

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19TH MARCH 2014

PRESENT: Councillors L. Ames (Chair), Mrs S. Bradley (from 7.10 pm), R. Denton-White, R. Hughes, A. Matthews, Miss A. Munro, T. Munro, Mrs E. Munro-Price, I. Munro-Price, R. Nowak, Mrs S. Reynolds and R. Wild.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Rev. Tim Gomm (Mayor's Chaplain), Cllr's Paul Kimber & Kate Wheller (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), together with approximately twenty members of the public.

2579 – PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

2580 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. K. Tonkinson-Dutheridge.

2581 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

Cllr. Denton-White proposed and it was **RESOLVED** – that Item 13 – Press Officer be taken before Item 11 – Motion of Confidence.

(Cllr. Bradley joined the meeting.)

Cllr. Nowak asked why his motion concerning the Council calendar for 2014/15 had not been included in the meeting agenda. The Clerk said that he had taken Cllr. Nowak's e-mail to be an enquiry rather than a request for an agenda item. The Chair agreed to accept the matter as business for the meeting as Item 18a.

2582 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Matthews declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9(b) – Tourist Information Centre through Portland Community Partnership.

2583 – OPEN FORUM

a) Police Question Time

No representative of the Police was present.

b) Public Half-Hour

Peter Siddons said he would be sending a written request to the Council that the number of votes cast be recorded for all motions put at Council meetings.

Paul Snow called upon the Councillors to consider their position as representatives of the people of Portland when casting their votes on Council issues.

Linda Wistall (?) of Wakeham requested the Council to exert more control regarding uncovered stone lorries. Stones up to six inches in diameter were being shed from them with consequent danger to life and limb. Cllr. Kimber agreed to take this up with the stone companies through the Quarry Liaison Committee.

Martin Luther asked when the footpath behind Pennsylvania Castle would be reopened. Cllr. Wheller undertook to find out.

June Morley considered that members who had voted in favour of the large precept increase should resign. She also referred to Councillors who had previously indicated they would resign, but had not yet done so.

Mr Siddons asked, if the Island Caretaker's contract was not renewed, would the people of Portland be given a refund from the precept?

Margaret Stone drew attention to Tesco lorries causing traffic problems in Easton Square. Cllr. Kimber will look into this.

June Morley commented that cars were still going the wrong way round the one-way system in Easton Square.

Sue Lees asked for the Clerk's Report to the Town Council meetings to be displayed on the Council's website.

Anna Forden criticised the facilities for parking in Easton as "abysmal." Cllr. Tim Munro thought that if the County get more involved in tackling this problem they might well worsen it. Cllr. Matthews suggested the parking sign near Boots be reinstated to divert some cars to park beyond the Square.

Glen Chadwick complained about inaccuracies in the recording of Council minutes. Cllr. Ian Munro-Price defended the Clerk in the performance of his duties and the Clerk himself asked Mr Chadwick to write and furnish examples.

c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. Kimber commended Islanders and the emergency services for the work done during the storm on the night of 14th February. He had sent a letter of thanks to the County for its assistance.

A report on the County Council's future plans to supply its services on a diminishing budget had gone to the Cabinet for consideration.

The Heritage Lottery was providing small grants to help communities to commemorate the centenary of the start of the First World War.

Cllr. Tim Munro criticised the parking questionnaires that the County had recently sent out to Dorset town councils. As these included questions concerning the future of town centres he thought it was pre-empting the formulation of Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr. Matthews volunteered to complete the survey form sent to the Island.

Cllr. Wheller wanted to raise two issues arising from the recent storm. Firstly she mentioned the problem of evacuating people in the pitch dark, a consequence of street lighting being switched off during the early hours.

She also referred to the burst of a sewerage pipe along Hamm Beach and Wessex Water's action of scattering aggregate in part of a SSSI site. Wessex Water thought they had completed the work, but this situation left the possibility of camper vans etc being able to reach the water's edge of the harbour from the road. The utility

company had originally promised to reinstate the boardwalks. Now it seemed to have changed its mind on the issue with these regrettable consequences.

Cllr. Hughes said one effect of the storm had been to create a two foot drop between the steps and the slipway to the harbour. Cllr. Wheller replied that there was no money in their County's budget to remedy this.

Bill Buchan raised the question of the potential risk to life arising from occasions when normal communications between the Island and mainland had been cut.

Cllr. Ian Munro-Price reported that the Borough's current Chief Executive, David Clarke, was retiring at the end of April and a replacement had been appointed.

Funding would continue for the maintenance of Easton and Victoria Gardens this financial year, but the Borough was in discussion with the Crown Estate concerning the future of those parks that the latter owns.

The Borough was reviewing local sports facilities to produce an overall strategy. This included the Boscawen Centre.

Meanwhile it had produced a further report, "2020 Vision," to identify which services would continue to be financed in the light of cuts to some statutory services. Cllr. Munro-Price hoped Islanders would attend the associated public meetings to hear what was proposed and provide feedback.

Cllr Nowak said the Borough had decided to forward the discretionary grant to the Town Council this year, but it may be reduced next year.

The Borough had decided not to make full use of the Portland Council Offices, which would mean more jobs being transferred from Weymouth to Dorchester and Chickerell. As a result it was likely the building would be sold and the Town Council rehoused. He wondered whether the community might exercise a "right to buy" bid in the future.

