

## **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

### **TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2017, IN THE PETER TRIM HALL, ST. GEORGE'S CENTRE, REFORNE**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R. Nowak (Chairman), Ms J. Atwell, Mrs S. Cocking, J. Draper, C. Flack, C. Gover, Ms S. Lees, Mrs S. Reynolds, A. Sergison, D. Thurston, Mrs S. West and R. Wild.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Rev. Chris Briggs (Mayor's Chaplain), Cllr. Paul Kimber (Dorset County Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Mr Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group), two officers from Dorset Police and six members of the public.

#### **3372 – CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

Cllr. Nowak welcomed all to the meeting and advised of fire precautions at the hall.

#### **3373 – PRAYERS**

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer, including a minute's silence to commemorate recent bereavements.

#### **3374 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs. D. Symes and Kate Wheller (Dorset County Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.)

#### **3375 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **3376 – OPEN FORUM**

##### **a) Police**

PCSO Williams said he had followed up the parking problems reported last time. Unfortunately the problems tend to reoccur as time went on. There had been a spate of commercial burglaries recently and enquiries were ongoing. The Neighbourhood Team was now dealing with the repercussions of the accident on New Road.

Cllr. West asked whether there was a drug problem on the Island. PCSO Williams said it tended to be a problem everywhere nowadays.

Cllr. Lees reported cars parking on the pavement by the Indian restaurant in Easton.

##### **b) Public Half-Hour**

June Morley asked about the Royal Manor playing field. From the chair Cllr. Nowak said nothing had been agreed yet about the Council taking a lease on the field. At the moment the Council was still checking the legal implications.

Rob Hughes expressed the hope that under Agenda Item 14 the Council would continue to separate the offices of Council Chairman and Town Mayor.

Martin Luther asked who approached who about the possible purchase of the present Council Offices. He also expressed concern that the present arrangement for Chairman and Mayor was illegal and therefore Council decisions might be open to challenge. Cllr. Nowak said the Council had taken the initiative over the purchase of the Offices. It had been the Council's intention to own its own premises after being turned out of the old Offices, but the upheaval of the move had delayed action being taken.

Paul Snow, referring to the Calendar of Meetings agenda item, asked why the December meeting in particular had been deleted. Cllr. Nowak explained there were several reasons why the scheduled meetings in June, August and December had been cancelled. The intention was to consider the draft budget for 2018/19 next November.

### **c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors**

Cllr. Paul Kimber commended to the Council a County presentation on its Living and Learning project.

Asked about IPACA he said he and Cllr. Wheller had met with the former principal about the academy's problems and budget. However the situation deteriorated. They met several County officials and two "specialised" teachers were drafted in to help. The redundancies had increased in number and now he and Cllr. Wheller were seeking meetings with Deborah Croney, the Cabinet member for learning, and the new acting principal.

Cllr. Gover queried the County's role as a co-sponsor of the academy. Cllr. Kimber admitted that the Aldridge Foundation had put a lot of money in, but had wanted control also. Because of the problems a hundred and sixty children had transferred to schools in Weymouth. He suggested there might be a role for the Town Council in remedying the situation.

### **3377 – MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017**

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

### **3378 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

No matters were raised.

### **3379 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN**

Cllr. Nowak had replied to a letter from Mr John Thorner.

### **3380 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr. West said she had received a letter from Mr Rob Hughes suggesting that the Council was being overcharged for its office accommodation. She would liaise with the Chairman to write in response.

Cllr. Nowak observed that it was a question of supply and demand. The Council had taken on the property at Easton Street as the best option at the time.

Cllr. West said she had recently received a letter from HMS Portland, to which she had replied. She also publicised the Civic Service taking place on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr. David Thurston, reported on a seminar he had attended at the Tank Museum where G3 Systems had made a presentation. They could give a similar one to the Council if it so wished.

### **3381 – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

#### **a) Payments for Authorisation**

**RESOLVED** – that the schedule of invoices as stated (including cheque refs. 300114) in the sum of £6,877.46 including VAT be authorised for payment.

