

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

MARINE, ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD AT THE PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE ON WEDNESDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Sue Lees (Chairman), Ray Nowak, Rod Wild, Rob Hughes and Jo Atwell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) and five members of the public.

1242 – CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Cllr. Lees welcomed all to the Partnership Meeting and apologised that it had been a while since the last meeting, explaining that she had suffered an accident and had been incapacitated for a length of time.

1243 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Terry Shakespeare – Friends of the Grove

1244 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Lees declared an interest in Chesil Equestrian Centre and Cllr. Nowak declared a non-pecuniary interest in St Georges Centre.

1245 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH FEBRUARY 2018

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

1246 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr. Rob Hughes was proposed as the Vice Chairman the proposal was seconded and carried unanimously.

1247 – MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

1248 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A concern was raised about the Islands underground hospital and the intent that it to be opened up and used. Cllr. Nowak responded that whilst it was not 'listed' Dorset Health had given no indication that it would be cleared out. He further commented that he believed this to be the only underground Naval hospital in the country, and further that he understood that Cllr. Kimber proposed to earmark it as a project. Cllr. Nowak was informed that the underground hospital at Portland was not unique and that other underground hospitals existed.

Mr Matthews added that within the Town Plan there was a process that allowed for Town Councils to nominate historic sites for local heritage listings. He suggested that he make contact with Ashley Smith, who is involved with Isle of Portland Heritage, and make him aware that the underground hospital together with other heritage sites on Portland should be considered for listing. Cllr. Nowak agreed that there was a greater degree of success if a number of people provided input.

The Chairman asked Mr Matthews to make contact with Mr Smith and provide him with an update from this meeting.

Mr Matthews is to report back to the next meeting.

1249 – Sylvia Clayden – Presentation on Historical Awareness Project.

The Chairman asked that the meeting allow a change in the running order. Requesting that Ms Sylvia Clayden be allowed to make her presentation now, rather than at the latter end of the meeting; stating that Ms Clayden had travelled some distance to attend this evening and did not wish to delay her in return journey.

Ms Clayden explained to the meeting that she had gained funding to support an historical awareness project in her home town of Pewsey, Wiltshire. She felt that this project would translate well to Portland and proceeded to explain how the project had developed and how the end result had been a number of linked display boards that provided a visual display of the historic sights around the Pewsey area; adding that she felt that the cost was outweighed by the increased tourism. Mr Matthews felt that there was something similar in some areas of Portland, but that an audit of existing signage would be worthwhile. He added that he felt that a Project of this type should be encouraged as each village on Portland had its own historic story to tell, but that unifying them to cover the whole of Portland would be beneficial.

Cllr. Hughes stated that there was a need to consider something more than static displays and that the public now wanted something more interactive, such as outdoor videos and something that could interact with their phones. It was agreed that if Portland wished to encourage a greater number of the tourists then it would be necessary to stimulate the tourist offering.

Cllr. Nowak felt that this was a good quality scheme but unfortunately it came down to the money required and the money available to take forward any such scheme. He suggested that, if all of the interested organisations on Portland could raise a thousand pounds each then the Project could become a reality.

The Chairman asked that Cllr. Hughes undertake a review of the potential of the project proposed and provide a plan to take forward.

The Chairman thanked Ms Clayden for her presentation.

Cllr. Hughes to take forward the Project and provide an update for the next meeting.

1250 – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)

Mr Matthews advised the meeting that at the last meeting the informal consultation of the NP had just been finished and that in the summer the first official consultation had been undertaken. As a result of that work the comments received were being discussed with the local Planning Authority who were becoming increasingly interested in what was being proposed. The discussions would ensure that the NP could be used as a recognised planning document and that there were no obvious faux pas being made. There is a meeting planned for next week with the Planning and Highways which will look at the final wording of the proposed amendments. If PTC Council deem that they are comfortable with the amendments, then the NP will be submitted to the Council for formal approval to present to the Planning Inspector, the ultimate aim is for it to become a material planning document within the Planning Authority framework. When asked about timescales, Mr Matthews stated that once

the NP had been passed to the Planning Authority it would ultimately become their document and it would not be possible to determine the timescales.

1251 – PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

The Chairman advised the meeting that she will shortly submit an application for bridleways on the island. She stated that this had been something that has been discussed for many years and explained that her previous attempt had failed as she had used a map that highlighted (in a specific colour) which routes were the bridleways among others indicated on the map. It was unfortunate that the map had then been photocopied in black and white suggesting that horse riders wished to have access to all routes on the island. Because of the misunderstanding the project had stalled somewhat, however she recognised that she had until 2024 to get the bridleways issues resolved and promised that it would be complete within this timescale.

