

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2019 AT PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) and 14 members of the public.

3940. 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.

3941. Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain Mrs Paula Brown led the meeting in prayer.

3942. Presentation by Inspector Gosling – Dorset Police

Inspector Barry Gosling of Dorset Police delivered a presentation on the issue of crime and the reporting of crime within the Weymouth and Portland area. He stated that in general Portland was a safe place to live with an overall reduction in crime of 1.5% over the last year. He explained that he was keen to improve communication and plans were in place to introduce local surgeries; he was hoping that this would allow residents of Portland to be able to come and speak with them. In support of this, he introduced PC Billy Taylor who would be joining the local team on Portland at the end of October. He recognised that there were some very local issues that required support and asked that any instances of crime or anti-social behaviour be reported. He felt that many people suffered in silence and urged that everyone make the effort to report crimes to the Police. He explained that there were several ways in which crimes could be reported and that more information on the various ways were available on the website; he also agreed to email posters to the Town Clerk for further dissemination. He acknowledged that the act of reporting crimes would present an increase in numbers but re-iterated that without the reporting it was not possible to get an overall picture of the true level and nature of the crime within an area. Once this was known then it would be possible to develop more appropriate strategies to deal with them.

A general question and answer session followed with the Councillors being interested in issues such diverse issues as cyber-crimes, hate crimes and speeding.

Inspector Gosling advised that it was his intention that either he or a local representative would be able to attend Full Council Meetings on a regular basis.

The Chairman thanked both Inspector Gosling and PC Taylor for the very interesting presentation.

3943. Presentation by Mrs Barbara Davis – THRIVE

Mrs Davis provided a presentation on the THRIVE ethos; THRIVE seeks to support children with social and emotional needs through the use of arts and crafts. Her aim, she said, was to give something back to the children of Portland who, for one reason or another, were not attending main-stream schools. In support of Mrs Davis, Cllr Cocking stated that Portland was a recognised area of social deprivation and child poverty; and provided statistics of the numbers of children excluded from local schools. Mrs Davis explained that she was trying to raise awareness of the number of children who were home educated on Portland and was seeking support from Portland Town Council (PTC) to implement a course of sessions aimed at helping those children through the use of THRIVE.

3944. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3945. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Paul Kimber expressed a non-pecuniary interest in Osprey Leisure Centre (see item 3953c) and the Wyvern Credit Union (see item 3951).

3946. Co-option of Councillor to Portland Town Council

The Chairman introduced Mrs Lesley Saunders who had been the only applicant for the vacancy currently held for the Tophill East Ward. Mrs Saunders was asked to provide a short personal presentation. Following the presentation, from which there were no questions, a secret ballot was taken. The Clerk and Chairman counted the votes and it was declared that an absolute majority had been returned in favour of Mrs Saunders being appointed to the position of Councillor for Portland Tophill East Ward. Mrs Saunders took the oath, signed the declaration of acceptance of office and took her seat with the Councillors.

Resolved that Mrs Lesley Saunders be co-opted as a Member onto the Portland Town Council

3947. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24th July 2019

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

3948. Minute Update and Matters Arising

Item 3933 – St Peters Church – The Clerk stated that, as per her action from the previous minutes, she had written to the conservation officer asking for his support in saving the church. She had received a response stating that he had written to the owner seeking his plans for the church.

Cllr Kimber asked that the Clerk invite the conservation officer to the next meeting, asking him to provide a presentation on, not just St Peters Church but also the Windmills.

Action on the Clerk to write to Mr Stefan Ganther inviting him to present at the next Full Council Meeting.

3949. Democratic Public Half Hour Open Forum

- a. Mrs Jo Pearce (member of Keep Portland Hospital and Portland Hospital Development Group) provided an update on Portland Hospital – see **annex A** to these minutes.

Mrs Pearce also requested that the Council write to the Trust adding their support to the Groups proposal to extend the opening hours of the Minor Treatment Centre to cover weekends. This proposal gained unanimous agreement.

Action on the Clerk to write to the Hospital Trust.

- b. Mr Andy Matthews provided an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and the recent call for 'Sites for development' – see **annex B** to these minutes.
- c. Mr Derek Vincent sought clarification on the grant money available for this year, believing that at the recent P&R meeting it had been stated that there was only £500 allocated for this year. The Chairman explained that the £500 was the allocation from this year's precept but that there was also a reserves fund of £3,302.50 available making a total of £3,802.50 available for grants for this year. The Clerk agreed to speak to the Responsible Finance Officer and to confirm the situation.

