



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11TH MAY 2022
AT THE FOLK HALL, 95 HIGH STREET, PORTISHEAD, BS20 6PR**

This was a hybrid meeting to enable community participation

Members present:

Councillor Patricia Sterndale	Councillor Paul Gardner
Councillor Ben Aldridge	Councillor Bob Cartwright
Councillor Bob Bull	Councillor Paul Churchill
Councillor Janet Davey	Councillor Nicola Holland
Councillor Sue Mason	Councillor Tanya Slatter
Councillor Tim Snaden	

Officers present: Matt Ryan - Locum Town Clerk and Sharon Sherborne – Deputy Town Clerk

Others present: Residents 15 (including 8 in the room)

TC22.484: Apologies for absence (Town Clerk)
None

TC22.485: Declaration of Councillors' interests and requests for dispensations
None

TC22.486: To Elect the Chairman of the Council for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year
Councillor Gardner nominated Councillor Sterndale. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sterndale is elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year

TC22.487: Declaration of Acceptance of Office
The Locum Town Clerk, as Proper Officer, received the signed Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office

TC22.488: To Elect the Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year
Councillor Sterndale nominated Councillor Gardner. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Gardner is elected as Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year

The Locum Town Clerk, as Proper Officer, received the signed Vice Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office

TC22.489: Chairman's address

Councillor Sterndale thanked Councillors for the vote of confidence in performance over the last year and the honour of being elected chairman of the Council for a second year. She hoped that the coming year will be less traumatic and looks forward to doing her best for the town and residents. Councillor Sterndale also thanked Councillors for appointing Cllr Gardner again as Vice Chairman.

TC22.490: Declaration of Councillor Vacancies

Councillor Sterndale introduced this item and said that it was with great regret that we accept the resignations of Tina and Polly. Had they not done so, and they continued to act as Councillors, they could have faced the prospect of being held personally liable for breaking the law should someone wish to bring a prosecution - their only crime being that they were unable to physically attend Council meetings due to illness and personal hardship, through no fault of their own during an unprecedented global pandemic. Councillor Sterndale confirmed that the Council will continue to lobby the Government to amend the 1972 legislation to allow for online meetings. She went on to say that the Council is now faced with the possibility of two unnecessary by-elections, money that could otherwise be spent on something worthwhile.

Polly Shepperdson echoed Councillor Sterndale's position and stated that she was proud to be elected as a Portishead Independent Councillor; and believed that the results of this shift in political affiliation and energy will stand Portishead's Town Council in good stead. Polly stated that before her resignation is called for, that she would offer it willingly to avoid any impact on her personal integrity or that of PTC; adding that she is proud to have been a councillor.

Tina Mason confirmed her resignation from the role of Councillor for Portishead East. She was elected to support the community of Portishead and felt that she has done this to the best of her ability. Tina stated that when she was awaiting major surgery and very unwell with significant mobility issues and clinically extremely vulnerable for covid, she attended meetings online; and that as a result of this, she has been told that legally she cannot be a councillor. She further explained that neither she, nor any other councillor, was aware of a requirement to have absence from face-to-face meetings formally approved. She also felt that the requirement to attend in person under the 1972 Local Government Act is in direct conflict with requirements of the Equalities Act 2010, which protect those, such as her, with disabilities. Tina went on to say that despite her personal conviction that she hasn't done anything wrong, she understood that by continuing as a councillor in these circumstances, she could be held personally liable and that whilst she understood the formal punishment for this would still allow her to hold certain more senior public offices in this country, that such a slur on her integrity could potentially lose her professional status and ongoing paid employment - a risk that she is not willing to take.

Councillor Slatter thanked Polly and Tina and provided information about life in 1972 – the year that the Government Act was introduced. She was astounded that a few residents think that a minor technicality, nothing more than the failure to utter around a dozen words, once, based on a law made in 1972, is more important than the work Councillors do, day in day out. Councillor Slatter confirmed how hard working, dedicated and passionate Polly and Tina are as Town Councillors. Councillor Slatter shared a recent experience between a resident and Tina at a Neighbourhood plan information event; and went on to affirm that one has to question the motives of some people and what are they trying to achieve.

Councillor Davey made a statement about the positive work of Polly Shepperdson who has led on the Wellness Partnership bringing local providers together and successfully bidding for funding to set up a pilot community hub. She explained that Polly has worked tirelessly, consistently attending meetings online, and that Polly has resigned at no fault of her own – not knowing how Polly will be replaced.

Councillor Cartwright stated that's it not just about physically attending meetings but also online. He made three pledges when appointed as a Councillor, the latter being to modernise the way we communicate. He advised that it's alright to be online at meetings and that the act is out of date. He also stated that there is so much negativity against the Council despite Councillors working for free week in week out.

Councillor Holland having worked with Polly and Tina cannot believe that the Council is going to lose these two people – she is lost for words – the tireless work that they have put in for the Council and the town and the idea of spending money that can be spent elsewhere on something unnecessary astounds her.

Prior to the item being brought to vote, Councillor Slatter confirmed that she is not in favour but because of the personal implications of doing otherwise she will vote. Councillor Sterndale said that we all feel the same and Councillor Gardner for the record was only voting because of the personal implications to Polly and Tina.

