

Portishead Residents Annual Meeting Minutes Wednesday 17 May 2023

This was a hybrid meeting

Meeting venue was online and in the Folk Hall, Portishead

The meeting was recorded

Council Chairman's welcome (Councillor Ben Aldridge):

Good evening, everyone and welcome to the Portishead Resident's annual meeting 2023.

A brief summary of the past year's achievements. Over the past few months you'll have seen the Slade Road Play Park, thank you to the Project Manager for the work behind the scenes and the relevant Councillors involved.

The biggest event on Saturday was the opening of the Skatepark, so thank you to everyone who turned up on Saturday.

Thank you to everyone, this goes back a long way who contributed to the fight for the skatepark for various different reasons. Saturday was a very memorable moment for a lot of people. If anyone hasn't been down there yet, I implore you to go and have a look because the excitement and the smiles on faces is amazing.

The Jubilee Festival last year to celebrate the Queen. We are doing another one this year called the Penny Festival. It is to help out local businesses in Portishead and North Somerset. It is a free event of sorts; we charge a penny and the reason we charge a penny is if we don't charge a penny we have to pay fees which North Somerset Council are legally obliged to pass down to us. So effectively it is a penny donation, all the money will go to local causes. Anyone that was here last year will remember that we asked the PRAM to decide who the 2 charities were that it went to. So, we will ask at the end, if you can put your thinking caps on, who you'd like the money to go to this year. Whatever money is raised will all go to local charities.

Last year the Skatepark Group were chosen as well as the Christmas Lights, just over £1800 was raised. It is a great event, with lots of food stalls, general stands, we have live music, we've got the Rock Choir opening at 11.30am. The live music will start at 1pm and will go on to 10pm.

As this is your meeting, I would like to ask if anyone would like to Chair the meeting?

The Council Chairman requested a resident volunteer to facilitate the public discussion.

- Nomination for chairing the meeting, Laura Porter nominated Paul Maltby, this was seconded by Annette Hennessy. There were no other nominations, therefore Paul Maltby took the Chair.

Paul asked that anyone online, could put their hand up.

Paul thanked the public for coming and putting their trust in him once again as Chair for the meeting. He stated that it was the people's meeting and that it was for anyone to speak for as long as they wished. He asked everyone to be mindful not to let the meeting go on for too long. He asked that if anyone in the hall wished to speak, if they could put their hand up.

Paul said that the Skatepark was absolutely superb, he went down on Saturday for the opening and didn't think he'd ever been so proud for the people of Portishead as he was on Saturday. It was absolutely superb and there was one very old man, who was apparently 57 years old was on his scooter and managed to get an interview on Bristol Radio, being the oldest man down there but I don't want to boast! The meeting is your meeting.

- Laura Porter – Thanked and congratulated Laura Bowers because Laura coordinated a wellbeing event that I took part in and it was so much fun. I had such a good day and I was based over at the Beacon Hub and it was actually the Beacon Hub that asked me if I would be part of it but I just thought the event was brilliant and I have been asking people for feedback and everyone had such an amazing time. If we can more of that going, but in particular I wanted to highlight Laura because I had such a good experience of Laura as a member of staff on Portishead Town Council. Those of you who have heard me speak before know that I haven't always had the best interactions or I have felt very uncomfortable about them but Laura has completely changed my view. I was really hesitant to be involved with the Wellbeing Day because of previous experiences. I emailed Laura in advance and asked if she would meet me and she did. She gave me some one on one time to sit and listen and talk and really understand and because she gave me that time, I think the whole thing was a massive success. Well done, thank you for putting Laura where she is. Going forward, I would love to hear how Councillors are going to facilitate that one to one engagement. I was a bit worried about

a comment from Roger that he wanted to reduce Public Participation. Look what we've achieved having that sort of platform and what's going to happen in its place. Some of the feedback was that people didn't know anything about it. I haven't seen anything from the Town Council. I have been sharing it on Facebook, but I don't know where else you'd look to find out about these sort of events.

Another resident wanted to know what is Wellbeing.

She explained that since becoming disabled and having a crisis and ending up in secondary mental health care and going through all sorts of years of therapy and medication, I am trying to become a functioning human being again. And the way that I am achieving that is by engaging with people and making music, practical singalongs. Even if people are profoundly disabled, they can come and sit with me and make music and cheer themselves up in a non-threatening inclusive welcoming way and so it's just looking for ways to help people enjoy life more whatever they are going through. She was interviewed on Radio Bristol last week and offered to share the link.

Laura also wanted to know whether she could try out her wheels at the skatepark.

- Chairman of the meeting – stated that everyone in Portishead appreciates what a difficult job the staff at the Council have got. I have found them nothing but helpful, polite and I certainly hope that they feel very wanted and they do a marvelous job and I know people criticize councillors but I haven't ever heard anybody criticize any of the staff and a big thank you and well done to all the staff at Portishead Town Council.
- Sue Mason – Just wanted to reiterate what Paul has said about the staff. They have always been very helpful whenever I have asked them something for anything I have been involved in.
- Laura Bowers talking as a resident and a member of staff. I would really like to see a bit more positivity because I really want to second something that the leaving chairwoman said in the AGM that if you're not part of the vision, you're part of the problem. If we could just be a bit more positive towards one another and spread a bit of kindness our Councillors are volunteers and they might not be doing exactly what you want them to do but they're doing their best and I think if we could just approach each other with a little more kindness we'd get a lot further and have a town that we could all be proud of and all achieve that together.
- Roger Whitfield – As you mentioned I did put some comments out on social media during the recent election campaign regarding the public participation sessions, in the Council. What I actually said was that I was not a fan of the current format of the public participation sessions. Which seemed to be used by certain people as a political platform to air their own views rather than to come up with anything constructive so what I was hoping we would be able to do over the next few years is to put together a proper public participation where people are actually involved in the decision making process rather than just turning up to vent their feelings on certain things which is totally unrelated to what was going on in the council. So yes, I'm hoping that public participation will be much better going forward but maybe looking for a new format.
- Ken Smith asked that if the Council put up the precept by 50% is it right that the public can't vent their feelings?
- Roger Whitfield – Responded saying that anyone could turn up and they could discuss any decision that the Council makes be that a reduction in the precept, an increase in the precept. I would like to see people turn up with a positive attitude to tell us that if they disagree with an increase in the precept, then maybe where they suggest we make those savings or what services they'd like to do without because without an increase in the precept over the 10% inflation rate at the moment things will go backwards. So yes, feel free to come along and tell us what you think but also try and be constructive and tell us where you think we could make improvements.
- Sam Barnes – Note that with regard to the precept I don't pay towards the precept because I'm not eligible to do so but I would note that before 2019 and we may still be the lowest rate of precept in North Somerset for a town of our size, we do need that precept to ensure we have the services and the environment we want in Portishead. I personally believe if you want to complain about the

