

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 17TH APRIL 2019 AT PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE

PRESENT:

Councillors: Charlie Flack, Rob Hughes, Dave Thurston, Sue Cocking, Sandy West, Jo Atwell, Jim Draper.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) and 10 members of the public.

3858. Chairman's Welcome

Cllr. Flack chaired the meeting as Cllr. Nowak was unwell. He welcomed all to the meeting and advised that there was no planned fire alarm testing and indicated to those present the various fire exits.

3859. Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain Mr Dave Farmer led the meeting in prayer.

3860. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Nowak and Cllr. Gomm.

3861. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

3862. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27th March 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the acting Chairman.

3863. Minute Update and Matters Arising

Item 3845b – Dog Warden – The Chairman confirmed that post April 1st, 2019 the dog warden service would continue to be provided to Portland.

Item 3845e – Goal Posts – The Chairman stated that he had been advised by the head of green spaces for Weymouth Town Council that the issue of the Goal Posts now lay with Portland. The Chairman hoped that in due course there would be an opportunity to apply for a grant to have them replaced.

Item 3852 – Meeting Dates – Cllr. Cocking advised that the Mayor Making would now take place on 7th May with an informal meeting for all Councillors to be held on 6th May. She explained that whilst she recognised that this was a bank holiday she felt, and others had agreed, that the meeting was important and should go ahead. It was agreed that the Clerk would issue letters to all prospective Councillors inviting them to the meeting.

3864. Democratic Public Half Hour Open Forum

- a. Mr Matthews advised a full written report updating the current situation of the Neighbourhood Plan would be provided at the Planning Meeting to be held the following week (24th April 2019).
- b. Mr Dave Darby Friends of Victoria Gardens – informed the meeting that he had been advised that children had been playing football on the Bowling Green, the reason being that they had no where else to play football. He asked if it was possible to make it known that there was a football pitch at Officer's Field.

The Clerk is to put a notice in the Free Portland News as a reminder that the bowling green is not to be used for football.

- c. Mr Darby asked whether there was any intention to re-instate the toilets in Victoria Gardens. The Chairman advised that Dorset County Council (DCC) had investigated the financial impact of re-instating the toilets but that the costs had been prohibitive (circa £40K), and not taken forward. The Chairman also advised that DCC had stated that they would find the money to re-furbish the toilets on Portland but at the last moment had been unable to make the money available to undertake all of the work. He added that once the toilets had been legally transferred to Portland Town Council (PTC) then efforts would be made to secure grant funding to get toilets installed and hoped that this could be achieved within a few years.
- d. Mrs Saunders provided an update on Cliff School development, stating that a further application had been made by the developers which sought to demolish more of the school. She informed the meeting that a number of residents had complained as the footings now being dug for the proposed buildings were not in accordance with the original plans and that the drainage solution was still not showing on the plans; she explained that she had sought independent advice on the plans and been advised that the plans as shown were incomplete. She asked that the meeting consider this issue at the next Planning and Highways meeting. The Chairman thanked Mrs Saunders and confirmed that this issue was on the Agenda for discussion.
- e. Mrs Giovanna Lewis asked whether Mr Matthews had any feedback on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan, and whether it was still possible to make comments. Mr Matthews responded that the habitat regulation assessment was complete and that it would now be submitted to Natural England for comment. Once the comments had been received and accepted the Plan and associated documents would then be made available for the next stage of public consultation. Mrs Lewis also asked that the Council commit to considering environmental issues, in particular climate change when moving forward. The Chairman confirmed that it was included as part of the NP and that the Council were committed to taking forward strategies that supported the environmental issues.
- f. Mr Paul Snow reminded the Council that prior to the hand over there had been pledges made to re-decorate the public toilets, he asked whether this had been carried out. The Chairman confirmed that the lady's toilets in Easton had been re-furbished and that the others had been re-decorated.
- g. Mr Vincent asked for an update on the carparks that had transferred to PTC. The Chairman stated that the carparks were being managed by PTC under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) until such time that the legal paperwork was complete and ownership was formally transferred. He also asked whether it was the intention to allow tradesmen to continue to trade (he referenced the ice cream van in the New Ground car park) and whether that revenue would go to PTC. The Chairman thanked Mr Vincent for his reminder of the issue and advised that payment of the licence fee had been passed to the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to pursue.

