

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2017 IN EASTON METHODIST CHURCH HALL, EASTON

PRESENT: Councillors Ray Nowak (Chairman), Jo Atwell, Susan Cocking, Charlie Flack, Chris Gover, Lucy Grieve, Sandra Reynolds, David Thurston, Sandy West and Rod Wild.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Paul Kimber (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) and four members of the public.

3506 – CHAIRMAN’S WELCOME

Cllr. Nowak welcomed all to the meeting and advised of fire precautions at the hall.

3507 – PRAYERS

The Clerk led the meeting in prayer.

3508 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Jim Draper, together with Katherine Garcia (Dorset County Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Dave Farmer (Mayor’s Chaplain) and PC Steve Morris (Dorset Police).

3509 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3510 – OPEN FORUM

a) Police Question Time

No members of the Police were present.

b) Public Half-Hour

Chris Wakefield asked what steps had the Council taken in readiness for unitary reorganisation.

From the chair Cllr. Nowak said the Council had held informal discussions, the result of which would be shortly conveyed through the Free Portland News. In essence the Council would welcome taking on extra services provided it was granted matching income from transferred car parks. There had been little response from the County on the subject. In any case final approval of the unitaries scheme had not yet been given.

Paul Snow was critical of the decision to appoint an Assistant Clerk, saying the public had been denied information at every stage and the cost would have to be added to next year’s precept. He also asked about the discussion process for next year’s budget and precept. Cllr. Cocking said this would begin at the next Finance Committee meeting at the beginning of October.

Mr Snow queried the cancellation of the December Council meeting. Cllr. Nowak said the draft budget would be available by November with a decision on the precept in January, perhaps February if necessary.

Martin Luther asked whether the Council would be funding Easton Promise this year, saying that as a commercial venture it should not be financed with public money. Cllr. Nowak said the Council would be supporting it as a number of charities on the Island derived much benefit from it.

Rob Hughes queried the future of the Lord Clyde toilets, saying they were scarcely used by divers for storage facilities. He also criticised the Council for funding a Spirit of Portland advertisement. Cllr. Nowak said this had been done as a way of supporting Island businesses.

Mr Wakefield commended the local community land trust and asked whether the Council would support it. Mr Matthews said three Town Councillors were already involved as members of the trust's board.

c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. West said her recent council activities had been hindered by the need to take some sick leave. However she had recently become a member of the Borough's Licensing Committee. She was also trying to arrange a visit to Heli-Ops.

Cllr. Kimber referred to a difficulty over an unpaid bill for the community garden. If the bill were not paid it might mean losing the garden.

He said the Borough would become liable to a debt of £186,000 to the Government in 2019. Therefore it was important that the issue of Dorset unitaries be settled sooner rather than later.

Cllr. Nowak advised that he had recently supported a Borough grant of £50,000 to the MEMO project.

3511 – MINUTES

a) Town Council Meeting, 19th July 2017

b) Extraordinary Town Council Meeting, 6th September 2017

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record.

3512 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Minute 3486 – Japanese Knotweed

Cllr. Nowak undertook to convene a meeting of the working group.

b) Minute 3488 – Primary School in Underhill

The Council's nomination of the school as an asset of community value is being processed by the Borough.

3513 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN

There were none.

3514 – TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr. Thurston explained his recent illness and operations he had undergone. His doctor had advised him not to drive for eight months. He announced he would therefore be standing down as Mayor after the evening’s meeting. Cllr, Flack would become the Acting Mayor.

3515 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments for Authorisation, August and September

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices for August (including cheque refs. 300134 - 300135), excluding a payment to SSE and another to CRC of £369.60, in the sum of £3,988.13 including VAT be authorised for payment.

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices for September (including cheque ref. 300136) in the sum of £7,147.25 including VAT be authorised for payment.

b) 2017/18 Financial Report to 31st August 2017

RESOLVED – that the report be accepted.

c) Virement

RESOLVED – that £1,000 be vired from Contingencies to Civic Expenditure.

