

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices
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8th February 2017

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the **TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**, to be held in **PETER TRIM HALL, ST. GEORGE'S CENTRE, REFORNE** on **WEDNESDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY 2017**, commencing at **7.00 pm** when the business set out below will be transacted.

It should be noted that it is the Council's intention that all meetings of the Council and its Committees be recorded aurally.

Yours faithfully

Ian Looker
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. **Chairman's Welcome**
2. **Prayers**
3. **Apologies for Absence** – to receive
4. **Declarations of Interest** – to receive any declarations from Councillors or Officers of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests regarding matters to be considered at this meeting, together with a statement on the nature of those interests.
5. **Open Forum**
 - a) **Police** – to receive a report
 - b) **Public Half-Hour** (Limit: three minutes per speaker, thirty minutes total)
 - c) **Reports from Borough and County Councillors** – to receive
6. **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting, 18th January 2017** (attached) – to agree and sign
7. **Minute Update and Matters Arising from the Minutes** (attached) – to receive
8. **Written Questions for the Chairman** – to receive replies
9. **Town Mayor's Announcements**
10. **Financial Matters**
 - a) **Payments for Authorisation** (to follow) – to approve
 - b) **2016/17 Financial Report to 31st January 2017** (attached) – to accept
 - c) **Internal Audit, 2016/17** – to receive the first report (attached)
11. **Questionnaire on Healthcare in Dorset** – to agree answers
12. **Co-option of Councillor for Underhill Ward** – to consider an appointment (see confidential attachment)

13. **Local Government Reorganisation in Dorset** – to consider the decisions of the principal authorities and possible implications for Portland, then agree a response (see attached)
14. **Council Offices** – to agree a response to a request for the use of a room and give further consideration to issues around the submission of a planning application (see open and confidential attachments)
15. **Finance & Staffing Working Group** – to consider a report by the Clerk (attached)
16. **Changes to Planning Procedures** – to consider:-
 - a) **Reporting to the Borough** (see attached)
 - b) **Viewing Application Details at Planning Committee Meetings** (see confidential attachment)
17. **Royal Manor Playing Field** – to decide whether to adopt the County Council offer (see confidential attachment)
18. **Grass-Cutting Contract** – to determine its parameters (see attached)
19. **Meeting with First Bus Representatives** – to receive a report from Cllr. West
20. **Living and Learning Project** – to receive written and verbal reports (see attached)
21. **Reports from Representatives to Outside Bodies and Voluntary Posts** – to receive
22. **Exclusion of Press & Public** (discretionary)

“That pursuant to the provisions of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for Agenda Item(s) ... by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.”

23. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council is due to take place at the Peter Trim Hall, St. George's Centre, Reforne on Wednesday, 15th March 2017, starting at 7.00 pm.

EXPENDITURE

Salaries	30,500
Advertising	286
Audit	1,326
Bank Charges	70
Civic Expenditure	1,020
Computer Equipment	306
Computer Software	367
IT Support	255
Contingency	5,000
Council Offices	12,000
Elections	4,000
Furniture & Equipment	624
Hire of Halls	857
Honorarium	100
Insurance	1,530
Legal Fees	0
Mayoral Allowance	1,000
Miscellaneous	0
Postage	500
Publications	20
Stationery	700
Subscriptions	1,632
Telephone / Internet	510
Training / Conferences	800
Travelling & Subsistence	102
Sub-Total	63,505

Gifts and Donations	102
Grants	1,000
Landscape Maintenance	6,000
Lottery-Funded Events	500
Lottery-Funded Facilities	1,000
Neighbourhood Plan	3,000
Office Move	800
Projects	5,000
Town Crier	50
Website	1,224
Sub-Total	18,676

TOTAL 82,181**INCOME**

Precept	76,132
Discount Grant	549
Council Offices Rent	3,000
Fair	1,000
Interest	0
Lottery Fund Grant: Events	500
Lottery Fund Grant: Facilities	1,000
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	0
Other	0
TOTAL	82,181

SURPLUS / DEFICIT (-) 0
FOR YEAR**RESERVES RELEASED****TOTAL 0**
Net Total after Reserve Release 0

MINUTE UPDATE

a) Minute 3335, para 2 – Meeting with First Bus

See Agenda Item 19.

b) Minute 3336(c) – Easton Promise

The money donated has not been committed to the Projects budget, but rather to Lottery-Funded Events expenditure, this with the approval of Finance & Staffing Working Group members.

c) Minute 3339 – Lottery-Funded Events

A recommendation on the themes is awaited from the Events & Tourism Working Group.

d) Minute 3346 – Deed of Receipt and Release

The deed has been signed and returned. I have to make a declaration about the access road (on the 10th February?) for the Borough's solicitor to add to the file documents.