services and what is provided for Portishead, you do need to accept that we need to have a higher precept to do so. A higher precept needs to come along with those better services and better environment.

- Ken Smith asked if Sam was prepared to pay twice, we pay North Somerset Council for something then we pay the Town Council to do something, we're paying twice. Why is a parish council talking about buying the Lake Grounds and using a million pounds to do it up. We won't get a rate reduction; North Somerset won't give it back so why are we paying twice for things.
- Sam Barnes – responded saying it depends upon how the precept was used.
- Laura Porter – Offered some constructive suggestions for the possible new format for public participation something which I've commented on in previous correspondence is that when people come to their councillors they are often already at a point of tearing their hair out over whatever it is, they are looking for help, they are frustrated they are often very angry they perceive that they have a problem and they need somebody to help them fix it. If somebody come to a council meeting and they understand that this is their space to raise these things, I would just ask that you be mindful that someone who appears flustered and angry and very cross might not be coming to the table with all the background knowledge of how things work as a town council will understand things They are probably not as read up on who they should be going to and I don't think its always the case that people come here to rant and rave and air negative feelings because they want to have a fight. I do believe that a lot of people genuinely don't know where they should be going. So if it is the councils intention to only have positive feedback which I think is impossible I think you have to consider how you're going to make it explicitly clear what platform people should be going to when they are cross and upset and angry because I think the public shouldn't be asked to come to the table with positivity, its not humanly possible. So just identify where those platforms are if you don't want it in the council meetings. I hope that wasn't aggressive.
- Toby Thurlow (Online) – Thank you to the previous speakers. I'd just like to follow-up on a couple of point that have already been addressed around the engagement with the councillors and where we engage. I only accidentally stumbled across this meeting at 7pm this evening. I was browsing Facebook which I rarely do. I hadn't seen it elsewhere; it might have been advertised elsewhere so I think there's a communication issue that need to be looked at to improve the consultation with residents. How are meeting notices and communication paths put out to them. Is it via a website that not everyone is going to look at, do we need more signs. I was reading the minutes from last time and there was a commentary that the number of signboards has gone down. I am only aware of one which is outside Waitrose, I never look at it. Do we need to look at putting bigger signboards in those more travelled paths elsewhere in town? I think this is an issue that needs to be looked at and to address the point about, who do people speak to? I'm not sure what is the responsibility of the town councillors and what is the responsibility of North Somerset councillors so wherever that communication path is theirs probably some sort of key that needs to be put in which says this is what your town council can do for you and this is what you need to address to North Somerset Council. Improving communication somehow. I'm not against bringing something positive to the table, not sure how it can be done. Maybe some less online methods, some more signboards talking about this meeting, talking about other things, how to get hold of our councillors and what they are responsible for.
- The Chairman of the meeting thanked Mr Thurlow.
- Sue Mason – To answer Toby's question, there are noticeboards around the town. There are large ones owned by the town council and maintained by councillors who put the notices up. The notices are put up about a week before all of the meetings they are often also put on the other small notice boards that are around. They are also on the town council website and also on social media and we do have there the town council Communications Manager here at the meeting and I am sure that she will have heard your comment and wracking her brain how to try and make things better because this has been a question for many years and doesn't matter how many different ways the town council have tried to tell people what's going on there are always ways to look at. Going back to the town council website that has been updated it is regularly updated and redone. The new one has just come onboard and there is a lot of information on there about what the town council and

what the town councillors are responsible for and do and also what North Somerset does. I think really the best place to find all of the information or a lot of it is via the website but people don't always look at them. All we can say is, look at the town council website, look at Your Portishead Website because there are links on there.

