

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 26th JUNE 2019 AT PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE

PRESENT:

Councillors: Charlie Flack (Chairman), Rob Hughes, Dave Thurston, Sue Cocking, Sandy West, Berny Parkes, Carralyn Parkes, Paul Kimber, Giovanna Lewis, Pete Roper, Sarah Harpley.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) and 8 members of the public.

3892. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and advised that there was no planned fire alarm testing and indicated to those present the various fire exits.

3893. Presentation by Helen Persey – Head of Integrated Community Services (West) See Annex A to these minutes for this report.

3894. Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain Mrs Paula Brown led the meeting in prayer.

3895. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Draper and Atkins.

3896. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3897. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15th May 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

3898. Minute Update and Matters Arising

- a. 3881a – Update on Allotments – The Chairman advised that a letter had gone to all allotment holders and that a response had been requested by 19th July 2019.
- b. 3881d – Attendance by the Police at Council Meetings – The Chairman stated that a letter had been written to the Chief of Police and a response received from Inspector Gosling agreeing to attend a Full Council Meeting and to provide a presentation.
- c. 3881e – A letter had been written to Atlantic Academy declaring the Council's support for the nursery to remain open but the Chairman had been advised that despite a lot of work by the staff to prove that the nursery was financially viable, regrettably it was to close on 24th July 2019.

Cllr Kimber proposed that a special item be added to the next Agenda so that the issue could be considered in more depth.

The Chairman commented that there was still an action required to write to the Academies Board of Directors and remind them that the Council had previously had a place on that Board and would welcome the invitation to do so again. He recognised that as the end of term was nearing then this action should be picked up again in September 2019.

Action on the Clerk to write to the Academies Board of Directors

- d. 3881h – Caterpillars – The Clerk confirmed that an email had been sent to Dorset Council, Mr Giles Nicholson and a copy was attached as an annex to the minutes.

- e. 3881j – Concerns Over the Rising Levels of Rape Seed – The Chairman informed the meeting that he had been advised that what had initially been thought to be rape seed was in fact black mustard seed.
- f. 3882d – Storage of Christmas Decorations – the Chairman advised that the Responsible Finance Officer intended to contact Turrells to understand whether they could potentially store them and to gain a quote for their erection and removal after Christmas.

3899 – To approve the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 4th April 2019

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 4th April 2019 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

The Actions proposed as part of the Minutes were agreed as appropriate.

The Clerk is to write to Comer Homes inviting representation at a Full Council Meeting and requesting that they present their plans for the Hardy Block site.

The Clerk is to write to Comer Homes informing of the situation in relation to the unacceptable levels of caterpillars and request that action is taken to reduce the brambles on the site to alleviate the problem next year.

3900. Democratic Public Half Hour Open Forum

- a. Mr Tony Water wished to bring to the attention of the Council the issue of Climate Change. He advised that drastic action needed to be taken now to avoid the catastrophic consequences of global warming. He urged Portland Town Council (PTC) to consider the biodiversity implications in everything that they do, adding that we cannot afford to do nothing. He believed that the time was now right to be doing the right thing for Portland.
- b. Mr Vincent wished to know who had decided to spend £790 on cleaning the stonework in Easton Gardens and asked whether the money would not have been better spent on goal posts, as requested by Mr Darby? The Council responded that the decision was taken to give Easton gardens the best possible chance of gaining a green flag in the first year that it was under PTC management. In addition, the Council would continue to focus on understanding what should/could be done to make the most of Portland's assets for the residents of Portland; recognising that decisions made by the Council would not always accord with those of some of the residents of Portland.
- c. Mr Darby requested that the Council consider making the lettering on the Sidon memorial more prominent as it is now becoming difficult to read the inscription.
- d. Mr Darby advised the meeting that he had met with Cllr Roper to undertake a site visit of the Officer's Field and thanked him for his time.
- e. Mr Darby wished to make it known that he was unhappy with the state of the bowling green. However, as the bowling green was now being cut on the diagonal, he hoped things would improve.

3901. Chairman's Update

- a. The Chairman advised that following the passing of Cllr Ray Nowak a book of condolence was being held in the Council Offices and was open for anyone who wished to make an entry.
- b. He informed the meeting that interviews had been conducted for the post of Responsible Finance Officer and he was pleased to announce that Mr Wayne Lewin (the current RFO) was to be offered the post on a permanent basis.
- c. Following some negative feedback on the cutting regime of the verges on Portland; he wished to reiterate that the verge cutting was the remit of the Dorset Council and were not the responsibility of the PTC Gardeners. He read out a statement to support the new regime and this is held at **Annex B** to these minutes.

- d. The Chairman advised of a change to a meeting date. The Planning and Highways meeting which was to be held on Thursday 12th of December will now be held on Wednesday 11th December. The time and venue remain unchanged.
- e. A public meeting is to be held on Wednesday 7th August at the PCV at 7:00. The meeting will focus on the progress made since the transfer of services and assets from Weymouth Town Council on 1st April 2019, everybody is welcome.
- f. Following a meeting with Councillors and a member of the public today in relation to the MUGA in the Royal Manor Playing Field the decision has been taken on the grounds of health and safety to close it on a temporary basis until such time that critical repairs can be made.
- g. On the subject of asset transfer, there are still a small number of assets (pieces of land) that need to be viewed prior to taking the decision on whether or not they should transfer to PTC. To that end, the Chairman, Councillor Thurston and the Clerk will undertake an inspection of these pieces of land to aid that decision.
- h. The Chairman advised, that following an incident today in which an angry resident had kept the Assistant Town Clerk on the phone for over an hour; that in future any callers of this kind would be put in contact with the brief holder for the relevant area.
- i. Following an email from Dorset Council regarding electrical vehicle charging points a response was to be returned that suggested four car parks: Chesil Beach Car Park, the Masonic Car Park, Easton Car Park and the Car Park at Portland Bill. In addition to these it was requested that the Car Park at the Portland Community Venue be added to the list and that thought be given to including charging points for electric push bikes.
- j. The Chairman informed the meeting that he had met with the Court Leet to discuss the siting of a memorial to Jack Mantle and the Foylebank on the area now known as Beacon Hill. He advised that the Court Leet were trying to progress this quite quickly due to the age of the remaining relatives who would like to be able to see it. Advice on whether formal planning permission will be required is being sought.
- k. Cllr Thurston asked why all of the grass that was being cut from the verges and was being disposed of behind the wall of the Royal Manor Playing Field, and that there was concern that with the heat it would combust. Mr David Avery (Head Gardener) advised that there was no risk of fire and that the smoke/steam being seen was perfectly normal.