2016/17 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31ST JANUARY 2017

Changes to Projections

Target for expenditure and income this month is 83% of budget figure.

Expenditure

Stationery	Increase £70	Adjustment to current spending level
Neighbourhood Plan	Decrease £8,000	Adjustment to current spending level

Income

Neighbourhood Plan	Decrease £5,625	Adjustment to current income total
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Portland Town Council - Financial Report, 15.2.17

	Budget 2016/17	Expend. 2015/16	Expend. to 31.1.17	Projected 2016/17	Paid / Rec'd to Date (%)
EXPENDITURE					
Salaries	29,844	30,333	24,843	29,900	83.24
Advertising	280	219	182	210	65.00
Audit	1,300	1,377	652	1,300	50.15
Bank Charges	0	0	167	190	-
Civic Expenditure	1,000	956	579	1,000	57.90
Computer Equipment	300	0	236	300	78.67
Computer Software	360	39	21	100	5.83
IT Support	250	175	0	50	0.00
Contingency	0	0	0	0	-
Council Offices	17,200 ¹	0	21,930	25,340	127.50
Elections	6,000	4,210	4,209	4,210	70.15
Furniture & Equipment	612	895	315	420	51.47
Hire of Halls	840	1,108	804	1,100	95.71
Honorarium	100	100	100	100	100.00
Insurance	1,500	1,309	1,250	1,250	83.33
Legal Fees	0	1,896	668	670	-
Mayoral Allowance	1,000	700	1,000	1,000	100.00
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	-
Postage	790	945	488	640	61.77
Publications	20	5	79	80	395.00
Stationery	850	719	533	640	62.71
Subscriptions	1,600	1,471	1,602	1,600	100.13
Telephone / Internet	500	598	568	600	113.60
Training / Conferences	1,000	389	285	600	28.50
Travelling & Subsistence	100	89	162	190	162.00
Sub-Total	65,446	47,533	60,673	71,490	92.71
Cheyne Weares	4,800	4,608	236	240	4.92
Gifts and Donations	100	70	50	70	50.00
Grants	2,750 ²	2,232	1,915	1,915	69.64
Landscape Maintenance	5,000	52	1,152	2,000	23.04
Lottery-Funded Events	0	0	901 ³	1,000	-
Neighbourhood Plan	18,000	3,678	3,836	4,000	21.31
Office Move	3,800	163	4,160	4,300	109.47
Projects	3,150 ²	1,375	400	3,150	12.70
Town Crier	50	35	35	35	70.00
Website	1,200	2,651	90	1,450	7.50
Sub-Total	38,850	14,864	12,775	18,160	32.88
TOTAL	104,296	62,397	73,448	89,650	70.42

INCOME

Precept	63,679	50,723	63,679	63,679	100.00
Discount Grant	2,007	3,390	2,007	2,007	100.00
Compensation	0	0	50,000	50,000	-
Fair	1,750	1,375	1,000	1,000	57.14
Hire of Halls Refund	840	801	1,350	1,350	160.71
Interest	220	72	191	200	86.82
Lottery Fund Grant	0	0	5,800	5,800	-
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	15,000	2,500	3,375	9,000	22.50
Sale of Council Furniture	0	0	1,909	2,000	-
Other	0	70	20 ³	230	-
TOTAL	83,496	58,931	129,331	135,266	154.89

SURPLUS / DEFICIT (-) FOR YEAR	-20,800	-3,466	55,883	45,616	
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RESERVES RELEASED

Cheyne Weares	4,800		236	3,000	
Council Offices	4,000		4,000	4,000	
Grants - Fair	0		0	0	
Landscape Maintenance	5,000		1,152	2,000	
Legal Fees	4,000		668	670	
Neighbourhood Plan	3,000		461	3,000	
TOTAL	20,800		6,517	12,670	
Net Total after Reserve Release	0		62,400	58,286	