Action with the clerk to clarify the situation with regard to the money available for grants in 2019/2020.

- d. Mr Vincent also sought clarification on the closing time for the toilets, being aware that the toilets in Easton Gardens were still open well after the advertised closing time of 8pm. He stated that there was evidence that these toilets were still open on Thursday 12th and Tuesday 17th September at 9.45pm. The Clerk explained that whilst the closing time was officially 8pm the cleaning company had several toilets to close and therefore it was entirely likely that most would not be closed until after 8pm as it took some time to get around to them all. The meeting was reminded that the winter hours for the toilets would begin in October which would see the toilets open later and close earlier.

Action with the Clerk to speak to Glen Cleaning and determine if there are any issues with the toilets closing later than advertised.

- e. Mr Darby wished it to be recorded the work that Cllr Roper had undertaken to resolve the issue of the goal posts in Officers Field. He reminded the meeting that the agreement with Weymouth and Portland Borough Council had been that when the last house at Officers Field had been completed that the goal posts on Officers Field would be re-instated, and this had never been done. He further explained that whilst it had been the intention to re-instate full size goal posts this had not been possible due to the area available but was pleased to note that the intention was now to place youth sized goal posts in the area. Cllr Roper confirmed that it was the intent to have the same size pitch as at Southwell Park. In addition, Mr Darby also explained that he would wish to see three gates at Osprey Field each with 'No Dog' notices attached.
- f. Mr Darby had noticed that there was an agenda item to discuss the issue of the bus stop in Fortuneswell and wished to add his thoughts to the discussion. He made a plea that, for the sake of the safety of motorists and cyclists, that the steps be removed along with the bus stop. The Chairman thanked Mr Darby for his comments and stated that this issue would be discussed in full later in the meeting.
- g. Mr Darby commented that the Free Portland News had listed those areas that were to be transferred to Portland Town Council and in particular the fact that the green space in Hambro Road Car Park had been listed as a play area. He wished it to be known that this had originally been an allotment; as this had been the case he wished to know if this could be re-instated as an allotment. He also advised that there was a lady who was feeding the birds in the allotment who had contacted Dorset Council (DC) and received confirmation that she could continue. The Chairman advised that contact with DC would be required to understand the issue and resolve.

Action with the Clerk to review the land and to seek advice from DC on any agreements made.

3950. Chairman's Update

The Chairman reported the following:

- a. There had been three cases of fly tipping, all of which, because it was on Council land required the Council to pay to have removed and for which the cost came out of the precept.
- b. Following the assessment of the trees in Easton Gardens by the County's Tree Officer, seven trees were in need of attention, with one needing to be removed and replaced. Quotes have been received from three specialist contractors to undertake the work and were currently being evaluated.
- c. Dorset Council (DC) were currently undertaking coastal work and to support this there would be two small containers temporarily sited in the Masonic car park for three weeks.
- d. The legal work currently being undertaken to transfer assets to PTC has been delayed and would not now be complete by the end of September 2019. He advised that a revised date from DC was expected shortly.

- e. There is to be a remembrance evening to celebrate the life of Cllr. Ray Nowak. The fish and chips and poetry evening will take place on 18th October 2019.

3951. Town Mayor's Announcements

- a. The Mayor provided a brief update on the events undertaken during the last month (see **annex C** to these minutes).
- b. A presentation was provided by two directors of the Wyvern Credit Union whose offices on Portland would have to close if they were unable to find sufficient volunteers. It was explained that the service was open to all although the principle beneficiaries were the deprived and as, there were no longer any banks on Portland the Wyvern Credit Union provided an invaluable service as a community bank. Continuing that they would be extremely grateful if the Councillors were able to spread the word for the need for volunteers.

3952. Receive written reports from and County Councillors

The Chairman advised that two reports from County Councillors had been circulated with the Agenda and asked the meeting if they were content to accept these reports without further discussion? A positive response was received.

3953. Financial Matters

- a. Payments for Authorisation – A list of payments totalling £18,081.99 had been circulated before the meeting and the Chairman asked if there were any questions from the Councillors on the proposed payments. The list of payments is held at **Annex D**. There being no questions the Chairman sought a vote on the authorisation of the payments.

Authorisation of the payments was unanimously approved.

- b. The Clerk sought pre-approval of £400 to cover the removal of spoil from the Cemetery.

Authorisation of the proposed pre-approval was unanimously agreed.

- c. Approval of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment to Osprey Leisure Centre.

