

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices
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PORTLAND
Dorset
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7th October 2015

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the **TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**, to be held in **ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH HALL, SOUTHWELL, PORTLAND**, on **WEDNESDAY, 14TH OCTOBER 2015**, 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

A G E N D A

- 1. Prayers**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Declarations of Interest** – to receive any declarations from Councillors or Officers of personal or prejudicial interests regarding matters to be considered at this meeting, together with a statement on the nature of those interests.
- 4. Open Forum**
 - a) Police Question Time
 - b) Public Half-Hour
 - c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors
- 5. Minutes** – to confirm the minutes of the last meeting held on 16th September 2015 (attached)
- 6. Minute Update and Matters Arising from the Minutes** (see attached)
- 7. Town Mayor's Announcements**
- 8. Written Questions for the Mayor**
- 9. Financial Matters**
 - a) Payments for Authorisation (to follow)
 - b) 2015/16 Financial Report to 30th September 2015 (attached)
- 10. Human Resources / IT Committee Meeting, 29th September 2015**
Finance Working Group Meeting, 30th September 2015 - to receive a written report from the Clerk (attached)
- 11. Budget and Precept, 2016/17** – to consider a proposed timetable and associated matters (see attached)
- 12. Annual Return, 2014/15** – to receive the external auditor's report (see attached)

13. **Council Offices** – to discuss further the Council’s future provision of accommodation
14. **Future Direction of the Council** – to receive a written report from the Clerk (attached)
15. **Youth Service Provision on the Council** – to consider, especially with regard to Royal Manor Youth Centre
16. **Code of Conduct Training** – to consider arranging a new date
17. **Award of Grants, 2015/16** – to consider the applications received (attached)
18. **Easton Promise 2015** – at the request of Cllr. Cocking, to consider if and how the Council might get involved
19. **Christmas Lights Competition, 2015** – to consider the format (see attached)
20. **Reports from Representatives to Outside Bodies and Voluntary Posts** (see attached)
21. **Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils** – to consider five motions from member councils for AGM (attached)
22. **Councillors’ News from the Wards** – to receive reports
23. **Hire of Council Offices** – to receive a verbal report from the Clerk and consider drawing up a set of procedures
24. **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.”
25. **Freedom of the Island** – at the request of Cllr. Wild, to consider a new award (see confidential attachment)

26. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 18th November 2015, starting at 7.00 pm.

AWARD OF GRANTS, 2015/16

The four grant applications received total £1,502 and £1,915 remains unspent of the grants budget.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION, 2015

The competition originated in 2006. The intention was to brighten up the Island in the dark days at the turn of the year by encouraging private and commercial displays.

Further categories and trophies have been added over the years, so that now there are eight categories in all. Sadly the numbers of entries each year has usually struggled to make double figures.

Council's view is sought on this year's competition.

**HUMAN RESOURCES / IT COMMITTEE MEETING,
29TH SEPTEMBER 2015
FINANCE WORKING GROUP MEETING,
30TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

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BUDGET AND PRECEPT, 2016/17

The Finance Working Group gave some initial consideration to this, taking note of Council practice in recent years, which has varied.

Five members are due to attend a DAPTC training course on budget preparation shortly, so it is hoped the process will be aided by what they come away with.

The Working Group planned a further meeting on 29th October, to be followed by full-scale Council discussions in November and December. This leaves open the possibility of a further discussion in January, should delays arise.

One unknown quantity is the size of the discount grant that the Council is due to receive from the Borough in 2016. Although the national procedure has only been operating for two years, some district councils have withheld all or part of the grant from the parish councils. More money was withheld in 2015 across the country than in the previous year, increasing the uncertainty for the future.

Members of the Working Group suggested that a small group of Town Councillors meet with representatives of the Borough to try to find out their intentions concerning the discount grant. They also thought it would be a good opportunity to share views again on the Council Offices and the possible transfer of services, both of which have implications for next year's budget.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE COUNCIL

Council gave this some consideration in June. The minute records that, “The discussion moved seamlessly into an appraisal of the staffing review.” Resolutions were passed involving working hours, salaries and staff training.

Council then went on to discuss the projected second part of the Council review, proposals for the future and in particular the consultant’s quotation. Reservations were expressed about the size of the quotation, but the members decided to review the matter in October.

