

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19TH JANUARY 2011, COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillors D. Thurston (Chair), L. Ames, Mrs S. Bradley, N. Charlton (from 8.50 pm), Mrs J. Collinge, R. Denton-White, M. Gosling, R. Hughes, T. Munro, Mrs Elspie Munro-Price, I. Munro-Price, R. Paisley and Mrs S. West.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Rev. Chris Briggs (Mayor's Chaplain)

1835 – PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

1836 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor N. Charlton.

1837 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

Cllr. Munro initiated a debate about the status of the Finance & Projects Committee held on 15th December 2010. He argued that, because the meeting had been inquorate, it had been improperly constituted and none of its recommendations should stand. Furthermore the six members who had attended the meeting had declared their mind on the items discussed and were pre-determined on them. Therefore when those items were brought again before this meeting of the Town Council the six members concerned should withdraw from the Chamber for the duration of the debate.

The Clerk disputed this interpretation, saying this was contrary to the ruling given by the Monitoring Officer in the case of inquorate meetings. Additionally she had never referred to the possibility of pre-determination in such circumstances.

The Chair sought the opinion of Cllr. Ames as a senior Councillor. Cllr. Ames appeared to concur with Cllr. Munro.

At this point the Clerk temporarily left the Chamber. When he returned he stated that he had sought the opinion of another clerk well versed in committee administration and procedure. This officer had endorsed the Clerk's opinion.

The Chair ruled in favour of Cllr. Munro's viewpoint. As a consequence agenda items 9, 13 and 15 were deferred to the next meeting of the Finance & Projects Committee. Agenda item 12 was deleted.

Cllr. Denton-White requested that the Clerk seek further professional advice on the status of inquorate committee meetings and members' pre-determination associated with them.

1838 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

1839 – OPEN FORUM

a) Public Half-Hour

There were no members of the public present.

b) Police Question Time

No representative of the Police was present.

1840 – MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 17TH NOVEMBER 2010

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

1841 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING

a) Minute 1829 – Town Crier

Cllr. Elspie Munro-Price offered her congratulations to those members who had been particularly involved in bringing the scheme to completion. Cllr. Thurston remarked that the Crier had already received a deal of positive comment from people on the Island.

b) West Weares

Responding to a question from Cllr. Munro, Cllr. Thurston said he was still confused as to the situation because of a lack of relevant paperwork.

1842 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr. Thurston informed members that interviews had been conducted for the post of Assistant Clerk and Miss Samantha King had been offered it.

He had also received requests from Yvonne Bevin of Revive Portland and Rev. Chris Briggs for permission to use the Jubilee Pillars site for a spring fair and August Bank Holiday event respectively.

1843– WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR

Cllr. Thurston was prompted to read a letter from Cllr. Charlton, giving his apologies for the meeting and offering an opinion on a couple of agenda items.

(Cllr. Denton-White left the meeting at 8.30pm.)

1844 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Payments for Authorisation

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 2496 – 2508) in the sum of £2,223.93 including VAT be authorised for payment.

b) 2010/2011 Financial Report to 29th December 2010

RESOLVED – that the report be accepted.

1845 – TOWN LENGTHSMAN

Cllr. Thurston summarised the progress of the project and its present situation. Members proceeded to discuss various elements of the scheme. (Cllr. Charlton arrived at 8.50pm.)

Potential difficulties in operating a lengthsman scheme were voiced.

(Cllr. Gosling left the meeting at 9.20am.)

Cllr. Thurston said that if the scheme was dropped the £10,000 grant from the County Council would have to be returned, the County informed of the situation and its advice sought on how to proceed.

Cllr. Elspie Munro-Price proposed that the Town write to Dorset County Council, stating its intention to withdraw from the lengthsman scheme, and look at funding options for the provision of a lengthsman through a Council working group.

Cllr. Ian Munro-Price proposed an amendment adding that a meeting be arranged with the County and Borough Councils to review the future possibilities for a lengthsman service on the Island.

RESOLVED – that the amendment be accepted.

RESOLVED – that the composite motion be approved.

It was also agreed that the new lengthsman working group should comprise Cllrs. Hughes, Munro and Paisley.

1846 – COUNCIL BUDGET AND COUNCIL PRECEPT, 2011/12

A debate commenced to reassess the draft budget recommended by the Finance & Projects Committee at its meeting on 15th December 2010.

(Cllrs. Bradley and Collinge left the meeting at 10.00pm.)

(Cllr. West left the meeting at 10.05pm.)

(Cllr. Ames left the meeting at 10.10pm.)

(Cllr. Munro left the meeting at 10.25pm.)

Amendments were made to the draft budget as follows:-

Expenditure	Salaries	24,000
	Civic Expenditure	1,500
	Contingency	260
	Mayoral Allowance	700
	Revised Total	41,432
Income	Precept	33,616
	Fair	5,500
	Interest	316
	Other	2,000
	Revised Total	41,432

RESOLVED – (1) that the budget figures for 2011/12 as revised be approved and (2) that the precept for 2011/12 be set at £33,616 (nil increase on the precept for 2010/11).

1847 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED – that agenda items 16 – 18 be deferred to the next meeting.

1848 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 16th March 2011 commencing at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 10.55pm.

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