

## **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

### **ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2014 AT EASTON METHODIST CHURCH HALL**

**PRESENT:** Councillors L. Ames (Chair), Mrs S. Bradley, R. Denton-White, A. Matthews, Miss A. Munro, T. Munro, R. Nowak, Mrs S. Reynolds, K. Tonkinson-Dutheridge and R. Wild.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Cllr. Paul Kimber (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council) and approximately eighty members of the public.

#### **2547 – PRAYERS**

The Clerk led the meeting in prayer.

#### **2548 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs. R. Hughes, Mrs E. Munro-Price and I. Munro-Price.

#### **2549 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Clerk confirmed that all members were covered by a dispensation to discuss the financial matters on the agenda.

#### **2550 – OPEN FORUM**

##### **a) Public Half-Hour**

Four people expressed concern at the notice of the revised precept to the Borough. The Clerk responded by detailing the events involved in clarifying the precise amount of the precept decided from the motion resolved and notifying the Borough.

Mr John Thorner asked in view of the (unofficial) vote taken at the previous meeting why the Council and Clerk had not resigned.

Another gentleman said the Council should dissolve itself and pass its powers to the Borough.

Cllr. David Hawkins criticised the communication between the Council and the people of Portland, adding that the whole Council should stand down in April and a new Council be elected.

Mrs Jean Ames defended her husband, Cllr. Les Ames, against the personal attacks that had been made upon him.

A gentleman requested an apology from Cllr. Denton-White for his recent alleged bad behaviour. Cllr. Denton-White offered an explanation of the provocation he felt he had received and apologised.

(Cllr. Denton-White left the meeting at 7.40 pm).

Mr Darby queried the decision arising from Cllr. Tim Munro's motion to notify the amount of the original precept "immediately" to the Borough. Cllr. Tim Munro replied, comparing the level of the proposed precept with neighbouring town councils and stating the perception of the Council's inability to raise the precept in the following years.

Ms Julie Jackson, representing Richard Drax MP, expressed Mr Drax's concerns that he had been misquoted about Government policy on local council precept rises at the recent public meeting on the Island.

A gentleman asked members how they expected low-paid residents to afford the large precept increase. Cllr. Ames explained that some had fought to change it while Cllr. Tim Munro referred to the rebates that were available to the poorer paid.

Another gentleman asked why the Borough wasn't delivering all the services it was supposed to and the possibility of closing the public gardens on the Island. Responding, Cllr. Matthews said the County and Borough were both facing large reductions in their income and should have been explaining this better to the community. One result of the Localism Act was that they were starting to look at ways of devolving powers down to parish and town councils.

A lady spoke of Underhill's underprivileged status. She thought the Council had brought the trouble upon itself, "People have been hurt and are very bitter."

Mr Thorner referred to duplication of hedge-cutting on the Island by different council workforces.

A gentleman drew attention to the austere times people were living in. He thought the cuts were falling disproportionately on Portland and suggested some of those present should lobby the Borough for the Island to be given a fair deal.

Cllr. Wild, answering a point raised by Cllr. Margaret Leicester, pointed out that some of the work done by the Island Caretaker included work to unadopted roads.

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

Cllr. Kimber offered the slightly encouraging news that the County's envisaged cuts had been reduced from £48m to £43m. However the net effect was that lots of changes were in the offing. Members had decided to have recorded votes at future budget meetings. All County Councillors had been allocated £5,000 to spend in their constituencies and he was looking to the community for advice on how best to allocate the money.

Cllr. Kimber advised that the Portland Quarries Liaison Committee was being started up again. He also commended the work of Island residents in dealing with the effects of the recent storms and mentioned that Tesco and Asda had both helped provide food and drink for those temporarily displaced from their homes.

## **2551 – MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2014**

### **Minute 2533(b) – Council Budget, 2014/15**

Cllr. Matthews requested that the words “on the night” be inserted after “rest” in the final sentence of the minute. This change was accepted.

With this amendment the minutes were formally agreed and signed as a correct record.

## **2552 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2013 AND 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2014**

### **Minute 2520 – Marine & Environment Meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

Cllr. Tim Munro asked about the decision to buy bags of grit as a reserve. The Clerk said they had been bought and were stored on the lower ground floor of the Offices.

## **2553 – TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

At the request of the Mayor the Clerk read a letter from Mr Peter Siddons concerning the proposed increase in the precept.

From the public present a lady asked which members of the Council would be resigning. Cllr. Ames indicated that he would resign when his term as Town Mayor ended.

Cllr. Bradley wanted it to be known that she had voted against the large increase in the precept and had been quoted in the Echo to that effect. She also read out a statement that she had no confidence now in Cllrs. Denton-White and Tim Munro.

## **2554 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE MAYOR**

There were none.