She also reminded the meeting that there had been a previous discussion on the lack of a right of way from the Naval Cemetery to Nickodemus Knob for cyclists. She reiterated that this was a cycleway (and a bridle path) that she would dearly love to see open and understood that Portland Port might now look on it more favourably if, the MET Partnership were able to find the money to erect a secure fence.

Mr Matthews confirmed that Portland Port recognised and supported that there was a real desire to open up this side of the Island and in addition the NP reiterated this. He confirmed that the length of fence required would be 150mtrs, would need to be to a certain standard, would open up the East side of the Island and join up the south west coast path. He felt opening up this route alone had a tourist and economic value associated. It was discussed as to whether local CIL money could now be used to support this project.

Mr Matthews is to pursue the matter with Portland Port and report back at the next meeting.

Cllr. Wild brought up the issue of the right of way through St Peters Church and the fact that the route was currently unsafe due to the state of the key stone; he believed that English Heritage were aware of the issues given that Mr Lewin (Interim Town Clerk) had written to them. Mr Matthews commented that English Heritage were in the process of generating a new funding stream which centred around being realistic about heritage being preserved whilst being used to generate an income i.e. St Peters Church could become a heritage centre for the Grove. He felt that Portland needed a heritage strategy to support future maintenance of the Island buildings and monuments.

The Town Clerk is to look for the letter written by Mr Lewin

1252 – PORTLAND RESILIENCE PLAN

Cllr. Wild explained that the need for a Portland Resilience Plan had been borne out of the Cockermouth flooding disaster, where it had been shown that having a resilience plan allowed for services to be restored more quickly than if a plan did not exist. Following this it had been decided that Portland would follow best practice and generate a resilience plan.

Mr Matthews stated that he had several minor amendments to be made to the resilience plan and that, rather than go through them at this meeting, he would to speak to the Town Clerk and get them amended offline.

Mr Matthews to provide the Town Clerk with the amendments required.

Cllr. Hughes asked the meeting to consider installing a de-fibrillator at the new Council Offices. He referred to an incident earlier in the year when he had been witness to a fisherman having a heart attack on the sea wall.

Discussing funding, Cllr. Hughes explained that the majority of this equipment was funded by charitable donations. Mr Matthews felt that an audit of places that held this equipment needed to be undertaken and once known then the gaps could be identified and filled in.

In addition, he asked that Page 8 of the Plan – Key Locations to be used as a place of safety, be updated to include the Portland Community Venue.

1253 – Presentation by Mr Douglas Pigg on Dorset National Parks

Mr Pigg started his presentation by thanking Portland Town Council for the support that it had provided, and which had resulted in Portland being an considered an exemplar. He continued that there had been very little MP support for the Dorset National Park initiative but that things had been moving, that was, he said until the Glover Review had been instigated at which point progress had been put on hold. The Review, which was due out next year was looking at designated landscapes and the history of how national parks were put together and run. He explained that he had been asked to provide a briefing to support Mr Glover's visit (for consideration as part of the review) and this he had done (copy attached to the Agenda) and in writing the document had been reminded of how well it sat with the Neighbourhood Plan. The other thing that would support the Glover review was a spreadsheet that identified all outside recreational activities (when complete a copy is to be sent to the Town Clerk for reference).

He referred to the LEP - Dorset 2023 and stated that whilst Eden Portland and Osprey are mentioned there was concern from Dorset County Council on what they expected to be provided with as financial support, feeling that the LEP was heavily biased towards Bournemouth and that Portland was a mere dormitory of that. He also mentioned that an independent report had been commissioned and published that detailed the economic benefits of Dorset National Parks which fills in much of the gaps on rural Dorset. (A copy of the report is to be provided to the Town Clerk).

1254 – Litter and Fly Tipping

The Chairman advised the meeting that she had been called to remove two single mattresses from Weston Playing Field.

The Chairman stated that the issue was more about getting rid of the waste as there was no formal agreement with the Tip for these items to be disposed of. She explained that having collected the items she was then left with them to dispose of, and although the Tip had not stopped her in getting rid of the fly tipped rubbish, she was concerned that no formal agreement existed. She commented however, that she was surprised that there was not more fly tipping and that things had seemed to improve since the big clear up a few year ago.

