

Portishead Town Council

Minutes of Town Council Meeting

on Wednesday 17th March 2021

at 7:30pm

DRAFT MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT MEETING

The meeting was held remotely via Microsoft Teams. A video recording of the meeting will be available on the Town Council website.

In Attendance:

Chairperson: Cllr Gardner

Councillors: Aldridge, Bull, Cartwright, Davey, Goddard, Holland, Mason, Sheppardson, Snaden, Sterndale, Slatter and Temple.

Staff & Others: M Salisbury (Meeting Clerk) and 26 members of the public and no members of the press.

Councillor Gardner opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

TC 20.349 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received all councillors being present.

TC 20.350 Declarations of interest & dispensation requests

Cllr Aldridge declared an interest in the Christmas lights grant item (15) and noted he would not take part in the discussion and would abstain from voting.

TC 20.351 Wyndham Way Study Area Report

Cllr Gardiner provided background to the project and introduced Alex Hearn from NSC. Alex explained the scoping document is the result of several months of study to collate information and to set the principles for a development framework for the study area to create a better connected and greener Portishead. The Stage 2 process being to create a development framework, with continued collaboration between the study group partners and more proactive engagement is undertaken.

Andrew Dakin representing Aberdeen Investments, thanked NSC and PTC for their engagement in a constructive process. He explained that NSC was considering an wider area than Old Mill Road for the development framework, and until that second phase was completed there will be no further planning application for Old Mill Road and Aberdeen Investments will continue to manage its estate for business tenants.

Questions and comments:

Lin Morrissey – enquired as to the role of Mr Dakin, it was confirmed that he represents Aberdeen Investments in respect of their development strategy of various sites.

Annette Hennessy – noted that the word partnership had been replaced by collaboration in the report, but that steering group did not have any residents on it. Her concern being that residents will not be consulted, and that it is naïve to believe that there will not be a residential development proposal. She would like to see and asked for reassurance that any businesses are re-sited as part of any future development. Alex Hearn explained that additional consultation, both physical and digital, was planned as part of the Stage 2 process.

Geoff Hardman – was concerned about infrastructure, in particular the lack of school, highways and car parking capacity, and that any residential development must come with additional infrastructure. Cllr Gardner explained that the Stage 2 consideration would be run by NSC and the objective of the development framework was to ensure the appropriate and connected development of the whole area.

In response to a further question about who instigated the Study Area process. Alex Hearn explained that NSC, as the planning authority, had initiated the process to deal with the undetermined Aberdeen planning application which it had considered was sub-optimal. The initiative was to engage with Aberdeen and other stakeholders to take a fresh look at both the Aberdeen site and across the wider area.

Cllr Gardner noted that an extensive FAQ would be published. Please see www.wyndhamway.co.uk

Resolved:

- a) To support the Stage 1 report
All councillors in favour
- b) Portishead Town Council supports the Stage 2 process. In addition the town council notes the importance of any future development incorporating a healthy mix of uses including the creation of industrial and other employment opportunities. A vibrant community must provide the ability for people to live, work and play.

All councillors in favour

TC 20.352 Presentations from Organisations

Hinkley Point Connection – Gillian Burnell as project communications manager introduced Aden Precious as project engineer and Victoria Lloyd from Western Power Distribution. It was explained that the major work affecting the Portishead area was underground cabling, upgrade of the Portbury Nature Reserve sub-station, the construction of T-Pylons (2 within the nature reserve) and removing the WPD pylons. Underground cabling work will be undertaken from April to June 2021 and T-Pylon work from May 2021 to September 2024 when energising of the new cables is expected. Letters will be sent out to Portishead affected residents explaining the

works from next week, as a face-to-face meeting is unfortunately not possible at the current time.

A full timetable of the works is provided in the presentation available with the meeting papers on the PTC website.

HPC was also excited to be involved in the project to relocate the Splash Sculpture and will be aiding by retrieving the sculpture, transporting it to Cod Steaks in Bristol for repair/refurbishment and relocating it back to Swan Lake in the nature reserve.

Portishead Chamber of Commerce – David Cook noted the exceptional circumstances this year with activities of the Chamber having to move online, whilst continuing to work with the town council to promote and support business in Portishead and being involved with NSC as part of the newly formed economic recovery group. He hoped that in the coming year the Chamber would be able to get back to holding live events and the largely new committee committed looking forward to the AGM on 25th March, with guest speaker Liam Fox and a proposal to change the name of the Chamber to Portishead Chamber of Trade and Commerce, to reflect commitment to supporting local traders.

