



Portishead Town Council Minutes: Full Council meeting 19.30 Wednesday 21st July 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: Julia Stuckey

Town Councillors present:

Councillor Patricia Sterndale (Chairman)
Councillor Paul Gardner (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Ben Aldridge
Councillor Caroline Goddard
Councillor Janet Davey
Councillor Nicola Holland (online)

Councillor Polly Shepperdson (online) (arrived 19.49)
Councillor Robert Bull
Councillor Robert Cartwright
Councillor Sue Mason
Councillor Tanya Slatter (online)
Councillor Tina Mason

Town Councillor apologies

Councillor Tim Shaden

North Somerset Councillors present

Councillor John Cato

North Somerset Councillor apologies

Councillor Caritas Charles
Councillor Huw James

Residents (online and in person) ranged between 6-11

1. Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations (exemptions) (Chairman)

Members declare disclosable pecuniary (financial) and other interests re. items on the agenda.

- a. None given

2. Decision item: Behaviour Policy (Chairman)

- a. As part of an on-going review of Council Policies and Standing Orders, the council has created a Behaviour Policy to prevent unacceptable behaviour and encourage respectful debate.

Chairman's statement:

"Intimidation in public life has increased in frequency and intensity in recent years fuelled by the increase in social media. People in public life and minority groups suffer disproportionately from intimidation.

In 2017 report the Committee for Standards for Intimidation in Public Life: intimidatory behaviour was described as words and / or behaviour intended or likely to block participation, which could reasonably lead to an individual wanting to withdraw from public life. Intimidation can include physical violence, threats of violence, damage to property and abusive online and offline communications. Sometimes the collective impact of a number of individual actions can also be intimidating, for example coordinated social media attacks.

A clear finding of the report is that it is disproportionately likely to be directed towards women, those from ethnic and religious minorities and the LGBTQ community.

Unfortunately, this Council: both councillors and staff, have been the victims of intimidation and bullying from a tiny number of residents over a protracted time period. Sadly, our many attempts to deal with the issue through constructive dialogue have had no positive impact and in fact this behaviour has been increasing.

Robust political disagreement is part of our democratic process, personalised attacks are not. Intimidating actions are not the right way to apply legitimate political pressure, instead they are intended and likely to cause an individual to withdraw from a public space, including social media, public events or even public life altogether. This can have the effect of limiting freedom of expression and is in itself antidemocratic.

Regretfully this has happened and continues to happen in Portishead. Last year we had one Town Councillor describe in a public meeting, the negative impact on his mental health due to the behaviour of a resident towards him. That Councillor resigned several months ago. We have another Councillor who is not here tonight, (correction) is here tonight, because of the bullying and harassment they have been subjected to over the last few months, other councillors and even their family and friends have been regularly subjected to personal attacks.

We also know that some residents will not attend council meetings because of the unpleasant bullying behaviour of a small number of individuals who regularly attend.

This harassment has ranged from a councillor being reduced to tears by an abusive resident whilst walking along the street minding her own business, poison pen postcards sent to a

councillor and a member of her family and many personal attacks on social media including using fake Facebook accounts set up by residents as well as rude abusive and intimidating behaviour in meetings.

We have a vast amount of evidence of this behaviour from the video recordings of council meetings and our regular trawls of social media posts.

This behaviour must and will stop.

Portishead Town Council is now implementing a zero-tolerance approach to intimidation, bullying or harassment of any kind in any situation. We have produced a policy to back this up and to deal robustly but fairly with perpetrators, so that we can continue to work with the overwhelming majority of residents in a constructive environment to help our whole community”.

b. Councillors’ questions and comments:

i. Councillor Goddard: Wasn’t going to attend tonight, but after seeing what happened with the racial abuse of English football players and Hamilton, decided she will not back down to bullies and will not, not attend a meeting because of what she is seeing at the moment on Facebook. She is no longer on social media to avoid having to deal with it daily and thanks the council for its support in the ongoing horrible scenarios.

ii. Councillor Gardner: The Chairman gave a very good summary

c. Recommendation to approve the Behaviour Policy:

i. Councillor Sterndale proposed, Councillor Aldridge seconded, all agreed

3. Chairman’s verbal update

a. COVID-19

i. There is a worrying increase in the number of C19 cases in North Somerset, so the Council is taking the following steps to keep all as safe a possible:

