



Annual Report 2024-2025

Welcome and Introduction

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Community for its support whether reflected through attendance at meetings, talking to us by phone or by email or through one of Portland's amazing organisations; and to the Town Council staff team for continuing to deliver valued community services and functions.

I am pleased to present Portland Town Council's annual report for 2024-25.

Councillor Sue Cocking
Chair of Portland Town Council

Town Council

The Town Council has 14 Councillors who are elected to represent one of the three wards on the Island:

Underhill	• Councillor Rob Hughes • Councillor Carralyn Parkes • Councillor Kia Pope • Councillor Sandy West
Tophill East	• Councillor Paul Kimber • Councillor Sheila Miles • Councillor Pete Roper • Vacancy
Tophill West	• Councillor Cathy Atkins • Councillor Andy Carr • Councillor Sue Cocking • Councillor Jim Draper • Councillor Charlie Flack • Councillor Tim Woodcock

Councillor Vacancy

A Notice of Vacancy in the office of Councillor for Tophill East was published on the 24th April 2025. Dorset Council has received the relevant 10 requests for an election to take place to fill the vacancy. Further details to follow.

A Councillor's role can include developing strategies and plans for the area, helping with problems and ideas, representing the community, working with other local community groups, making decisions, and talking to the community about their needs and what the council is doing.

Councillors contact details are available on the Town Councils web site:

www.Portlandtowncouncil.gov.uk

The Council is the body that makes decisions including Committees that have delegated authority in line with the Councils standing orders.

The Council has a Chair and a Mayor who are elected annually from the Council itself. The Council has five main Committees that govern the strategic and much of the day to day business of the Council – providing decisions for implementation by Council Officers.

Financial Report

Portland Town Council is mindful of how it protects and spends the income that it receives from Council tax payers to deliver services and facilities to the local community. The Council particularly recognises the impact that the cost of living crisis is continuing to have on its residents and communities.

Each year the Town Council conducts a thorough, comprehensive budget setting process that is open to public scrutiny. The Council looks to identify budget savings or to maintain budgets at current levels to achieve real term savings, where possible, in order to mitigate the overall impact of the cost increases.

The Council's budgets are financed through a combination of the precept, service fees and charges including income derived from cemeteries, allotments, car parks, land rentals and the PCV. The Town Councils precept is the most local portion of the council tax levied by Dorset Council on properties within the parish of Portland.

Portland Town Council Precept for 2025/26 is £618,624.00. This represents a year-on-year increase of £4.00 (2.69%) or 8 pence per week on an average Band D property. Most Portland properties are within the Band A and Band B Council Tax charge. Illustrative Council Tax Bands for the Portland Town Council 2025-26 charge are as follows:

Year	Precept Payment per Council Tax Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2025/26	£101.71	£118.66	£135.61	£152.56	£186.46	£220.36	£254.27	£305.12
2024/25	£99.04	£115.55	£132.05	£148.56	£181.57	£214.59	£247.60	£297.12

Governance

The Town Council received a successful 2023/24 internal and external audit.

A copy of the 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). A copy of this is available on the Town Councils website at [DO0127 - _Portland_Town_Council_-_Final_Signed.pdf](#)

The AGAR is a set of documents and financial statements that local councils are required to prepare and submit each year. It is also an essential part of the external audit process and serves several purposes:

Staffing

The past year saw a number of changes within the staffing team. Two new members of staff started working for the Council during the last year, the Office Administrator and the Maintenance Officer. There are currently two vacancies – Responsible Financial Officer (Job Share position) and the Services & Facilities Officer post.

The full staffing complement is:-

Town Clerk	Full Time
Deputy Town Clerk	Full Time
Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)	Part Time
Office Administrator	Part Time
Services and Facilities Officer	Part Time
Maintenance Officer	Part Time
Green Team Supervisor	Full Time
Green Team - Gardener	Full Time
Green Team – Semi Skilled Gardener	Full Time

The Council has continued to invest into staff training. Three of the team are now trained in RP11 Playground Inspections and the RFO has undertaken FILCA training.

