

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs S. Bradley (Chair), L. Ames, Mrs R. Barton, Mrs J. Collinge, R. Denton-White, Miss A. Munro, T. Munro, R. Nowak and R. Wild.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), together with three members of the public.

2301 – PRAYERS

The Mayor led the meeting in prayer.

2302 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs. R. Hughes, Mrs Elspie Munro-Price, I. Munro-Price and Mrs S. West.

2303 – OTHER APOLOGY

Cllr. Nowak apologised to the Council for raising his voice during a particular item at the last meeting.

2304 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Tim Munro declared an interest in agenda item 9(b) – Proposed Upgrade of Footpaths to Bridleway and 9(c) – Proposed Stopping Up of Footpath 34 at Perryfield Quarry as chairman of the Dorset County Council committee responsible for footpaths. He said he would remain in the Chamber during these items, but would not take part in the debates.

2305 – OPEN FORUM

a) Police Question Time

No representative of the Police was present.

b) Public Half-Hour

Mr Owen spoke regarding the item on Footpath 34 as a resident of the nearby Weston Street. He argued that Weston Street, which is not on any bus routes was becoming increasingly isolated by successive footpath closures. Footpath 34 offered an amenity for residents and visitors alike, was used frequently and supplied a vital link to Footpath 36 south of Weston Street.

Cllr. Tim Munro said that the issue would eventually come to the County Council for a final decision and suggested Mr Owen write to the County, stating his case. Mr Owen said there had already been correspondence between himself and officers at the County.

2306 – MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2013

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

2307 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Minute 2289 – Council Budget and Precept, 2013/14

Cllr. Tim Munro suggested that Council had made premature decisions in agreeing its budget and precept for the coming year. Standing Order 39 stated that where there were substantial increases or reductions to the budget the proposals should stand adjourned until the next ordinary Council meeting.

The Clerk gave his opinion that the precise wording of the Standing Order only applied this instruction to the budget of a committee rather than that which was the responsibility of the full Council itself. Cllr. Tim Munro was right if the Standing Order was taken to apply also to full Council and its budgets.

The Chair agreed to take a fresh vote on the decision concerned and it was **RESOLVED** – that £20,000 be added to the 202/13 projects budget figure for 2013/14 and likewise £2,800 to the salaries figure.

b) Minute 2295 – Finance & Projects Committee

Cllr. Tim Munro argued that under Standing Order 42 Council might appoint committees, etc at its Annual Meeting, whereas the Finance & Projects Committee had been terminated at an ordinary Council meeting.

The Clerk replied that SO 42 states that “... Council may, ... at any other time, appoint such other committees ...” and in paragraph (b) [Council] “may ... at any time dissolve or alter the membership of a committee.

Cllr. Ames moved next business, which was **RESOLVED**.

2308 – TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr. Bradley said that former Councillor Maurice Gosling was now out of intensive care and a bed was being sought for him at Portland Hospital for his further convalescence. It was agreed to send him a card, signed by the members.

2309 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR

There were none.

2310 – MINUTES OF THE MARINE & ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP MEETING, 6TH FEBRUARY 2013

a) Minute 917 – Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement in Minerals and Waste Plan

Cllr. Tim Munro queried the regulation of non-elected members of the Marine & Environment Partnership, the Nolan Report stating that all committee members should sign up to the Code of Conduct agreed by its Council.

The Chair ruled that this discussion was not tabled on the agenda and agreed to have it brought as an agenda item at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED – that the Council comment on the Statement particularly querying the timetable for the two stages of consultation and how people will be notified.

b) Minute 919 – Proposed Upgrade of Footpaths to Bridleway, Ref. 12/36
RESOLVED – NO OBJECTION, subject to the condition that any surface work is sympathetic to the surrounding neighbourhood

c) Minute 920 – Proposed Stopping Up of Footpath 34 at Perryfield Quarry
RESOLVED – OBJECTION

2311 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments for Authorisation

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 2833 – 2844) in the sum of £2,359.23 including VAT be authorised for payment.

b) 2012/13 Financial Report to 31st January 2013

Cllr. Tim Munro queried the projected expenditure for civic expenditure and travelling & subsistence.