- Beth Hobbs – Thanks to Laura Porter, the difference she has made to the community is amazing. I have 2 young children and seeing the difference she's made is incredible and the wellbeing support offered by the town council has made a big difference to my life in the last couple of years and thank you to all of the town councillors who have put themselves forward for the next coming term and thank you to those who have finished their term. I completely agree that there needs to be more kindness in politics in Portishead it's got very aggressive over the last couple of years and that has been difficult to watch and there was a time when I was a part of it. I don't feel I've got the mental strength be part of politics in Portishead at the moment. I just implore all people involved in politics in Portishead to practice what they preach. There are members calling for kindness who I don't remember being kind to previous administrations, I'm glad you've seen the other side of it. I absolutely agree that kindness needs to part of Portishead politics but that covers everyone and not just residents. I'm not saying that all town councillors are mean on Facebook, that's not true I'm just saying that councillors should be equally aware of the impact their words can have on social media and in meetings. I'm not saying you're not allowed to angry too, you're human too just like the rest of us that's absolutely fine but sadly being councillors, your words have more of an impact than we do. Saying that I don't want to be negative because I've done a lot with the council and I've had some really positive interaction with councillors which I'm really grateful for so I'm trying to tar everyone with the same brush but I agree that we should really fight for positive politics in Portishead because that's the way to get increased engagement and I do worry that we are losing engagement in local politics which would be a shame because there's so much good that can be done through the medium of local politics. Kindness in politics needs to come from all sides as well.
- Ray Shields – I have lived in Portishead for over 30 years I've not been specifically involved in the council here, but I have been involved in local government in Kent before I came here to this part of the world. I just feel sad that having seen the council's activities over the years I'm just puzzled as to what the situation is that we've reached. We have a meeting here with an audience with about 15 to 20 people. In previous residents' meetings, only in the last couple of years this hall has been full and I consider well attended. But what's happened now to make the situation where we've got such few involvements with the people of Portishead. The town has increased dramatically over the years. I guess a few of you here are involved with the town council so what about the residents. It has been mentioned about communication, over the years we've been kept generally informed of what's going on. Traditionally the information has come via the pages of the North Somerset Times which is still available in town and yet it doesn't appear to carry anything relating to the town council or North Somerset Council. Other people have mentioned to me in conversation what's the point in having the Times, it never tells you an. People speaking before me have said how do you know about this meeting. Previous meetings did seem to be well promoted but recently it seems to have died. It might have been published on social media and the website but not everyone looks at the website and social media and there are plenty of people who don't know about the meeting tonight. So that can we do? Traditionally in the past we have read about meetings and elections in the paper. It was mentioned earlier about the notice boards around the town. I was looking to try and find details about the election and the one outside Waitrose and there was one result mentioned otherwise the others were purely details of nominations. So where is one supposed to find details of who is now part of Portishead Town Council. I'm just worried about what's gone wrong why is there so little interest in the town council.
- Laura Porter – last year I attended this meeting online and I think you asked the same question last year. Since at least 2020 I have been desperately trying to get involved with town council and district council stuff. My struggle has been interactions with individual councillors. I was gutted that few are here tonight because I hoped to meet the new lot so I thank you for coming. I've had good experiences with Ben in the past so I'm glad Ben is here, thanks for coming. I'm gutted that I didn't get more of an opportunity to meet more of the new ones. I made a deliberate decision to stop engaging with Portishead Town Council completely because of what I perceived to be complete lack of professionalism, complete lack of respect and in the run up to the election I ended up telling people that Sue Mason was my favorite town council because she was the only one who I didn't know what she thinks of me personally. I think she's very good that way, she kept it all so

professional and I'm gutted that Sue is no longer on the town council because I think she was exceptionally good at preventing making anything personal. So, I backed off because of individuals. I don't care if people don't like me and don't like what I say but at least do a convincing job of pretending you care so if I can make a plea to the new lot who might be listening to this later, even if you can't stand me, please just try and recognise what I'm trying to do as a resident and with someone who might have a few skills that can benefit others in the town and I want to be involved. Let's just find a way to make it work. I had a plea to councillors to read up on how to work with people who might present as difficult characters. You haven't got a clue what their background is. One of the councillors in an email suggested that they knew how to spot neurodivergent people because of their part time work in a different profession. I am really glad to see that some of the new councillors have backgrounds in mental health and the aspects of wellbeing that would be useful, but I've had another request now. You've got mental health professionals in your councillors now and also when Laura goes in terms of community engagement and wellbeing, she's a member of staff but if you lose funding to pay for that member of staff what training and CPD will you be putting in place for any elected councillors who might not have a clue how to deal with difficult members of the public. That is all part of your job.

- Ben Aldridge (Chairman of Portishead Town Council and Resident of Portishead) – I don't know what the answer is to get people more involved. With the various things that I am involved in within the town, it is very difficult to get engagement some of the time. A lot of it, I have found is post Covid issues, with people saying they don't go to places, or they don't see it anymore. So what we do is put adverts in the pubs and restaurants where people do go. One answer might be to distribute leaflets to local venues. This is where we need to work out the engagement so I'd like us to be more engaged, I'd like more people to come to the meetings. I don't know why there are fewer people here tonight, they might be down the skate park! We will work on it, we will try and find a solution are we going to find the solution overnight, no. It is just one of those nuts that is really hard to crack I think, but we will try. Also more engagement with the residents, I'd like the residents to be more involved. You can't vote because you're not elected councillors but for example, the Lake Grounds Project, the Lake Grounds Committee I'd like residents to be on it and part of it because we're here to represent you. Are we going to make the right decisions, not we are not, are we going to have arguments, yes, we will. I think we need the residents to be involved I think its really important. So I will be working on a plan, you'll need to give me a few weeks at least. I would like residents to be part of these things.
- Laura Porter – get rid of the security on the door.
- Ken Smith – Even when I'm trying to sound nice, I sound gruff. I think I've been coming here 20 years or more. Every new council wants to change the public participation. The first thing they do when they get in power, they want to shut the public out, but the council write manifestos. The public read the manifestos and hope that you'll stick to it. Many times, you don't. That gives me a right to mention that. You said something pre-election that you are going to do and then when you get here you change your mind. The previous 4 years you said we'd all get together in groups, put our arms round each other and start to move forward, that never happened. In fact, I think I've had more insults from the last council than I've had anywhere in any other council, and you say the public are negative. The previous council get awful stick, real nasty, people saying they'd been taking bribes and all kind of things. Don't just say that the public are being negative. We hold you to your manifesto commitments. People say it's not politics, of course its politics. You got elected as Portishead Independent Party, you're a party, you must be politically minded so don't be surprised if there are people in Portishead who don't agree with some of your policies. For example, I bitterly disagree with you trying to buy the Lake Grounds. This is a parish council, bus stops, grants, toilets so that's what you're responsible for the main thrust of politics in North Somerset is North Somerset District Council. There is one North Somerset Councillor here tonight, where are the rest? That is where the power is and some nights, I've been here and there isn't one district councillor in the place except for those who are on both councils. The people of Portishead want to see what the North Somerset Councillors are doing that's where the power is. What committees are they on, what are they doing for Portishead, are they battling about the building they're doing in Old Mill Road or Wyndham Way are you opposing it. What are you doing for Portishead, that's what the people want to know. Councillor Whitfield is the most important person in this room as he's on the North Somerset Council Executive, everything about Portishead is resting on your shoulders. You've got to fight on those committees on everything concerning Portishead. We're the second biggest town

in the place and we get worse treatment from Weston than any other town in the conglomerate. You've got to change that; we're fed up with it. The only nice thing at the Lake Grounds is Ben's Skatepark, the place is looking disheveled. I do support the town council, carry out your manifesto, don't change public participation, let people say what they really think.

