

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND MAY 2012 AT ST. JOHN'S PARISH HALL, FORTUNESWELL, PORTLAND

PRESENT: Councillors Ian Munro-Price (Town Mayor), Mrs S. Bradley, Mrs J. Collinge, R. Denton-White, R. Hughes, Miss A. Munro, T. Munro, Mrs E. Munro-Price, D. Symes, Mrs S. West, R. Wild and T. Woodcock. There were approximately two dozen members of the general public also present.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk) and Reverend C. Briggs (Mayor's Chaplain).

12/1 – PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

12/2 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

12/3 – MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, 4TH MAY 2011

The minutes of the meeting were formally agreed and signed as a correct record.

12/4 – MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were none.

12/5 – TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

Cllr. Ian Munro-Price opened by saying that the Island as everywhere was feeling the effects of the financial situation. Accordingly there had been no rise in the Council precept this year. However the Council had continued to make grants to local organisations and would again this coming year. He invited representatives of such organisations present to submit applications.

The Police were reporting lower levels of anti-social behaviour on the Island than in the previous year, due in part to higher visibility policing.

Significant changes had occurred in the last twelve months. Underhill Library had closed, for example. The County Library Service had substituted a mobile library. Meanwhile the Town Council was framing plans for some library service based in a building, depending on sufficient volunteers to staff it. Cllr. Munro-Price suggested that anyone interested in helping should contact the Clerk.

The Tesco supermarket had opened and happily the change in traffic patterns had not been as problematical as expected.

In a few months' time the Island would be hosting the Olympic sailing events, which would necessitate some temporary changes to road circulations.

During his Mayoral year Cllr. Munro-Price said he had attended various local events, giving the opportunity to see what was happening on the Island.

For the future he hoped that the financial situation would make significant improvement.

12/6 – FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2011/12

The Clerk presented his report. Mr Andy Matthews asked what was the Council's policy with regard to its reserves. The Clerk responded by explaining briefly the annual cycle of income and expenditure, and the Council's decision to increase its income from bank interest by investing a portion of its reserves in a fixed-term interest account.

12/7 – ELECTORS' ITEMS

Mr Matthews described how the Portland Community Partnership was actively assisting in the formulation of Local, Neighbourhood and Town Plans. He requested that the Town Council make it a subject for discussion at its next meeting. Cllr. Munro-Price said that the Town Council would be pleased to work with the Partnership in producing the plans.

Wilma Butler, representing Community 2000, asked whether there were any plans for celebrating the Queen's Jubilee on the Island. Cllr. Munro-Price said it was intended to organise a number of beacons in the Borough. Cllr. Tim Munro noted that there had been no requests for road closures on the Island in order to allow street parties and indeed only one in Weymouth. A member of the public said their village on the Island intended holding two events, but they were deliberately keeping them low-key.

A question was asked about part of the Hambro car park site, which had been promised to Revive for the provision of a garden or play area. Cllr. Tim Munro replied that the Borough had not given any undertaking in this respect because the area specified might well be given over to car parking in order to facilitate development of the Council Offices. Mr Matthews said that Portland Community Partnership had already expressed its willingness to surrender any rights to the plot if and when requested.

Cllr. Richard Denton-White noted that the date for next year's Annual Meeting had been scheduled a week later, this avoiding a clash with local elections.

Cllr. Sandy West requested the Town Council to consider the provision of play areas on the Island. The one at the Grove was suffering from broken equipment, while in Underhill there was no facility for children in the "middle years" between those using the nursery area at Victoria Park and the skateboarders' park adjoining Victoria Square.

Mr Matthews mentioned the Governor's Garden as being open and available for recreational use by the general public.

A question was asked whether pressure could be brought to bear to improve some of the street frontages in Fortuneswell. Cllr. Hughes said that the problem was that the buildings of concern were in private ownership and Mrs Yvonne Beven added there was difficulty in contacting specific owners. Cllr. Tim Woodcock suggested that

environmental health be contacted where there were particular problems with vermin. Cllr. West congratulated Revive on the work they were doing to improve the appearance of the area. Mrs Beven responded by saying more volunteers were needed to help with Revive's work and that the group would continue for as long as it was needed.

Another question referred back to the Grove play area and whether it might be repaired. Cllr. Munro-Price from the chair said the primary responsibility for this lay with the Borough Council.

A further query concerned the future plans for Underhill Junior School. Cllr. Tim Munro said it would continue in use until September 2013. Meanwhile the Brackenbury School would be turned over to community use, with Sure Start likely to move there.

Mrs Tina Lancaster asked what had happened to Zero C's undertaking to pay for a new gate and railing around Victoria Park. Cllr. Munro said this Section 106 agreement would come into play when 75% of the Officers' Field housing had been achieved, probably some time next year. However there was a problem in that SWRDA had denied making such an agreement.

Mrs Lancaster raised further issues concerning Officers' Field. She said that two separate planning applications had been lodged. In the first the central area had been identified as a public amenity. However in the second it had become an amenity solely for the use of the new primary school. Cllr. Munro responded that the agreement had not been finalised yet. The likelihood was that the area would be used by the school for seventeen hours a week and be available as a public open space for the rest of the week.

12/8 – DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

The next Annual Town Meeting is due to take place on Wednesday, 8th May 2013.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm.

Signed Dated
(Town Mayor)