The Chamber is pleased to be part of the North Somerset Economic Recovery Group, with the first full meeting being held on 25th February where the terms of reference and the economic plan was discussed. The objective of the group being to provide a strategy and investment the recovery of town centres from the effects of the pandemic. Included in the work is a town guide for local business.

TC 20.353 Wellbeing Project Update

Cllr Shepperdson introduced this item and the development of the Portishead Wellness Partnership with work being undertaken to understand how we can collaborate with the North Somerset Together network and other organisations to access wellbeing services and support. She introduced Richard Blows of North Somerset, Paul Lucock of Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) and Fiona Cope of Citizens Advice North Somerset (CANS). The objective being to involve town councils and local community groups within the integrated care system infrastructure.

Richard Blows talked about the North Somerset Together opportunity, to capture the energy of local partners to deliver community led support services, being trusted, accessible and responsive to local needs. He noted that Portishead Town Council being a founder member of North Somerset Together and having set aside staff and financial resources was playing a leading role in developing the local partnership approach. He was pleased to announce a contribution by NSC of c£7,500 to help PTC take forward these shared ambitions at a local level.

Paul Lucock explained the role of Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) being a charity providing support to third sector partners to develop community services and volunteering opportunities.

Fiona Cope of Citizens Advice North Somerset talked about the North Somerset Wellbeing Collective and its approach to the delivery of community led wellbeing support with a local 'ground-up' approach. Portishead Town Council is part of the Wellbeing Collective which is helping to give a voice to the community in

commissioning services and empowering town councils to co-ordinate and deliver community support.

Cllr Shepperdson summarised the objective over the coming year was to work together to be able to signpost to the community the services and support that are available and to identify and fill gaps in provision, working with North Somerset Together and the Wellbeing Collective.

TC 20.354 Chairs Report

- **Litter in Portishead** – the problem was noted, and the action being taken to install seagull flaps, additional bins provided and increased collection frequencies, it is an ongoing piece of work to improve matters.
- **Food poverty in Portishead** – this is a rapidly growing problem, and the valuable contribution of Portishead community groups is acknowledged and the town council is delighted to support them.
- **NSC Community support funding** – as noted by Richard Blows Covid community funding of £7,500 is being provided to the town council to support the Wellbeing project.
- **Policy update** – the policies reviewed at the January meeting have been approved and added to the website.
- **New Clerk** – it was noted that the new Clerk, Julia Stuckey, would start in mid-April and thanks was provided to Martin Salisbury who leaves at the end of March.
- **Bullying and Harassment** – an example was shared of anonymous postcards that were sent to a councillor and family, which caused great distress and is unacceptable bullying. It was noted that harassment of councillors and staff alike is unacceptable. It was requested that a policy is introduced to deal with such behaviour.

This recent incident was universally condemned, and a call was made for mutual respect and decent behaviour from all residents in communication with councillors and the use of social media. With the following statement being supported:

PTC condemns in the strongest possible terms bullying of any sort carried out against anybody in any setting whether it be email, social media, online, face-to-face, letter or postcards. It is totalling unacceptable, and we will continue to have a zero tolerance to bullying behaviour.

It was agreed that PTC should review its policy in this area.

Meeting Clerk note: The council has a governance policy for 'Staff Protection' and a staff & employment policy for 'Bullying & Harassment' and a review and extension of these should be considered.

TC 20.355 Questions & Comments from Residents

Paul Maltby – was concerned about the cost of the upcoming elections and various resignations from North Somerset and Portishead Town Council position. He shared some responses he had received in response to Freedom of Information requests

concerning councillor resignations. Cllr Gardner clarified that Portishead elections on 6 May will be combined with the Police Commissioner election so any additional cost would be minimal.

Lin Morrissey – asked in respect of litter on the Portbury Hundred and graffiti around the town and if the town council or North Somerset Council should be contacted. Cllr Gardner asked that matters are reported to the town council and noted that the blue hoardings opposite the Travel Lodge would be repainted shortly. Cllr Holland also asked that such matters are reported via the North Somerset website using the My Account function, so that action can be taken.

