

3rd July 2019

Notes from the Marine Environmental and Tourism Working Group Meeting

Present:

Cllr. P. Kimber
Cllr. P. Roper
Cllr C. Parkes
Cllr. S. Harpley
Cllr. J. Draper

Andy Matthews – Portland Community Partnership
Rod Wild – Portland Seafarers Support and Association for Portland Archaeology
Mike Deadman – Portland Tourist Information Centre
Peter Allam – Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy
Jane White – Crown Estates
Hannah Sofaer – Portland Sculpture and Quarry Trust

2 members of the public: Mr D Vincent and Ms Lesley Saunders

Item 1 – Chairman’s Welcome

As there was no Chairman present – The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Item 2 – Election of New Chairman and Deputy Chairman

New Chairman – Giovanna Lewis – Seconded Paul Kimber
Deputy Chair – Jim Draper – Seconded Paul Kimber
As The newly elected Chairman was absent the Deputy Chairman chaired the Meeting.

Item 3 – Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Giovanna Lewis, Mr Geoff Peters – National Coast Watch Institution and Mr Frank Cox – Portland Port.

Item 4 – Declaration of Interest

No declarations received.

Item 5 – Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March 2019

These were declared to be an accurate reflection of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Item 5a – Matters arising from the Minutes

Underground hospital, Cllr C Parkes stated that it was not easy to undertake research on this item from Portland as much of the paperwork has been archived. Andy Matthews has offered to provide Cllr Parkes with the email address of Helen Persey who may be able to help.

Cllr Harpley raised concerns about defibrillators and commented that most were not accessible and suggested that an audit of the defibrillators be undertaken.

Action on Cllr Harpley to undertake an audit.

The Emergency Plan – Peter Allam stated that facilities for accommodation and catering were available at the sailing academy and asked that they be included in the emergency plan. Acknowledgement from the meeting that the Emergency Plan should be updated.

Action: Cllr Harpley, with support from the Assistant Town Clerk to update the Emergency Plan.

Public Rights of Way – ‘Missing Link’. Andy Matthews informed the meeting that he had spoken to the Port – with regard to the right of way and believed that a scoping report was required, from that would come a feasibility study. He believed that there would be minimal costs required to undertake a scoping study. When to be taken to Council? Cllr Draper – Quite soon. We have CIL money which needs to be developed into a programme. Not exactly sure how the scoping report will cost but he (Andy Matthews) will be happy to take it forward. **Action with Andy Matthews**

Item 6 – Change of Status of the MET Meeting

a) The Deputy Chair advised that the MET Meeting would no longer be a committee but would now be a Working Group. However, it would maintain strong links with the other Council Committees and a report following each meeting would be required to be submitted to Full Council.

Town Clerk will continue to set the agenda and issue the notes from the Working Group.

b) The Aims of the Working Group as published were discussed and agreed.

Cllr Kimber asked whether ‘to maintain the Portland Community Emergency Plan’ should be included as an aim? All agreed that it should.

c) Relevant Organisations to be added to the Distribution List

RSPB

Bird Observatory

Drill Hall – Paramedic

Coastguard

Natural Environment Team (NET) – DC

Friends of St Georges

Rod Wild asked if it was possible to include a Standard Agenda Item – Item 12f - Reports from Organisations.

Item 7 - Public Participation

Mr Vincent asked, ‘who maintains the defibrillators?’ Recognising that sometimes people move, and the machines may no longer be maintained. Cllr Harpley agreed to take that into account when she undertakes the audit.

Lesley Saunders suggested that some aspects of tourism were missing and cautioned that there was a need to be careful about Tourism, she felt that there were many walkers who walk the south west path and these people may not be being catered for. She was asked whether she had someone specific in mind who should be invited to the meeting.

Mike Deadman added that it all came down to cost and rather than specialise it often came down to offering a wide range of generic advice.

Peter Allam asked who is making the policy in terms of Tourism for the Island? Is it the elected officials and if so to whom were they consulting when determining policy? There were other groups, such as the Portland Economic Vision Group who would like to assist with a cohesive plan of action. Strategies are all well and good but doesn’t take account of what is happening on the ground and asked whether this group should take the lead?

Mike Deadman stated that for the Spirit of Portland a new set of walking maps would be issued. Cllr Roper added that a total re-vamp of PTC website was being pursued, which would look to have an area on the website to deal with what is on offer to tourists.

Cllr Harpley suggested that it would be worth considering a sub-committee of this group for tourism and it was generally agreed that there should be no more strategies and now was the time to start doing.

Cllr Kimber stated that lots of Weymouth Town Council members are speaking to Dorset Council but nothing yet from Portland.

It was agreed that a sub-group be started to deal specifically with tourism; with the group consisting of Cllrs. Harpley, C Parkes, Draper and Roper, together with Andy Matthews and Bob Ford, Hannah Sofaer and Mike Deadman. It was also agreed that Douglas Pigg should be invited, given his involvement with the Dorset National Park.