In the Executive Summary of the Staffing Review the consultant stated,

“The important point however is that the Council has, by undertaking this review, made the first step in resolving the problems it currently faces. While there are things that can be done, in the short term, to address some of the issues the basic problem is one of resources, the Council precept is very low, which means that most resources are committed to the basic tasks of operating the council without having a meaningful impact on the life of the community. The Council has a clear choice, it could decide that it must remain within its current budgetary framework, in which case it will need to overhaul and further prune its functions to ensure that it can operate successfully within that constraint. Alternatively, it can define a strategy for growth and address the issues associated with funding and deploying increased resources to improve its impact for the community. This is in line with National Policy.”

The consultant then referred to the series of recommendations he had made. The Council has now implemented the majority of them.

The single, most important issue still to be decided by the Council is its future strategy. The choice lies between the two alternatives presented in the quotation above. However the second option, growth, would still be subject to consideration of the scale and speed of that intended growth.

What I will try to do is indicate possible avenues for growth from a theoretical point of view and then illustrate how this has been tackled by other councils in a similar situation to Portland.

The first set of avenues to look at are the statutory responsibilities open to parish and town councils. These will now be familiar to members but they are listed in a table appended to this report. Few of them are “money-spinners.” It has to be acknowledged that they are public services, whose cost is greater than their income, but which are generally reckoned to be of benefit to the wider community.

In one sense these services are a menu from which the Council can select those it wishes to pursue. However the reality is that the Borough Council

currently holds the responsibilities and may not wish to give them up so readily. In that case members will need to consider how best they want to approach the Borough with their requests.

A second concern is the ever-lingering threat of double taxation, that Portland residents pay directly for any services the Council acquires, while continuing to fund jointly those same services that are provided in Weymouth. One way out from this is the possibility suggested on one occasion by the Borough that it gives a refund for the services handed over. This begs the questions, how much would be refunded for each service and to what extent would it be a continuing, undiminishing commitment?

The other avenues to be explored are what might be called the “creative” ones, functions and projects outside of the traditional parish council role. These are among the “new ways of working” people have suggested are emerging from the Government’s policies, often grant-funded. Others are more knowledgeable and discerning than I in seeing these new opportunities, but it would be remiss of me not to draw attention to them.

We turn now to the councils in a similar situation to our own and below are some gleanings from the Internet.

There are about twenty district and unitary councils that have only one or two parish councils operating with them. They range from villages to sizeable towns. Here are perhaps the more interesting ones:-

District / Borough / Unitary	Parish / Town
Birmingham	New Frankley in Birmingham
Bournemouth	Holdenhurst Village
Castle Point	Canvey Island
Christchurch	Burton, Hurn
Gloucester	Quedgeley
Manchester	Ringway
Oldham	Saddleworth, Shaw and Crompton
Southend-on-Sea	Leigh-on-Sea
Tameside	Mossley
Torbay	Brixham
Westminster	Queen’s Park

Curiously the list failed to include Weymouth & Portland, so it cannot be taken as 100% accurate.

I had thought this to be the whole story, but this was because I had considered the situation in Dorset to be general throughout the country i.e. districts wholly parished like East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck and West Dorset with one- or two-parished “anomalies” such as Christchurch and Weymouth.

There is a set of other councils however where the anomalies are more widespread. Time has prevented me from establishing precisely how many there are, but they are characterised as borough councils with at least one large, unparished town surrounded by a host of villages and smaller towns. Ashford Borough Council in Kent is such a case.

Ashford has forty or so parishes within its boundaries, including one town council, Tenterden. In effect all the parishes suffer double taxation and are helping to subsidise the parish level services provided in Ashford itself. The lowest Band D charge in the Borough is for the unparished area, £1,427.69, and the highest for Tenterden, £1,516.00. The discrepancy was created in 1974 and has continued to this day. Here I think is a worthy cause for taxpayers' rights.

Some of those isolated towns and parishes on page 2 have set about rising above their in-built handicap. Some are comparatively new creations, Mossley (1999), Brixham and Canvey Island (both 2007), recently Queen's Park (2114) in the heart of London. Their websites are worth a glance to gauge their range of activities. Canvey Island (population 38,170) doesn't have the full range of normal responsibilities, but gives a summary list of sixteen services under "What Do We Do?". Some of them Portland could already lay claim to.

