

## **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

### **TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015 IN THE PETER TRIM HALL, ST. GEORGE'S CENTRE, REFORNE**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ms J. Atwell, G. Chadwick, Mrs S. Cocking, C. Flack, C. Gover (from 7.35 pm), Ms S. Lees, R. Nowak, Mrs S. Reynolds, A. Sergison, D. Symes, D. Thurston, Mrs S. West and R. Wild

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Cllr. P. Kimber (Dorset County Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Cllr. Mrs P. McCartney (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Mr Andy Matthews (Finance Working Group and Portland Community Partnership), Mike Deadman (Marine & Environment Partnership and Heights Tourist Information Centre), Jez Morris (Magna Housing Association) and one members of the public.

Cllr. Wild in the chair.

#### **3026 – CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed by Cllr. Chadwick, seconded by Cllr. Lees and **RESOLVED** – that Cllr. Ray Nowak be appointed Chairman of the Town Council. (For: 10 votes, Against: 0 votes, Abstentions: 2 votes). Cllr. Nowak made a declaration of acceptance of the office and then took the chair.

#### **3027 – PRAYERS**

The Clerk led the meeting in prayer.

#### **3028 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr. J. Draper and Rev. James Menzies (Mayor's Chaplain)

#### **3029 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **3030 – MAGNA HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Jez Morris, Head of Housing Services at the Association, gave members a short presentation.

Magna has eighty-four properties on the Island, including two new developments. At present it is a non-developing housing association because of the high cost of building new houses. Also it is concentrating on paying off the debt it inherited. When that is achieved Magna would wish to recommence building properties again.

Another factor currently operative is the set of welfare reforms affecting some of their residents, which requires lower rents to be charged and hence reduces Magna's income. Locally a survey of residents showed that parking was one of their main concerns.

Answering questions from members, Mr Morris said that if grassed areas were on Magna's land they would accept responsibility to maintain them. Cllr. Chadwick pointed out that often it was difficult to identify the particular owner. Asked whether one company might provide a grass-cutting service for all grassed areas, Mr Morris said Magna employs its own workers to carry out such tasks.

With regard to taking on new tenants there was an issue of whether there was sufficient housing across all age groups. Difficulty arose from insufficient turnover to new ownership. Magna had adopted a policy of six-year tenancy periods, but at present most of its tenancies were "assured."

### **3031 – OPEN FORUM**

#### **a) Police Question Time**

No representative of the Police was present.

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

Mr Matthews was given permission to speak under Agenda Item 16 – Budget and Precept, 2016/17 and Mr Deadman under Item 14 – Portland Maps.

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

Cllr. Kimber reported that the bus service survey was now completed. Five hundred replies had been received, but they had not yet been analysed. A second consultation on the youth service had ended that day, a very emotive issue he described it as.

Regarding the County's budget, it was now being allowed to precept for an extra 2%, which would be spent on social services. 30% of the budget was now being allocated to young people in care. The arts service had been privatised and was now being run as a workers' cooperative.

Discussions continued about the future shape of local government in Dorset. Cllr. Kimber had heard of consequent resignations at East Dorset District Council and the subject was being discussed at the County's Cabinet meeting that day. He thought this meant an important role for the Town Council in the future.

Cllr. McCartney also had concerns about the future of the youth service. She said she had received no reply from the County to e-mails sent. With respect to dog control orders there had been a fundamental shift in policy so that, for example, dogs in Victoria Gardens now had to be kept on leads.

Cllr. West reported on recent planning applications in Weston Street and Brandy Row that the Borough had rejected. She had attended a recent County seminar on safeguarding children, which had been informative and helpful.

(Cllr. Gover joined the meeting.)

Cllr. Thurston raised the subject of car parking machines at the Bill not being emptied. Since there were only two on the site it was causing a deal of inconvenience. Cllr. Nowak said this was a common occurrence in the Borough since its ticket machines had not been updated for twenty years, but replacements were due to be installed soon.

Cllr. Nowak went on to report that further consideration was being given to a unitary council for Dorset, which he saw as a direct consequence of a £90m. reduction in council budgets across Dorset.

#### **d) Public Half-Hour (Continued)**

Mr Nigel Ewens was granted permission to speak under Agenda Item 17 – Western Relief Route.

#### **3032 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015**

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (12-0-1)

#### **3033 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING**

##### **Minute 3002(b) para 3 – King Street / Mallams**

Cllr. Flack reported that a drain had been installed to take away the excess water.