3902. Town Mayor's Announcements

- a. The Mayor advised of the meeting of the engagements that she had attended during June 2019 and for the record these are attached at **Annex C**.

3903. Receive written reports from and County Councillors

- a. Cllr Kimber advised that he had submitted a written report by email but regrettably this had not been received by the Clerk. For information this report is now held at **Annex D**.

3904. Financial Matters

- a. **Payments for Authorisation** – The Clerk presented payments for authorisation totalling £26,018.18, the list of payments is held at **Annex E**.

Authorisation of the payments was unanimously approved.

- b. The Clerk sought pre-approval (authority to commit funds) of £255.46 for the purchase of spring bedding plants from Weymouth Town Council. She explained that, in general, any spend which was greater than £150.00 needed to be pre-approved by either Full Council or the Resources and Policy Committee prior to any employee making a commitment of funds.

A vote was taken with the action being unanimously approved.

- c. The Clerk advised that spend to date equated to 21.31% of the years budget, whilst being 25% of the way through the year. This indicated that spend was on track.

3905. Climate Change/Extinction Rebellion

Cllr Lewis proposed (and was seconded by Cllr B Parkes) that Portland Town Council declare a) a climate emergency and b) immediately set up a working group of Councillors to explore, identify and take action to reduce Portland's impact on climate change and pollution; this proposal is held at **Annex F** to these minutes.

Cllr Kimber suggested that wording be added to the Portland Town Council logo to reflect their support for this cause.

A vote was taken on whether to accept both proposals, with a unanimous response being returned.

3906. Incomes, Poverty and Social Mobility in South Dorset

Cllr Kimber presented a report to the meeting (seconded by Cllr B Parkes) that illustrated the issues of low incomes, poverty and social mobility in Weymouth and Portland. He sought support from Portland Town Council in any future action and submission to Dorset Council. Cllr Cocking spoke passionately on the subject and the issues of deprivation on Portland, declaring that there is, indeed a deprivation emergency on Portland. The report is held at **Annex G** to these minutes.

A vote was taken with regard to supporting the report and the submission to Dorset Council, with a unanimous response being returned.

3907. School Holiday Lunch Club

Cllr Cocking presented to the meeting, a case for the support and running of a pilot for a summer holiday lunch club for children who might not otherwise receive a mid-day meal. Her vision was that there would be an allotment, with a green house where children would be able to see first-hand the entire process of food from ground to plate. The proposal is held at **Annex H** to these minutes.

A vote was taken to support the running of pilot summer holiday lunch club and a unanimous response was returned.

3908. Working Group Reports

The Chairman asked the meeting to consider whether reports from Working Groups were required and if so the frequency and delivery media of the reports. Following a discussion, it was agreed that written reports from each of the Working Groups would be required on a monthly basis and submitted to the Chairman in sufficient time for him to collate and submit to the Free Portland News.

3909. Appointment of Deputy Mayor

The Clerk advised the meeting that she had received two nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor; Cllr Flack and Cllr West. She asked whether there were any more nominations, but none were received. Each of the nominations were seconded and following declaration of the seconds a vote was held. Cllr Flack received 4 votes whilst Cllr West received 7.

Cllr West was duly appointed as Deputy Mayor she made the declaration and signed the declaration of acceptance.

3910. Appointment of Community Safety Officer

The Clerk advised that following the call for nominations none had been received for this post.

The Clerk was requested to re-issue the call for nominations, and to discuss further at the next meeting.

3911. Donation of a Display Case, and Contents from Portland Museum.

Cllr C Parkes advised that Portland Museum had made the generous offer to donate to the Portland Community Venue, a museum quality display case, complete with artefacts, representative of Portland's geology and history. The case is a metal table with a glass enclosure to protect the exhibits with an approximate size of 42inches by 28inches. Cllr Thurston also noted that there were several items, currently held within the storeroom, which as it appeared there was little opportunity for them to be displayed within the PCV, Portland Museum might wish to consider having.

A unanimous vote was returned in support of accepting the donation of the display case and contents.

3912. Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils

On behalf of Portland Town Council, Cllr Hughes had recently (4th June 2019) attended the Central Area Committee meeting and provided a report on that meeting. His report is held at **Annex I**.

3913. Dog Poop Project

The Clerk provided an update on the progression of the Dog Poop Project currently being undertaken by Mrs B Avery. In addition, she sought volunteers to be part of the judging panel for the Poster competition that was due to complete on 12th July 2019. Both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor kindly volunteered.

3914. Exclusion of Press & Public (discretionary)

There were no matters to discuss.

3915. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 24th July 2019 at the Portland Community Venue at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 21.15 hours.

Signed Dated.....
Chairman