

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER 2015 IN THE PETER TRIM HALL, ST. GEORGE'S CENTRE, REFORNE

PRESENT: Councillors R. Wild (Chairman), Ms J. Atwell, G. Chadwick, Mrs S. Cocking, J. Draper, C. Flack, C. Gover, Ms S. Lees, Mrs S. Reynolds, D. Symes, D. Thurston and Mrs S. West

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Rev. James Menzies (Mayor's Chaplain), Mr Andy Matthews (Finance Working Group), Cllr. Ray Nowak (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council) and eight members of the public.

2998 – PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

2999 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Jason Webb (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council).

3000 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

At the request of Cllr. Chadwick the Chairman agreed to take Agenda Item 18 – Christmas Tree in Easton Gardens immediately after Item 12.

3001 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3002 – OPEN FORUM

a) Police Question Time

No representative of the Police was present.

b) Public Half-Hour

Paul Snow said that under the present financial circumstances residents would be expecting no increase in the Council's precept for 2016/17. He identified reasons for this and referred to levels of Council Tax around the country, citing Weymouth & Portland's as the highest nationally. He therefore requested the members to give serious consideration to no increase.

Andy Matthews asked the Chairman for permission to speak during the Agenda Item 12 – Budget and Precept, 2016/17 and was granted it.

James Menzies queried the algae growing at the bottom of King Street and Mallams. Cllr. Flack said this was reported to Dorset Highways after the last Marine & Environment meeting. The Clerk was asked to check on progress.

c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. West advised that at the last Borough Planning meeting the Committee rejected the application for a caravan park at New Ground. Meanwhile an appeal had been lodged in support of the original application for 120 caravans to be housed on the market site.

Cllr. Nowak said he had asked the Borough Council to review the future of the Comer Homes site and for the installation of more waste bins throughout the Borough.

3003 – MINUTES

a) Town Council, 14th October 2015

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (For: 9 votes, Against: 0 votes, Abstentions: 3 votes)

b) Additional Town Council, 4th November 2015

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (10-0-2)

3004 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING

a) Town Council, 14th October 2015

i) Minute 2969(a) para 1-3 – Parking Problems

Cllr. West said she had encountered more instances of poor and dangerous parking and would be forwarding photographs to the PCSO.

ii) Minute 2983 – Easton Promise

Cllr. Chadwick thought the Council had acted out of turn in approving a donation of £400 to Easton Promise out of the grants budget. In particular he was concerned that the Council had not followed its own procedures in awarding the grant. Various views on the merits of the case were expressed. The Clerk advised that he was aware of at least one case in the past when Council had set aside a grants procedure in making an award.

iii) Minute 2986 – DAPTC

Cllr. Wild reported that all five motions from member councils had been passed at the AGM.

b) Additional Town Council, 4th November 2015

No matters were raised.

3005 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr. Wild said the DAPTC meeting he had attended the previous evening had been advised that there would be a £1m. cut in the County's youth budget. All the youth clubs in the County could be closed unless financial support was forthcoming. The Town Council had written recently to the County arguing in favour of retaining youth centres, including the one at Royal Manor. Its future looked bleak, as did that of the Islanders Club.

He had also recently attended a Civic awards evening, which included three awards for Portland properties, including the gates to Victoria Gardens and the Victoria Lodge stables.

The Civic Carol Service would take place at All Saints Church on Friday, 18th December at 6.30 pm.

3006 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR

There were none.

3007 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments for Authorisation

It was proposed by Cllr. Wild and **RESOLVED** – that a donation of £50 be made to the Royal British Legion.

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 3297, 3365 - 3380) in the sum of £4,522.92 including VAT be authorised for payment. (12-0-0)

b) 2015/16 Financial Report to 31st October 2015

Cllr. Wild queried the large expenditure recorded against the Civic Expenditure budget. The Clerk explained that most of this arose from the cost of the replacement badge for the Mayor's chain, which had not yet been reimbursed by the insurers.