1. All council meetings will continue to be hybrid even after the pandemic to allow everyone to attend and cut down on unnecessary travel
2. Face masks are essential due to a lack of ventilation

b. Splash Sculpture

- i. Sculpture at Portbury Nature Reserve was damaged
- ii. Hinkley Connection Project removed and transferred to Cod Steaks (creators)
- iii. Will then be returned to a new home at Swan Lake
- iv. North Somerset Council is paying for the restoration from a S106 fund
- v. Funding is not required from Portishead Town Council

c. Bus Strategy:

- i. Government investing in national bus services ‘Bus Back Better’ scheme
- ii. North Somerset Council bus service improvement plan due by October 21 to apply for Government funding
- iii. Local areas must determine what improvements are needed
- iv. The Council has created a short survey online, encouraged residents to take part
- v. The results will be passed to North Somerset Council.

d. Neighborhood Plan

- i. Slightly adjusted schedule to enable face to face consultations which has increased contributors
- ii. 800 detailed responses to online Commonplace surveys and 400 comments pinned to map
- iii. It is vital that the Plan reflects residents’ views

e. Greenseas Bin

- i. Recent installation was publicised
- ii. Bin was donated by Marine Conservation Charity ‘Greenseas Trust’
- iii. Fazilette Khan, the Trust Founder revealed the bin at Portishead Marina

f. Bottellinos Decking

- i. Council is aware of the poor state
- ii. North Somerset Council planned to install new surface in May / June but not yet happened
- iii. The Council contacted the North Somerset several times expressing concerns.

g. Clarification of Standing Orders

- i. Later agenda item
- ii. Number of queries asking if non-committee Members have voting rights. The Standing Orders are somewhat inconsistent, but the decision has always been at each Chairman’s / Chair’s discretion.

- iii. The Standing Orders will be amended to reflect policy that only committee Members can vote.
- h. Steve Temple (former Councillor)
 - i. Unfortunately, Steve resigned in the previous week due to family and business commitments
 - ii. Chairman thanked him for support to other councillors and hard work
 - iii. Formal procedure will be followed:
 - 1. Notified North Somerset Council
 - 2. North Somerset put notices up that day
 - 3. If 10 residents from this Ward request a by-election within 14 days (contact details for North Somerset Council), a by-election will be held within 60-days of the advertisement
 - 4. If by-election is not called; Town Councillors can co-opt a Councillor for the remaining of Steve's tenure.
 - iv. Chairman presented a plaque to Councillor Gardner, the previous Chairman.

4. Questions & comments from residents (to ask questions in advance - clerk@portishead.gov.uk)

- i. Mrs Singer: The Lake Grounds:
 - 1. two weeks' ago, she noticed families playing with lots of space available. Sadly, the funfair rides have taken space a lot of space.
 - 2. The boathouse looks shabby.
 - 3. The lake water is not good, and the grounds are in disrepair. Who is responsible?
 - 4. Who paid for algae to be removed? Councillor Sue Mason responded: that this North Somerset Council.
 - 5. The toilets are closed.
 - 6. Bins are overflowing by the café. Who is responsible for clearing up?
 - 7. Should money be spent on maintaining existing and possibly extending the toilets?
 - 8. Who maintains the grass?
 - 9. Councillor Gardner responded: North Somerset Council has funding to invest as owners of the Lake Grounds and is responsible for all maintenance. Portishead Council has asked for improvements, hence the consultation. He asked Mrs Singer to leave her letter and he will reply in detail.
 - 10. Councillor Goddard responded: Councillor Davey, Councillor Slatter, Councillor Gardner and herself are on the Lake Grounds working group.
- ii. Mr Kenneth Smith
 - 1. Had intended not to come to the meeting as it is hybrid.
 - 2. Is disappointed with the Behaviour Policy. He fought for free speech. Previously people have said what they want. He made some claims about Councillor Charles which were considered unacceptable under the Behaviour Policy.
 - 3. Repeated a previous questions about why Portishead Councillors are not on North Somerset Executive, so North Somerset Councils holds the power. He felt that Portishead Town Council's job is to harass North Somerset to do its best for the town. He felt Portishead residents are paying twice for North Somerset activity. Asked for example when Cllr had a decision changed with no place on Exec
 - 4. Why was Councillor Charles not replaced by someone from Portishead
 - 5. Made claims about Councillor Gardner
 - 6. The path past Sainsburys to Wyndham Way houses birds. He made unacceptable comments about Councillors on the Wyndham Way committee.
 - 7. The Chairman asked him to refrain from making further unacceptable comments under the Behaviour Policy
 - 8. He claimed the Council has taken his freedom of speech.
 - 9. Councillor Gardner asked him not to speak about Councillors this way.
 - 10. Councillor Slatter responded: abusive speech is not freedom of speech
 - 11. Councillor Goddard responded: it is unacceptable to upset family members.
 - 12. Councillor Davey responded: At least five people are not coming to meetings due to bullying and unpleasant atmosphere.

