



Portishead Town Council Minutes: Full Council meeting

19.30 Wednesday 15th September 2021

The Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, BS20 6PR Tel: 01275 847078 www.portishead.gov.uk

This was a hybrid meeting

Chairman: Councillor Patricia Sterndale **Meeting Clerk:** Sharon Sherborne

Town Councillors present:

Councillor Patricia Sterndale (Chairman)	Councillor Robert Bull
Councillor Paul Gardner (Vice Chairman)	Councillor Robert Cartwright
Councillor Caroline Goddard (online)	Councillor Sue Mason
Councillor Nicola Holland	Councillor Tina Mason (online)
Councillor Polly Shepperdson (online)	Councillor Janet Davey (online)
Councillor Tim Snaden (online)	

There were four members of the public present in the Folk Hall and five who joined online.

TC 21.400 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Aldridge and Slatter.

TC 21.401 Declaration of Councillors' interests and requests for dispensations

There were no declarations of interests or requests for dispensation received.

TC 21.402 Chair's verbal report

Councillor Sterndale reported that:

- Town Council community halls are now open for hire (main hall and Fedden room only at the Folk Hall). There are restricted numbers, and the wearing of masks is essential during Town Council meetings. New conditions of hire are currently being sent to groups hiring these halls and it is their responsibility to safeguard their own members.
- The Splash renovation is now complete, and it will be returned to Portishead in time for the Public Arts Festival 25-26 September 2021. The Splash will be positioned on Swan Lake and unveiled at approximately 11.00am on Saturday 25th September. A guided tour of the Nature Reserve will take place from 9am prior to the unveiling.
- Work on the Neighbourhood Plan is still ongoing. The next stage is to identify the evidence gaps and continue formulating policies and objectives. The average time to create a Neighbourhood Plan from start to finish is 38 months. Portishead started its plan on July 2019 when it applied to North Somerset Council for a designated area. Progress is being made during what has been a difficult time during the pandemic.
- The timber decking outside of Bottelinos will be replaced by compacted gravel. The contract for the work has been let and works will hopefully start at the end of September subject to supplies being available.
- There is a meeting being held in the Somerset Hall on 8th October from 7pm to discuss Weston Big Wood and potential planning applications for housing near to the wood. The meeting will also consider the wildlife, buffer zones and potential plans for public ownership and will receive presentations from local community groups. Anyone wanting to attend will need to register online but anyone without online access should contact Portishead Town Council on 01275 847078.
- A meeting has taken place with Portbury Parish Council. Further meetings will be held to form a closer relationship as there are many common interests (for example, securing the future of Portbury Nature Reserve).
- Portishead now has its own full-time traffic warden provision to tackle parking problems in the town. For safety reasons this will not always be the same person. It was noted that officers are very diligent.
- Portishead Porters who provide a door-to-door service taking residents to their hospital appointments are in desperate need of more volunteers. Leaflets about the service are available on local noticeboards.
- Portishead Arts Festival will take place over the weekend of 25-26th September 2021. There will be a range of exhibitions, talks and walks including music and dance in the precinct, an exhibition in the Folk Hall on 25th and a graffiti artist running workshops in the Youth Centre to name but a few.
- Councillor Gardner provided details of the responses to the Lake Grounds consultation. There were 1,000 responses of which 75% were from Portishead. In summary respondents felt that the Lake

Grounds is a fantastic natural environment for wellbeing and general family enjoyment. The top priorities for improvements were the lake, boat house, toilets. It is expected that analysis of all the responses will be undertaken in the next three weeks, after which summary results of people's views will be published.

- There will be a public meeting covering transport, crime, and antisocial behaviour at the Somerset Hall on 28th October 2021 at 7.30pm. There will be several speakers including Avon & Somerset's Police and Crime Commissioner Mark Shelford.

Mr Maltby a resident attending the meeting obtained the consent of Ms Porter to video her addressing members.

