

**MINUTES OF THE 19TH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
FOR PORTISHEAD HELD AT THE FOLK HALL
HIGH STREET, PORTISHEAD
ON WEDNESDAY
2ND MAY 2012**

PRESENT Councillor Terry, Chairman of the Town Council – Presiding
Rachel Tranter – Deputy Clerk (taking Minutes)

APOLOGIES Councillor Cameron, Mrs Mason, Councillor McMurray

Mr Davis, a resident of The Deans suggested that as this was a resident's meeting, not Town Council, it would be more appropriate for no demarcation between councillors and residents in the Minutes. This item was agreed by the meeting.

There were approximately 45 residents present.

MINUTES OF 18TH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: 11TH MAY 2011

The Minutes of the 18th Annual Town Meeting held on the 11th May 2011 had been circulated and presented to the meeting.

It was agreed that the Minutes be approved.

RESOLVED that –

The Minutes of the 18th Annual Town Meeting for Portishead held on 11th May 2011, copies of which have been circulated be confirmed as correct.

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT AND REVIEW OF THE
BUSINESS UNDERTAKEN BY THE COUNCIL IN THE 2010/2011 MUNICIPAL
YEAR**

Councillor Terry, the Chairman of the Town Council presented his Annual Report and review of the business undertaken by the Council in the 2011/2012 year.

Councillor Terry thanked the Clerk and staff for the work carried out, and for supporting him throughout the year. He regretted the resignation of the Clerk for personal reasons. He also thanked Rod Morley, Administrator to the Redcliffe Bay Hall, who had recently retired after working for the Council for many years.

In addition Councillor Terry drew attention to a number of important issues that the Council had to address during the past year –

- The opening of the Gertie Gale's Allotment Site. Work is well in hand for the new tenants to form an informal association.
- Replacement of equipment at the Merlin Park Skatepark.
- Safeguarding the provision of services at the Youth Centre.

- North Somerset Council has approached the Town Council with requests for considering taking over other facilities in the town.

Councillor Terry gave details of a number of events which he had attended or arranged whilst representing the Town Council the last year.

Councillor Terry's report is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Hennessy, a resident of Albert Road, read from a statement about a number of items -

- Councillors Conduct – Mrs Hennessy raised the question of negativity towards young people by some of the town's councillors and the way this was reported by the local press. She also made reference to meetings held in the Town Hall, Weston, attended by district councillors, who were also town councillors, where incorrect information about the Town Councils stance on the skate park at the Lake Grounds and Landlord's Consent for the site was given. She asked why other councillors sat back at town council meetings and allowed inaccurate information to remain unchallenged?

Mrs Hennessy also asked why questions made to Portishead Town Council regarding the "secret developer" remained unanswered. She also asked how the town council could suggest the golf course as an alternative site for the skate park when permission had been granted for the Lake Grounds for this purpose.

Mrs Hennessey added that she no longer had faith in local politics and would not address the current town councillors until her current concerns were resolved.

- Portishead People's Meeting Advertising – She questioned that as this was a residents' meeting notices were not on the Residents' Boards through the town. She now understood that they had been put up but had been removed by some unknown person. Mrs Hennessy confirmed that she had advertised the event on the Bristol Evening Post website and hoped that this had clarified the difference between the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Council Meeting.
- Clerk to the Council - Mrs Hennessy thanked the Clerk for his commitment and gave him credit for a number of projects personally carried out by him, and for the new paths of communication with the Council. She was sorry to see him go.
- The Portbury Sea Wall Commission/Sea Wharf Coastal Footpath - Mrs Hennessy informed the meeting of the current status of the footpath and that North Somerset Council has a duty to investigate the Evidence Forms submitted. A Freedom of Information Request was also awaited. She questioned the formation of the commission and advised that residents are

trying to establish if the Sea Wall Commission AGM in July will be open for the public to attend. This would be an opportunity to ask questions and find out who it is accountable to.

- Portishead Youth Club Renaming – Mrs Hennessy questioned the renaming of the Portishead Youth Club and whether any consultation had taken place. She added that she would like to hear from the Portishead Youth and what they have to say on the subject before a name change is implemented.

Mrs Hennessy thanked everyone for listening and said that Portishead remains the best place to live.

John Dixon. A resident of Victoria Court, raised a number of points which he generally raised every year –

- Do not forget the Portishead Railway Line.
- He is pleased to see that the likelihood of another Post Office for the Town is moving forward.
- There are a few issues with 2 bus stops in the town. The bus stop outside the Sorting Office is incorrectly named as the Post office. The positioning of the bus stop at Halletts Way should be looked at, as buses using the stop block the road.
- Avon Way – traffic lights are needed to slow the traffic coming down over the hill too fast. In his opinion the lights should show red until the speed of vehicles has dropped sufficiently.