RFO to review current trading agreements with Weymouth Town Council (WTC)

3865. Chairman's Update

Transfer of assets and services to PTC.

- a. The Chairman advised the meeting that the assets that had been nominated to move to PTC had in fact done so and whilst there had been some issues with the keys and signage these were slowly being resolved. He explained that the work with covering the old W&PBC signs was in hand and progressing well but would take some time to complete.
- b. Car Parks. The Masonic car park which had been a fee-paying car park was now free and Dorset County Council (DCC) had covered over the machine until such time that they could remove it. He further explained that there were plans to make some of the car park residents parking only and to allow a small area for lorries to park overnight.

- c. Cemeteries. The Chairman reminded the meeting that PTC now managed two cemeteries, the Strangers cemetery on Victory Corner and the Portland cemetery at Weston Road. He informed those present that PTC had already had several burials and interments which had gone without incident.
- d. Parks and Gardens. He praised the Gardeners for continuing the good job that had previously been undertaken by W&PBC (Pattie) and remained confident that the Green Flag audit for Easton Gardens would be well supported. Cllr. West thanked the Friends of Easton and Victoria Gardens for the hard work that they undertook in supporting the Gardens.
- e. Mayoral regalia.
 - i. The Chairman advised that some mayoral regalia had been returned from WTC and the robes had gone for cleaning and were to be used in the Mayor Making ceremony in May 2019.
 - ii. The Battle ensign of HMS Portland had also been returned and would be displayed properly in due course.
 - iii. The Mayors Chair had also been returned and was now situated in the Committee Room.
- f. In connection with the Transfer of Assets the RFO sought the pre-approval of sums of money to purchase the following assets:
 - i. A new mower to cut the grass in the Gardens – up to £2,000.00
 - ii. Two new soil boxes for the cemetery – £1,500.00
 - iii. A new shed for the cemetery (WTC having previously removed the old one and replaced it with a smaller shed which was not now big enough to hold all of the equipment) – £500.00

He stated that in the event that pre-approval was provided that the proper procurement actions would be undertaken (competition where possible) to ensure that PTC received value for money.

The Chairman asked for confirmation that the money was available within the budget and was assured that this was the case.

Pre-Approval for the purchase of assets was unanimously given.

- g. Service Contract for the Handwashing Machines in the toilets.
The RFO explained that there was a legal requirement to provide hand washing facilities within the public toilets and the machines to facilitate this were currently provided by a specialist firm (Wallgate). A service contract with Wallgate was required to ensure that the machines provided were serviced and maintained. In summary he sought approval to proceed with a service contract with Wallgate at a cost of £1,100.00 for the service and maintenance of the six hand wash machines situated in the public toilets.

Unanimous approval was given to proceed with the placement of a contract with Wallgate.

The RFO stated that a letter was being prepared to go to Dorset Council addressing all of the issues that he felt were still outstanding and these generally fell in to two areas; a) where there had been a promise that assets would be repaired and had not been, and b) where there was money now due to PTC which had not been transferred i.e. allotment and licence fees. He explained that once the letter had been written it would be passed to the Councillors for agreement.

3866. Town Mayor's Announcements

- a. The Mayor advised the meeting of the engagements he had attended during April 2019 and for the record these are attached at **Annex A**.

3867. Receive written reports from Borough and County Councillors

- a. No written reports were received.

3868. Financial Matters

- a. **Finance Report for end of the year** – this can be found attached as **Annex B** and is an update on the one presented and discussed at the previous meeting, and the RFO explained the minor updates. The RFO asked the Council to declare the end of year accounts as a true and accurate record; a unanimous vote was returned.

The Council unanimously declared the end of year accounts to be a true and accurate record, subject to external audit, for the financial year 2018/19.

- b. **Payments for Authorisation** – The RFO presented payments for authorisation totalling £34,165.65, and this report is held at **Annex C**.