Town Clerk to contact Dorset Waste Partnership and see if a formal arrangement could be agreed.

1255 – Events Diary Christmas Sparkle

Cllr. Wild stated that the next event was the Christmas Sparkle and provided an update on the latest news and who was likely to attend.

1256 – Members Forum Update

a) Portland Seafarers Support Group – Cllr. Wild stated that there are one or two issues with the Catalina, but they are being resolved. Of interest, he felt, was the cable innovator which is being fitted out with a lightweight cable.

b) The Archaeology Group – Cllr. Wild informed the meeting that:

i. A grant has been received to protect the Culverwell Mesolithic site. This is only a short-term grant for 3 to 4 years. English heritage has recommended a full back fill and a new roof on the site.

ii. There have been some exciting finds on the Reap Lane site, with a track way having been uncovered. They have also found a wild boar's tooth and a sheep's tooth.

1257 – Flood Wardens News Letter

The Chairman confirmed that a copy of the Flood Wardens News Letter has been received (and was distributed to all at the meeting) – copy held at Annex A to these Minutes.

The Chairman wished to understand whether the residents in Chiswell were all aware, that in the event of flooding, who and where they should contact to get help. This was confirmed by Mr Matthews.

1258 – Disused Quarries

Nothing to discuss

1259 – Run Down Areas

The house on High Street was discussed, Mr Matthews informed the meeting that he had looked at it with the Land Trust, but the property had been compulsory purchased by Dorset County Council. Cllr. Nowak expressed his frustration, stating that he had declared an interest in this over four years ago and was still waiting for action.

1260 – Open Spaces, Hedgerows, Footpaths and Dry-Stone Walls

a) Open Spaces

The meeting was advised that a working group was to start work in the disused King Barrow quarry next week the aim being to maintain the features.

The issue of grazing on the Verne was discussed, and the meeting was advised by Sam Hamer (Dorset Wildlife Trust) that all the fences were complete, and the goats were in. He also confirmed that Dorset Wildlife Trust had applied for and received 10 years funding to support this project; with the bulk of the funding going to support the type of animals required to graze the area. He added that it would need several years of grazing to reduce the impact of years of non-grazing and re-instate the grass. He further stated that it was not the intention to have a long-term commitment to management of the area.

b) Hedgerows

Cllr. Wild explained that once again the moths had been a problem this year and were likely to be problem again next year. He explained that the only real remedy was to cut them out and dispose of the cuttings by burning. Although he had been advised that consideration should be given getting a pest control firm in to spray the affected areas with an insecticide.

c) Drystone Walls

The meeting was advised that the Crown Estates had funded some repairs to walls along the Portland Bill Road. The Chairman explained that over the years there had been an aspiration to provide dry stone walling training courses, but these had not come to fruition. Jane White (Crown Estates) added that the biggest cost to repairing the walls was in bringing in the new stone that was required. The Chairman agreed and felt that there was little to be gained in putting more effort into potential training courses as the cost was prohibitive. As a solution the Chairman stated that she had quite a keen bunch of people who wished to gain experience in dry stone walling and that she intended that they gain this experience from repairing her walls and further accepted that she would bear the cost. She extended the invite to anyone who wished to gain experience in this skill.

d) Cycle Paths

The Chairman expressed her frustration with cyclists using the Beach Road and not using the cycle paths. Mr Matthews explained that the Beach Road Cycle path was still a work in progress and that he continued to seek progress with Dorset County Council.

e) Grit Bins

The Chairman asked that she be allowed to add Grit Bins to the list of Standard Agenda Items. She felt that there was a need for more grit bins on the Island and asked the meeting to consider the issue, and to come up with an idea of where further grit bins could be added. She asked that if anybody was passing a grit bin that they look to see if more grit was needed and if so to contact her, she also reminded people that there is a dumpy bag of salt in the car park at the PCV.

1261 – Additional Item - Report from Portland Tourist Information Centre

Mr Deadman advised the meeting that he had attended the Rutland Bird Fair in August and felt that mention of the coast to this landlocked community was of great interest and had certainly encouraged many people to come and visit the Jurassic Coast.

The latest edition of the Wildlife on Portland newsletter was available for anyone who wished to have a copy.

He thanked PTC for the sponsorship and advised that the latest edition of the Portland map was now available.

He also asked the meeting to look out for some of the large foam board maps, which have been distributed around the island.

1262 – Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 6th March 2019 at the Portland Community Venue.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date