Ms J Thornycroft, a resident of Eastcliff spoke too about the Sea Wharf Coastal Path. She explained that the path was open from the Sheepway end and surely the way forward would be to remove the lock on the gate and put up a sign advising people that they entered at their own risk.

Mr D Stewart, West Hill, explained that he had not attended the meeting before and was interested to know how he could put in an interest which he wished the council to consider on his behalf. He considered that there should be a more formal approach on how matters could be dealt with.

The Clerk responded to the question and explained how items raised at past Annual Town Meetings, he cited the Post office as being a good example, could if the meeting agreed be progressed and acted upon.

Mr Stewart also spoke about the Skatepark and the obvious history to the project. He considered that the way forward should be that people should work together not against one another.

Mrs Hennessy pointed out that problems in the past has resulted in the Monitoring Officer at North Somerset Council being involved.

Mr Paul Maltby, a resident of South Road, praised the work of the Clerk, Martin Dolton. He was a capable asset to the town and would be sadly missed. When the

process to appoint his replacement was started it could be appropriate for a lay member/resident to be involved to ensure the process was fair and honest.

Mr Maltby referred back to last year's meeting and his thanks given to two councillors who lost their seats in the local election in 2011. They were dedicated and hardworking. He informed the meeting that he had studied the attendance records for the "new" councillors and noted that Councillor Mrs Philpot had attended only 50% of meetings and Councillor Patel only 33%. Indeed, Councillor Patel had not attended a meeting since 9th November and if he had not attended this evening would have lost his seat.

He thanked Councillor Lord for attending a meeting on Youth Club Funding at North Somerset Council. She had spoken against the cuts and was the only Town Councillor to attend.

Mr Maltby spoke about the continuing problems with the Skatepark and the questions which remained unanswered by members of the Council. He added the saddest thing was that residents were told if they spoke out of turn they would be gagged at meetings. This shows that members do not want to hear from the public. He urged residents to speak at Town Council Meeting, although there were fewer taking part in recent months.

Lastly, Mr Maltby added that with S106 monies being available on the back of the Sainsbury planning application perhaps this funding could be used to provide a bus service for those who had recently lost their bus service in the town.

Mr Davis, a resident of The Deans advised the meeting that he regularly travelled to Weston-super-Mare from the Deans/The Downs down Valley Road. The number of large potholes and the surface along this stretch of road was unacceptable.

Mr Dolton, the Town Clerk advised the meeting he was speaking as a resident of Kilkenny Place. Most people present at the meeting knew that he had served in the police as a Divisional Commander in Luton, Bedfordshire. He would have 420 incidents in 24 hours, 11 murders and 26 police officers injured in a year. Here in Portishead you do not know how lucky you are. Within the Town are 86 voluntary groups which is an incredible amount. It is the people of Portishead that make the town. They are the ones which make the town look beautiful - Portishead in Bloom. It is the people who run the carnival and the flower show. The Folk Hall is regularly fully booked with all these voluntary organisations. It is a fantastic town where everyone works together.

Mr K Smith, a resident of Down Road, spoke about the small number of 7 Executive Officers at North Somerset Council who make the decisions which affect all the residents. He asked that district councillors question the decisions made and he considered that there was no openness at the district and North Somerset Council was a closed shop. He asked that District Councillors report to the Town Council on activities at North Somerset.

He thanked Councillor Cruse for all her hard work at the Youth Centre, when North Somerset Council washed their hands of the Youth Service.

Lastly he was disappointed with Dr Liam Fox. He considered he should resign and be replaced with someone else.

Councillor Peter Burden gave an update on the Seawall Coastal Path. He confirmed that 12 years ago “an event” happened ie the gate was locked. Earlier this year the matter was raised at North Somerset Council and the lock disappeared for a brief period. Witness statements proving the 20 years right to claim this path as a PROW would mean that the pathway could be added to the Definitive Map. These have been submitted to North Somerset Council.

Rather than the application going the Secretary of State and a Public Enquiry it is hoped that a meeting can be set up with Portbury Sea Wall Commissioners and locks can be removed. This will be a common sense approach to the problem.

Liese Stanley, a resident of The Park, gave detail at some length on her involvement on the Skatepark Group as a town councillor and her decision not to stand again for council and to stand down from the Group. Ms Stanley explained the process, involving planning permission, landlord’s consent for the Lake Grounds site. Reference was also made to the proposed Golf Course site. She had also been involved in getting legal advice on a Judicial Review. However because of the costs involved this had been shelved.

She added that she was a positive person but had been disillusioned by the whole process and advised others not to get involved in politics. Finally she asked councillors to listen to the voices of Portishead.