2584 – MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 18TH AND 19TH FEBRUARY 2014

a) Meeting of 18th February 2014

Minute 2557 – Review of Council Structures

Cllr. Nowak pointed out that the reference in para 6 should be to the **Finance & Resources Committee**. With this amendment the minutes were formally agreed and signed as a correct record.

b) Meeting of 19th February 2014

Minute 2566 (b) – Public Half-Hour

Cllr. Ian Munro-Price drew attention to the fact that not all members of the public who spoke had been referred to by name. The Clerk commented on the difficulty of obtaining people's names in cases where none had been offered or not heard clearly at the only opportunity provided. Correcting this might require repeated interruption of the flow of the meeting.

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

2585 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Meeting of 18th February 2014

There were no matters arising.

b) Meeting of 19th February 2014

There were no matters arising.

2586 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

2587 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR

There were none.

2588 – MARINE & ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 5TH MARCH 2014

a) Minute 988 – Dorset Quarries Liaison Committee

Cllr. Ian Munro-Price thought a written report should be provided. It was therefore **RESOLVED** – that the representatives of the Town Council on the Committee should report back to the Council through the Partnership and on both occasions a written report should be included.

b) Minute 991 – Tourist Information Centre

Cllr. Tim Munro expressed the wish that a Tourist Information Centre at the Heights Hotel not be the only tourism provision for the Island. He proposed an amendment that the Borough's tourism strategy should continue to include other information points in the Borough, particularly on the Island. This was **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED – the Town Council supports the proposal for a Tourist Information Centre at the Heights Hotel and proposes that the current Tourist Information points should carry information and leaflets about local Portland attractions. The Borough's tourism strategy should continue to include other information points in the Borough, particularly on the Island.

2589 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments for Authorisation

The Clerk drew attention to errors in the cheque numbers quoted on the schedule. Taking these into account it was **RESOLVED** – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 3029 – 3060 excluding 3049) in the sum of £5,099.69 including VAT be approved.

b) 2014/14 Financial Report to 28th February 2014

RESOLVED – that the report be accepted.

2590 – PRESS OFFICER

As a result of the Council's discussion Cllr. Denton-White withdrew his original motion, which was replaced by an alternative proposed by Cllr. Matthews and **RESOLVED** – that the Town Council develop a communications strategy and in the interim the Clerk act as the point of contact with the media.

2591 – MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE

Cllr. Bradley spoke to her motion, saying she had personally been upset by the nature of the debates at the All Saints meetings and felt that the public had not been heeded.

Cllr. Wild thought there were two separate issues involved. One was how Councillors had behaved, which the public were free to lodge complaints about. The other was the question of the proposed precept.

Cllr. Tim Munro and Cllr. Denton-White defended themselves against the accusations, each detailing the respective sequence of events involved. Answering a question from Cllr. Matthews, both said that if the motion was passed they would not stand down.

The voting on the motion was as follows:-

For: Cllrs. Bradley and Reynolds

Against: Cllrs. Denton-White, Hughes, Matthews, Tim Munro, Elspie Munro-Price, Ian Munro-Price, Nowak and Wild

Abstentions: Cllrs. Ames and Amanda Munro

The motion was therefore **LOST**.

2592 – TOWN MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR, 2014/15

Cllr. Matthews proposed that a Chairman of the Council be appointed for 2014/15 instead of a Town Mayor. The Clerk advised that this change would require an alteration to the Council's Standing Orders and there were now insufficient meetings before Mayor-Making to allow this to happen. Cllr. Matthews therefore withdrew his motion.

Cllr. Tim Munro was proposed for Town Mayor in 2014/15. There were no other proposals.

RESOLVED – that Cllr. Tim Munro be nominated for Town Mayor in 2014/15. For the record the voting was seven votes in favour, four against and one abstention.

Cllr. Denton-White and Hughes were proposed for Deputy Town Mayor.

RESOLVED – that Cllr. Hughes be nominated for Deputy Town Mayor in 2014/15. There were five votes for Cllr. Denton-White, six for Cllr. Hughes and one abstention. (Cllrs. Elspie and Ian Munro-Price left the meeting at 9.55pm.)

2593 – COUNCIL CALENDAR, 2014/15

After some discussion, particularly concerning the date of the Annual Town Meeting, Cllr. Nowak agreed to withdraw his motion.

(Cllrs. Bradley and Reynolds left the meeting at 10.05pm.)

2594 – REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRUCTURE

RESOLVED – that Standing Order 46 be altered as follows:-

- a) The Council shall determine the quorum for a meeting of a Committee and a Sub-Committee, which shall be no less than three.

- b) Membership of the Planning & Highways Advisory Committee shall comprise all members of the Council and the quorum shall be three members.
- c) Membership of the Marine & Environment Partnership shall comprise all members of the Council plus the extra invited representatives and the quorum shall be four Council members.

2595 – APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Cllr. Matthews reported on the latest developments in obtaining quotations from the two audit firms considered.

It was proposed by Cllr. Tim Munro and **RESOLVED** – that Council allow Cllr. Matthews and the Clerk to make a decision on the appointment of an internal auditor for the financial year 2013/14, subject to the approval of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

2596 – COUNCIL WEBSITE

Cllr. Matthews reported on the progress of the website, in particular that it had been made public the previous Monday.

A motion recommending that a gallery feature be added was **LOST**.

2597 – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP

Cllr. Matthews reported that members were gathering evidence at the present. There was a great deal of evidence already in the public domain, which meant a lot of work in collating it. Declaration of Interests forms had not yet been circulated to members of the Working Group.

2598 – DATA PROTECTION

It was proposed by Cllr. Tim Munro and **RESOLVED** – that the draft data protection policy submitted to the meeting be accepted by the Council with continuing draft status and passed to the Finance & Resources Committee for further consideration.

2599 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Town Council was due to take place on Wednesday, 16th April 2014, starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 10.25 pm.

Signed Dated
(Chair)