- iii. Mrs Hennessey (via Mr Maltby's phone as they had declined to enter when asked to wear a face mask)
 - 1. Unacceptable accusations have been made towards residents.
 - 2. Respect goes both ways.
 - 3. Questioned the evidence of incidents mentioned.
 - 4. All residents and Councillors should be held to account.
 - 5. Current Councillors had behaved poorly in the past and she apologised to previous Councillors for not believing them.
 - 6. She stands up for people
 - 7. Unhappy about being asked to wear a face mask.
 - 8. Thanked Councillor Sue Mason for adequately chairing the Planning meeting, although being interrupted.
 - 9. Thanked Council staff.
 - 10. Agreed that non-committee members should not vote.
- iv. Mrs Lyn Morrissey:
 - 1. Asked everyone to keep safe and be kind
- v. Gwyneth:
 - 1. Asked why Councillor why only 4 people in the meeting.
 - 2. Chairman responded: partly due to aggressive and threatening behaviour so some feel intimidated. Also, COVID-19 has made people more cautious, this is a badly ventilated Hall so people feel happier online at the moment.
 - 3. Councillor Goddard responded: 11 people are online.
 - 4. Mrs Morrissey responded: the room is very hot and she is staying safe at home. She agrees that masks should remain and as the Council owns the Hall it can set its own policies.
 - 5. Councillor Shepperdson responded: she agreed with the previous speaker. Many people are still wearing masks. Plenty of interaction can happen and items can be raised at any time online / by phone. Also, this section of the meeting should focus on this agenda's items.
 - 6. Councillor Cartwright responded: he is online at the moment as infection and death rates are very high.
- vi. Mr Paul Maltby:
 - 1. More people would be in the Hall had they not been 'banned from entering'.
 - 2. Councillors do not wear a mask.

5. Information item: Weston Big Wood update (Councillor Gardner)

- a. Community groups and residents and councillors will gather at 3pm on 1st August
- b. media will be provided to inform residents of the potential threat of development
- c. Then on the 20th September 2021 (please note this has now been moved to 8th October) at Somerset Hall will be a public meeting (may live stream) and consultation
- d. Residents are looking at increasing Public Rights of Way and TPOs (previous blanket TPO 1972), North Somerset is looking at this.

6. Information item: reports from North Somerset District Councillors

- a. Councillor Goddard:
 - i. Thanked residents for bringing back into the seat.
 - ii. Last 3 months, she has represented residents.
 - iii. Regarding question about Portishead Councillors joining North Somerset's Executive; the meeting has been moved to an inconvenient time, she wrote to the Leader and CEO.
 - iv. Working on the Bus Back Strategy
 - v. Addressed previous question about reference to Portishead Independents on North Somerset website; it has an administrative purpose to enable her to join committees.
- b. Councillor Holland:
 - i. Is on the Schools Improvement group – it was not very good Ofsted report, so the panel is look to improve the rating
 - ii. Is an Assistant Executive Member and does have equal voice at meetings in discussion
 - iii. Working on Slade Rd
 - iv. Interviewed by Wild Portishead on Facebook