RESOLVED – that the report be accepted.

c) Internal Auditor's Report, 2012/13 (first visit)

Cllr. Denton-White proposed and it was **RESOLVED** – that the internal auditor's report and the Clerk's responses be accepted.

d) Fixed Interest Account

Cllr. Denton-White proposed and it was **RESOLVED** – that the item be deferred to the next meeting.

2312 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED – that Agenda Item 12 – Portland Fair be deferred until after Item 21 – Exclusion of Press and Public.

2313 – COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT, 2013/14

No updates had been received.

2314 – TESCO STORE

Members made a number of comments on the development. However it was agreed that the Council should not make any official comment on the development and that a neutral reply be sent to Mr Brown.

2315 – PARISH LENGTHSMAN

Cllr. Tim Munro criticised the Council's press release concerning its spending plans for 2013/14 in respect that it had suggested Portland people might eventually pay less Council Tax to the Borough than Weymouth people as a result of responsibilities being transferred from the Borough to the Town. Cllr. Barton said she had not written that element of the release.

It was proposed by Cllr. Tim Munro and **RESOLVED** – that a Working Group be convened to consider details of the post and bring them and any recommendations to the next Council meeting. The members would comprise Cllrs. Barton, (Chair), Ames, Denton-White, Tim Munro and Wild.

2316 – MAYORAL CHAINS

Cllr. Bradley said there were a number of problems involving the two mayoral chains. The inset badge had become loose, but this had now been refixed. However there remained difficulties with the links. Also the carrying case had not been returned by former Councillor Richard Paisley after his term as Mayor.

It was suggested that the Mayor would obtain estimates for repairs to the chains and the Clerk would write to Mr Paisley about the case.

2317 – TOURISM MATTERS

a) Visitor Centre, Portland Bill

Cllr. Nowak explained some of the background to the Borough's decision to close the Centre, but offer it to the Town Council to operate instead. He believed the hotel bookings service would pass to the Weymouth BID (Business Improvement District) and the Borough would shift the emphasis of its tourism service to more electronic communication. Cllr. Nowak also said the Centre would remain open until November.

Cllr. Tim Munro said that the Borough ought to provide a business proposition, giving full details of its running costs and the leasing arrangement concerning the lighthouse. He suggested that a Borough officer provide the Council with a presentation on the Centre.

b) Island Maps

It was agreed that the Council make no further response on the matter.

2318 – REPORTS FROM BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr. Nowak said the Borough's Policy Development Committee considered the Town's application for a Neighbourhood Plan and recommended that all the Island be included in the Plan and a second, Business Plan be produced also covering the entire Island.

Cllr. Tim Munro reported that the County will not raise its Council Tax rate in 2013/14. Answering a question, he said that it intends to cut approximately £60m from its budget over the next three years. Its non-statutory services may well be passed on to other bodies.

2319 – VOLUNTARY POSTS

Site Visits (Planning)

It was proposed by Cllr. Wild and **RESOLVED** – that no change be made to the appointed members.

2320 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS

DORBAG

Cllr. Denton-White regretted that the BBC had rejected Brewery Square Ltd's offer of premises in Dorchester. He proposed and it was **RESOLVED** – that the Council write to the BBC supporting DORBAG's view and asking the Corporation to reconsider its decision.

2321 – FORWARD PLAN

Visitor Centre – bring back to March meeting.
Town Crier – to present a report at the Annual Town Meeting.

2322 – EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – 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 Item 12 – Portland Fair, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

2323 – PORTLAND FAIR

Cllr. Ames introduced the topic by reporting on the meeting between the Fair operators and the Mayor and himself. The operators had said they were currently losing money on the Fair and wanted to renegotiate the existing contract. The Mayor and the Fair operators had agreed to this and settled on a new contract figure for both the spring and autumn Fairs.

In the course of further discussion Cllr. Tim Munro proposed and it was **RESOLVED** – that the Council charge a certain fixed contract price (in excess of the recently negotiated figure) for two Fairs to be held each year for three days at a time, the contract to last three years.

Cllr. Nowak suggested a choice of words to be used in the further negotiations with the operators to soften the wording of the above resolution and allow a little more flexibility in conducting the operations. There was no objection to this suggestion.

2324 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 20th March 2013, starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm.

Signed..... Dated.....
(Chair)