

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH MARCH 2018
AT THE PETER TRIM HALL, ST GEORGE'S CENTRE

PRESENT: Councillors Ray Nowak (Chairman), Jo Atwell, Sue Cocking, Charlie Flack, Chris Gover (arrival time not noted), Lucy Grieve, Sue Lees, Sandra Reynolds, David Symes, David Thurston, Sandy West and Rod Wild

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Dave Farmer (Mayor's Chaplain), Councillor Katharine Garcia (Dorset County Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Councillors Kerry Baker and Paul Kimber (both Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) and ten members of the public

3631 – CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

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

3632 – PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain led the meeting in prayer.

3633 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Jim Draper.

3634 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3635 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman said he would take Agenda Item 5(b) – Public Half-Hour after Item 11 – Financial Regulations.

3636 – OPEN FORUM

a) Police Question Time

There was no representative of the Police present.

c) Reports from Borough and County Councillors

Cllr Garcia detailed several items with which she had recently been involved, among them conversations with Dorset Highways about the Beach Road and the uneven state it had been left in. She said she supported the BEACH project in principle, but had concerns that the public had not been properly consulted.

Following from this Cllr Thurston queried issues that had arisen with Stone Firms. Cllr Nowak clarified that noise and vibrations along Reforne due to mining were due to cease in two months' time.

Cllr Kimber mentioned that it was still uncertain whether there would be local elections in May this year.

Cllr West said she was still waiting for replies to her requests for rubbish bins at two bus stops and road repairs on the approach to East Weare Road. Likewise there had been no response to her suggestion for a commemoration of the extension to suffrage in 1918 and 1928.

Cllr Nowak let it be known that he had voted against a 2% rise in the Borough Council Tax because of the Council's imminent demise. He had also raised the question of ownership of Portland Museum, currently in the possession of the Borough.

3637 – MINUTES OF MEETINGS

a) Extraordinary Town Council Meeting, 7th February 2018

b) Town Council Meeting, 14th February 2018

Both sets of minutes were formally approved and signed as a correct record.

3638 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING

Minute 3614, para 4 – Public Half-Hour

Cllr Nowak advised that the Council at a future date would also look at notifying the public of forthcoming meetings by e-mail.

3639 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN

There were none.

3640 – TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Flack reported that he had received a letter from Richard Drax offering his support in providing opportunities for Islanders. He noted the recent successes of Portland Angling Club and complimented those who had assisted in the delivery of services during the recent spell of cold weather.

3641 – FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments for Authorisation

It was agreed that the reimbursement of the payment to Autoglass be withheld until further notice from the Council's insurers.

RESOLVED – that the schedule of invoices (cheque refs. 300154 – 300156) in the sum of £10,977.82 including VAT be authorised for payment.

b) 2017/18 Financial Report to 28th February 2018

RESOLVED – that the report be accepted.

3642 – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RESOLVED – that the tabled alteration, "Insert new section, '5.4 The RFO shall only be required to pursue VAT for invoices of £20 or more. The RFO's discretion may be exercised for invoices less than £20.' and renumber the succeeding sections." Be approved.

3643 – FORMER BRACKENBURY INFANTS SCHOOL

a) Cllr Grieve gave a presentation to update the meeting on what stage the BEACH project had reached.

3644 – OPEN FORUM (Continued)

b) Public Half-Hour

Paul Snow asked several questions about the survey conducted as part of the BEACH project.

June Morley made several requests concerning the project and survey, including an independent enquiry into how the survey was conducted.

Cllr Baker expressed her support for the project, but asked what would happen to the building and site if the Council's bid was unsuccessful or the hub went ahead and subsequently failed to attract sufficient support for its services.

Cllr Kimber voiced his concern about the loss of services for the elderly on the Island and asked how the BEACH might make up that shortfall.

Cllrs Grieve and Nowak responded to the issues raised.

Rob Hughes criticised the expenditure of £2,000 on commemorative benches in respect of the First World War that had been mooted.

Linked with the BEACH Andy Matthews had two main regrets. Firstly the County Council had put into abeyance their Living and Learning project, which sought to make better use of public sector buildings on the Island, and secondly the Borough Council was taking steps to establish Weymouth on a new footing using money that had originally come from residents of Portland as well as Weymouth.

Mr Vincent wanted an Island referendum on the Beach project and further financial details.

3645 – FORMER BRACKENBURY INFANTS SCHOOL (Continued)

b) Prior to taking a vote on the tabled motion Cllr Nowak from the chair emphasised that if the County did not agree to transfer the property there would be no need to seek the loan.

RESOLVED – that the Council seek the Secretary of State's approval for the proposed borrowing to finance the BEACH project. The decision was unanimous.

c) Cllr Cocking said it had been estimated that it would cost the Council £16,000 a year to pay off the loan envisaged.

RESOLVED – that in the event of the publicised worst-case scenario occurring the cost of repaying the loan would be borne solely by the precept. It was estimated that the £16,000 figure was equivalent to a precept rise of £4.80 or 20.9%.

It was further **RESOLVED** – that the three quotations for the work involved in providing fire survey estimates be accepted.

3646 – FORMER SOUTHWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr Matthews reported that there had been no further negotiations since the last Council meeting. He would keep Council informed of any developments.

3647 – STAFFING

a) Town Clerk

Cllr Nowak informed the meeting that the present Clerk would be leaving on 30th April. The Council was in the process of appointing an interim replacement.

b) Overtime

RESOLVED – (i) that a total of up to four hours per week overtime be granted to staff for six weeks in March and April to be allocated at the discretion of the Clerk, and (ii) that £2,000 be released from reserves to Contingency for staffing and other incidental costs.

c) Assistant Clerk

The Staffing Committee will review the postholder's hours at its next meeting.

3648 – COMMEMORATIVE BENCHES

It was proposed by Cllr Nowak and **RESOLVED** – that Council obtain quotations for Armistice benches, seek a suitable site and look for sponsorship assistance with the cost if the Council decides to go ahead.

3649 – EVENTS & TOURISM WORKING GROUP

a) It was proposed by Cllr Gover and **RESOLVED** – that the Group be redesignated as the Events Committee with ad hoc working groups as and when necessary.

b) Cllr Nowak presented a report. The Lottery Fund had approved the accounts submitted and allowed the Council to retain the £500 residue from the original grant. Both Portland Sparkle and the Summer Fete had proved successful.

Cllr Lees advised that she knew of a suitable beam on which to mount a beacon, though it would need restoration. Cllr Nowak was negotiating with the Borough for a suitable site on which to locate the beacon.

Cllr Thurston suggested that the Council award an annual certificate of appreciation to recognise the work of individual Islanders on behalf of the community. This idea will be discussed at the next Events Committee meeting.

3650 – CALENDAR OF MEETINGS, 2018/19

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

3651 – GRIT BINS

Cllr Flack spoke to his written report. There was a need to refill the existing bins and consider the purchase of more community bins. The Clerk was asked to write to Dorset Highways that they consider installing more of their own bins, after which the Finance Committee will consider the provision of any further.

3652 - REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND VOLUNTARY POSTS

No reports were presented.

3653 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is due to take place at the Peter Trim Hall, St George's Centre on Wednesday, 18th April 2018, starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.

Signed Dated.....
(Chairman)