

**MINUTES OF THE 16TH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FOR
PORTISHEAD & NORTH WESTON HELD AT THE
FOLK HALL, HIGH STREET, PORITHSEAD
ON WEDNESDAY 6TH MAY 2009**

PRESENT Councillor Walters, Chairman of the Town Council – Presiding

Councillors M Cruse, Mrs Cruse, Hazelton, Howells, Mrs Knight, Mrs Lord, McMurray, Mrs Mason, Miers, Parker, Pasley, Miss Stanley, Terry, Mrs Way

Mrs R Tranter – Deputy Clerk

20 electors of the Town of Portishead and North Weston

APOLOGIES Councillor Wright

MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 15th Annual Town Meeting for Portishead and North Weston held on 9th May 2008, copies of which have been circulated, be confirmed as correct.

**CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT AND REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS
UNDERTAKEN BY THE COUNCIL IN THE 2008/2009 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Councillor Walters welcomed to the meeting the representative of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Richard Penska from North Somerset Council who was appointed to Portishead and North Weston Town Council as mentor.

Councillor Walters presented a written report reviewing the business undertaken by the Council in the 2008/2009 Municipal Year. Councillor Walters explained that the year has not been an easy one following the resignation of the long standing and respected Town Clerk Mrs Penny Rendle. He informed the meeting of the lengthy process involved in obtaining a replacement Clerk. Miss Rebecca Key had taken up the post in November but unfortunately had only been with the Council for a short period as her husband had been posted abroad unexpectedly. Councillor Walters confirmed to those present that the Appointments Panel would be interviewing again on the following day, 7th May 2009.

Councillor Walters added that there had been other changes to public figures in the year. The Rector Rev Alan Taylor had retired after 14 years and the much respected Police Sergeant, Sgt Scoble had moved to a new posting. His successor, Sergeant Ashdown, had been welcomed at a recent Town Council Meeting.

Special mention was made of the efforts of the Portishead in Bloom Committee who had been awarded the Portman Cup for the best town of its size in the South West. The town would also be entered into the national level competition and judging would take place later this year. The Chairman's Christmas card 2008, with the permission of the Committee had featured a picture of the town complete with hanging baskets.

The Town Council had helped financially the Christmas Lights Committee enabling an extension of the Christmas Lights further along the High Street. Councillor Walters thanked all those who had made this possible and also thanked the Carnival organisers and Horticultural Society who do so much for the community. The Council had also provided some pump priming funds for the Portishead Pool Community Trust which was making great progress in keeping open the open air swimming pool.

Other achievements reported were the signing of the Parish Wharf Agreement and the opening of the Trinity Community Hall in the Village Quarter. Improvements had also been made to the outside of the Folk Hall and improvements to the Fedden Room. All the management and janitorial staff were thanked for their work in keeping the respective halls operating for the use of all the community groups.

In drawing his report to a close Councillor Walters thanked the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Pasley and all other councillors, especially the Chairmen of the Committees and various working parties for their help and guidance. The office staff were also thanked for their work in this difficult year.

A full copy of the Chairman's Annual Report is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Paul Maltby, a resident of 22 South Road referred to the Town Council's proposal to provide a car park within the new part of the cemetery. He understood that currently residents were being charged a fee of £600 plus other expenses for a grave plot in order to bury the cremated remains of their loved ones. North Somerset Council is advising residents that the costs apply because the Town Council has yet to decide where the car park will be within the cemetery. The provision of an area for cremated remains has therefore been held up until this decision has been made.

In response Councillor McMurray explained that the area for the car park within the cemetery grounds had been agreed and the planning application would be submitted shortly to North Somerset Council. It was hoped that the problem would be resolved within 6 months.

Mr John Dixon, a resident of 21 Roath Road, raised a number of issues –

- Portishead Railway – Mr Dixon urged the Council to keep trying for the Portishead Railway.
- Timetable information at bus stops - He also asked that all bus stops in the town be provided with timetable information. He understood that many of the shelters would be upgraded with timetables but asked that if this was to be a lengthy process the information could be displayed as soon as possible.
- Cabstand Junction – Mr Dixon asked that pedestrians should not be forgotten with the redesign of the junction. He suggested a bridge across the roads for pedestrians be included.

- Misconduct in the Town – Mr Dixon complimented the last police sergeant, Sergeant Scoble, on his actions to cure misconduct in the town and asked that Sergeant Ashdown keep up the good work.

Mrs Annette Hennessey, a resident of 15 Albert Road, raised a number of issues –

- Annual Town Meeting – Mrs Hennessey made reference to her comments made at the previous Annual Meeting when she had asked for the Annual Town Meeting to be moved to a different day than the Annual Town Council Meeting. She added that this is the one time when residents may talk without any prior notification, as is required at the monthly Town Council Meetings.