There is one frequently occurring element among these councils. I haven't checked the villages, but Brixham, Canvey Island, Leigh-on-Sea and Saddleworth all run their own allotments.

This may not be surprising. Charles Arnold-Baker states (p. 284):-

"In England councils have allotments functions only in non-parochial places: consequently where a parish is constituted by an order and land in it is held by a district council as or for allotments, the land automatically passes to the parish council or, as the case may be, to the parish meeting. "(Ref. Local Government (Parish and Parish Councils) Regulations 1999, SI 1999/545, reg. 10).

So I would commend allotments to the Council as an opportunity to deliver services to residents on the Island at a reasonably small level of expenditure. Because of the above regulations the Borough may feel obliged to hand them over. Whether members wish to go beyond at this stage and seek the transfer of other services rests with them.

Portland Town Council - Financial Report, 14.10.15

	Budget 2015/16	Expend. 2014/15	Expend. to 30.9.15	Projected 2015/16	Paid / Rec'd to Date (%)
EXPENDITURE					
Salaries	23,824	23,033	13,602	31,500	57.09
Advertising	280	358	121	260	43.21
Audit	1,070	1,234	840	1,600	78.50
Civic Expenditure	1,000	1,525	245	1,000	24.50
Computer Equipment	300	636	0	0	0.00
Computer Software	360	21	0	270	0.00
IT Support	200	295	95	290	47.50
Contingency	12,803	0	0	0	0.00
Elections	6,000	5,850	0	4,210	0.00
Furniture & Equipment	612	600	420	840	68.63
Hire of Halls	840	0	553	1,100	65.83
Honorarium	100	100	100	100	100.00
Insurance	1,300	1,298	1,309	1,310	100.69
Mayoral Allowance	700	700	700	700	100.00
Postage	790	739	560	1,120	70.89
Publications	0	18	0	20	-
Stationery	710	786	465	930	65.49
Subscriptions	1,440	1,468	1,269	1,500	88.13
Telephone / Internet	300	605	294	600	98.00
Training / Conferences	1,000	95	128	280	12.80
Travelling & Subsistence	100	57	27	70	27.00
Sub-Total	53,729	39,418	20,728	47,700	38.58
Cheyne Weares	5,000	0	200	3,000	4.00
Gifts and Donations	50	50	20	50	40.00
Grants	2,645	0	730	2,640	27.60
Maintenance / Caretaker	0	3,884	13	40	-
Neighbourhood Plan	6,600	6,335	452	6,600	6.85
Projects	144	1,216	414	450	-
Town Crier	50	35	35	40	70.00
Website	1,200	1,200	1,375	1,380	114.58
Sub-Total	15,689	12,720	3,039	11,200	19.37
TOTAL	69,418	52,138	23,767	58,900	34.24
INCOME					
Precept	50,723	50,222	50,723	50,723	100.00
Discount Grant	3,390	4,051	3,390	3,390	100.00
Fair	1,375	2,000	375	1,375	27.27
Hire of Halls Refund	840	0	801	801	95.36
Interest	220	238	57	70	25.91
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	3,600	700	0	3,600	0.00
Other	0	81	0	0	-
TOTAL	60,148	57,292	55,346	59,959	92.02
SURPLUS / DEFICIT (-) FOR YEAR	-9,270	5,154	31,579	1,059	
RESERVES RELEASED					
Cheyne Weares	5,000			3,000	
Grants	1,270			1,270	
Neighbourhood Plan	3,000			3,000	
TOTAL	9,270			7,270	
Net Total after Reserve Release	0			8,329	

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Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils

(Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils)

WEBSITE: www.dorset-aptc.gov.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Area Committee held on Tuesday 14th July 2015 at Digby Hall Sherborne.