Annette Hennessy – noted the council has both social media and bullying & harassment policies that should be looked at. In respect to working in co-operation with North Somerset Council to improve and invest in litter bin and collection improvements, she voiced the concern that Portishead Town Council was paying for improvements that should be a cost to North Somerset Council.

TC 20.356 District Councillor Reports

There were none.

TC 20.357 Town Councillor Reports

Cllr Aldridge explained that there had been a serious assault in Vale Park and he had received a request for better lighting and tree work in the park to improve security.

TC 20.358 Approval of the Minutes of the last Ordinary Town Council meeting

Resolved – the Minutes of the last Ordinary Town Council meeting held on 20th January 2021 are confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Chairman.
All councillors in favour

TC 20.359 Finances January & February 2021

Resolved – the schedule of payments and bank reconciliations for January and February 2021 were approved.
All councillors in favour

TC 20.360 Minutes of committee meetings

Members noted the Minutes of the following committee meetings:

- 27th January 2021 Staffing & Finance Committee
- 3rd February 2021 Planning Advisory
- 10th February 2021 Community Matters Committee
- 3rd March 2021 Planning Advisory
- 10th March 2021 Community Matters Committee

There were no specific comments.

TC 20.361 Change to Council meeting dates

It was noted that both the annual and ordinary town council meeting will be held on 19th May.

Resolved – to postpone the Annual Residents Meeting to 26 May 2021 and cancel the Staffing and Finance committee meeting scheduled for that date.

All councillors in favour

TC 20.362 Portishead in Bloom Watering Contract

Resolved – to award the contract to the contractor at an annual cost of £9,500 per annum (excluding VAT) to be paid in instalments and that Cllr Bull be authorised to sign the contract on behalf of the council.

All councillors in favour

TC 20.363 Grant Application – Portishead Christmas Lights

Resolved – to award a £12,000 grant to Portishead Christmas Lights to contribute towards the cost of providing the December 2021 Christmas lights display and events. The grant award includes the cost of storage facilities provided by Portishead Town Council and the grant, net of storage, costs to be paid in April 2021.

12 councillors in favour. Cllr Aldridge abstained.

TC 20.364 Internal Audit Review

Resolved – to accept the Internal Auditor Report and the actions proposed are adopted.

All councillors in favour

TC 20.365 Guide to Information Review

Cllr Davey left meeting at 22:00

Resolved – the Guide to Information, as presented, is approved and published on the PTC website.

12 councillors in favour

TC 20.366 Investment Strategy & Policy Review

Resolved – that the investment strategy report is adopted and in particular:

- a. Investments should be made with institutions that meet the High Credit Quality condition. Including at least £250,000 of cash being held on instant access terms and term investments of between 6 and 12 months of up to £200,000 are permitted.
- b. A CCLA Money Market fund is opened and used as part of the Instant Access deposits strategy.
- c. An Insignis investment platform account is opened to manage term deposits of longer than 6 months and other deposits where it offers favourable rates.

- d. Deposits can be made with UK based High Credit Quality financial institutions or funds, including Channel Island branches of such institutions.
- e. The Clauses 3.1.5 and 3.3 of the Investment Policy are amended to read:

Clause 3.1.5: All investments will be made with a body or investment scheme (including a Money Market Fund) which has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency. (A high credit rating will be defined as 'A' 'High Credit Quality').

Clause 3.3: For prudent management of its balances, the Town Council, to maintain sufficient levels of security and liquidity, will adopt a policy whereby surplus funds can be invested on short term deposit with one or more UK banks and/or building societies (including Channel Island branches of such UK banks or building societies) and/or UK Money Market Funds.

12 councillors in favour

TC 20.367 Risk Assessment Review

Resolved - to approve the risk assessment and its recommended actions.
12 councillors in favour

TC 20.368 Internal Controls Review

Resolved - to approve the review of internal controls and its recommended actions.
12 councillors in favour

TC 20.369 Financial Regulations Review

Resolved - to approve the amendments to the Financial Regulations and that an updated copy be produced and published on the website.
12 councillors in favour

TC 20.370 Banking and Cash Handling Procedure Review

Resolved - to approve the amendments to the Banking and Cash Handling Procedure and that an updated copy be produced and published on the website.
12 councillors in favour

TC 20.371 Date of next meeting

The date of the next ordinary and annual town council meeting is Wednesday 19th May 2021.

Meeting closed 22:05

Signed:
Councillor Paul Gardner, Chairman