

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

MARINE & ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4th SEPTEMBER 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs S. Bradley (from 7.15pm), A. Matthews, Mrs S Reynolds and R. Wild, together with Peter Allam (Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy), Philip George (Crown Estate) and Nicholas Wright (Portland Bird Observatory)

IN ATTENDANCE: Pam Hamblin (Assistant Town Clerk).

950 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs L. Ames, R. Denton-White, R. Hughes and Mrs E. Munro-Price, together with Mrs Lyn Cooch (Coastal Rangers Team), Charles Frampton (Portland Stone Quarry Trust), Geoff Peters (National Coastwatch Institute), Ms Sandie Wilson (Portland Port) and Cllr. Kate Wheller (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council and Dorset County Council).

In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Cllr R. Wild took the chair.

951 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

952 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH JUNE 2013

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

953 – MINUTE UPDATE AND MATTERS ARISING

(a) Minute 941(d) – Portland Bill Visitor Centre

Cllr Matthews asked if there was any further information beyond the Clerk's report. Cllr. Wild confirmed that the present facility would close at the end of September 2013. He reported that at the recent joint meeting Trinity House were keen to take over the building and use it as a paying museum. Mr Wright added that Portland Bird Observatory had donated £4,000 to the facility as a Visitor Centre. Mr Matthews also said that 300,000 people visit the Bill area each year. It was agreed by the Partnership members that it was important that the Visitor Centre should continue in some form as it is a focal point for the Island and benefits local businesses.

(Cllr. Bradley joined the meeting and took the chair.)

(b) Minute 947(c) – Run-Down Areas

With regard to the football pitch close to the Osprey Quay school, the Assistant Clerk reported that a letter had been written to the Borough but no reply had been received.

954 – COASTGUARD AND HELICOPTER SERVICE CLOSURES

No further reports had been received. Cllr. Matthews mentioned that it was unlikely Dorset Police would use the Portland base for refuelling its helicopter.

955 – OLYMPIC LEGACY

The Assistant Clerk drew members' attention a recent article in the Dorset Echo which set out a number of projects that were part of the Olympic Legacy. The article mentioned the Festival of Sport which had taken place in August. Cllr. Matthews said that it was unfortunate that Portland had not been included in this. He added that Underhill has one of the County's highest obesity rates and work was being carried out by the Portland Community Partnership to address the issues involved.

956 – PARKING ON GRASS VERGES

Cllr. Hughes was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments and Cllr. Wild reported on his behalf that there was no by-law to prevent parking on the grassed area at Avalanche Road, but that the Police will attend if called and inform drivers they are causing a nuisance to residents.

957 - CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The meeting had already welcomed Mr Wright to the Partnership. He assisted the meeting by indicating that Lyn Cooch was no longer the Portland Ranger, but that she is now part of the Coastal Rangers Team with much less emphasis on working on the Island.

958 - GRIT BINS

The Assistant Clerk reported no further progress in locating the "lost" grit bins other than that noted in her report.

959 – OPERATION SHORTBILL

Cllr. Wild said that he found the Emergency Planning report of the exercise confusing. Mr Wright thought that its Executive Summary was worth reading. Mr Allam added that such detailed documentation was similar to many he had dealt with in preparation for the Olympics.

960 – AGENDA ITEMS (by exception)

a) Disused Quarries

Cllr. Wild mentioned that he believed that the area behind Tesco had been backfilled, possibly without permission, by Portland Stone Ltd.

b) Fly-tipping

Cllr. Wild had seen recent fly-tipping at Glacis Road near Fancy's Farm and the Partnership requested that the Clerk inform the Borough Waste Management Team of this.

c) Run-Down Areas

Various members of the Partnership informed the meeting that the graffiti had been cleared at the electricity sub-station on Weston Road and at St George's Estate and the grassed areas at Pound Piece and Verne Common Road had been tidied.

Cllr. Wild reported that an Island Caretaker was now employed by the Town Council on an initial six-month contract and it might be possible for him to take on specific work needed by local businesses with a contribution from them to help meet the cost. His work would include hedge cutting and litter picking. Mr Allam indicated that such work had often been a bone of contention as regards the service received in the past.

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

Cllr. Wild reported that the Borough Environmental Health Department was looking into camping and fires being lit on the Island other than at a recognised campsite. Cllr. Matthews indicated this as a sign of increasing pressure on the public’s finances, especially those who were seeking a “cheap holiday.”

Cllr. Bradley informed the Partnership that the holes in the dry-stone walls near Southwell had been filled in. Mr George added that the concrete capping on dry-stone walls along Portland Bill Road had become dislodged and was falling onto the highway on the western side of the road. The meeting asked the Clerk to write to Dorset Highways about this.

961 – ISSUES RAISED BY PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

Mr Wright mentioned that the Portland Bird Observatory had purchased sixteen acres of fields opposite the Observatory, which had previously been held on a long-term lease. The object was to develop a conservation area on a ten year plan with the emphasis on restoring the Portland habitat.

962 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair advised members that the next meeting of the Partnership would take place at the Council Offices on Wednesday, 4th December 2013, starting at 7.00pm.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.

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