Grants Awarded

Portland Town Council works with a range of community based groups and organisations to help deliver priorities and improve life for local people. The Council has supported Local community groups with £5,750.00 worth of grants during 2024/2025. These included:

Name	£
Portland Museum	3,150.00
B-side	500.00
Royal Victoria Bowling Club	500.00
Chiswell Community Trust	500.00
Portland Shed	500.00
The Portland Association	600.00

Additionally, the Town Council has a Service Level Agreement with the ICA which delivers on specific outcomes including the Portland Youth Council ensuring a voice for local young people.

Town Council Projects, Initiatives and Representation

High Angle Battery Project:

The Town Council has partnered with Dorset Council and other Community groups to rejuvenate the High Angle Battery. The project has received overwhelming community support.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Dorset Council, support of Portland Town Council and the help of partners, heritage experts, and the local community, the site has received a much-needed revamp and is now more accessible with new interpretation panels, improved pathways, and increased biodiversity. Structural repairs have also been made to site, along with vegetation clearance and litter removal.

Portland Town Council has signed a Service Level Agreement with Dorset Council to manage all future activity and event bookings taking place at the site.

A six month programme of events and activities - from walks to photography exhibitions, access tours to teddy flinging competitions will be taking place during the year.

Powerfuel Appeal:

Portland Town council continues to remain vehemently opposed to the Portland waste incinerator. The council has had expert reports commissioned and supported Rule 6 party opposition at the planning inspectorate appeal hearing.

The Council representation has included the local MP, Lloyd Hatton to ask that he supports Portland Town Council in opposing the incinerator and puts his views to the Environment Agency, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State.

The Council will continue to support positive action objecting the incinerator.

Towns of Culture:

Portland Town Council and Weymouth Town Council successfully bid to be the joint Towns of Culture 2025.

A programme of extraordinary cultural, community events and activities will be delivered across Portland and Weymouth in 2025. We have proud traditions of arts and culture, and we want to build on these and move into the next phase of our artistic and cultural development.

An incredible 28 Portland and Weymouth partners took part in the launch weekend (Friday 25th – Sunday 27th April 2025) - from food makers to DJs, schools to brass bands, poets to visual artists.

As Towns of Culture 2025, we are uncovering and amplifying the incredible cultural life that already thrives in our communities—shining a light on local talent, heritage, and shared experiences. From music and theatre to heritage crafts, food, festivals, and everyday creative moments, REVEAL brings culture to where people live, work, and gather. It's about community pride, connection, and inspiration—creating opportunities for everyone to take part, whether as an artist, participant, or audience member.

Portland and Weymouth Towns of Culture will now be showcasing 13 'Launchpad' projects. From mass synchronized sea swimming events to accessible dance performances, yarn bombing to poetry, singing, and film workshops - all events are delivered by our communities and will take place across Portland and Weymouth over the next 4 months.

Further information available at: www.portlandweymouthculture.com

Green Flag:

Easton Gardens successfully retained its Green Flag Award during July 2024.

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Residents Survey:

The Town Councils Community Consultation survey was launched on Thursday 27th February 2025. The survey results will help inform future Council priorities and provide information about the things that matter most to residents. The intention is to incorporate

these into a new Community Council Plan for 2025-2030. The deadline for responses was Sunday 13th April 2025.

The summary of results will be presented to the Annual Town Council meeting on the 21st May 2025. The drafting of the new Community Council Plan for 2025-2030 will subsequently commence. The draft Plan will be subject to Councils approval prior to community review.

Freedom of the Town:

On the 20th November 2024 The Mayor and Councillors of Portland Town Council bestowed the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Manor of Portland to Stuart Morris, in recognition of his dedication and commitment to the history, community and heritage of Portland.