Councillor Pasley responded to allegations made about his involvement in the site for a skateboard facility in the town.

Mrs Hennessy interrupted Councillor Pasley and said she had not named him in her statement and that the Deputy Clerk had a copy of her speech.

Councillor Pasley explained that the Town Council was a mix of two political parties. Most members work hard but he acknowledged that you can’t please everyone all the time. He was elected as the coast ward member for both the town and district. and had returned in the last election with an increased majority. He supported public participation as it gives councillors valuable feedback but does not believe it should be used to get back at councillors when residents don’t agree with decisions made.

Councillor Pasley added that he worked hard and was an honest person. He answered to his electorate and the majority of residents around the Lake Grounds did not support the Skatepark being sited there. He referred to the matter raised where he had been reported to the Monitoring Officer but pointed out that he had been completely exonerated.

Finally Councillor Pasley advised the meeting that the residents of the Lake Grounds had formed a Residents Association.

Mrs Hennessey pointed out that she had paperwork confirming that no majority evidence was available proving Lake Ground residents did not want a Skateboard Park on the Lake Grounds.

J Mott, a resident of Woodhill Avenue, referred back to the item on the Coastal Path. He had contact the Bristol Port Company, Bristol City Council, and Persimmon. Persimmon had denied having anything to do with the locks but he had subsequently found it was Persimmon who had put the locks on the gate.

Various reasons had been given for the locks –

- Erosion to the sea wall. However the Wharf Lane to Chapel Lane stretch of the path is identical and there is no gate at that end.
- Health and Safety reasons – he would point out that going around the obstacle on the rocks is far more dangerous.

Mr Mott also made reference to the bridge across the rhyme. He considered the provision of the bridge was not adequate and the state of it appalling. He concluded that the Public Right of Way should be established.

On another point Mr Mott considered that the removed Give Way sign at the bottom of Cabstand should be replaced. Currently traffic using the hill was travelling across the junction into the path of traffic on the main road and there had been a number of near misses. He also considered that the pedestrian crossing was badly placed.

Lastly he made reference to the Skateboard Park. He said that in democracy there should be no shadows where stink could grow. He suggested that lack of light on aspects of the process were causing a lot of the problems and councillors should throw light on this and there would then be no room for rumour and everyone would know what was going on.

Yvonne Dutton, a resident of Pennant Place spoke in support of councillors. She explained that she had been subject to threatening messages at a result of commercially sensitive information, to do with the additional Post Office in Portishead, being leaked to the press. She had been unable to retaliate. Ms Dutton explained that she could feel for the councillors and would not want to take on their role under any circumstance.

Marguerite Daniel, a resident of Lake Road informed the meeting that she had been subjected to vandalism. Over the years there was increased vandalism and graffiti at the Lake Grounds and she had recently had a group of 50-70 youngsters sitting on her railings and plants had been plonked on the roof of her car. She agreed that Portishead needs somewhere for the youth to go but did not support the siting of the Skatepark at the Lake Grounds.

Councillor Mrs Koops advised the meeting that she had requested details on how the Skateboard Group intended to find the money (£250,000 -£300,000) to not only build the skateboard park but run the project. This information had not been forthcoming. The Town Council would not have this sort of money. She would welcome the information so that she could come to an informed decision.

Mr Stewart, informed the meeting that the youth need a Skatepark and everyone should focus on the way forward not what had happened in the past.

Councillor Cameron, resident of Woodhill Road and Town Councillor for Coast Ward spoke in support of Councillor Pasley. He had always found Councillor Pasley to be hard working and supported his position.

Ms Stanley, raised the comment made earlier that she had attached her bike to Town Council property during the election, outside the Polling Station. She confirmed that this was not illegal but she had removed the bicycle to another location after consultation with the local police.

Ms Stanley also confirmed that she would like to look at the other 2 sites being considered for a Skatepark. She had a passion for the youth of Portishead.

At this point the Chairman asked Councillor Burden to give an update on the Wheels Facility Working Party. Councillor Burden informed the meeting that the three members (Councillor Clark, Mrs Philpot and himself) had been chosen as none had any previous involvement with the Skatepark Project. The Group had examined those sites which had been looked at before. As a result of the Localism Bill, North Somerset Council were disposing of various assets and the depressed golf course was considered as a possibility. The Skateboard Group met with the Wheels Facility Working Group and considered the site and agreed it was interesting. It was thought that a facility using wheels, not just skateboards might be the way forward.

Unfortunately North Somerset Council are trying to lease the land as a concession so hopes were raised and dashed in quick succession. This was the current position.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Minutes Approved at the 2013 Annual Town Meeting

Signed

Dated