Councillors voted 9 in favour with 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

1. Declares as vacant the office held by Councillor Tina Mason, Councillor Caroline Goddard, and Councillor Polly Shepperdson.
2. Instructs officers to liaise with North Somerset Council and issue a formal Notice/s of the Vacancies; and
3. If a request for an election is called to fund the election from the election's revenue budget and the Councils general financial reserve if the cost exceeds this sum

TC22.491: Appointment of Committees 2022/2023

Planning Advisory Committee

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Gardner seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To appoint the following members to the Planning Advisory Committee:

Councillor Slatter
Councillor Sterndale
Councillor Davey
Councillor Mason

Councillor Bull
Councillor Cartwright
Councillor Holland
Councillor Snaden

That Councillor Slatter be elected Chairman and Councillor Bull be elected Vice Chairman of the Planning Advisory Committee for the ensuing year. There were no further nominations.

Community Matters Committee

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Gardner seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To appoint the following members to the Community Matters Committee:

Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Cartwright
Councillor Davey
Councillor Snaden

Councillor Gardner
Councillor Churchill
Councillor Slatter
Councillor Sterndale

That Councillor Aldridge be elected Chairman and Councillor Churchill be elected Vice Chairman of the Community Matters Committee for the 2022/23 year. There were no further nominations.

Staffing and Finance Committee

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Gardner seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To appoint the following members to the Staffing and Finance Committee:

Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Gardner
Councillor Slatter

Councillor Bull
Councillor Holland
Councillor Sterndale

That Councillor Bull be elected Chairman and Councillor Gardner be elected Vice Chairman of the Staffing and Finance Committee for the ensuing year. There were no further nominations.

TC22.491: Working Parties

Grants Working Party

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Gardner seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To appoint the following members to the Grants working party:

Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Mason

Councillor Bull
Councillor Sterndale

That Councillor Aldridge be elected Chairman of the Grants working party.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Aldridge seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To appoint the following members to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:

Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Gardner
Councillor Slatter

Councillor Bull
Councillor Holland
Councillor Sterndale

That Councillor Sterndale be elected Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

TC22.492: Appointment of Councillors in representative roles

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Aldridge seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To appoint the following members in representative roles for the year 2022/2023 –

- Citizens Advice North Somerset - Councillor Davey

- Gertie Gales & North Weston Allotments - Councillor Churchill & Councillor Cartwright
- Lake Grounds Management Committee - Councillor Snaden & Councillor Gardner
- Nailsea & District Community Transport - Councillor Sterndale
- Parish Wharf Winter Boat Storage - Councillor Bull
- Fairtrade Portishead - Councillor Mason
- Portishead Partnership Steering Group - Councillor Slatter & Councillor Mason
- Single Use Plastic Free Community Steering Group - Councillor Cartwright
- Tourism & Heritage lead – Councillor Davey
- Twinning Association - Councillor Davey
- Wellbeing Lead (local partnerships) - Councillor Davey
- Wellbeing Lead (wider partnerships / strategy) - Councillor Churchill
- Youth Centre - Councillor Slatter & Councillor Holland

TC22.493: Delegation Arrangements

The Council reviewed the terms of reference agreeing the highlighted changes to the Community Matters Committee and the delegation of rights of way to the Planning Advisory Committee.

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Mason seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To approve the terms of reference for Planning Advisory Committee (Appendix 12a), Community Matters Committee (Appendix 12b) and Staffing & Finance Committee (Appendix 12c).

TC22.494: Town Council meetings 2022/23

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Holland seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

That the Council approves the schedule of Town Council and Committee meetings at Appendix 13a.

TC22.495: Annual subscriptions

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Slatter seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To approve the annual subscriptions as detailed.

TC22.496: Designation of cheque signatories

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Aldridge seconded the motion

RESOLVED

That the Chairman (Councillor Sterndale), Vice-Chair (Councillor Paul Gardner), Chairman of Staffing & Finance Committee (Councillor Robert Bull), Chairman of Planning Advisory Committee (Councillor Slatter) and Councillor Mason are designated as cheque signatories and can authorise payments.

TC22.497: Council Policies and Procedures

The Council considered Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Health and Safety Policy – Appendix 16a and the Community Grants policy - Appendix 16b

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Aldridge seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

To approve the council policies as stated and agree a working party to review other Council policies and procedures for a future Council meeting during 2022/23.

TC22.498: Minutes to last meeting

Councillor Sterndale proposed a number of minor changes to the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 16th March and the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on the 23rd March 2022. Councillor Mason highlighted the omission of the year with regards to the Full Council extraordinary meeting held on the 23rd March 2022.

Councillor Slatter requested a recorded note in respect of the 16th March 2022 Full Council minutes and to the point raised by Mr Smith claiming that Councillor Slatter had trolled him. Councillor Slatter confirmed that this is absolutely not true and she does not agree with this statement.

Councillor Sterndale proposed and Cllr Bull seconded the motion

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2022 and the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on the 23rd March 2022 as amended as a true and accurate record.

TC22.499: Date of next Annual Town Council Meeting: Wednesday 10th May 2023

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.31pm.