## **2555 – COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT, 2014/15**

Members debated the composition of the 2014/15 budget and agreed the following figures:-

### **EXPENDITURE**

Salaries	23,287
Advertising	400
Audit	805
Civic Expenditure	1,541
Computer Equipment	0
Computer Software	50
IT Support	260
Contingency	1,241
Elections	1,500
Fair Expenses	0
Furniture & Equipment	378
Honorarium	100

Insurance	1,300
Mayoral Allowance	700
Postage	600
Publication	0
Stationery	600
Subscriptions	1,400
Telephone	600
Training/Conferences	100
Travelling & Subsistence	100
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>34,962</b>
Gifts & Donations	210
Grants	3,000
Island Caretaker	15,000
Neighbourhood Plan	5,500
Projects	0
Town Crier	50
Website	1,500
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>25,260</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,222</b>

#### **INCOME**

Precept	50,222
Discount Grant	4,000
Fair	3,000
Interest	500
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	2,500
Other	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,222</b>

Surplus/Deficit (-) for Year 0

**RESOLVED** – that the above budget figures be confirmed for 2014/15.

**For:-** Cllrs. Ames, Bradley, Matthews, Amanda Munro, Tim Munro, Nowak, Reynolds and Wild

**Against:-** None

**Abstentions:-** Cllr. Tonkinson-Dutherford

## **2556 – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **Payments for Authorisation**

**RESOLVED** – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 3006 – 3009 and 3011 – 3015) in the sum of £3,408.00 including VAT be approved.

## **2557 – REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRUCTURES**

It was confirmed that Town Council meetings in the new municipal year would take place in May, July, September, November, February 2015 and April. Finance & Resources Committee meetings would take place in June, August, October, December, January 2015 and March.

It was proposed by Cllr. Tim Munro and **RESOLVED** – that Council Sub-Committees might include one co-opted, non-voting lay member with relevant skills.

Members then considered the recommendations in the Clerk's Report regarding Standing Orders.

It was **RESOLVED** that:-

- a) Standing Order 42 remain unchanged
- b) Standing Order 43 remain unchanged
- c) Standing Order 44 remain unchanged
- d) Standing Order 45 remain unchanged
- e) Standing Order 46 be amended to read:-

- 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.

- f) Standing Order 47 remain unchanged.

The Clerk expressed his concern about the extra staff resources required to administer the new sub-committees and it was agreed that this matter be brought to the Human Resources and IT Sub-Committee.

It was also agreed that the terms of reference of the Sub-Committees be left to the Finance & Resources Committee to determine, as well as the number and time of their ordinary meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** – that membership of the new Committee and Sub-Committees should be as follows:-

Finance & Resources: Cllrs. Bradley, Denton-White, Matthews, Tim Munro, Ian Munro-Price and Nowak with one vacancy

Budget & Investment: Cllrs. Hughes, Matthews and Tim Munro  
Events: Cllrs. Bradley, Amanda Munro, Elspie Munro-Price and Wild  
Grants: Cllrs. Bradley, Matthews and Elspie Munro-Price  
Human Resources and IT: Cllrs. Matthews, Nowak and Reynolds

### **2558 – TRANSFER OF SERVICES TO THE TOWN COUNCIL**

Cllr. Nowak spoke to his tabled motion, describing the cuts being made to the budgets of larger councils and touching on how the Town Council might be affected. Cllr. Tim Munro proposed an amendment, that the Finance & Resources Committee be tasked to open discussions with Borough and County Officers, and other partners as to the transfer of some services to the Town Council.

The amendment was **CARRIED**.

Members then voted on the substantive motion, that the Finance & Resources Committee should be tasked to open discussions with Borough and County officers and other partners as to the transfer of some services to the Town Council.

There needs to be a clear examination of the key facts, costs and potential risks of taking on more services as there will be budget implications as to future precept levels.

The Council needs a firm indication from the Borough as to what assistance might be expected in moving these services across to the Town. The assistance could be in financial and officer support over a phased period to ensure that the financial and capacity issues are planned for in advance.

The Finance & Resources Committee should make recommendations to Full Council by no later than September 2014 and if agreed then to work on the budget implications for 2015.

This was **RESOLVED** – unanimously.

(Cllr. Bradley left the meeting at 10.15 pm.)

### **2559 – REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS**

There were none.

### **2560 – EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

It was **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 Grant Awards, 2013/14, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

### **2561 – COUNCIL GRANTS AWARDS, 2013/14**

The Clerk expressed his concern that the Council had previously made a decision in contravention of its own grant conditions.

Cllr. Matthews said that the decision made was felt by members to be for the benefit of the community. He acknowledged the point made by the Clerk and affirmed that the Council were knowingly taking responsibility.

It was proposed by Cllr. Tim Munro and **RESOLVED** – that the list of grant allocations remain unaltered.

**2562 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meetings of the Council were due to take place on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014, both starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 10.25 pm.

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