¹ £4,000 added from Reserves, 17.8.16

² £1,000 vired from Projects to Grants, 16.11.16

³ £211 donated at Easton Promise, moved from Other Income to Lottery-Funded Events expenditure, 18.1.17

Council Offices

	Expend. to 31.1.17
Council Tax	1,114
Electricity	229
Rent	9,371
Waste Collection	65
Water & Sewerage	67
Building Materials	360
Contractor Payments	10,224
Fire Risk Assessment	280
Legal Fees	162
Signage	58
Total	£21,930

Office Move

	Expend. to 31.1.17
Auction Refund	30
Building Maint. & Materials	1,129
Catering Expenses	3
IT Support	280
Key Cutting	10
Legal Fees	712
Mail Transfer	425
Removals	813
Skip Hire	286
Staff Relocation	472
Total	£4,160

Neighbourhood Plan

	Expend. to 31.1.17
Consultant's Fee	3,375
Grant	250
Staff Overtime	211
Total	£3,836

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Internal audit report 2016/17

Visit 1 of 2

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Date: 27th January 2017

Report author: R Darkin-Miller
Email: r.darkin@darkinmiller.co.uk

Introduction

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Portland Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on the 26th January 2017.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Appendix 9 of the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide'.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

Audit Opinion

As this audit report is an interim one, no audit opinion is offered at this stage.

The report issued after the final visit for 2016/17 (which will be in May or June 2017) will contain the audit opinion.

The following areas were reviewed during this audit visit:

1. Proper Book-keeping
2. Payments
3. Risk Management
4. Petty Cash (confirmed not applicable to Council).
5. Payroll
6. Bank Reconciliation

Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.

Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit and their priority are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	0
Medium	4
Low	1
TOTAL	5

I would like to thank Ian Looker, Town Clerk for his assistance during this audit.

Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants
2016/17 INTERNAL AUDIT OF PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT REPORT: 27th JANUARY 2017

Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/Medium/High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
2.1 – Supporting paperwork and authorisation	<p>I checked a sample of payments to ensure that they were supported by invoices, authorised and minuted. I found that 1/16 (£66 for postage) did not have an invoice or receipt to support it. I found that one other sample (the quarterly Standing Order for rent which was paid in December) had no paperwork and had not yet been authorised by the Clerk or minuted for approval by the Council.</p> <p>It is recommended that all payments made are supported by a certified invoice in order to ensure that the payment relates to a valid business expense, and that the amount has been confirmed as being correct before payment is made.</p>	M	<p>The auditor noted that the number of the till receipt had been recorded on the payment slip. It just appears to have been mislaid. I have queried the reference and amount quoted by the auditor in order to investigate the transaction further.</p> <p>The rent payment is an error on my part and will be rectified.</p> <p>The point is accepted and the procedure is normally followed as some members will confirm. All members need to be aware of this procedure also for the occasions when they claim reimbursement of expenditure on the Council's behalf.</p>		
2.2 – Council approval of payments	It is further recommended that all payments made are tabled for Council approval at the next meeting.	L	This procedure is followed too and isolated errors that occur are corrected when found.		
2.3 – VAT reclaim	The Council reclaims VAT on purchase invoices once a year. The 2015/16 claim	M	As the return has to be completed once a year it tends to be subordinated to more pressing needs. As we no longer		

	<p>has not yet been submitted.</p> <p>It is recommended that the claim is submitted as soon as possible in order to recover monies due to the Council at the earliest opportunity.</p>		<p>have a current bank account that earns interest there is less incentive to file the return early.</p>		
7.1 – Review of employment contracts	<p>The Council amended the hours and salary scale points for its posts in 2015/16, but has not yet issued fresh contracts of employment.</p> <p>It is recommended that the contracts of employment for existing postholders be reviewed and updated where necessary, in order to ensure that they remain appropriate.</p>	M	<p>This work has not been carried out and is one of the effects of having fewer staff than the recommendation of the staffing review previously agreed by the Council.</p>		
7.2 – Salary payments	<p>I checked a sample of salary payments for one month to confirm that they agree back to the amounts approved by the Council. I found that one member of staff had not received the 1% Local Government pay award that was due in April 2016. I was unable to confirm the calculation for the other member of staff, although the difference was not material.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Clerk check the calculations of pay with the payroll bureau to ensure that staff are being</p>	M	<p>I had assumed the payroll consultant would award the national pay rise as soon as it became effective. She tells me some local councils do not implement it automatically and therefore expects us to notify her.</p> <p>The Admin Assistant has also been underpaid. When asked about this the consultant could not account for the slight difference in the hourly rate used in her calculations.</p> <p>The consultant will correct the errors at the next opportunity. I shall keep a closer eye on her calculations.</p>		

	paid in accordance with the salaries agreed by Council, and that any adjustments are made to salaries as appropriate.				
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DORSET

