

**MINUTES OF THE 183RD ORDINARY MEETING OF
PORTISHEAD & NORTH WESTON TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT THE FOLK HALL, HIGH STREET, PORTISHEAD
ON WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 2008**

PRESENT Councillor Walters – in the Chair

Councillors Cameron, Cruse, Mrs Cruse, Hazelton, Howells, Mrs Knight, Mrs Lord, McMurray, Mrs Mason, Miers, Parker, Pasley, Terry

Mrs P Rendle – Clerk of the Council

APOLOGIES Councillors Miss Stanley, Walker, Mrs Way

1570 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hazelton

- Personal interest in Planning Application No. 08/P/1323/F Land adjoining 16 Roath Road, Portishead – Erection of a dwelling following demolition of existing garage and car port.
Reason – Development site is within sight of home address

Councillor Mrs Knight

- Personal interest in Minute No. 1573 – Motion to Council in respect of Severnside Siren Trust
Reason – North Somerset Council representative on Severnside Siren Trust

Councillor Mrs Mason

- Personal interest in Minute No. RW791 Redcliffe Bay Hall
Reason – Member of Redcliffe Bay Hall Management Committee

Councillor Miers

- Personal interest in Minute No. RW791 Redcliffe Bay Hall
Reason – Member of Redcliffe Bay Hall Management Committee

Declaration by members who serve on both the Town Council and District Council

Councillors Mrs Knight, McMurray and Pasley stated that any views they expressed on matters to also be considered at North Somerset Council would be provisional and based on the facts known. They would be exercising their rights to reconsider the matter afresh when the matter went before North Somerset Council.

1571 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs Catherine Stockham, a resident of 75 Woodhill, Portishead, and representing the Friends of Portishead Open Air Pool, expressed her concern about a number of matters concerning the pool -

- She considered that the colour of the newly painted back wall was awful and showed a complete lack of care for the visual amenity.
- It was totally inappropriate that the Friends of Portishead Open Air Pool had been told that they could repaint it themselves when they had complained about the colour.
- The menu in the café was totally unacceptable and in her opinion unhealthy.
- The children's paddling pool was still boarded over, the general maintenance was a disgrace and the pool was not heated properly.
- She expressed the opinion that if the pool was run properly it would pay its way.

In reply, Councillor Pasley stated that the view had been taken that it was more important to open the pool than to worry about the colour of the back wall, but he did share Mrs Stockham's concerns about the catering facilities. He also reminded Mrs Stockham that future of the pool was currently under review and that the NSC Scrutiny Panel were expecting to receive a report from the review panel shortly.

The Chairman also again reminded Mrs Stockham that the Open Air Pool was a North Somerset Council facility and that she should address her comments to that authority.

Mr Ken Smith, a resident of 57 Down Road, referred to the statement made by Mr Tony Mosely at the 11th June 2008 meeting of the Town Council regarding the possibility of a skatepark being located to the rear of the open-air pool at Battery Point. He considered it disgraceful that the Council had not informed Mr Mosely at that time that the site would be unsuitable due to its designation as a local nature reserve and its close proximity to a site of special scientific interest.

Mr Smith also stated that he considered the design of the proposed new library to be horrendous.

Mr Smith thanked the Town Clerk for her help and kindness over many years.

Councillor Mrs Mason, speaking as a member of the public, referred to the statement she had made to the 11th June 2008 meeting of the Town Council in respect of the Amenity Working Party and asked the Chairman for a response.

The Chairman confirmed that the Amenity Working Party had not met and he could not see any possibility of it being convened in the immediate future.

1572 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 182nd Ordinary Meeting of Portishead and North Weston Town Council held on 11th June 2008 be confirmed as correct.

1573 MOTION TO COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 9

Proposed by Councillor Pasley, seconded by Councillor Hazelton –

Motion

The sirens are reported to cause confusion and to some extent fear among local residents, particularly the elderly when the sirens are tested on the 3rd day of every month. There is a lack of public information to inform people of the monthly siren testing but in particular what to do in the event of an emergency or indeed how to know when there is an emergency.

Also, in recent months, the local Police Stations in Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea have been closed due to shortage of labour. Portishead's Police Station will soon be open only on a Monday and Tuesday between 11am and 3pm. There is a telephone number that can be used in the event that the Police Station is closed and/or out-of-hours but all this needs to be explained to local residents. The Local Action Team is keen to work in conjunction with the Town Council on this matter.