RESOLVED – that the report be accepted. (12-0-0)

3008 – MINUTES

a) Human Resources / IT Committee, 29th September 2015

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (3-0-9)

b) Finance Working Group, 30th September 2015

The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (4-0-8)

A vote of thanks was agreed to Mr Matthews and the Clerk for their work in piloting the new set of Financial Regulations.

c) Finance Working Group, 28th October 2015

Mr Matthews regretted that the minutes had not provided an explanation of each of the agreed budget figures alongside. The minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record. (3-0-9)

3009 – HUMAN RESOURCES / IT COMMITTEE MEETING, 29TH SEPTEMBER 2015

a) Minute 55(b) – Staff Handbook

It was proposed by Cllr. Wild and **RESOLVED** – that the Council seek a quotation from Paula Harding to produce full policy documents for the twenty policies previously itemised. (12-0-0)

Councillors with experience of drafting such policies were asked to identify themselves to the Clerk.

b) Minute 56, Recommendation (1) – Recording Meetings

RESOLVED – that copies of recordings of the Council's meetings be available to members of the public subject to a written request. (12-0-0)

It was agreed to discuss the question of charging for sound copies at a subsequent meeting.

c) Minute 57 – IT Provision

RESOLVED – that the Council buy a new lap-top for the Clerk with a price limit of £500. (12-0-0)

3010 – BUDGET AND PRECEPT, 2016/17

Cllrs. Cocking and Flack gave a presentation in support of the Finance Working Group's draft budget and precept options.

Cllr. Wild provided details of the discussions with the Borough over the future of the Town Council Offices. It was possible that the Borough's intentions to sell the Offices might result in the Town being without any offices. If a change did occur to the current accommodation arrangements the Town Council might face significantly higher costs in paying for this.

Cllr. Chadwick criticised the Working Group for not seeking project bids from other members. Cllr. Lees identified a growing need for local voluntary groups to receive financial support from the Town Council.

The budget was referred back to the Working Group for further consideration.

3011 – CHRISTMAS TREE IN EASTON GARDENS

Cllr. Chadwick requested the Council to provide £500 funding for a tree, including the cost of insurance. Following discussion Cllr. Chadwick withdrew his request.

(Cllr. Chadwick left the meeting at 8.40 pm.)

3012 – AWARD OF GRANTS, 2015/16

It was proposed by Cllr. Gover and **RESOLVED** – that a grant of £250 be made to the Grove Prison Museum and £452 to Portland Parish.

3013 – COUNCIL OFFICES

Cllr. Nowak of the Borough Council reported on the current situation. The Borough had made no budget provision for the Town Council Offices in future years. It appeared set on selling the building and no longer willing to provide accommodation for the Town Council in line with its forty-year-old arrangement. After discussion it was agreed to continue the debate at a private meeting of Town Council members the following evening.

3014 – ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk reported that he had received no reply from the Borough to the list of questions about allotments that he had sent.

3015 – FUNDING ADVICE FOR COUNCIL PROJECTS

It was proposed by Cllr. Cocking and **RESOLVED** – that the Finance Working Group review the matter and report back to the Council. (11-0-0)

3016 – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It was proposed by Cllr. Flack and **RESOLVED** – that the Council adopt the new set of Financial Regulations as drafted. (11-0-0)

3017 – POSSIBLE PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL

It was proposed by Cllr. West and **RESOLVED** – that the Council respond to both approaches. (11-0-0)

3018 – WORKING TOGETHER

Cllr. Wild from the Chair asked members to submit any comments to the Clerk by 26th November. Generally members indicated their support for the initiative at the meeting.

3019 – MAYOR’S SUBSTITUTE BADGE

It was proposed by Cllr. Wild and **RESOLVED** – that the central design consist of the Portland oval logo “in the round” with the wording of the gold badge replicated on the outer ring. (11-0-0)

3020 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS

There was no comment on the reports presented.

3021 – COUNCILLORS’ NEWS FROM WARDS

Cllr. Thurston said only four members had attended the Remembrance Day ceremony and one at the Armistice Day ceremony. He urged Councillors to offer better support.

3022 – 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 22 – Co-option of Councillors and Agenda Item 24 – Staff Superannuation Provision by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

3023 – CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS

RESOLVED – that Mr Ray Nowak and Mr Alex Sergison be co-opted to the Town Council.

3024 – STAFF SUPERANNUATION PROVISION

It was proposed by Cllr. West and **RESOLVED** – that the Council make employer contributions in the case under consideration with immediate effect. (10-0-0)

3025 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is due to take place on Wednesday, 16th December 2015, starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 10.20 pm.

Signed Dated.....
(Chair)