It looks as though the existing nine principal authorities will be replaced by two unitaries, one for the south-east conurbation, the other for the remainder of the county. This proposal is supported by all the councils apart from the three remaining independent district councils.

As is well known, under the proposals Weymouth & Portland Borough Council will cease to exist. Most of its functions and assets will be absorbed by the new "Dorset" unitary. It seems inevitable too that a new town council will be created to manage local council responsibilities in Weymouth. In order for it to operate it will need the provision of initial funding and assets, including council offices.

In a sense the reorganisation should mark a new beginning for Portland Town Council, since it should expect to be given parish council services also. With the Council's present limited resources it seems right that it be given the same sort of helping hand as Weymouth. With the straitened times that local government currently operates in we cannot expect much generosity from the Borough or its successor over what it passes to Portland.

Therefore it seems necessary for the Town Council to fight its corner. What form that action should take rests with members. They will no doubt be aware that the Town Council's Chairman in his other role as a Borough Councillor has requested that the Borough officer report on the transfer of assets should include Portland as well as Weymouth. It may be that the Town should write to the Borough to make clear the extent of Portland's aspirations. Managing allotments, the Town Council's legal right, may be a starting point.

COUNCIL OFFICES

We have received a request from an officer attached to the Borough of Poole for the use of accommodation to hold meetings with individual member of the public. I understand such meetings would last about an hour and a half and take place once a week initially.

I have given the officer concerned a brief tour of the building and she considers that the lounge area upstairs would be suitable. Therefore I seek members' permission to formalise an arrangement.

The officer has been made aware of recent improvements to the building and current circumstances. Should they be required tea-and coffee-making facilities would be available in the kitchen attached to the offices downstairs.

Members are also asked to consider what charge should be made for the use of the accommodation.

[Continued in separate confidential report]

FINANCE & STAFFING WORKING GROUP

Members are asked to consider again the operation of this Group, which was last discussed in August. Technically it is less than the six months required by Standing Order 7(b) because of the dates of the months involved, but August to February could be regarded as a valid six-month interval.

The presenting issue is that Council decided in December that the June 2017 meeting would be delayed by two weeks and the December 2017 meeting cancelled altogether. This has the effect of not providing an opportunity for the monthly payments schedule to be approved at the due time.

By changing the status of Finance to a committee and giving it delegated authority to agree payments be made the problem can be avoided. See Financial Regulations 5.2 and 6.2. I would point out however that according to my reading of 5.2 Council will still have to give its approval to those payments when next it meets.

The other major aspects of concern about the Finance Group is its level of attendance. The current membership is Cllrs. Cocking, Flack and Nowak with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor being ex officio. In practice neither the Mayor nor Deputy have attended any meeting of the Group this year and on some occasions only two members have been present, which is below the quorum required for a recognised Council gathering.

Since the quorum for a committee of up to nine members is three I would recommend the Finance Committee be set up with at least five named members, together with the Mayor and Deputy ex officio as at present. My suggestion is that the Committee meet at least two weeks prior to the following Town Council meeting to give adequate notice of recommendations that have been agreed. It may also be necessary to switch from daytime to evening meetings in order to facilitate the attendance of individual Councillors.

Finance members are given sight of the intended payment schedule and invoices one or two days before a Town Council meeting. This arrangement, treated as informal, could continue if members so wish.

Regarding staffing matters I would recommend a separate Staffing Committee of at least five members be set up. The present two-tier membership of the Finance & Staffing Working Group is awkward. Indeed a Staffing meeting as such has not been held since September 2015, when it was the Human Resources and IT Committee.

CHANGES TO PLANNING PROCEDURES

From the Planning Committee agenda, 15th December 2016:-

Members will be aware of some of the changes resulting from the Dorset Councils Partnership decision to adopt “paperless” working procedures with regard to Planning. This week (7th December) I attended for the first time a meeting of the pilot group monitoring these changes. It consists of Partnership officers and a small number of West Dorset parish clerks.