TC.21.403 Public Participation

Laura Porter spoke about:

- Explained that she had tried to involve herself with Council activity but found it difficult and felt she had received backlash from the council for getting involved. She stated that councillors have a public role when they are in office and feels there is a lack of training for councillors, who should be able to adapt to all types of residents regardless of their background. She understood from an email she had received from Mr Salisbury, former Town Clerk, that there is no appointed Equalities Officer within the Town Council. She referred to her own health difficulties. She felt that some members had written her off as a troublemaker and questioned that if they had been aware of her health difficulties, they might have engaged with her differently. She has significant concern about the Town Council's Behaviour Policy and alleges that it makes insufficient reference to truly independent arbitration or how the Town Council fulfils its duty of care to "difficult people". She had submitted a freedom of information request on 7th August appertaining to the matter and as she had not received a response had referred the matter to the ICO (Information Commissioners Office). She urged that the policy be paused and urgently taken for review by equalities, diversity, and mental health professionals, and asked that the Town Council commissions regular equalities training, seeking professional support services for its members and staff.

Lin Morrissey asked:

- If details of the Weston Big Wood meeting will be made available online. Councillor Gardner advised that some information had been made available on social media by volunteer groups and details would be made available on the Town Council website shortly. It is hoped that the meeting will also be accessible online as well as in person.
- The frequency of the parking attendant in Portishead. An attendant is allocated to Portishead daily (full-time equivalent). The Town Council will hold monthly reviews with the service. Residents should contact the Town Clerk to highlight any areas for concern.

Lesley Cottrell questions and concerns:

- Would like a breakdown of the actual hours being covered (day/evenings/anti-social times) by the Parking attendant in Portishead.
- The breakdown of Town Orderly hours in the Town. The Assistant Clerk advised that the Caretaker currently works 7 hours a week and Glendale provide 2 days per week. Jobs are allocated by the office and depend on the type of work required. Mrs Cottrell provided hotspots requiring weeds to be removed (road between precinct and Aldi car park, Nore road and Down Road).
- As there were no reports available to the public for agenda items 7, 8, 9 and 10 were members satisfied that they had all the information to hand to decide whether to spend £66k. Councillor Sue Mason spoke in support of having a report for the various items. Councillor Holland assumed presentations would be available during the meeting.
- The Avon Way proposal, this road is the responsibility of North Somerset Councils highways and residents are being asked to pay twice if the Town Council agrees to help fund the project by £10k. This was considered in the past by the Town Council and residents were not in favour. A discussion took place regarding funding that had previously been made to level the precinct.
- The Staffing and Finance committee meeting Minutes were not available online.

Ken Smith spoke in relation to:

- an accusation of intimidation. He asked fellow residents to please speak up if they feel offended by any matters he raises. He has phoned the Town Council office 3 times in the last 16 years and has never had a problem with officers or the Clerk. He is IT illiterate and alleged that he was trolled online by one member of the Town Council. He asked the Town Council for an apology; he is not the alleged bully, and, in his opinion, he feels the Town Council has racially abused him for being a northerner. Councillor Holland asked Mr Smith to explain what and where this has happened. Councillor Tina Mason would be happy to have a chat with him about the situation when she has recovered from her operation.
- the building being erected opposite Harbourside Health Centre is monstrous. Councillor Gardner confirmed that planning permission had been given for this 2-3 years ago.

TC.21.404 Community Matters Committee Member

Following the resignation of Councillor Steve Temple, a proposal was put forward by Councillor Gardner for Councillor Goddard to join the committee. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Sue Mason.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Goddard resides on the Community Matters Committee with immediate effect.

TC.21.405 Modification of the Folk Hall top floor to create an open plan office for staff

Councillor Bull explained the necessity to have the whole team in an open plan environment and this needs to be done soon to accommodate the team returning to the office from home working. More ventilation, removing some stud walls and reconfiguration are required. Two quotes have been obtained indicating the costs but generally contractors are hard to source at the present time. Full plans will be circulated prior to the work taking place. Councillor Mason felt that it would have been useful to have Councillor Bull's comments in a report ahead of the meeting for consideration. She urged that officers take into consideration the previous comments and reports provided to the Town Council who had investigated the matter. Councillor Bull confirmed that a plan, report and proposal will be put together for members to consider. Councillor Holland asked Councillor Bull to include in the report the loss of revenue from the top floor being rented out over a twelve-month period. Mr Paul Maltby asked if the Town Council had any intention to move any staff or offices out of the Folk Hall building in the foreseeable future. Councillor Bull confirmed that there are no plans at the present time.