#### **3034 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr. Wild reported that at the last meeting of the Marine & Environment Partnership several of the organisations represented had agreed to liaise on quarries and other issues of mutual interest through the Partnership. This would include the Court Leet. He also indicated his intention to bring a proposal to the next Town Council meeting to extend the Partnership's remit specifically to tourism.

Cllr. Wild also mentioned a successful Easton Promise night, his presentation of a Queen's telegram to Rene Trim for her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and the Civic Carol Service taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **3035 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR**

There were none.

#### **3036 – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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

**RESOLVED** – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 3381 – 3396) in the sum of £5,878.65 including VAT be authorised for payment. (12-0-0)

##### **b) 2015/16 Financial Report to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Cllr. Lees asked about the projected expenditure on Cheyne Weares. The Clerk said it was just based on his educated guess at the cost of the remedial works.

Cllr. West queried the continuing use of the "Maintenance / Caretaker" heading. The Clerk thought this had been discussed at a Finance Group meeting and agreed to check.

It was agreed that the report be accepted.

##### **c) Internal Audit, 2015/16: First Report**

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the report be accepted. (12-0-0)

#### **3037 – RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the question of levying a charge be passed to the Finance Working Group to bring forward a recommendation.

### **3038 – COUNCIL OFFICES**

Although three members had requested that Council's decision on 3<sup>rd</sup> August be rescinded the Clerk had neglected to mention this on the agenda. It was therefore agreed that this be done at an early opportunity in the New Year with a full discussion to follow.

### **3039 – PORTLAND MAPS**

Mr Deadman spoke in favour of the tabled recommendation and supplied some of the detail involved.

It was proposed by Cllr. Thurston and **RESOLVED** – that the Council provide a one-off grant of £1,000 towards the production of Portland maps, to be reviewed annually. (12-0-0)

It was further **RESOLVED** – that the funding be made from reserves and dealt with by the Finance Working Group. (12-0-0)

### **3040 – ALLOTMENTS**

The Clerk reported that he had received no reply to his enquiry from the Borough. The Chairman agreed to pursue the matter in conjunction with the Clerk.

### **3041 – BUDGET AND PRECEPT, 2016/17**

It was proposed by Cllr. Wild and **RESOLVED** – that an additional meeting of the Town Council take place on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to discuss again the Council's views on the Council Offices and the possible budget implications. (12-0-0)

### **3042 – WESTERN RELIEF ROUTE**

Mr Ewens spoke in favour of retaining main transport arteries to the Island, the Western Relief Route and the railway link. These were key necessities to unlocking the full economic potential of the Island and its port.

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the Council write to the County expressing its disappointment at the outcome of the Cabinet meeting to discuss the Relief Route, demand a commitment to preserve the potential for constructing it and ask for the details of the lower cost option. (12-0-0)

### **3043 – OFFICE HOURS**

The Council accepted the report of the Clerk and agreed to his suggestion that the office opening hours be extended to 3.00 pm, Mondays to Thursdays. The Clerk was asked to publicise this in the Free Portland News.

### **3044 – DORSET HOME CHOICE**

Council agreed to accept the report of the Dorset Councils Partnership.

### **3045 – REPORTES FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS**

It was agreed that an appointment to the Coastal Communities Trust be postponed to the January meeting of the Council.

### **3046 – COUNCILLORS' NEWS FROM THE WARDS**

Cllr. Flack reported that Dorset Highways had carried out work to the speed bump in Reap Lane, which in his view could cause damage to car tyres.

Cllr. Lees said she was hoping to organise a clean-up by Cheyne House in January.

**3047 – ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Cllr. Wild reiterated his proposal to add “Tourism” to the Marine & Environment title.

**3048 – EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

It was proposed by the Chairman and **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 23 – 25 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. (12-0-0)

**3049 – EXTERNAL FUNDING SUPPORT**

It was proposed by Cllr. Thurston and **RESOLVED** – that a specific consultant be employed for a trial period of three months to explore and secure funding opportunities for the Council with an option to extend the period further. (11-2-0)

**3050 – CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING FORMER MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL**

Having debated the present situation it was **RESOLVED** – that the Clerk write again to the Council’s solicitor, stating its wishes on the subject. (12-0-0)

**3051 – LIVING WAGE**

It was proposed by Cllr. Gover and **RESOLVED** – that the Council enact from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 the Living Wage sum proposed by the Living Wage Foundation for those staff so affected. (11-0-2)

**3052 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is due to take place on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016, starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm.

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