- Annettee Hennessy - I will try to say what I need to say in a manner that everyone finds acceptable and I can confirm that I have never been aggressive in council meetings but I have held the council to account and I will continue holding them to account so firstly on the Portishead Residents Annual Meeting, which is what this meeting is really important to advertise. It is difficult to know what will make people engage. But can I firstly mention to the Town Clerk and the Communications Officer, there were several things regarding the Portishead Residents meeting which are really important and on your new website it immediately ostracizes a lot of people in the town because it says, places are limited so please book your seat. For this meeting no resident has to book their seat, they never had to, and they don't need to now because that immediately disengages the public and we have raised this, time and time again. Not just with this council but with the past one because this meeting is really important for the people of the town to speak. This meeting is not a council meeting, it may have residents who are councillors here, but it is not a council meeting. In the past it's been labelled as the council annual meeting. You've got your own meeting, this is residents meeting, the peoples meeting and it's the people that named it, the Portishead Residents Annual Meeting PRAM. Those words are not on your website, use the correct title please. We're not in a pandemic anymore so you don't need peoples' names and addresses before they come to these meetings, we do not need them to book. It doesn't say online what the capacity of this hall is, I think it might be in the region of 100 so that would help people to understand and then if people do turn up and the hall is absolutely packed and they can get in, they understand that it is first come, first seated. But to say straight away that numbers are limited it immediately makes people think, I won't bother. It shouldn't be up to the residents to advertise the meeting. Its also important that people know that they can speak on anything they want without limitation as long as its about our town. So, I think people have lost sight of what this meeting can do for the town. I thin, someone said last year with regard to why there weren't so many people here was that it was because everyone was happy with the town council. We have heard that before and it wasn't the case and its not the case now, but the engagement is not there. The political party that got in on this election got in with half the votes that they did in 2019 so that shows that people have disengaged since 2019. I wasn't going to come to this meeting tonight because last time I was told I had a camera pointing at me, not the person speaking. That is intimidating, what councillors can't do is have a different set of rules for them than they have for the public. To me that is common sense. Why should the public have to act with a different set of courtesy and politeness to councillors. I have never seen anyone be aggressive or attack any member of staff and if they have done outside of meetings that aren't on video, they report it to the police, and we've had to raise this before. I had a letter last year saying that I was banned from council meetings for a social media site and the same has happened just a few days before the election this year. And I can confirm as evidenced by video that I have never been aggressive towards anyone in a meeting, but I have been assertive, and I will hold people to account when they fail in their manifesto as someone in this meeting has already said. As Ken Smith highlighted in 2019, we were told explicitly, that the controlling council would take over public participation and they would allow every resident to engage, to take part in all decisions. They would form groups and although they could not vote on a subject they can engage and take part in it. Yet public participation diminished during the four years so Covid excepted when meetings were not being held but the rest of the time it diminished and diminished and a couple of meetings ago I had to come along and I thought I was still banned so I don't know how I can be banned again because I was already banned a year ago and I didn't stop doing what I thought was correct which was holding the councillors to account so my ban wasn't actually revoked so I'm not sure how I can be banned again. But it won't stop me because as long as there are councillors who don't tell the truth and who are not open honest and transparent to the people of Portishead, I will challenge them. There are a growing number of people who will also challenge them but at the previous but one meeting I came along because I wanted to challenge a councillor who kept on raising my name when I wasn't even here. At the same meeting there were some residents from the Senior Forum and those residents came the previous meeting and they were raising what they considered to be very valid. I didn't know them personally, but it was only when they were talking and I was sat at the end of the hall I could see what they were talking about. For some people with vision difficulties, you do get glare off the laminates. Whether people think that's right or wrong, there is a group of people in Portishead who struggle and what I cannot understand is refusing to liaise and negotiate with

