at 7pm.

Sandie Wilson said that the Crown Estate had awarded seabed rights to Siemens Marine to conduct a feasibility study into the use of turbines.

1023 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman advised members that the next meeting of the Partnership would take place on Wednesday 3rd December 2014 at 7pm, venue to be advised.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.

Signed(Chair) Date