The granting of the freedom represents the highest honour a Town Council can bestow on an individual or organisation.

Assets:

Portland Town Council has gone through significant change following the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Dorset on 1st April 2019. The Council became responsible for services and assets that were previously managed and operated by Weymouth & Portland Borough Council under a Memorandum of Understanding with Dorset Council. This includes the management and maintenance of parks, gardens, allotments, play areas, car parks, toilets, memorials, and other similar assets.

The Town Council is working with Dorset Council to transfer these assets on a freehold / leasehold basis. A list of assets is available on the Town Councils website at:

[Copy_of_Land_Buildings_Asset_Register_V_23-04-2025.pdf](#)

Assets transfers during the year included the Incline Community gardens (freehold), Land at Haylands (Leasehold) and Grove recreational area including play park and MUGA (125 year lease).

Future assets for transfer from Dorset Council unless otherwise stated includes:

- Victoria Gardens, Easton Gardens, Portland Bill Swings and Church Lane play area – leasehold from the Crown Estates.
- Easton Car Park (Freehold), Fortuneswell Car Park (Leasehold), Hambro Car Park (Leasehold) and Lord Clyde (Freehold).
- Allotment land at Southwell – Leasehold from Stone Firms Ltd
- Portland Skatepark (Freehold)
- Play areas – Sweethill Lane, Grangecroft, and Reap lane
- Officers Field
- Fortuneswell and Yeates toilets (Freehold)
- West Weares MUGA (Freehold)

Portland Cenotaph:

The Council supported by the Court Leet facilitated the cleansing of the Portland Cenotaph.

The Council alongside the general maintenance of assets repaired the Dry stone walling at Royal Manor playing field, installed new external event electrical sockets at Easton Gardens and renovated / replaced various play equipment.

Anti-social behaviour:

Portland Town Council, including Councillors, are aware of the anti-social behaviour taking place in Easton Gardens, and have been proactively engaging with the relevant agencies to address this.

How can the Community make a difference?

If you witness or experience any anti-social behaviour , e.g. causing a public disturbance, vandalism in progress, or Criminal damage, we ask you to please take the time to report this to Dorset Police online at www.dorset.police.uk/ro/report/ or by calling 101 or 999.

Community reporting will help provide evidential data, highlighting ASB hotspots and enabling the Neighbourhood Policing team to allocate resources to respond proportionately.

Portland Town Council will continue to engage and work together with the Dorset Police neighbourhood team, and Dorset Council – Community safety around the impact of this antisocial behaviour on the community.

Car Park Regulations:

To be able to proactively manage Easton, Fortuneswell, Hambro, Lord Clyde, Church Ope and Portland Community Venue Car parks for the benefit of the Community the Town Council has put in place an Off-Street Parking Places Order. This will come into effect alongside practical proportionate enforcement following the completion of new signage later this year.

Portland Community Fridge:

The Council has continued support of the Portland Community Fridge with free use of the Portland Community Venue (PCV).

The community fridge is run by volunteers and is somewhere anyone can come along and get great food that would normally go to waste.

PCV – Upgrades:

The PCV wi-fi was upgraded during the year to ensure that hirers of the venue, tenants and the Council has good connectivity. Additionally new external welcome and directional signs have also been installed.

Family Hub:

The Town Council is supportive of the Dorset Council family Hub initiatives. Family hubs are a single place to get support for children, young people and families. Family Hubs bring together workers from Dorset Council, Health Services, and Voluntary and Community Organisations in one place. This helps to make sure you get the right support when you need it. Family hubs provide a range of support for families with children from conception to age 18 (or 25 for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). Services include

things like play and learning sessions, health visiting and midwifery appointments, parenting advice and courses and more.

Families in Portland will soon benefit from a new family hub based at Portland Community Hospital, with additional network points across the island to improve access to vital services and activities.