In addition Mrs Hennessey commented that there was less publicity than seen in the past and the date was not on the Town Council website until she had telephoned the town council office to point it out. With the exception of the council notice boards no posters appeared on the community boards through the town. The Council needs to look at improving publicity for the meetings next year.

In reply the Chairman advised Mrs Hennessey that the office was currently understaffed but the whole issue of publicity for next year's meeting would be considered.

- Portishead Open Air Pool - Mrs Hennessey thanked Councillor Pasley for his support of the Portishead Open Air Pool. Although she was disappointed that no Portishead councillors had succeeded in getting the Review Report produced by Cllr Ap Rees withdrawn. This report contained data and comments which were inaccurate and unsubstantiated. Mrs Hennessey added that the process seemed flawed when a document which was inaccurate was on record within the council and in the public domain.
- Misinformation - Mrs Hennessey pointed out that a number of issues where residents had been misinformed on topical matters.
 - She cited the Open Air Pool as one example of this. The pool had been portrayed as rundown and in a worse condition than it actually was.
 - The Cabstand Lights was another example where residents were led to believe that North Somerset Council would change the Cabstand junction if the Conservatives won the election.
 - The Skateboard Park Project has looked at many different areas of the Town often when a council recommended site has no possibility of being approved. The Kilkenny Fields site had been declined by North Somerset Council although there had been support from the Town Council. Town Councillors should give their support to the group and agree a new site. Many of the young people raising money for the Skatepark would be too old to use the facility, or working by the time it was provided.
 - The Library plans do not progress. A wall was recently built and peoples' hopes were raised, only to be quashed as they are told the work was to secure the original planning permission.

Mrs Hennessey concluded that she hoped that in the coming year residents would be happy to listen to other peoples' opinions respectfully despite not necessarily

agreeing with them. She added that Portishead had always been a great town and despite some of the current problems she still considered it to be the best place in North Somerset to live. She suggested that newspaper correspondence and communications be kept robust but civil.

Mr Ken Smith, a resident of 57 Down Road made reference to letters in the local press by Councillor Cameron. He noted that he had remained silent when councillors were given increased allowances, silent on the magazine which comes through his door every month and silent on the library.

On another matter Mr Smith said it was most important as far as he was concerned that whoever would be the next Chairman of the Town Council should also be on the Council at North Somerset and would represent the wishes of Portishead residents at that Council.

In response to the comment about the Life Magazine which is distributed to all households Councillor McMurray pointed out that he thought the magazine was an excellent way of communicating facts and the issues of the day.

Councillor Cameron apologized for his silence on a number of issues and pointed out that his published comments were as a resident of the town as he was not a district councillor.

Mr David Fitzpatrick, a resident of 18 Station Road, Portishead spoke about a number of issues –

- The recent resurfacing in Station Road. The speed humps were now not as high as before and traffic speeds had increased. In addition to this problem the adjacent multi court continued to give rise to balls across the road with youngsters following to retrieve them. This together with the increased speed of traffic was bound to result in accidents.
- There is also an issue with the balls going up on to the roof of the Leisure Centre. This was first reported two years ago but still nothing had been done.
- Mr Fitzpatrick reported that about 5 years ago the 20mph signs had been removed as they were the wrong size. These had never been replaced.
- Litter bins had been put in at Pill Park but were not being emptied regularly. Over a weekend with approximately 200 people pass the bins were totally inadequate and only the size of a carrier bag.
- Outside MeMe Chocolat – tables and chairs overflowed onto the public area and made it impossible for mums with buggies to get past.

In response to some of the comments made by Mr Fitzpatrick, Councillor Mrs Knight informed the meeting the 10 new dog bins were to go in around the marina funded by S106 money and the bins would be emptied by North Somerset Council. Councillor

Mrs Knight had spoken to Mr Fitzpatrick before about the MUGA which in her opinion had been put in the wrong way around. The item concerning youngsters climbing on the roof had been brought to the attention of Health and Safety Department at North Somerset Council. Councillor Mrs Knight would take up the matter of the height of the speed humps in Station Road and also investigate the area outside Meme Chocolate at North Somerset Council.

Noel Brailsford a resident of Windrush, Battery Lane spoke about several issues –

- Firstly he agreed with Mrs Hennessey in the lack of advertising for this meeting.
- Secondly he pointed out the inadequate bus shelter outside the old Post Office and would like to see an increase in length. There is frequently a long queue at this site.
- Mr Brailsford had some concerns about the increase in wall height proposed on the Swimming Pool and suggested the use of razor wire to deter youths from entering the site.
- Lastly he congratulated Councillor Walters on his longevity as a councillor.