3516 – SMALL CLAIM

Cllr. Flack explained that the outstanding debt could only be dealt with as a civil matter and outlined the options available.

Cllr. Wild requested that the details be made public, which was agreed. Cllr. Nowak said the debt involved a former Councillor, Glenn Chadwick, who had agreed to sell the remainder of the Council’s furniture, made redundant by the office move, through his company, Jurassic Coast Auctions, and return the proceeds to the Council.

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the Council continue to seek payment and ask its Finance Committee to recommend the best way forward.

3517 – GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

It was proposed by Cllr. Flack and **RESOLVED** – that the Council meets conditions of eligibility for the General Power of Competence.

3518 – FINANCE COMMITTEE, 16TH AUGUST 2017

a) Purchase of Weedkiller

RESOLVED – that the Council buy five litres of Round-Up.

b) Bank Accounts

RESOLVED – that the Council open a six-month saver account at the Nationwide Building Society with £50,000.

c) CiLCA Qualification

RESOLVED – that the Council approve the pay increase to the Clerk, the money to be taken from reserves.

d) Assistant Clerk

RESOLVED – that the additional funding required be taken from Contingencies.

e) Terms of Reference

RESOLVED – that the amended list of terms of reference be approved.

f) Review of Accounts System

RESOLVED – that the Council continue to use the existing Quickbooks system and review this arrangement as part of the 2018/19 budget process.

g) Wreaths and Resources for Civic Events

RESOLVED – that the following events be included in the civic programme for 2018/19: Mayor-Making, D-Day Landings Memorial, Merchant Navy Day, Ceremony of the Keys and Civic Service, with others to be determined as part of the annual budget process.

h) Council Offices Loan

Cllr. Nowak said he would present a report in the Free Portland News outlining the costs of renting the Easton Street Offices over ten years and purchasing the freehold of the property.

RESOLVED – Recognising the importance of the subject that current circumstances preclude full consideration, the Committee recommends it be deferred until circumstances are clearer.

3519 – EVENTS

a) Fourth Lottery Event

Cllr. Nowak spoke to his additional paper reporting on the costs and income of Lottery-funded events. He said there were thoughts of linking the fourth event to the Ceremony of the Keys. However there was a need to move quickly as unspent grant would shortly have to be returned.

b) Easton Promise

RESOLVED – that the Council will organise Easton Promise this year, to take place on 15th December 2017, at a cost of up to £250.

**3520 – MARINE, ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM PARTNERSHIP MEETING,
6TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

It was proposed by Cllr. Flack and **RESOLVED** – that the Council donate £1,000 to Portland Visitor Information Centre towards the printing of 20,000 more tourist maps at the end of the year.

3521 – CLEANING CONTRACT

It was agreed that the Clerk would set up a contract for cleaning the Offices one hour per week with a “deep-clean” to be carried out once a year, three quotations to be obtained.

3522 – ARTIST ROW AND LORD CLYDE TOILETS

RESOLVED – that the letter drafted by Cllr. Nowak be sent to the Borough.

3523 – DEVOLUTION

Cllr. Nowak said the Borough had been advised of the Town Council’s aspirations, but a request to have car parks transferred in order to provide some income had been turned down.

3524 – PROPERTY REQUEST FROM B-SIDE

RESOLVED – that the Council support B-side’s outline proposal.

3525 – CEREMONIAL AND NON-CEREMONIAL PROTOCOLS

RESOLVED – that the Clerk’s report be accepted.

3526 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS

Cllr. Atwell informed members that the Portland Centre had closed at the end of August, but will reopen under the auspices of the Community Advisory Bureau. The services previously offered will continue.

3527 – EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

It was suggested that the paragraph regularly listed on Council agendas may have been superseded by provisions of the 1972 Local Government Act. The Clerk will check.

3528 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting will take place on Wednesday, 18th October 2017, at Easton Methodist Church Hall, Easton starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

Signed Dated.....
(Chair)