Authorisation of the payments was unanimously approved.

- c. The RFO advised that receipts received to date totalled £14,802.20 and can be found at **Annex D**.
- d. The RFO advised that precept spend for this year sat at 8.15% of the anticipated spend at 8.33% of the way through the year.
- e. The Chairman drew the meetings attention to mention of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) received (£14,847.12) and explained that the current Council had made the decision that until such time that the new Council had been formed there would be no decision on which infrastructure project the money would be spent.
- f. **PD Fire and Safety Systems Quote** – The Town Clerk sought approval from the Committee to proceed with a quote for £870.00 for the purchase of additional fire extinguishers; proposed by PD Fire Systems following a review of the number and type of fire extinguishers undertaken in March 2019. In addition to extra fire extinguishers the quote also included a service agreement to review, service and maintain the existing fire extinguishers and fire alarms; new fire extinguisher notices and the provision of fire training. The provision of fire training will allow for training of up to 10 people to include the Officers of the Council, Allsorts, the Drop-In centre and the Lighthouse Church.

A vote was taken on the proposal and unanimous approval given.

Approval was given for the Clerk to proceed with the quote provided by PD Fire and Safety Systems.

3869. Staffing

- a. Appointment of Assistant Town Clerk

Cllr. Draper advised the meeting that interviews had been undertaken for the position of Assistant Town Clerk, following which an offer had been made and accepted and the successful applicant (Mrs Anna Takashima) would start on the 1st May 2019. In addition, he stated that the Town Clerk had produced a staffing report which concluded that, once the position of Assistant Town Clerk had been filled and the permanent appointment of an RFO had been concluded then there would be sufficient staff to manage the Council's business.

- b. Advertisement of permanent Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

Cllr. Draper explained that currently the post of RFO was being filled on a temporary basis and that it was the intention to convert this to a permanent post. He advised

that in order to do so it would be necessary to advertise the post and fill following a fair and open competition. To that end an advert was to be published in the Free Portland News to advertise the permanent position. The Clerk advised that the advert would be with the FPN tomorrow for publication on the 1st May 2019. The aim being to have the position filled on a permanent basis by 1st July 2019.

c. Employment of Seasonal Gardener

Cllr. Cocking made an enquiry regarding the seasonal gardener and the length of his contract. The Clerk responded that Mr Martin Weller had started on 8th April for a period of 6 months and his contract would end on 4th October 2019.

Cllr. Hughes added that on walking through Victoria Gardens he had noticed that a wall was falling down and asked what the plan was to rectify. He was informed that there was no immediate danger and that the plan was to rectify during the winter months.

3870. Portland Community Venue (PCV) Update

Cllr. Cocking stated that the PCV open day had been a great success and that the feedback received had been very positive. She also added that the costs incurred had come in at less (by £75.00) than the budget figure set. She explained that given the success of the open day she was now considering other events that would highlight the resources available within the PCV.

3871. Dorset Waste Partnership Enforcement Action

Cllr. Wild explained to the meeting that he felt that there was a growing trend to leave rubbish bins out overnight and overfill the bins etc. Given this he wished to ask the Council to take an action to write to Dorset Waste Partnership asking them to take enforcement action. A discussion ensued regarding this item which determined that it would be a very difficult issue to enforce; the conclusion being that should Cllr. Wild wish to ask DWP to undertake enforcement action that he should do so on a personal basis but that the Council would not do so on this occasion.

3872. Dog Waste Campaign

The Clerk explained that Mrs Briony Avery had offered to undertake a campaign to highlight and reduce the issue of dog waste around the island. She also added that the reason for bringing this to this meeting was to gain approval to be allowed to proceed with and support Mrs Avery in this campaign. Mrs Avery provided a brief presentation on her intended strategy, following this the Chairman put the Clerks proposal to a vote. A unanimous response in support of the proposed campaign was returned.

Mrs Avery is to provide a plan of action, with costings to the next Finance Committee.

3873. Exclusion of Press & Public (discretionary)

There were no matters to discuss.

3874. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 15th May 2019 at the Portland Community Venue at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 20.15 hours.

Signed Dated.....
Chairman