The Chairman explained that a presentation had been made by Osprey Leisure Centre (OLC) at a previous Policy and Resource Meeting for £5,000.00 of CIL funds. Following a lottery grant OLC were required to obtain match funding to secure sufficient funds to enable refurbishment of the changing rooms. Cllr Kimber declared a non-pecuniary interest in the OSL and abstained from voting.

Following a vote, a majority decision was returned in favour of the donation and it was resolved to donate £5,000.00 of CIL funds to OLC.

3954. Formation of Management and Forward Planning Working Group

The Chairman directed the meeting to the Terms of Reference issued with the Agenda and sought comments. Cllr Harpley sought guidance on why it was proposed that this be a working group and not a committee? The Chairman advised that the working group would not have any decision-making powers and that any decisions would require ratification at Full Council prior to being implemented.

Cllr Draper moved that Cllr Roper be nominated as the Councillor seconded to the working group. This was seconded by Cllr Cocking and agreed by the remaining Councillors.

Resolved that Cllr Roper be seconded as Chairman of the Management and Forward Planning Working Group.

3955. Expiry of Lease of Gardeners Vehicle

Cllr Roper presented a paper (issued with the Agenda) explaining that the lease on the Tipper Truck was due to expire in mid-October. In addition, he explained that the second

vehicle, used by the Head Gardener was not owned by the Council, but rather by the Head Gardener and that currently the Council simply provided fuel. He outlined the options being proposed, concluding that advice was now being sought on the Councillors preferred direction.

Following a debate, it was determined that the preferred option would be to extend the lease on the Tipper Truck and to pay the Head Gardener 45p per mile for the use of his personal vehicle. During the next year (the lease duration) further research was to be undertaken on a more long-term solution.

Resolved that the lease on the Tipper Truck be extended by one year and that 45p per mile be paid to the Head Gardener (Option 2) for the use of his personal vehicle.

3956. Purchase and Installation of Defibrillator for Portland Community Venue

Cllr Thurston presented a motion to purchase a defibrillator for the Portland Community Venue (PCV). Having undertaken some research he had been advised that costs would be in the region of £745 (vat ex). He further advised that if the defibrillator was to be sited outside of the building a secure cabinet would be required and which would involve additional costs; driving the total costs to £1,200.00 for purchase and installation. The Chairman advised that the majority of defibrillators were situated outside and this was supported by Cllr Harpley who advised that the British Heart Foundation would provide a grant of up to £600 towards the purchase of the equipment and added that there would be a need for an electrical supply and some regular routine maintenance. Several Councillors added their support to the proposal and a vote was taken on; whether the Council should purchase a defibrillator and whether it should be sited inside or outside. Following a vote, a unanimous decision was returned to assign £1,200 to the purchase of a defibrillator and a cabinet for an outside defibrillator.

Resolved to allocate funds of up to £1,200.00 for the purchase of a defibrillator and a cabinet to be sited outside of the PCV. In addition, the British Heart Foundation is to be approached to seek a grant.

3957. Presentation of a Grant to THRIVE

Following the presentation by Barbara Davis on the THRIVE ethos, Cllr Cocking proposed that a grant of £600 be provided to her to cover the costs to run a pilot project of 15 sessions at the PCV. Cllr Hughes proposed that Barbara be referred to the Dorset Council's funding stream. Cllr C Parkes added that she felt uncomfortable supporting a grant to a private individual but that the provision of space would be encouraged.

A vote was taken which returned a majority decision not to support this motion.

It was resolved that a grant would not be given to Ms Davis but that the provision of space, in the event that she required it, would be supported.

3958. Proposed Letter to the Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP

Cllr Lewis referred to a letter which she proposed be sent to the Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom (added as an annex to the Agenda). No questions were posed, and the motion was proposed and seconded by Cllrs Kimber and B Parkes. A vote was taken, and a unanimous response returned in favour of sending the letter.

It was resolved that the letter (as per that added as an annex to the Agenda) be sent to the Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom.

3959. Proposed Letter to the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group

Cllr Lewis referred to a letter which she proposed be sent to the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group (added as an annex to the Agenda). No questions were posed, and the motion was proposed and seconded by Cllrs Kimber and B Parkes. A vote was taken, and a unanimous response returned in favour of sending the letter.

It was resolved that the letter (as per that added as an annex to the Agenda) be sent to the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group.