- c. Councillor John Cato statement on “Some matters, that I am involved with as a District Councillor:
- i. Resident Issues:
 1. The normal range of matters arising where as a Councillor I can facilitate action on a range of issues from housing, council tax, business grants, fencing, planning, drains, lighting, waste collection, yellow lines, green spaces, wilding, housing benefits etc.
 - ii. Avon Pension Fund - committee member. The focus is increasing on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues, good news at last, taking care of pensioners financial interests more ethically. Investing in sustainable future, Climate Action 100+, IIGCC. Prime focus on climate change and increasing attention to a broader range of sustainable and ethical issues, environmental matters and inclusivity issues are at last coming to the fore.
 - iii. North Somerset Levels Internal Drainage Board - board member Recognition of need to increase resilience with respect to skills, we need to recruit and train to continue the amazing work these people are doing. The waterway lungs of North Somerset, flood defense and biodiversity issues. Floating Penny Wort weed in Rhynes
 - iv. The Golf Course: Safeguarding the Golf Course for our residents Chair facilitator of the Working party, meeting regularly, North Somerset Council taking action, work still underway, it has support from current Executive Councillors and the NSC democratic services team are working on it - nothing specifically to report, and I will do when there is.
 - v. EV Strategy working group - migration towards Electric Vehicles requires an EV Strategy Anyone have any thoughts or opinions, contact me.
 - vi. Climate Emergency working group - hard to get this done, great work being done despite lack of national commitment, esp housing and transport issues. 1st November, Carbon Literacy day - talk to me.
 - vii. Audit Committee - Chair - focus on matters of assurance, governance, internal controls, risk management, financial strategy, the annual governance statement, and related performance improvements (doing things better within NSC), for all our residents, treating July 21 Notes for info-Report of District Cllr John Cato 1 people as customers, valuing great customer experience. As part of that, I want to know where the council is not doing as well as you would wish, especially if it is a general case and therefore a system issue. There is a real desire within NSC to identify these matters and improve.
 - viii. Adult Services and Housing - committee member Our ageing population and the increasing desire people have to stay in their own homes, NSC is doing some great work with 'innovative' technology in care, being cited in national forums, it's little talked about and can make a substantive difference. Carers in North Somerset - there is a shortage, perhaps you have ideas on that, would like to know more. Are you aware of 'hidden' carers, know of people who need support?
 - ix. Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Management - committee member. Broadly speaking, a policy and scrutiny committee working to improve the way things are done within NSC.
 - x. Web site consultative group - its use as a tool for information, reporting of resident issues, engagement and so on; anyone want to give me feedback on how NSC can improve, email me at john.cato@n-somerset.gov.uk
 - xi. North Somerset, your county. Consultations you can and, in my view, should take part in. Please do take part. I stood for election to help get your voice heard, and it is getting better. A big improvement since we became district councillors is improved engagement. I recognise it may still not be as good as we might wish, yet, it is a journey we are on and NSC is getting better. You can help them get better by taking part in a positive pro-active way.
 1. Portishead Lake Grounds - <https://nsomerset.inconsult.uk/PLG2021/consultationHome>
 2. Citizen's Panel - show you care - <https://nsomerset.inconsult.uk/citizenspanel/consultationHome>
 3. Banwell by Pass - <https://nsomerset.inconsult.uk/banwellbypass/consultationHome>

4. Banwell Conservation Area - <https://nsomerset.inconsult.uk/BCAAMP/consultationHome>
 5. A38 Improvements - <https://nsomerset.inconsult.uk/A382021/consultationHome>
 6. Waste Consultation - https://nsomerset.inconsult.uk/waste_consultation/consultationHome
 7. Surgery chat room, every 2nd Saturday 10.30-12.00
 8. Email me at john.cato@n-somerset.gov.uk
 9. Agreed with the Behaviour Policy and supports it".
- d. Councillor Slatter: thanked Councillors for helpful reports.

7. Decision item: Slade Road Playing Fields (Councillor Gardner)
- a. North Somerset owns part of the site, Portishead Council owns the rest.
 - b. Residents so far have said keep the area as green space
 - c. Has spoken to North Somerset, which listed the site as potential development for affordable housing to increase provision and income.
 - d. Nb: this doesn't mean it will definitely be developed, but is a step forward to development
 - e. North Somerset and Portishead plan to consult together
 - f. Councillor Tina Mason volunteered to lead consultation
 - g. Recommendation to consult with residents on the future of the Playing Fields.
 - i. Councillor Gardner proposed, Councillor Bull seconded, all agreed

Councillor Gardner, Councillor Goddard and Councillor Bull left

8. Information item: project management process update (Councillor Tina Mason)

PORTISHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Scope

PTC Project Process
The Whats, Whys and Hows

v_0.01

Tina Mason



What do we mean by a Project?