Forthcoming projects:

Projects to be progressed during 2025/26 includes:

- Solar PV system - To support the reduction of the Town Council carbon emissions and the Council's goals to becoming a more sustainable Community venue a solar PV system is to be introduced at the Portland Community Venue. It has been calculated that this project has an estimated payback from investment of only 3.9 years and it would reduce CO2 emissions by 2,846 kg / year.
- Unisex - accessible Toilet facility – Victoria Gardens (following completion of lease).
- Refurbishment proposals for the Victoria Gardens Tennis courts including fencing and court relining
- Development of feasibility proposals with partners for a new play, sports and recreational facility on the site of the current West Road Muga . Further details to be announced in the next few months.
- Continued Assets transfers.

Council Services

During the year, the Town Council has continued to manage and maintain the following services, functions, amenities and facilities:

ALLOTMENTS (Grove Road)	BENCHES and MEMORIALISATION (across island)
CAR PARKS (Lord Clyde, Hambro Road, Fairfield, Easton and Church Ope)	CEMETERIES (management/maintenance of Portland Cemetery, Weston Road and Stranger's Cemetery at Victory/Castle Road)
CIVIC DUTIES (Mayor and Deputy Mayor – represent island, attend events, meet/support local groups and good causes etc.)	CIVIC & COMMUNITY EVENTS (includes Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Sparkle, Christmas lights, Christmas trees, National anniversaries)
CLIMATE and ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY (includes plans to address climate change, improve and protect Portland's natural environment, and deliver the actions defined in PTC's Biodiversity strategy)	GRASS CUTTING: Victoria Square and Portland Heights roundabouts.
MONUMENTS and STRUCTURES (Victoria Gardens American Memorial, The Cenotaph, Bowls Pavilion and Easton Clock)	PARKS, GARDENS and RESIDENTIAL SPACES (Victoria Gardens, Officer's Field, Easton Gardens, Rufus Way, Fancy's Close, Haylands, Westcliff and The Cenotaph area at Yeates)

PLAY AREAS (Victoria Gardens, The Grove, Easton Gardens, Westcliff, Reap Lane, Church Lane and Sweet Hill Lane)	SPORT and RECREATIONAL AREAS (including Portland Skatepark, Grove sports field and multi-use games area (MUGA), Victoria Gardens tennis courts and basketball hoop, Easton Gardens hoop, Royal Manor playing fields and MUGA etc.
PLANNING, HIGHWAYS & LICENSING (PTC is a statutory consultee for all Portland based planning applications)	PORTLAND COMMUNITY VENUE (Consists of Council offices, tenanted facilities (The Drop In & Nursery), hall, three rooms + kitchen available to hire)
PUBLIC TOILETS (Yeates Road, Easton Gardens, Fortuneswell and Portland Bill)	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

N.B: Portland Town Council is not responsible for the following services, which fall under the responsibility of Dorset Council:

- Benefits
- Highways (including verges and footpaths)
- Planning
- Social care
- Parking (highway and off-street at: Castletown, Chesil Beach, Grangecroft Road, Masonic and New Ground)
- Bin collections
- Libraries
- Schools

Events and Activities

The Town Council with partners from across the Island delivered the successful 80th Anniversary of D-Day Commemorations including:

- Proclamation at Castletown
- Services at the American Memorial and the Cenotaph
- Beacon lighting and tribute

The Town Council also seeks to support wider community groups with the use of Town Council open spaces. For 2024/25 local community groups and organisations delivered activities at Easton Gardens including:

- Pirate Day in May
- Summer Fete (Easton Community Group) in August
- Craft display by ICA
- Walking Nativity on Xmas Eve

Communications:

The Town Council has sought to improve communications with residents. To this end we have increased the use of our social media channel (Facebook), web site, and have continued to provide monthly Free Portland News updates.

Should you wish to receive further details about the information contained within the annual report or the services and functions delivered by the Town Council, please contact: Office@portlandtowncouncil.gov.uk or TEL: 01305 821638