3960. Expiry of Lease at Cheyne Weares Car Park

Cllr Draper explained that the current lease on the car park at Cheyne Weares had, at the end of 30 years expired, and a decision was required as to whether the lease be renewed and if so, whether PTC should continue with the maintenance. He added that there had been some complaints regarding the disposal of waste on the site. He advised that, as the brief holder for car parks he had received some complaints from residents regarding the number of camper vans parking there overnight and felt that the waste issue could be attributed to the camper vans. He stated that current maintenance of the site was in the region of £400. He suggested that to reduce the issue of camper vans that a height barrier costing around £2,000 could be installed. Following a discussion it was proposed that PTC pursue a renewal of a lease on the same terms as previously enjoyed (a peppercorn rent) and that funds of £2,000 be released to cover the cost of the installation of a height barrier, noting that the car parks budget had sufficient funds available.

A vote was taken with a majority decision being returned that the lease on the car park be extended and that a height barrier be installed.

Resolved that a new the lease on Cheyne Weares car park, at the same terms and conditions as previously enjoyed, be pursued. In addition, the purchase of a height barrier is to be progressed.

3961. Closure of the Fortuneswell Bus Stop

The Chairman advised the meeting that at a recent Planning and Highways meeting a resident had asked that consideration be given to closing the bus stop at Fortuneswell (outside of the laundrette), on the grounds of pollution and lack of accessibility; and had requested that the issue be taken to Full Council. The general feeling was that no action be taken as the bus stop serviced those people who were attending St John's Church and that the addition a few years ago, of a handrail, for increased accessibility. It was felt that this was a well-used bus stop and should not be lost. On the issue of pollution, the Chairman reminded the meeting that a climate emergency had just been declared and that motorists who were stopped at this bus stop were adding to the issue of pollution. Whilst the issue of pollution was acknowledged it was felt that the utility that the bus stop provided outweighed the pollution caused by stationary cars. The point was made that only one person had raised the issue and until such time that there was greater support for the removal of the bus stop then it should remain.

A vote was taken on whether the closure of the bus stop should be taken forward with a majority response being returned that it should not.

Resolved that the no further action be taken to close the bus stop.

3962. Extended Opening Time of Accessible Toilets

Cllr Kimber presented a motion that sought to undertake a pilot scheme which would leave the accessible toilets open for 24 hours (they are currently locked along with the public toilets). Cllr Kimber explained that Mr Mike Kelly who was a champion for accessibility was proposing this pilot scheme. Cllr Draper proposed that the pilot scheme be adopted and that the action be passed to the public toilets working group to initiate. The motion was seconded and following a vote it was unanimously agreed that the pilot scheme be adopted and passed to the toilets working group to initiate.

Resolved that the pilot scheme to leave the accessible toilets open for 24 hours a day be supported and that initiation of the pilot scheme be passed to the public toilets working group.

3963. Windmills

Cllr Kimber advised the meeting that he had received an email from a resident of Portland who wished to see the Windmills conserved (see annex to the agenda). He acknowledged

that ownership of one of the Windmills might add some difficulty, but he felt that it was imperative that every effort be made to protect them as part of the heritage of Portland. Cllr Cocking added that at a meeting with the Stone Firms they had advised that they had received CIL money of £11,000 to undertake some renovation work but had been advised that it would cost at least twice that. As such the Stone Firms have asked DC to match fund the CIL money and have received confirmation to that affect. The Chairman proposed that the conservation officer be invited to the next meeting.

Action on the Clerk to invite the conservation officer to a future meeting, following which a decision on future action and support will be determined.

3964. Addition of a Permanent Gardener Post

The Chairman informed the meeting that at the recent Policy and Resource (P&R) Meeting the addition of an extra gardener had been approved. Cllr Draper explained that the seasonal gardener's contract came to an end at the beginning of October and, with the programme of work planned for the winter it was appropriate to turn the temporary solution into a permanent one. The Chairman sought approval from the Councillors to ratify the decision made at the P&R Meeting. A vote was taken with a majority decision being returned.

Resolved that a permanent contract for an additional gardener be let on expiry of the latest seasonal contract.

3965. Appointment of Community Safety Officer

The Chairman proposed that, following presentation by Inspector Gosling that this appointment be deferred by one month upon receipt of the information promised by him. However, Cllr Lewis felt that as she had been the instigator of the appointment that she self-nominate herself.

A vote was taken on the appointment of Cllr Lewis as the Community Safety Officer with a majority vote being returned.

Resolved that Cllr Lewis be appointed to the post of Community Safety Officer for Portland Town Council.

3966. Exclusion of Press & Public (discretionary)

There were no matters to discuss.

3967. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 16th October 2019 at the Portland Community Venue at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 21.45 hours.

Signed Dated.....
Chairman