Mr Wilkin, a resident of South Road, spoke about the area proposed for the Skatepark within the area fenced for young children. This area was used by families with young children to play an informal ball game etc without fear of dog mess or competing with cricket matches etc. He considered that there must be a more appropriate area within the Lake Grounds which could be used for the Skatepark.

Mr Wilkin also had concerns about the height of the speed humps in South Road. He had already suffered damage to his car from the increased volume of traffic using the road and to negotiate the height of these speed humps was unacceptable.

Mr Skinner, a resident of 33 Burlington Road, spoke in support of the last speaker and the height of the speed ramps. Mr Skinner had recently moved back to Portishead and had several complaints with the roads –

- The surface of the High Street was a disgrace.
- Clapton Lane has channels in the road, and
- The humps in South Road.

Mr Skinner considered that the roads in Portishead were particularly bad when compared with Clevedon and other places in the district. In addition Mr Skinner advised the meeting that he understood that the traffic humps should be no more than 10cms high. These humps in South Road were illegal and are scraping the underside of cars as they pass over them. He considered that the previous speaker had probably exaggerated the speed of vehicles in Station Road as it was impossible to drive over the humps at high speed because of the parked cars on both sides of the road. He considered the 20mph speed restriction to be a good idea.

Councillor Mrs Knight informed Mr Skinner that the High Street would be resurfaced during the year.

Mr Tony Mosely, a resident of 7 Hillcrest Road complained about the lack of Post Offices in the Town. He had moved to the town 10 years ago when there had been

three. The town was now twice the size and there was only one Post Office. He asked whether anyone was looking at the possibility of persuading Royal Mail to increase the number of Post Offices and/or increase the facilities of the existing one?

Councillor Mrs Lord informed Mr Mosely that the Town Council had met with Post Watch and protested vigorously against the closure of the two Post Offices but were totally ignored. She added that she was not very optimistic that this decision would be reversed.

Mrs Annette Hennessey advised the meeting that the staff in the Post Office were actually employed by the Newshop. They had been most sympathetic to customers' requests and had arranged for a replacement door. She suggested that if people had a problem with the layout of the shop they should mention this to the shop assistants who had in the past been very co-operative.

Mrs Hennessey also questioned the delay in producing the minutes of the Annual Meeting. She had to wait for a year for the minutes to be available. She also complained about the advertising of the same meeting. She acknowledged that posters had appeared on the Town Council notice boards in the town but none had appeared on the public community notice-boards throughout the town. There are also no notice boards in the Village Quarter. Mrs Hennessey added that she would be happy to put up posters although that was not her role but would like it clarified as to whose responsibility it actually was.

Councillor Mrs Mason confirmed that the Communications Working Party was looking at additional sites for Town Council notice-boards in the town.

Councillor Terry added that there was a notice-board in the Vale and that part of the Village Quarter was not currently in Portishead but in Portbury. Councillor Terry also took the opportunity to advise those present that as part of the boundary review this would be changed and all of the Village Quarter would become Portishead. Councillor Terry also confirmed that Moor Farm would remain within Portbury. There would also be some other changes with an extra ward in the town increasing the total to seven and the number of town councillors would be reduced from the current 18 to 14. The recommendation that the name of the town be altered to Portishead Town Council would also be implemented at the next election. The name North Weston would be retained within the South and North Weston Ward. Finally Councillor Terry added that the town was moving towards the position when they would be looking at this new area and would be looking at the provision of facilities within there that the town is required to provide.

Councillor Terry then commented on the Open Air Pool Swimming Pool Review which was conducted by three colleagues at North Somerset Council. It should be a clear indication of the decision that the Leader of the Council took to invite the Trust to meet him that the report was discredited and will remain discredited. Whilst it remains on the public record the fact that the Trust were given the opportunity to take over the pool is a clear indication that the report does not have any credibility.

Mrs McLaughlin, 8 Down Close acknowledged that whilst advertising may help she had attended a meeting on the Cabstand when a large number of people had attended and had made comments on the then proposed layout. Mrs McLaughlin

added that she was totally disenfranchised as nobody ever takes any notice of what the residents say.

Mr Brailsford added that there should always be a response from the Council.

Councillor Howells suggested that as so much is happening in the Town perhaps a meeting twice a year might be appropriate and would be of great benefit to everyone.

Councillor Pasley acknowledged the comments being made by residents about the lack of advertising of the Annual Town Meeting and suggested that the Town Council should go back to the Communications Working Party and review what had been done for this meeting and in the future give it a great deal more relevance than in the past. He added that he was sure the Town Council could do a better job next time.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm.