

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY 2017, IN THE PETER TRIM HALL, ST. GEORGE'S CENTRE, REFORNE

PRESENT: Councillors R. Nowak (Chairman), Ms J. Atwell, Mrs S. Cocking, C. Flack, C. Gover, Ms S. Lees, 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 and Kate Wheller (Dorset County Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Mr Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group), two officers from Dorset Police and fourteen members of the public.

3348 – CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

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

3349 – PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

3350 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Mrs S. Reynolds and D. Symes.

3351 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3352 – OPEN FORUM

a) Police

PCSO Joseph Newall introduced himself and his colleague. He said the number of police officers on the Island is set to increase. Officer Newall reported on local occurrences of crime. He was unable to provide an update to Cllr. Atwell about parking on the pavement along Avalanche Road and also undertook to investigate vehicles parking on the corner of East Weare Road and outside the kebab shop in Easton.

b) Public Half-Hour

June Morley expressed concern that £25,000 was due to be spent on the Council Offices this financial year and thought more checks should have been carried out on the building before moving in.

From the Chair Cllr. Nowak said that a limited number of properties were available and better premises would have cost more. Regarding the flat above progress had been disappointing, but the Council's intention was to pursue refurbishment and gain income from letting it.

Paul Snow also raised questions concerning the Council's accommodation, whether the present building was fit for purpose, whether problems there should have been resolved by the landlord before the Council moved in and why so much money had been spent on improvements when the Council only had security of tenure for two more years. He also criticised the lack of information the Council provided to the public regarding its 2017/18 precept.

Rob Hughes wondered why the Council had not asked for a reduction on its rent and referred to the adverse fire risk report on the building.

Asked by an unidentified lady what were the terms of the tenancy agreement Cllr. Nowak assured her that the Council had tenants' rights.

John Thorner complained that he did not have wheelchair access to the Council Offices and about the lack of action concerning overgrown hedgerows. Cllr. Nowak pointed out that this was a County responsibility, but the Town Council had achieved some progress by persuading landowners to take action on a goodwill basis.

Martin Luther asked whether the Council would be submitting a response to the current NHS mental health consultation.

c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. Paul Kimber reported that the County's share of Council Tax was due to rise by 4.99% in 2017/18. Faced with a choice of rises over the next three years the County Council had chosen successive rises of 5%, 5% and 2%. However the County's financial problems were set to continue with so many children in care.

The County was in discussion with a possible new sponsor for IPACA. The Community Bus was proving quite popular, though still operating at a loss. It is likely to continue now until May rather than March.

Cllr. Nowak reported that the Borough Council had supported his motion regarding the transfer of services to this Council. It had acknowledged the need to maintain parity with the future Weymouth Town Council.

3353 – MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, 18TH JANUARY 2017

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

3354 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No matters were raised.

3355 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN

Cllr. Nowak said he would respond formally to Mr Thorner's letter.

3356 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr. West said she and other representatives of the Islanders Club had held a meeting with a multi-ethnic music group with a view to them using some of the accommodation there to collaborate with local youngsters.

For the record the Mayor's Sea Cadets this year are A/Cdt Chelsea King and A/Cdt Maddie Louch.

3357 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments for Authorisation

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices as stated (including cheque refs. 300115 – 300118, 300114 not used) in the sum of £10,967.42 including VAT be authorised for payment.

b) 2016/17 Financial Report to 31st January 2017

RESOLVED – that the report be accepted.

c) Internet Audit, 2016/17

RESOLVED – that the report from the first visit be accepted.

3358 – QUESTIONNAIRE ON HEALTHCARE IN DORSET

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

3359 – CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR FOR UNDERHILL WARD

The Chairman reported that the sole application had been withdrawn.

3360 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DORSET

RESOLVED – that the Clerk's report be received.

3361 – COUNCIL OFFICES

It was proposed by Cllr. Gover and **RESOLVED** – that the flat be offered for meeting use to the person concerned as requested, the charge to be determined later and the decision to be reviewed in three months.

3362 – FINANCE & STAFFING WORKING GROUP

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the issue of Finance & Staffing's status be referred to the Finance & Staffing Working Group to consider the options and report back to the next meeting of full Council.

3363 – CHANGES TO PLANNING PROCEDURES

a) Reporting to the Borough

This was not discussed.

b) Viewing Application Details at Planning Committee Meetings

It was proposed by Cllr. Gover and **RESOLVED** – that members be encouraged to bring their own tablets to Planning meetings. If a problem arose over viewing applications within the next six months, the situation would be reviewed.

3364 – ROYAL MANOR PLAYING FIELD

It was proposed by Cllr. Thurston and **RESOLVED** – that the Council enter into a thirty-five year lease agreement for the playing field, subject to legal advice and other information requested from the County.

3365 – GRASS-CUTTING CONTRACT

It was proposed by Cllr. Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that the Council tender separate three-year contracts for Cheyne Weares and West Weares, requesting separate prices for providing two or three cuts a year at each site.

3366 – MEETING WITH FIRST BUS REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr. West reported on a meeting she and Cllr. Kimber had attended, discussing fare rises and other aspects of the bus service.

3367 – LIVING AND LEARNING PROJECT

Cllr. Thurston and Mr Matthews reported verbally in addition to the written report provided.

RESOLVED – that Cllrs. Nowak and Thurston represent the Council on the working group that will progress the project, Cllr. West to deputise as necessary.

3368 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS

There were none.

3369 – 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 Item 14 – Council Offices by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

3370 – COUNCIL OFFICES (continued)

RESOLVED – (1) that a planning application be submitted for change of use alone, (2) that materials for window displays be bought for approximately £98, (3) a metal storage shed be bought for approximately £250 and (4) Cllrs. Nowak and Cocking have sets of two office keys, Cllrs. West and Thurston have front-door keys only.

3371 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council is due to take place on Wednesday, 15th March 2017, in the Peter Trim Hall, St. George's Centre, Reforne starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 10.10 pm.

Signed Dated.....
(Chair)