

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2019 AT PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE

PRESENT:

Councillors: Charlie Flack (Chairman), J Draper, C Atkins, S Cocking, R Hughes, P Roper, P Kimber, S West, D Thurston and G Lewis.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr A Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan), PCSO Bool and 2 members of the public.

3985. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and advised that there was no planned fire alarm testing and indicated to those present the various fire exits. The meeting observed two minutes silence in memory of Mr Les Ames who had recently passed away and who had been a prominent figure within Portland Town Council.

3986. Prayers

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

The Chairman reminded the Councillors present that the rules of purdah needed to be observed during this period leading up to the general election.

3987. Presentation from Helen Persey – Update on Portland Hospital

The Chairman advised that due to the restrictions of purdah, the presentation due to be given by Helen Persey has been cancelled and would be re-scheduled for early next year.

3988. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs B Parkes, C Parkes, S Harpley and L Saunders.

3989. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

3990. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 16th October 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

3991. Minute Update and Matters Arising

Item 3970 – Presentation by the Conservation Officer Mr Stefan Ganther. Cllr Kimber asked that thanks be provided to Mr Stefan Ganther thanking him for the presentation he provided at the last meeting. The Clerk confirmed that thanks had been passed to him.

Item 3974a - With regard to the issue of graffiti; Cllr Thurston reported that he had taken photos these were currently being printed and would be sent to the PCSO Bool.

Item 3977c – Change of the Planning meetings to a Thursday; the Chairman advised that these meetings were likely to revert back to Wednesdays in the new year as it appeared that the Drop In centre were unable, at this time to afford to rent out the studio as planned.

Item 3982 – Deck Chairs – The Chairman advised that following an advert in the Free Portland News - ten people had contacted the Council to express an interest in the keeping the deck chair concession running.

3992. Democratic Public Half Hour Open Forum

- a. To receive an update from the police
 - i. PCSO Bool stated that the biggest issue of note had been the ram raid of the Co-op in Fortuneswell. He explained that investigations were ongoing but that he believed this to be a one-off incident.
 - ii. He thanked Cllr Thurston for the upcoming photographs.
 - iii. He asked if there was any update on the ownership of the shelter at the end of Sweet Hill Lane (item 3963 a). Cllr Kimber explained that it belongs to DC and believed that there were two options a) storage for grit bins or b) demolition, although he added that there was no money to have it demolished at the moment. PCSO Bool added that he tried to get out to it twice a day but couldn't commit to continuing that long term and added that a long-term solution was required. Cllr Cocking re-iterated that DC did not have the money available to knock it down and that if PTC wished to store grit bins there then they would be required to fund the addition of doors; for which they did not have the funds either.
 - iv. Cllr West reported that she had become aware of children playing around pushing one another off the pavement. She asked if it was possible for one off the PCSO's could go and speak to the Children at Atlantic Academy?

PCSO Bool agreed to visit Atlantic Academy and have a word with the children.

b. To receive questions from Members of the public

- i) Item 3996b – Mr Matthews wished to make it known that when Ms Aldridge spoke about the skate park, she had stated that it had originally been sited at the current market site. He felt that this was incorrect, and the site of the old skate park had been at the area where the memory stones are now sited. He felt that it could be important in the future to recognise the ongoing local amenity that this site had offered.
- ii) Item 3996d – Mr Matthews advised that he wished to support the statement by Cllr Draper that former Cllr Novak had been the primary point of contact in regard to the PSQT particularly linking this as well into his role as the Briefholder for WPBC Local Plan development.
- iii) Mr Vincent requested that in taking forward the issue of the Water Fountain in Easton Gardens (Item 3976) that a full assessment of the gardens be undertaken to determine where the optimum place would be for the siting of the fountain. Cllr Lewis agreed and stated that there was still a piece of work to do in the gardens, which would include the best place for the fountain to be sited.
- iv) Mr Vincent also asked what the closing date for registering an interest in the deck chair concession was? The Chairman responded that expressions of interest would be accepted up to 30th November 2019.

3993. Chairman's Update

The Chairman reported the following:

- a. He reminded the meeting that any Agenda items must be with the Clerk two weeks before the date of the next meeting. The Clerk agreed, that where possible she would issue a reminder.
- b. He advised that David Avery the Head Gardener would be leaving at the end of November. Cllr Kimber asked that the minutes record the Councils thanks to him. He also asked when recruitment of the new Head Gardener would start? The Clerk explained that prior to commencing recruitment there was a wish to review the job description but hoped that recruitment action would start in January 2020.

- c. Two examples of the new logo were provided to the Councillors for their views. Cllr Roper explained that both logos' would be used one would be used for the website, social media, badges etc. Whilst the other would be used for headed notepaper.
- d. He also reminded the meeting that Easton Sparkle would be held in Easton Gardens on Friday 13th December.