Present:

Cllr Jury	Broadmayne PC
Cllr Diamond	Broadmayne PC
Cllr Barry	Cerne Valley PC
Cllr Meader	Knightsford PC
Cllr Falkingham	Maiden Newton PC
Cllr Goff	Maiden Newton PC
Mrs Eastment	Melcombe Horsey PC (Clerk)
Cllr Lock	Piddle Valley PC
Cllr Wild	Portland Town Council
Cllr Elliott	Sherborne Town Council
Cllr Baker	Toller Porcorum PC

Also Present:

Cllr Thacker	Chairman - Central Area Committee DAPTC
Paula Harding	Secretary – Central Area Committee DAPTC
Stephen Hill	Strategic Director – Tri-Partnership (WDDC/WPBC/NDDC)
Emma Macdonald	Mineral and Waste Planning Policy Team
Trevor Badley	Mineral and Waste Planning Policy Team

16/15) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from:

Cllr Bundy	Crossways PC
Adrian Stuart (Clerk)	Dorchester Town Council
Hilary Trevorah	DAPTC Chief Executive (Elect)
Cllr Felce	Long Bredy and Kingston Russell PC
Graham Duggan	Community Protection Manager WDDC/WPBC

17/15) Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

18/15) Matters arising from the Minutes of the 14th April 2015

Cllr Lock asked if there had been any news on the removal of invasive weeds or assistance with equipment for litter picking (as noted in Minute 14/15). The secretary stated that it was hoped that Graham Duggan would have provided an update to the meeting, but unfortunately he was unable to attend. This would be followed up by e-mail and the response issued to all members as soon as possible.

Action: Secretary

19/15) Speakers: Emma Macdonald & Trevor Badley – Mineral and Waste Planning Policy Team, Dorset County Council.

Emma Macdonald and Trevor Badley from the Minerals and Waste Planning Policy team at Dorset County Council addressed the meeting and outlined the proposals for the Central area relating to the Draft Minerals and Waste Plan consultation.

This draft plan builds on the 2006 Minerals and Waste Plan and the 2014 Adopted Strategic Plan (which was not site specific). The consultation will run from July to September.

Trevor Badley addressed the meeting first and outlined the main areas of extraction proposed in the Minerals and Waste plan. It was made clear that if a site is included in the plan it is purely safeguarded for the future and may not necessarily become operational as soon as the plan is adopted, some sites may never be used but are included as a precaution.

Emma Macdonald then addressed the meeting and outlined the main areas identified for waste handling in Dorset. The site options included are the preferred sites but are not definite sites as planning permission would still be required.

A key statistic was that there would be no landfill capacity left in Dorset in the next 4-5 years unless landfill waste was reduced significantly, other ways were found to process landfill waste or further sites were identified.

Members asked questions specifically related to the Puddletown, Portland, Maiden Newton Woodsford and Moreton areas.

Links were given to the consultation document and details of the roadshows where the public can view the plans and discuss their concerns with the team would be sent directly to Parish and Town Clerks. It was noted that hard copies of the documents would not be issued unless requested but that all Clerks would receive details of the consultation and the web links for members to access the documents on line.

20/15) Reports

a) West Dorset District Council

A report was given by Stephen Hill, Strategic Director, Tri-Council Partnership.

He outlined how West Dorset District Council (WDDC) was now part of the Tri-Council Partnership with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (WPBC) and North Dorset District Council (NDDC). The Chief Executive and Directors have been brought together as a single management team and the rest of the staff structure will follow over the next year. The vacant 4th Director position has now been filled with Martin Hamilton joining the partnership at the end of September.

For future meetings it is hoped that a Tri-Council report will be produced and issued to the DAPTC Area meetings by Mr Hill and his team.

Other issues covered were:

i) Planning (Development Control) services.

There is currently a backlog with planning services at WDDC & WPBC. There have been a variety of reasons for this and some of these are complex.

A short term solution has been put forward to some of the pressure, but a long-term plan is required and this is in the early stages. A service review was planned but has been postponed until the service is on its feet again.

When things have settled, Mr Hill and Jean Marshall (development services manager) are to meet with Town Clerks and Mayors to establish what service Town Councils would like to see WDDC & WPBC providing with regards to planning services.

ii) New councillor training – planning issues

Training for Parish Councillors on the planning application consultation and decision process is scheduled for September.

iii) Local Plan Progress

The Planning Inspector was due to make a decision by the 17th July, however today the team has been told to consider the latest government announcement regarding their off-shore wind farms policy and to revise their Plan accordingly. The plan will be reviewed with regard to this change in government policy and re-submitted as soon as possible.

iv) Charles Street development

WDDC council have agreed to purchase the freehold of the Community Church which currently sits on the corner of the Charles Street Car Park. This would ensure that the Council owns the whole site ahead of any development. The Church will be assisted by WDDC to secure a new site at Poundbury alongside the proposed school.