those people. We cannot ostracize a group of elderly people in this town because you don't like what they're saying and even as I sit here, I haven't got any visual problems but anybody who does, would get glare off those laminates. I can see why they are struggling. They do feel that when they have their meetings in this hall, there are items in this hall that may cause them difficulties. Whether able bodied people and people with disabilities is irrelevant. What is relevant is those people are struggling, so when they come along to a council meeting, and we had councillors turn their back on those people. Why would a councillor turn their back on residents who are speaking because as councillors you're not representing yourself, you're representing the people o the very least you can do is listen to the people. I've got to mention, I think it was 2 years ago now there was an appalling meeting and Paul Maltby, and I were actually outside of that meeting and Mr. Smith was terribly abused by councillors in that meeting saying all manner of things without any evidence and it was upsetting and the videos are still available online now and so I think without going into too much negativity I think councillors have got to understand that all people expect of you is that you are open, honest and transparent and that includes before you're elected but it definitely means once you're elected and having seen things that are not true on various social media sites like Portishead Postbox like Portishead Say What You Like, and to have a website Say What You Want and people can defame and slander each other including one of the people who are online at the moment, I find quite atrocious. Its all very well when you have people saying, I want you to be positive, well yes everyone wants everyone to be positive, but it's got to go both ways and what you cannot have is councillors treating the public with such distain that they don't want to come along. I wasn't going to come along to this meeting, I was persuaded to. The reason I'm sat at the back is so that what happened to me at the last meeting doesn't happen to me again because I refuse to be intimidated by people, councillors who representing this town, treating the public in a poor way. That is all I feel I need to say. You say that the people are happy with everything, I'm sure there are people that are happy but there are also people who are very unhappy and if you want to build up your numbers for the next election I really feel you have to start listening to people and I can only praise Ben Aldridge he has worked hard and not just in a council meeting. I have seen nothing but integrity from Ben Aldridge so don't anyone say we don't praise councillors because residents do. In the past we've praised councillors and in fact pre 2019 we had very good councillors we may have had some poor councillors but what I never experienced in Portishead is the gang like culture that we have got now and that is what is not acceptable. It is not just a political party that is ganging it is their partners and supporters. I don't want to see that in my town, but while I do see it I will defend whoever they are attacking and I will defend the right for us to have honesty. All we ask is openness, honesty and transparency. If you can't do that, then perhaps being a councillor is not right for you. Now I personally would like to see the title councillor go completely, I would like to see committees. We already have great voluntary committees in this town who do things purely for the good of the town. Wouldn't it be lovely if we had the Folk Hall which had committees that dealt with money, distributed the grants like they always do. Every council that has sat in this hall has given lots of money to lots of groups, they support it with grants, everybody has done. But what you cannot have is councillors who are not consistent and so all we want is honesty and that is all anyone can hope. Not all councillors lie, I know Pual Churchill has got the genuineness and integrity that I think could lead this town forward, so I'm really pleased to see Ben as the Chairman and Paul as the Vice Chair of this council. I hope that it will take Portishead into a new realm and having seen councils in the past try to railroad public participation don't do it. Try to make sure you work with the public and you engage with them, and you tell the truth, and you could start next time by actually admitting you are a political party, and you are not independent which for you Mr. Whitfield was demonstrated very clearly by the ward sheet which showed Caritas Charles' as an independent and you as a political party, thank you.

- Ben Aldridge – An update on North Somerset Councillors attending town council meetings. I expect North Somerset District Councillors to come to council meetings, I don't care if you're a district councilor only, you're representing this town, you're expected to come to meetings and if you can't come because you're ill or at work whatever, fine then give a written update so that it can be read out on what you're working on and that you're working on for Portishead so it probably won't happened for the June meeting, I am going away but for the meeting after that I do want district councillors to be here and answer questions and not just say there is not a lot going on. I have to say when it's been on agendas, it is the worst part of the agenda for me, it is frustrating we all care about Portishead. Whether we all agree or disagree, it doesn't matter, as long as they do the bat for Portishead, that's fine but I do expect distract councillors to here or at least give a written update so that I can then present it to residents.

- Roger Whitfield – Just to speak back to Ken on what he said. I'm not the most important person in the room, the residents of Portishead are the most important people in the room because that's what we're here for. We're here to represent you. I am acutely aware not just from people here but also during the election campaign that Portishead is to be put first. All of our district councillors are acutely aware of the issues in Portishead and what we should be doing to make sure Portishead get its fair share of resources. It's been a bone of contention for far too long. Now we have a seat on the executive we should be able to get some more things done that have been impossible to do in the past. There is a lot to be sorted out at North Somerset, you're going to have to give us some time. Portishead Independent councillors have had a chat about this and yes we will be getting regular updates back from the district councillors at all the Portishead council meetings to ensure that everybody knows what's going on down there. We'll give a report on what's been going on.
- Sue Mason – I just wanted to mention very quickly, I was a town councillor for 18 years and I wasn't re-elected, but I am now a district councillor and yes, I do intend on coming to every single full town council and giving a report, even if I have very little. You will hear my voice again.
- Annette Hennessy – I just wanted to say a couple of things on the district council, I hope this time there will be changes because in the last 4 years, there weren't. We had Portishead Independent District Councillors and the moment they got into North Somerset District Council they were offered their own group, keeping our towns name and they refused it and they then joined the Independents people who had been elected as true independents and in doing so they lost our towns identity and we have had executive members on North Somerset Council in the last 4 years but they resigned we have got an assistant executive at North Somerset I don't know whether she remains that now she's been reelected but we had also an assistant one but yet, when it came to a really important topic about the development at Slade Road that councillor abstained so instead of standing p for our town and saying, no we don't want any development she abstained. We had other councillors who didn't attend meetings, we have a town council chairman who was a district councillor who then resigned his seat very quickly after election and he was a member of your party. So, we have heard lots of promises before, but they haven't been fulfilled and that's why people in the town are not always positive because we have heard so much before and nothing has changed. And in fact, the party that got in in 2019, the same one that's got in now actually laid in aggressively to the previous council for not doing certain things and then we had 4 years of exactly the same behaviour but worse. So, if people feel disengaged in the town and they don't always feel positive there's a very good reason for it and that showed in the voting numbers but I would like to say a huge congratulation to Sue Mason because you deserve to be a district councillor and I've got no doubt that you will try and represent our town as best you can and I wish you every luck and you will get the support of the public as you always have as a town councillor, but please don't make promises that you're not going to fulfill this time with the others, thank you.
- Ray Shields – Can I raise some other issues that I feel ought to be addressed. I am concerned about the increasing amount of traffic around Portishead. Portbury Hundred has always been a problem but its just concerning, the amount of traffic certainly around Harbour Road, the High Street, Keys Avenue. This is even before they start thinking of having a railway station, the area where the station is going to be. Getting in and out of there, Harbourside Health Centre and along Harbour Road and down the High Street. Another thing is the positioning of things in Portishead the fact that a large amount of housing is in The Vale and on the Marina, unfortunately where is the secondary school? It's down at Gordano School at the other end of the town, unfortunately 2 years ago the bus company decided that they didn't want to operate their bus service down the High Street and down Bristol Road so what does it mean? All the school children attending Gordano have to walk or be taken to school by their parents and so I am sure everybody here has seen the long queue of cars coming up the High Street at about 3.30 in the afternoon and the consequential thing that the school children have to walk from Gordano School up to the other end of town along pavements that aren't that suitable for large numbers of children to walk safely. And while we're talking about cars, speeding around town, especially along Wyndham Way, along Clapton Lane which of course is seen as a convenient way for a lot of people getting out of Portishead. It worries me the speed along the roads despite the humps that have been put in. I can speak from experience, for quite a few years now I've been involved with the Flower Show and I have seen people coming in and out of the entrance to the car park field and motorists have no consideration