Cllr Harpley had concerns with the implementation of a National park and advised caution, although accepted that having Douglas Pigg as part of the sub-group would give an opportunity to challenge him on the National Park.

A meeting date was set for Tuesday – 16th July at the PCV 7.00.

Item 8 - Neighbourhood Plan

Andy Matthews updated the meeting on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been submitted to the local planning authority and the Good news on the Plan Natural England comments have been included. An inspector should now be appointment and then it's into Regulation 16 – public comment. Once the inspector has signed it off it becomes more robust, but in essence we have finished our bit.

Item 9 – Events diary

Spirit of Portland – 26th August to 4th September.

Mike Deadman advised that the Launch was to coincide with the issue of the walking map. Regrettably they have had to scale back on one or two things on previous years.

Item 10 - Brown Tailed Moths

Cllr Draper advised that we need to have a strategy and action plan to deal with this Island wide Problem. We have certain bits of land that we need to deal with but that it would be nice to have an island wide strategy. Cllr Draper suggested that as PTC have more resource, we may be able to do a bit more. Cllr Kimber suggested approaching Lynn Cooch for some direction, and that Dave Ackerley (DC) should also be able provide some advice and guidance. Cllr Roper added that there was a need to plan for October, as the best time to eradicate the issue, but there is a need to prep now to have a team start in October. Cllr Draper felt that if the Council didn't drive the issue then no one would and there was a moral duty to try and resolve the issue on the Incline if now where else.

Action – Cllr Draper to take the lead and present at a future Full council meeting

Item 11 - Public Rights of Way – Updates

Cllr Kimber observed that the job of keeping the rights of way clear was so massive that there needed to be a plan.

It was mentioned that Andy Straw does an audit (volunteer ranger) and could be asked about the current issues. Heritage Paths to attract heritage funding. Tourism sub-committee should deal with Public rights of way. Encourage more walkers.

Action to put this issue on the Agenda for the next meeting

Item 12a – Disused Quarries

Nothing for discussion.

Item 12b - Fly Tipping

It was reported that people staying overnight in the Cheyne car park in camper vans are dumping rubbish over the edge. There used to be a height barrier but that is no longer there. It was remarked that Cheyne car park could do with an ice cream van.

Cllr Harpley reported that there was a big problem in the quarry opposite Cheyne, Coombefield, that a large amount of rubbish was being fly tipped there.

Cllrs Harpley and Draper are to email Cllr Kimber and he will ensure that it is passed on to the appropriate person in the Minerals Liaison Group.

Item 12c – Run Down Areas

Cllr Kimber to write a letter to DC asking what they are going to do with certain empty buildings. He suggested that a Run-Down Areas - Improvement Plan was required. In addition, he will also copy the letter to PTC so that we could send to DC also.

Item 12d – Open Spaces etc.

Cllr Harpley advised that the Secret Stairs at West Cliff were an accident waiting to happen. She believed that they were Built by the Climbers. She felt that PTC needed to be aware that it is was there but acknowledged that it is not the Council's responsibility. She was advised to bring it to Dave Ackerley's (DC Senior Ranger) attention.

Item 12d – Hedgerows

Nothing for discussion.

Item 12d- Dry Stone Walls

It was remarked that the Court Leet did a good job on the repair of the wall out to Portland Bill which now allowed increased species movement.

Item 12e – Cycle Paths (To be renamed Access Paths)

Cllr Draper suggested that the meeting ought to be looking at Cycle Paths and allocating CIL money to providing a safe path to the top of the island. Money is available to support sustainable travel. S

Item 12f - Reports from Members

Mike Deadman - Portland TIC – In August he will be representing Portland at the Annual Bird Fayre at Rutland as well as the Group Travel and leisure show which is being sponsored by the Heights Hotel and Trinity House.

As stated previously a new map is being issued soon.

The Portland Passport is doing well.

He also mentioned that in the event that PTC upgrade their website he would welcome a signpost on this to the TIC.

Rod Wild – provided a report from Portland Seafarers Support and the Association for Portland Archaeology - see attached.

Any Other Business

Cllr Roper spoke about St Peter's Church at the Grove.

He stated that Terry Shakespeare is concerned about the state of the building and that the only other building like it is in Wormwood Scrubs. It is starting to lose tiles, there is water ingress and a risk of falling masonry. The Rose Window is starting to lose glass and again the ingress of water is a risk and represents a health and safety issue. The building is currently owned by private individual and Terry is asking if there is anything that we can do to support restoration. It was considered that this would be a good community project but needs to happen quite quickly as it is deteriorating daily.

Cllr Kimber reiterated that someone must do something soon or it will be lost within the next year. There is a lot of public interest in the building. Cllr Harpley suggested contacting the Landmark Trust.

Action – Cllrs Roper and Kimber will put together a photographic report and send to the conservation team.

The meeting finished at 21.10.