#### **b) 2016/17 Financial Report to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**RESOLVED** – that the report be accepted.

#### **c) Payroll Services**

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the contract with the current provider be renewed for a further twelve months in accordance with the quotation received.

### **3382 – QUESTIONNAIRE ON MENTAL HEALTH ACUTE CARE IN DORSET**

**RESOLVED** – that a corporate reply from the Council be submitted as drafted.

### **3383 – COUNCIL OFFICES**

Cllr. Cocking said she had obtained estimates of the value of the Offices and had preliminary discussions about a sale with the landlord in the company of Cllr. Nowak. If the Council chose to proceed with purchase a low-interest loan could probably be obtained from the Public Works Board. A refund had been obtained from the landlord for electrical work previously carried out.

### **3384 – ROYAL MANOR PLAYING FIELD**

Cllr. Nowak said a solicitor had advised the need for a business plan regarding the field and associated MUGA. A fee would be payable to agree the lease. The annual costs of maintaining the field was currently in the region of £400. Replies were awaited to further operational questions, but had to be sought from IPACA.

### **3385 – COUNCIL CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the experiment of having separate roles Chairman and Town Mayor be continued for a further two years.

### **3386 – COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2017/18**

It was proposed by Cllr. Thurston and **RESOLVED** – that Cllr. Nowak be nominated Council Chairman.

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that Cllr. Thurston be nominated Town Mayor.

It was proposed by Cllr. West and **RESOLVED** – that Cllr. Flack be nominated Deputy Town Mayor.

### **3387 – EVENTS & TOURISM WORKING GROUP**

Cllr. Thurston had succeeded Cllr. Symes as Chairman of the Group. He reported on the arrangements being made for the Search and Rescue commemoration event, to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be accepted, including the recommendations made therein.

### **3388 – MAYORS’ PLAQUE**

Cllr. Nowak advised of the new location for the plaque at the Peter Trim Hall. Quotations were still being sought for the relocation of the plaque.

### **3389 – CALENDAR OF MEETINGS / FINANCE & STAFFING WORKING GROUP**

#### **a) Finance**

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak to accept recommendation (2) in the Clerk’s report and **RESOLVED** – that the Finance & Staffing Working Group be reconstituted as a Finance Committee with terms of reference agreed by Council, consisting of five members. It would meet two weeks prior to the following Town Council meeting with informal inspection of the payment schedule a day or two before full Council.

The resolved motion included an additional sentence that the Finance Committee be given delegated power to approve invoices for payment in the event of no suitably dated Town Council meeting. With amendments to Financial Regulations to follow.

It was also **RESOLVED** – that the members of the Finance Committee be Cllrs. Atwell, Cocking, Draper, Flack and Nowak.

#### **b) Staffing**

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that Council set up a separate Staffing Committee, consisting of five members and scheduled to meet at least every three months.

It was also **RESOLVED** – that the members of the Staffing Committee be Cllrs. Atwell, Draper, Gover, Thurston and Wild.

### **3390 – RISK ASSESSMENT, 2016/17**

**RESOLVED** – that the report produced by the Finance & Staffing Working Group be accepted.

### **3391 – COUNCIL WEBSITE COMMUNITY FORMS SERVICE**

It was agreed to take note of the report and website service offered.

### **3392 – PORTLAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

It was confirmed that Cllrs. Symes and Wild are the Council’s representatives for the Partnership, so an appointment was not necessary.

### **3393 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS**

There were none.

### **3394 – EXCLUSION OF PRESS & 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 Agenda Items 24 – 25, Staffing Matters and Staff Pension, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

(The Clerk withdrew from the meeting.)

**3395 – STAFFING MATTERS**

The Panel's proposals were considered and in essence agreed, the detail and ongoing work to be led by the Staffing Committee, making recommendations where appropriate.

**3396 – STAFF PENSION**

It was agreed that this item be delegated to the Staffing Committee to consider and report back to the Council.

**3397 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017, in the Peter Trim Hall, St. George's Centre, Reforme starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm.

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