The changeover process is now well under way. From 1st January the Partnership will no longer supply the weekly list of planning applications. From 1st February all reporting of parish planning committee decisions will have to be made online. This means we shall no longer be able to send the Borough a copy of the minutes to convey decisions but will input the information electronically. In effect the Partnership has relieved itself of processing the details of applications related to parish committees by shifting the work before and after parish planning meetings to the parishes themselves.

The Partnership’s IT work to carry out the procedural changes is planned to be finished by the end of February. However it was admitted at the meeting that the West Dorset and Weymouth planning portal is now out of date and will need to be replaced.

It was agreed at the meeting that the subject be raised at the Town Council.

Viewing Application Details

Members who attended the January Planning Committee meeting will be aware that the PC-projector arrangement for viewing planning applications was not available. Fortunately we had been given the Borough planning files as usual with the paper copies of the plans enclosed, which were duly circulated. The Borough will no longer provide this facility after March so I am advising Council to buy 3 - 6 tablets so that we have a backup option if the January circumstances are repeated.

Some members have brought tablets and PCs to the meetings and may be willing to continue doing so. My advice is to buy sufficient so that pairs of Councillors can each have a tablet or PC on which to view the schemes. The hope is that at least one of each pair will be sufficiently conversant with the technology that there will be no difficulty on accessing the information, though there may be a training requirement early on. It has also been outlined to me that there may be an issue with ensuring each tablet is fully “loaded,” so I hope that can be addressed in Council’s discussion.

A report on a choice of tablets is enclosed in a separate attachment, which is confidential to avoid infringing copyright.

GRASS-CUTTING CONTRACT

The Council has indicated that it wishes to let a contract for grass-cutting this year. This is likely to cover:-

Cheyne Weares
West Weares
Royal Manor Playing Field (see Agenda Item 17)

Guidance is sought from the Council regarding the following:-

How many years will the contract run for?

Will one contract apply to the sites or might the sites be cut under separate contracts?

How many cuts are intended each year at each site and when? (Mid/late March to late October/early November are quoted by other councils as the period for cutting.)

Should the mown grass be left in situ or removed and, if so, to where?

Should weed and feed applications be included in the contract, where and when?

What budget figure does Council wish to set for the work?

LIVING AND LEARNING PROJECT

An initial stakeholder meeting was held at the Jailhouse Café on 18th January. Cllrs. Thurston and West, and the Clerk attended on behalf of the Council.

Those attending were divided into groups in order to gather information and generate more discussion. The first exercise therefore was to identify public and community buildings on the Island, though this seemed more ad hoc than systematic.

The second exercise was based on six general questions: “What outcomes are you trying to achieve in Portland?”, “What are the current areas of strength in Portland?” etc. If you will excuse a personal note I raised two or three points worth mentioning:-

The Town Council is likely to expand in the next two or three years through being given additional responsibilities. (This was recorded in the meeting notes as due to an increasing population.)

The County Council made a serious error of judgement in relocating Royal Manor School to IPACA at Southwell. These are remote premises on the Island compared with the centrality of Royal Manor. The move has resulted in the loss of business units at Southwell, when the general intention is to stimulate employment on the Island. Meanwhile the Royal Manor site is likely to be handed over to housing development, the existing buildings demolished and a strategic site and opportunity lost. These comments did not find their way into the meeting notes.

The following key points from the group discussion were noted:-

- It is important to have access to health services particularly for young people to access
- Insufficient GPs and dentists for a growing population, how do we grow services to match the population?
- Housing needs to be met for social and affordable housing
- The issues around physical geography and transport problems
- Portland has a unique nature for sports, nature, history and culture, but not well marketed, make more out of the island
- Insufficient paid workers / resources on the island
- Consideration of expansion of the Town Council if the population increases
- Understand the community gaps
- Develop effective partnerships / networks
- Understanding partners and their focus on the community
- Facilities to be fit for purpose and supportive
- Providing an integrated hub
- Consultation to make use of evidence that has already been captured by other organisations
- Decisions made in isolation causes missed opportunities
- Share more information about resources, capital items etc.

The intention is to set up a smaller working group to progress the initiative and several volunteers have already been recruited. It is suggested that the Town Council appoint one or more representatives to the group to maintain its involvement.