This is an additional activity/deliverable which:

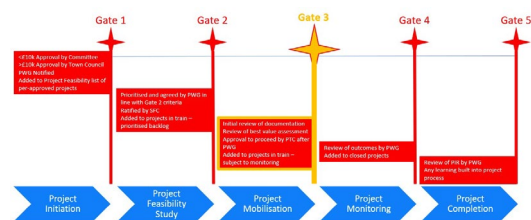
- is not part of the Work Programme
- involves cost and/or officer time
- has a fixed end date

Why have we designed a new process?

To enhance governance and oversight of project activity

- providing a framework within which project decisions are made
- defining accountability and responsibility
- improving transparency
- supporting delivery of required outcomes on time and on budget

What is the new process?



How are we implementing this?

- Project working group reviews all activity monthly
- Project documentation maintained in SharePoint
- New Projects will follow process from the start
- Existing projects are being 'slotted in' and evidenced retrospectively

Project Name	Project Status	Lead
Project A	Initiation	John Cato
Project B	Feasibility	Tina Mason
Project C	Mobilisation	John Cato
Project D	Monitoring	Tina Mason
Project E	Completion	John Cato

Projects Home

This site is designed to provide all our project activity and support the governance and oversight of our project activity. The purpose of this site is to provide a central hub for all project activity, including all project documents, reports, and other information. The site is designed to be user-friendly and easy to navigate. It will also provide a central hub for all project activity, including all project documents, reports, and other information.



- a. The Council currently has twenty-nine projects planned or underway
- b. Councillor Tina Mason has created a process to efficiently manage the process
- c. A Working Group sits below the Staffing & Finance Committee
- d. This process uses The Green Book as a basis

- e. Risks and procurement are checked to ensure resources and funding are in place and capacity is planned
- f. At Gate 3 in the process projects are brought to a Committee / Council meeting
- g. Post implementation – projects and processes are monitored
- h. New projects will follow the process from beginning, existing projects will be brought into the process at the appropriate point
- i. Councillor Davey, Councillor Slatter and Councillor Holland thanked Councillor Tina Mason for her hard work

Councillor Bull rejoined the meeting during the presentation

9. Decision item: Committee member voting permissions (Chairman)

- a. As part of an on-going review of Council Policies and Standing Orders, the Council suggests amending the following to clarify that only Committee Members may vote at each of the relevant Committees:
 - i. Standing Orders;
 - ii. Planning Advisory Group Committee Terms of Reference;
 - iii. Staffing & Finance Committee Terms of Reference;
 - iv. Community Matters Committee Terms of Reference.
- b. Other Councillors may attend these Committees but not vote.
- c. Recommendation: to amend and adopt the amended Standing Orders and Terms of References.
 - i. Councillor Aldridge proposed, Councillor Davey seconded, all approved

10. Decision item: finance reports (Councillor Bull)

- a. With the changeover of Clerk there was a slight delay in checking and approving the end of year report and AGAR statement, an accounting specialist was contracted to check the accounts in the interim
- b. Councillor Bull requested that any detailed questions be emailed to the Clerk.
- c. Recommendation to note and approve the 2020-2021 Annual Governance & Accountability Return
 - i. The Chairman proposed, Councillor Goddard seconded, all approved
- d. Recommendation to receive and note Apr-Jun 2021 schedule of payments.
 - i. The Chairman proposed, Councillor Sue Mason seconded, all approved

11. Decision item: Citizens Advice Network grant application for £25,000 (Councillor Aldridge)

- a. To provide generalist and specialist advice, information, and support to the residents of Portishead from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- b. The Working Group met and is aware that the last 18 months have been very challenging, with more online and less face-to-face provision but demand has risen.
- c. The Working Group recommends approval
- d. Recommendation to award a £25,000 grant to the Citizens Advice Network
 - i. Councillor Davey proposed, Councillor Sue Mason seconded, all approved
- e. Subject to COVID-19 restrictions and the Citizens Advice Network engagement strategy, a further grant application of up to £10,000 may be received within this financial year, if COVID-19 allows a face-to-face service.

12. Approval item: to approve Committee meeting minutes (Chairman)

- a. Staffing & Finance Committee 27 May 2021
- b. Planning Advisory Group Committee 2 June 2021
- c. Community Matters Committee 10 June 2021
- d. Planning Advisory Group Committee 7 July 2021
- e. Community Matters Committee 8 July 2021
- f. All approved by all Councillors

13. Approval item: to approve the minutes of the last ordinary meeting 19 May 2021 (Chairman)

- a. All approved

14. Date of next meeting: 15th September 2021 (Chairman)