

## **PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MARINE & ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2014**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R. Hughes (Chair until new Chair elected), Mrs S. Bradley, G. Chadwick, A. Matthews, (also as Chairman of Portland Community Partnership Board), Mrs S. Reynolds and R. Wild, together with Ruth Carpenter (Natural England from 7.25pm), Lyn Cooch (Dorset Countryside from 7.10pm), Mike Deadman (Portland Heights Hotel), Philip George (Crown Estate), Hannah Sofaer (Portland Stone Quarry Trust from 7.12pm), Sandie Wilson (Portland Port)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Pam Hamblin (Assistant Town Clerk)

#### **995 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2014/15**

Cllr Bradley and Cllr Wild were unanimously elected as Chairman as Deputy Chairman for the coming year. Cllr Bradley took the Chair at this point.

#### **996 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr R. Denton-White, Charles Frampton (PSQT), Geoff Peters (NCI) and Sue Lees (Chesil Equestrian Centre).

#### **997 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Matthews reminded members that he also attends as Chairman of the Board of Portland Community Partnership.

#### **998 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014**

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

#### **999 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING**

##### **Minute 992 – Agenda Items by exception - (c) Run-Down Areas**

Cllr Chadwick asked on behalf of Sue Lees as to progress made on the upgrading of paths to bridle paths on the Island and the support given by the British Horse Society for this purpose. The Assistant Clerk undertook to write to Dorset County Council to ascertain progress made.

##### **Minute 993 – Issues raised by Partnership Members**

Cllr Wild asked if it is possible to have an advance list of cruise ships coming into Portland Port. Sandie Wilson said that a list is available on the website and the next berthing is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June and that American citizens are likely to be on board.

##### **Minute 992 – Agenda Items by exception – (c) Run-Down Areas**

The meeting returned to this item as regards bridleways. Lyn Cooch said that she would undertake to ascertain from her colleague what progress is being made with regard to the upgrading to bridle paths. Cllr Chadwick mentioned that the kissing gate at Sweethill Road is not disabled-friendly and that the footpath on the Esplanade is due to be repaired next week.

### **1000 – COASTGUARD AND HELICOPTER SERVICE CLOSURES**

Cllr Wild said that the coastguard offices are for sale as part of the closures and that the loss of the Service means that Coastwatch is now a very important organisation on the Island.

### **1001 – OLYMPIC LEGACY**

Cllr Wild said that the gates in Victoria Gardens are unlikely to be erected as the quote to the WPBC is extremely high. Philip George added that the Court Leet may make a contribution to the costs as this is Court Leet land. There is continuing support for a schools programme, in particular with Absolute Theatre.

Cllr Hughes reported that the project with Sue Austin continues and she is travelling to Germany, Spain and Mexico later this year to give talks and performances. She was invited earlier this year to talk to an NASA event and this may be repeated.

### **1002 – DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL TRAFFIC AND CAR PARKING SURVEY**

Cllr Matthew reported that he had responded with the Portland Community Partnership by explaining that there is a Neighbourhood Plan which includes these issues and that this has been taken on board by DCC.

### **1003 – WEST WEARES – LANDSLIDES**

Lyn Cooch reported that the Ranger team do not continue to monitor the area seaward of the coastal path as the geologist from the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team has concerns about toppling of the land – how far will it reach and when will it go. New fissures continue to appear throughout the Island. It remains a landowner responsibility and she has had little response to her information email (attached) which was also sent to users of the cliff area, such as Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre. The Coastal Path remains closed where there is movement. She added there is an agreement in hand that the closed path at the YOI is removed. She mentioned the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 – the Lulworth to Rufus Castle area has been designated and Rufus Castle to Lyme Regis is the next area to be considered.

### **1004 – WEST WEARES – SIGNAGE**

The issue of a contribution to the costs of the 'No Camping' signs paid by the Borough was discussed and **RECOMMENDED** – a contribution of £46.00, representing 10% of the cost be considered. Lyn Cooch added that it would be helpful if the signs could explain why camping is prohibited to educate the public.

### **1005 – OPEN SPACES SOCIETY**

It was mentioned that the Society had been involved in local issues at Weston Green (Portland) and Little Francis (Weymouth) in the past. Philip George said that the Court Leet subscribes £100 pa and makes an additional small donation. After discussion it was **RECOMMENDED** that a donation (in addition to our subscription) be made of £50.00.