for people coming in and out there and just throw their hands up in disgust at anybody trying to come out. The size of the cars has increased, they are no longer Ford Escorts and Minis, the SUV's and 4x4's which are large cars and 2 large cars passing each other is more than say 2 Minis passing each other so that means they want loads of space, and they also want loads of space when it comes to parking. The issue is, is the council considering anything relating to parking. I think there has been talk over the years of the councils' doing things for us about parking but is anything happening? There seems to be continual building of blocks of flats whether it's for easy to acquire or retirement some of which are not occupied yet so they will increase the number of cars around town. These things concern me as a pedestrian around town and a motorist. I'm sure most of you want to be able to drive around the town safely.

- Marilyn Koops – 4 years ago the council promised that they would try to prevent overdevelopment. Since then, the development that has taken place in Portishead has become part of the problem with the traffic. One of the main problems we have is a reduction in pharmacies, we have no Post Office. I've lived here for over 50 years, I knew this place when it was 9,000 people, my children were brought up here, my grandchildren would have been brought up here if they could have afforded the prices. I am disgusted that there is very little fighting against further development. I note that the new Petersfield development is now being promoted. One thing we do need in the town is somewhere dedicated to dementia. I have a friend whose husband has a problem, and she has to travel because he has Alzheimer's, but he has Alzheimer's, and he needs nursing care. It doesn't exist. Petersfield could be promoted as a place which is dedicated to something that's worthwhile, not more retirement flats. I asked the question why there were so few parking spaces for a retirement home and was told that people over 60 don't drive at night. Well, I'm over 60 and I do drive at night, and we have a situation where they are dismissive. They are doing it for money. It will be like the Pegasus Life one, I went to that consultation, I made the point, what about infrastructure. The argument was that people would be moving out of their 4 bedroomed houses so those people then will be able to vacate their house and sell it to a family. Where are families coming from, outside Portishead so in fact we're increasing the population. We don't have now the wherewithal within town, the schools aren't too bad, the pharmacies, we do have doctors, but have you tried to get an appointment in the last week or so? I get on at 8 o'clock in the morning and I'm 54th! I lose the will to live, are they waiting for me to die? I'll die before they give me an appointment, or I have to be vetted. The people on the reception are great, but I don't want to be triaged by someone who is the receptionist. I want to be triaged by someone who is medically trained and whether they can be so with this new government incentive, £240 million won't touch the sides of it but what I'm trying to say is; the existing council that we have had for the past 4 years voted that they would not encourage further development. They have done it in spades, and they are doing it again now. We're ending up with a town full of coffee shops, estate agents and now funeral parlours. Well, I'll be using one of those shortly, we need a bit more than just that we need a community. This is the first PRAM meeting that I have been to for 4 years because the last time I came I was bullied as an ex-councillor, I was bullied. It was not a pleasant experience. I have been to a few others, and I have been deliberately focused by a particular individual, focusing on me and speaking my name and picking me out. I just wasn't saying anything, so I don't like it and I was a councillor for eight years. I was asked again, if I would stand this year. I said I'd kill somebody because quite frankly the bullying that the present council are responsible for, what they did to us in the previous eight years, I'd go home at night, and I couldn't sleep the bullying was so appalling. Those people now are complaining, and they are banning people. You can't have it both ways, you can't be a bully then complain and then you then bully someone else. That's why when you see somebody's partner saying that we don't need to come to meetings because the council is so brilliant, it's not, it's fear why do we want to come and be bullied, why do we want to come and be focused on. We don't want that; I want a meeting that's convivial. We had more district councillors over the last 4 years than we've got at the moment in executive positions and as already said they soon resigned. Why did they resign? Goodness knows, I hope that's not going to be true of you but you are a party, you're not independents, several of you have stood as Labour councillors so we know where your leanings are. I now do not belong to any party whatsoever. I do feel that at the moment we have a group of bullies intimidating residents and that is why you're not getting residential support in a meeting. With regard to the Lake Grounds, we used to own that and you've got the situation where, if you take that over going to have to appoint yet another member of staff, I know the bill we're paying for staff members on a monthly basis is unbelievable. I'm sure they're all excellent but some of it is also being nepotism. That is what I object to and I believe that is where

we have gone wrong over the last 4 years and that is why your vote has gone down and nobody else will stand.