RESOLVED

Authority is delegated to Councillor Bull and the Town Clerk (Julia Stuckey) to procure building works up to a value of £35,000 (thirty-five thousand pounds, excluding VAT) to create an open plan office on the top floor of the Folk Hall with full plans and a detailed report being presented to the Town Council prior to any works going ahead.

TC.21.406 Procurement of IT Support Contract

Councillor Bull explained that it might be necessary to source alternative IT support as our current supplier is under review. This review will conclude on 27th September and the annual budget for support is £12,000 excluding VAT. Councillor Bull confirmed that the matter would go before the Town Council before a final decision is made.

RESOLVED

Authority is delegated to Councillor Bull and the Town Clerk (Julia Stuckey) to procure an alternative IT support contractor if required to support staff and councillors, at an annual maximum cost of £12,000 (twelve thousand pounds) excluding VAT, subject to the matter going to Town Council for ratification prior to entering a new contract.

TC.21.407 Contributing financially to Avon Way improvements

Councillor Sterndale explained that unfortunately detailed costs had not yet been supplied to the Town Council. A discussion took place regarding seven accidents that had taken place between 2010 and 2018 and residents having received personal injury. It was understood that in 2006 there were 1318 cars a day speeding (over 37.5mph) on Avon Way. Members have revisited the situation as North Somerset Council have minimal money to spend on such a "discretionary scheme". The draft gives initial costing of £13,000 (£2,000 design, £1,000 traffic orders). Match funding has been raised with North Somerset Council (£6,500 each from the authority and the parish) yet to be agreed. Councillor Sue Mason questioned the removal of an existing drop kerb, which she felt should be retained. Members discussed the pros and cons of

financially supporting the local authority for highway improvements. Councillor Bull referred to the plan that was on display during the meeting for anyone to propose changes.

There were no decisions as further financial details are yet to be received.

TC.21.408 Security Improvements to Town Council buildings

Councillor Bull stated that there had been several incidents whereby Town Council buildings have been accessed without authorisation. Details for security reasons were kept to a minimum but a review has been undertaken by the Folk Hall security contractors to instal, upgrade existing, provide monitoring, and respond to alarm calls. Councillor Sue Mason questioned if there would be a cost to exit the security contract the Town Council has for the North Weston Village Hall. Councillor Bull confirmed that the contractor had not contested the council's decision to withdrawn from the contract owing to the unauthorised access.

RESOLVED

To give delegated authority to the Town Clerk (Julia Stuckey) and Councillor Bull to procure security at council buildings following a review to include the following costing:

- £6,695 (six thousand six hundred and ninety-five pounds) to add an alarm system to Redcliffe Bay Hall and Wyndham Way toilets and to move the North Weston Village Hall alarm contract from the current supplier to the same supplier as Redcliffe Bay Hall and Wyndham Way toilets, make general repairs and improvements

To give delegated authority to the Town Clerk (Julia Stuckey) and Deputy Clerk to procure security at council buildings following a review to include the following costing:

- £2,305 (two thousand three hundred and five pounds) procuring a contractor to monitor and respond to alarm calls at council buildings and provide annual maintenance of new security systems.

TC.21.409 To consider and approve the Minutes of the last meeting 21st July 2021:

The Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 21st July 2021 were agreed as a true record.

Councillor Mason asked if draft Minutes being put forward for approval at meetings could be circulated with the relevant agenda.

RESOLVED

The Town Council Minutes of 21st July 2021 were approved and accepted as a true record. They would be duly signed by Councillor Sterndale.

TC.21.410 Date of next meeting:

The date of the next meeting is 17th November 2021 but if there are any urgent matters to discuss then an extraordinary meeting would be called.

Meeting closed 9.00pm