### **1006 – HAMM BEACH**

Lyn Cooch said that replacement of the walkways is in hand, but no date has been given by Wessex Water. Ruth Carpenter said that she too has chased this up. Cllr Chadwick asked if the existing boardwalk could be removed in the interim as it is unsightly. Lyn Cooch undertook to pursue this.

### **1007 – TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**

Mike Deadman gave an update on behalf of Angie Mustill. He explained that he had previously worked at the Weymouth TIC and at the Portland Bill Visitor Centre. The new Visitor Centre at the Portland Heights Hotel will be open 365 days a year, day and night for visitors and local residents. Maps, leaflets and public transport information will be available, Portland events will be highlighted and there will be discounts for local attractions. A new public entrance to the Centre is being constructed and it is hoped to open in approximately two weeks. Discussions are ongoing with Portland Port to establish connections with cruise passengers and to keep them on the Island. Bus shuttle services exist from the Port to Weymouth and discussions are taking place for the same for Portland tours to include a pickup, the Visitor Centre, Tout Quarry and coastal walks, for example.

### **1008 – DRY-STONE WALLS**

Cllr Chadwick mentioned that Sue Lees may be able to assist with the ownership of the dry-stone walls which require repair near the Bill. The Assistant Clerk undertook to contact her.

### **1009 – ISLAND CARETAKER**

Cllr Wild added to his written report that the Council is being pursued for damage caused to a member of the public's vehicle at Cheyne Weares as it is being claimed that the headroom is 1" shorter than the sign indicates. The sign is now destroyed and Cllr Matthews said that the information on it requires updating to comply with insurance requirements in any event. Discussion ensued with regard to have a gate to prevent unauthorised parking which the Caretaker could unlock and lock. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the potholes should be filled in and the frame replaced.

General discussion took place with regard to the picking up of litter, overnight camping, fly-tipping and parking on various sites on the island. It was agreed that one approach could be to deal with infringements by polite signs in order to educate the public explaining why such behaviour is inappropriate and that it is prohibited for a reasons such as being a wildlife site or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for example.

### **1010 – STANDARD AGENDA ITEMS (by exception)**

#### **a) Disused Quarries**

Hannah Sofaer reported that Admiralty has been filled in, the area behind PSQT also and Inmosthey is being filled as it goes. Cllr Matthews mentioned that the Neighbourhood Plan and the Minerals Liaison Committee continue to consider the quarries.

#### **b) Litter and Fly-Tipped Material**

The Assistant Clerk mentioned that she had today written to Wessex Water with regard to the fly-tipping behind the Portland Heights Hotel and also to Albion Stone and Stone Firms with regard to overgrown hedges. Concern was raised with regard to litter from the market. Cllr Chadwick asked if the organisers could be contacted with regard to erecting a fence to prevent it going into Kingbarrow. The Assistant Clerk undertook to contact when details of the organiser are provided. Lyn Cooch said that a solution could be to go 'bag-free'. Cllr Hughes added that it is also plastic items such as water bottles which make up much of the litter.

**c) Run-Down Areas**

Scaffolding around a house in High Street, Fortuneswell was mentioned as having been in place for some time. The Assistant Clerk indicated that this could be a Planning Committee issue.

Lyn Cooch suggested that the Island Caretaker liaise with Dave Ackerley at DCC with regard to weeds as the County Council has a twice-yearly spraying programme in place. She undertook to speak with Mr Ackerley with regard to this and the footpath outside Cliff Top School.

**d) Open Spaces, Hedgerows, Footpaths and Dry-Stone Walls**

Already dealt with above.

**1011 – ISSUES RAISED BY PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS**

The Assistant Clerk raised the NALC Policy Consultation on Underground Drilling Access (Payments for Access) (document attached) for consideration and recommendations. After much discussion, it was **RECOMMENDED** – to ONE – the Council should object to an automatic right to extract in land at least 300m below the surface and therefore it follows that responses to TWO and THREE are not applicable and it is inappropriate to comment further.

**1012 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair advised members that the next meeting of the Partnership would take place at the Council Offices on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014, starting at 7.00pm.

The meeting ended at 9pm.

Signed ..... (Chair) Date .....