- Annette Hennessy - Just got to correct Marylin, I'm sure she won't mind, with regard to town and the Lake Grounds, we never owned, Portishead as a Town, as a parish didn't own the Lake Grounds, she has seen that in manifestos by the controlling party which is why I have to correct them. Before it came under the Portishead Urban District Council, it was Bristol City Council and before that I think there might have been Woodspring and a couple of others as well. Possibly Avon County Council but it was never Portishead's Lake Grounds. If Portishead Town Council wished to take over the Lake Grounds and we got it for a penny we couldn't afford the maintenance and the ongoing funding that we would need at that Lake Grounds so you might want to convince people that its great for our town but our precept would go up and I don't think it can go up anymore. There are people who are really struggling in this town and you might be able to afford it, but they may not and I think to have increased council tax to North Somerset Council, increased precept to Portishead Town Council to take over the Lake Grounds and also the state its in now, apart from the Wheels Park, which is absolutely brilliant, we cannot afford to take it on. And having spoken to North Somerset about it, they have assured me that Council tax has never been reduced when a town or parish council has taken over pieces of land that were under the district council jurisdiction. Don't take over the Lake Grounds for your own egos. What's happened at the Lake Grounds over the past 4 years? Nothing, it looks even worse than it has done in previous years, and you've admitted that. What happened to the 106 monies that we were promised for the Lake Grounds by one of your own councillors? She said that her council shouldn't pay the full funding for the Wheels Park but she expected the previous town councils to pay it. It is this inconsistency that I don't understand. The bickering between the parties is just as bad for Portishead than anything else. I would just like to mention one last thing on Old Mill Road, I have stood at so many meetings to tell them about the Old Mill Road and Wyndham Way development and the party that now controls this town council actively supported development on Old Mill Road and Wyndham Way and when I say development I mean multistorey developments, multistorey car parks, which I don't doubt we may possibly need in the town but multistorey flats and retail underneath? I'm sorry, I don't think our town does need that because we haven't got the infrastructure and as Mr. Shields has already said we don't have the facilities and the amenities. Yet a couple of months before the election, because we kept highlighting that the party actually supported that development over the last 4 years they changed their tune and said that they'd discovered how many homes might be going on the land and we no longer support it. They knew from the beginning how many homes were going on that land, yet you did nothing, you supported it. You did videos down at Old Mill Road, supporting that development and then a couple of months before the election, oh no we don't support it anymore. I don't know how many people went to the library consultation on what was planned for Old Mill Road, I did and apart from having one of the party councillors interrupting when I was trying to ask questions, I found quite appalling. Even the signage when you went in which told you how much green space there was in Portishead, even that was incorrect and so we do find that we're battling up against really a brick wall. So with regard to development, you have got to start safeguarding our town because if you don't, we're already crumbling under the amount of traffic as Mr. Shields has already said and the doctors, we didn't just say it this year, we said it last year but nobody listened to us, so this year, listen to us but I fear for Old Mill Road and Wyndham way, it's already too late because North Somerset Council already have it on their radar and I don't think one executive member is going to change that. Thank you.
- Annette Hennessy – I would like to thank one resident of Portishead she may or may not be listening but her name is Heather Toms and that lady has done more for Portishead over transport than anybody, than anybody elected, she has put herself forward and she has fought to get meetings with the right people even though some people have tried to take credit for what she did and that's one thing I find really hard to accept in Portishead when we have other people who take credit for others work but Heather Toms' success cannot be denied she has been amazing and I think she needs all our thanks, I think she should turn on the Christmas Lights along with the lady who ran the Chinese, she is retiring and I will miss her greatly, get the 2 of them to turn the Lights On.
- Mr Shields – Heather has done an amazing amount of work to get the bus service reinstated to Cribbs Causeway which I'm all in favour of but its not over and above what this town has at the

moment the reason that North Somerset Council have been able to do this is that they have managed to use the driver and the vehicle operating 2 bus services based at the Sainsbury's store, one that goes to North Weston and one that goes to Nailsea, which work at the moment. So now the driver and vehicle will operate a school service from Nailsea to Portishead in the morning, it will go as far as Gordano School, then it will go down to Clevedon, then from Clevedon to Portishead and to Cribbs Causeway. Yes, that's a quick way to get there but it is only 3 journeys per day. So it's 9.30am, 11.30am and 1.30pm from Portishead coming back at 10am, 12 noon and 2pm so you are limited to 4 hours at Cribbs Causeway. Perhaps that is enough for people but it means that 2pm is the last bus home purely because it's got to get back to Portishead, to do the school journey to Nailsea in the afternoon so it means that the facility that North Somerset Stage Coach introduced last year or the year before by diverting their service round the marina with the First Bus X3, so the service round the marina is lost, the marina area now gets no bus. There is no bus up to Wetlands Lane and North Weston unless you can walk down to the main road and catch the X5. It also means the loss of a service round Brampton Way and there are a fair number of older people that live round that area who use that service to get to the town and get to Sainsburys. It is not all positive and of course there is the service to Nailsea which people use quite often but the pull of Cribb Causeway is obviously more than around Portishead. So its not decrying what Heather has done to get this Causeway Bus back but it is not over and above what the town has now.

- Annetee Hennessy – Reminded the meeting about WestLink, which was a dial a ride bus service.
- Mr. Shields – Yes but somebody told me today that they tried to get there and they were told by the call centre that they couldn't provide a bus today and would not be able to until next know that is the idea but having worked in Transport for North Somerset before I retired the Saturday response demand services don't always work to the degree that government and councils expect it is purely the availability of the driver. I know its not Portishead but there is a situation in Nailsea where Nailsea is not in the WestLink area and anyone wanting to get out the Nailsea area can't use that service because it is outside the area. Then there is the issue of Walton Bay, yes, I understand that the residents there managed to get a bus into Portishead and Clevedon but the only way they could do it was to get everybody to ring up on that particular day. There was another instance at Cadbury Garden Centre where people had travelled from the Chew Valley area and different people booked up and it has been reported that 6 minibuses were parked up outside Cadbury Garden Centre to take these 6 people back to Chew Valley but that's the way the system works rather than one bus to take the 6 people. I thought having worked in public transport I would bring these matters to your attention.

Mr. P Maltby Chairman of the Meeting clarified with the Town Clerk that the minutes of the previous meeting needed to be approved. The Town Clerk confirmed that the minutes did need to be approved.