Cllr Wild asked if there had been any further suggestion that the developers of the Charles Street phase 2 – Simons – would be pulling out of the contract as has been reported. Mr Hill stated that there had been no response from Simons on this reported withdrawal.

b) Chief Executive Report – DAPTC

There was no Chief Executive report as the new post holder, Mrs Hilary Trevorah, did not take up her post until the following week.

c) Community Safety Panel

Cllr Thacker reported that the 3 area panel is going ahead, although individual panels at a lower level will continue in some format.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is considering the funding for CCTV in light of local government cuts.

There was also acknowledgement that PCSO's were good for communities providing they remain covering the same area for a period of time to build up a local knowledge.

d) Dorchester Area Community Partnership

Cllr Jury reported that he has now received the minutes for the last meeting and that the next meeting is at the end of September which he hopes to report on at the next meeting.

e) West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Joint Housing Forum

Cllr Falkingham reported that the next meeting is on the 30th July and that she would send the notes to the Secretary to be forwarded out to members. (Attached as Appendix A).

f) Dorset Broadcasting Action Group (DorBAG)

Cllr Falkingham reported that the BBC Trust have launched a public consultation on local radio and as members should encourage as many people as possible to reply to it. Dorset is the only area in the South West without local BBC radio. (The latest report is attached as Appendix B)

There is still a Breakfast radio show on BBC Dorset from 6.30am – 9am (weekdays) and 8am – 11am (Saturdays) on 103.8FM

21/15 - Members items

It was noted that at the last Executive meeting, Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE) brought their 'Emergency Mobile Unit' to the meeting. This unit assists rural communities in the event of a long term power failure. It was agreed to try and get this vehicle and representatives from SSE to the next Central Area meeting.

22/15 - Speakers for future meetings

As noted in 21/15 the Secretary will try to arrange for SSE to attend.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.25pm with notice that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13th October 2015 at Stratton Village Hall.

Signed _____ Date _____

Cllr Alan Thacker
Chairman

Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils

Annual General Meeting, 7th November 2015

Motions Put Forward by Member Councils

1. From Chideock Parish Council:

“That DAPTC requests through NALC that the Department of Communities and Local Government urgently close a loophole caused by the length of time it can often take to ensure Enforcement action takes place. At present long delays by Local Planning Authorities in taking Enforcement action on a planning violation can result in the evidence of the violation, as provided to the LPA by Parish Councils and private individuals, being used by the violator as evidence of existing and prolonged use to support an application for a Certificate of Lawful Use.”

2. From Chideock Parish Council:

“That DAPTC asks NALC to urgently take up the issue of SATNAV systems directing heavy vehicles onto unsuitable roads in rural areas and consequently causing damage and traffic chaos in local communities.”

3. From Colehill Parish Council:

“The change in electoral legislation which took effect in Parish and Town Council elections this year - under which it was no longer possible to submit nominations for more than one ward and then withdraw from those which have already reached quota after the close of nominations - has caused problems for several councils across Dorset. Elections have been required in some wards, while others have had to be filled by co-option, leading to additional expense and (in some cases) the loss of the Power of General Competence and/or Foundation Status under the Local Council Award Scheme.

Colehill Parish Council proposes that DAPTC requests that NALC and our area MPs lobby government to amend the legislation and remove this impediment to effective local government at the Parish and Town Council level.”

4. From West Moors Parish Council:

“West Moors Parish Council asks that DAPTC lobbies NALC to change the Localism Act 2011 to be amended so that power is restored to Standards Committees to impose penalties upon Councillors who contravene the Code of Conduct or who are guilty of inappropriate behaviour towards fellow councillors or members of staff.”

5. From Blandford Forum Town Council:

“That DAPTC requests, through NALC, that legislation be amended to ensure that parish meetings/a town assembly can be held at a reasonable time appropriate to its constituents. In addition to holding meetings after 6pm on weekdays, these meetings could be held over weekends.”