3994. Town Mayor's Announcements

- a. The Mayor provided a brief update on the events undertaken during the last month and those planned for the following month (see **Annex A** to these minutes).
- b. She advised that the funeral for Mr Les Ames would take place on Tuesday 26th November and that PTC's Portland Flag would be used. She added that the family had asked that people attending the funeral wear poppies and that there would be family flowers only. The Chairman proposed that a £50 donation be made to the RAF benevolent fund, this was supported unanimously.

Resolved that a donation of £50.00 be made to the RAF benevolent Fund

- c. She concluded by advising that a presentation from Bill Reeves -Portland Port would be provided before the Policy and Resource Meeting on 11th December 2019 and invited all other Councillors who were not on the P&R committee to attend.

3995. Receive written reports from and County Councillors

The Chairman advised that one report from County Councillors had been received and had been circulated with the Agenda.

He advised that there would be no report for December 2019.

Cllr Lewis provided a brief update on the DAPTC AGM held on 9th November 2019, and Cllr Hughes thanked Cllr Lewis for attending on his behalf.

3996. Financial Matters

- a. Payments for Authorisation – A list of payments totalling for payments to be authorised to £56,819.54 had been circulated before the meeting and the Chairman asked if there were any questions on these from the Councillors. (A copy of the list of payments is held at **Annex B**).

Authorisation of the payments was unanimously approved.

3997. Grants Procedure for 2019/2020

The Clerk advised that a revised procedure for the award of grants was proposed for this year only (2019). The revised procedure had been issued as an annex to the Agenda and was discussed by the assembled meeting. It was agreed that a summary of the grants awarded be presented at the Full Council Meeting of January 2020 for ratification.

Resolved that a) that for this year only grants will be approved by P&R and that b) a summary of the grants awarded be presented to the Full Council Meeting of 2020 for ratification.

3998. Portland Town Council Support for a Buildings Preservation Trust

Cllr Kimber spoke on the proposal to set up a building trust which he believed was the way forward for the preservation of many historic buildings on this Island. He felt that the Conservation Officer Mr Stefan Ganther, had demonstrated an enthusiasm to take the project forward and should be supported. A vote was taken which returned a unanimous vote that the Council in full support of the generation of a Buildings Preservation Trust.

Resolved that the minutes record that Portland Town Council is in support of the generation of a Buildings Preservation Trust.

3999. Letter to Dorset Council – Dorset Council Pension Fund

Annex B to the Agenda was a letter that Cllr Lewis proposed be sent to the Dorset Council Pension Fund. Cllr Flack proposed that the motion be deferred until the next Full Council for three reasons; a) recognising the sensitivities of purdah, b) in order for the staff to be consulted; as the letter primarily affected them, and c) in order for the pecuniary interests of any Councillors to be declared.

Cllr Kimber stated that he was unaware of staff ever having been consulted previously; and Cllr Lewis added that she did not feel that staff consultation was appropriate, and that as an employer it was the Council who had a say in where the Councils money went. Further she felt that there was only a need to inform the staff out of courtesy. Cllr Draper felt that if the staff did not agree with the motion that they had their own channels to pursue. He felt that he could not agree with the Chairman that the staff needed to be consulted. Cllr Thurston stated that he had concerns that if Councillors felt that there were problems that they should seek a resolution privately and not on behalf of PTC. Cllr Lewis felt that there was a moral obligation in ensuring that the precept that was raised was spent appropriately. Having listened to arguments for and against sending the letter, the Chairman sought a vote. By a very small majority it was agreed that the letter be sent.

Resolved that a letter be sent to Dorset Council Pension Fund requesting that they divest in fossil fuel investment and seek greener alternatives.

4000. Portland Christmas Lights

At Annex C to the Agenda was a paper that highlighted the issues with the current state of the Christmas decorations, and the quote from Turrells to repair and erect the decorations. Initially Turrells had quoted £5,890.00 to repair and install/remove but following a further request from the Clerk they had provided a breakdown of the costs which showed the repair costs to be £1,430.00 and the installation/removal costs to be £4,460.00. Having provided this information there were now two options a) to proceed with the repair and erection or b) to forego any repairs and simply erect those decorations that did not need repair. The Chairman asked how the Councillors wished to proceed. Following a discussion for which Cllrs West and Hughes argued for the acceptance of the whole quote, however Cllr Roper explained that there was a plan to hire next year’s lights. A vote was taken on which option to take forward. The vote returned a majority vote to only proceed with the installation of the decorations and not to undertake any further repairs to the decorations.

Resolved that Turrells be informed that no repairs were to be undertaken, and that installation only of the remaining lights was required.

A request was made that a working group be convened to deal specifically with the issue of Christmas decorations both for this year and next. Cllr Hughes volunteered to Chair the working group with Cllrs Roper and West volunteering to be part of that working group.

Resolved that a Christmas Decorations working group be convened, to be chaired by Cllr Hughes and members being Cllrs Roper, West and Flack.

4001. Exclusion of Press & Public (discretionary)

There were no matters to discuss.

4002. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee’s next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 15th January 2020, at the Portland Community Venue at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 20.21 hours.

Signed Dated.....
Chairman