- Mr P Maltby (Chairman of the Meeting) – We need to confirm the minutes of the meeting that was held on 18th May 2022 I know that they have been on the website, and they have been circulated to some parties is everyone happy that I sign these as a true record of the meeting of 18th May 2022.
- Annetee Hennessy – I wanted to check them but I couldn't find them online and there are no copies of them on the chairs so I would like to check the minutes.
- Mr P Maltby – I've had one request from Annette Hennessy that she wishes to check the minutes, with the exception of Annetee id she is happy with them, would people be happy for me to sign them as a true record? Is there anybody who is against that?
- Mr Shields – I haven't seen the minutes either.

Copies of the minutes were handed out to those who wished to inspect them.

- Marylin Koopes – Are the questions coming up on the monitor questions that the public which to be included in the meeting?
- Laura Porter – I have been close enough to see what was written on the screen, I actually don't think some of it should have been publicly visible. If you imagine someone doing it audibly, it's like

someone interrupting the current speaker and some of the comments I think might have been a little bit inappropriate I don't know whether the comments get published anywhere but that's something for the Clerk to consider. I don't know whether people commenting know that it was visible immediately as they were typing it.

- Beth Hobbs – I think Heather has just come back on so she may wish to speak before me. Just as we are getting towards the end as it's 9.30pm there has been a lot said this meeting that I would like to thank the council of the previous 4 years, I didn't vote for you but have benefited from an awful lot of the things that you have done for the town particularly me and my small children have and whilst I haven't necessarily agreed with everything I have been grateful for the work that you have put in because I like to think that you have Ben's sentiment, just because we don't all agree on what the right thing is to do I firmly believe that you are all doing what you're doing because you believe its in the best interests of the town and I respect that and I hope that continues into the future. I am really grateful for the Beacon Hub has done lots of wonderful things, the Skate Park for all of the criticisms, some are perfectly valid, I just wanted to say thank you because it's a really hard job to do and I don't envy you doing it. I offered to do it once and was glad I didn't get elected because I don't think I could have coped with it mentally but thank you for what you're doing. I hope you don't mind if we do disagree in future but I am doing it from the same place as you are I just want the best for the town but I respect that that's what you're doing to and I look forward to everyone working together and thank you to those who have served and thank you to those who are continuing to. There are residents that really appreciate what you've done and I thinks that's important because I don't think that's been represented at the this meeting to date but there are people who are grateful for what you've done.
- Heather Toms – I have never done this before, so it is very new to me. I have been following it all> The Cribbs bus from Clevedon to Portishead and Clevedon Portishead to Cribbs is totally different to the Nailsea bus . The 59 continues to go to Nailsea regardless and has no connection whatsoever to the Cribbs bus, the 57 however that was going round the marina, that is being withdrawn and that is going to be used to Cribbs so people wanting to go to Nailsea will carry on going to Nailsea on the number 59 and the idea being that at some stage WestLink will increase its numbers and buses and one of those will take over into Nailsea but for the time being the number 59 will continue to go to Nailsea and the Cribbs bus is not connected to Nailsea at all it goes from Clevedon to Portishead to Cribbs and back again. The fact that its only 3 times a day, Monday to Friday, that is going to depend on demand. I have assurances from North Somerset Planning Transport Officers that if the demand is there for more, there will be more put on but this is just the start just to get the service up and running and from the feedback I've had from the people in Clevedon and Portishead, its been tremendous the maiden voyage so to speak is going on the 5th June, Monday, I'm hoping to get on it myself in Portishead, I do worry that I might not be able to get on it if the people in Clevedon all decide to get on it and fill it up but that the first trip going. But as I say the 59 goes to Nailsea that will carry on, the Cribbs bus has nothing to do with Nailsea at all. I just wanted to make that point.
- Annette Hennessy – there is one thing missing from the minutes where Mrs. Koopes actually told another resident off for bullying within the meeting and that is not in here. Without looking at the video of last years its really hard to compare it to the shortened minutes that we've got here but I would say well done to whoever took the minutes because it can't be an easy job taking the minutes at one of these meetings but one important thing missing is where Mrs. Koopes stood up to challenge one of the town councillors, Bob Cartwright for bullying me in the meeting and it is important that these things are recorded, if we are going to have a positive recorded, we also need the negative recorded because I don't think anybody should come to these meetings and get bullied and intimidated so much that they don't want to come to another meeting and apart from that I think it's very hard, I don't know how you can improve it because I think whoever did the minutes did quite a good job with the task in hand but I would like those things included.

Ben Aldridge – reminded the meeting that at the Jubilee Festival last year, which was an event put on for the town, showcased local businesses and was a massive success until the heavens opened at about 4.30pm. We are doing it again this year, it's called the Coronation Festival in recognition of the King, I know it's 2 weeks later but its very deliberate, we didn't think it was the right thing to do on the actual weekend. It's a penny donation, or whatever you want to give but it will go to local causes so I'd like people to

nominate 1, 2 or 3 causes and this is for you to decide who should benefit from this money. It can go to any good cause.

Residents chose, the girls football team at Portishead Football Club, Portishead Christmas Lights, Portishead Foodbank and Portishead Parent.

It was proposed by Paul Maltby and seconded by Sue Mason that it be split equally between the 4 organisations. A vote was taken which was the majority in favour. Ben Aldridge did not vote.

Carried: That the monies raised from the Coronation Festival be split equally between the girls football team at Portishead Football Club, Portishead Christmas Lights, Portishead Foodbank and Portishead Parent.

An amendment to the minutes of the meeting of 18th May 2022 was proposed:

To include: 'Mrs. Marylin Koopes stood up to prevent Bob Cartwright from bullying Annette Hennessy in the meeting'.

This was proposed by Annette Hennessy and seconded by Ray Shields.

A vote was taken which was the majority in favour. Beth Hobbs abstained.

Carried: Amendment to the minutes of the meeting of 18th May 2022 to include that Mrs. Marylin Koopes stood up to prevent Bob Cartwright from bullying Annette Hennessy in the meeting.

The Chairman of the Town Council closed the meeting at 9.44pm and thanked all those who had attended.