The Town Council has an opportunity to provide a valuable public service by providing a public information leaflet that can be delivered to every home, commercial and public premises and retained for referral.

The following is proposed:

1. The Town Council in conjunction with the Local Action Team and in partnership with the local Police, produce a suitable durable leaflet to explain to households, schools, businesses and other buildings in Portishead and surrounding area what to do under the circumstances described above.
2. That this matter be referred to the Communication Working Group who should report back to the Town Council with an estimated cost for design, copy, print and delivery along with a time schedule.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Lord that the word "produce" in the second line of 1. above be deleted and the words "investigate the production of" be substituted.

This amendment was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the Motion.

Debate

The Chairman invited Sergeant Scoble to comment on the proposal; Sergeant Scoble confirmed that whilst the Police Station was currently only open to the public for the times stated this was only an interim measure whilst a new member of staff was being recruited. He anticipated that normal opening times would be reinstated shortly.

During the ensuing debate some councillors questioned if there was still a need for the sirens as many of the companies who posed a possible safety risk to the Town had either closed down or moved away from the area. Other members considered that the Siren Trust were responsible for informing the public and they should fund any publicity leaflet themselves. A representative of the Trust should also be asked to attend a meeting of the Town Council to explain why there is still a need for the sirens.

Councillor Mrs Mason, speaking as Chairman of the Communication Working Party, reminded members that an article could also be placed in the Council's North Somerset Times newsletter.

Upon being put to the vote the Motion, recorded above as Motion and Amendment was carried.

It was therefore RESOLVED that

1. The Town Council in conjunction with the Local Action Team and in partnership with the local Police, investigate the production of a suitable durable leaflet to explain to households, schools, businesses and other buildings in Portishead and surrounding area what to do under the circumstances described above.
2. That this matter be referred to the Communication Working Group who should report back to the Town Council with an estimated cost for design, copy, print and delivery along with a time schedule.

1574 MOTION TO COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 9

Proposed by Councillor Pasley, seconded by Councillor McMurray –

Motion

The residents of Portishead have endured significant changes to their Town over the past 10 years due to the current government's policy to impose massive growth in housing. Regardless of Town and District Council resistance to this level of development, we have been powerless to prevent this level of change from happening.

Developers not content to restrict their appetite to Port Marine and the Village Quarter have turned their attention to open spaces along the High Street. Most recently a planning application has been submitted to build on land that has been farmed for over 300 years by the same local family. On this occasion, the planning application was refused by North Somerset Council but it is probably just a matter of time before similar planning applications appear before us on this and similar parcels of land. We may not be in a position to refuse the next application.

These areas of green and open space are of strategic importance to everyone who lives in Portishead because the land and existing buildings constitute the Town's heritage and culture over time.

The following is proposed:

1. The Town Council take steps to protect land and buildings in Portishead, considered to be of heritage or cultural value to the Town.
2. That having identified such sites, the Town Council approach English Heritage with the view to securing appropriate 'listed' classification so that the sites and buildings may be protected from future development.

3. That this Council appoint a working group to report back to the Recreation and Works Committee.

Debate

Members generally expressed their support for the Motion but commented that a great deal of work would need to be carried out and other people and organisations contacted for help, including schools, Gordano Society and former Councillors.

Upon being put to the vote the Motion above was carried.

It was therefore RESOLVED that

1. The Town Council take steps to protect land and buildings in Portishead, considered to be of heritage or cultural value to the Town.
2. That having identified such sites, the Town Council approach English Heritage with the view to securing appropriate 'listed' classification so that the sites and buildings may be protected from future development.
3. That this Council appoint a working group to report back to the Planning Committee.

It was further RESOLVED that the Working Party consist of Councillors Hazelton, Howells, McMurray and Pasley.

1575 COMMUNICATION WORKING PARTY: WEBSITE RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 1532, Councillor Parker now reported on the research that had been carried out into redesigning the Town Council's website. Members noted that the favoured package, LC-905, was recommended by the National Association of Local Councils, was easy to navigate and gave the Town Council full control of the website contents and updating. The package also came with regular updates so as not to look dated in a few years. The costs associated with the LC-905 package were an initial 3 year licence at £300, an annual hosting charge of £400 and technical support at £105 per annum.

Councillor Parker also recommended that the Town Council purchase Adobe Acrobat software to enable documents to be held securely in pdf format.

Whilst councillors were generally in agreement to the proposal, some councillors expressed concern at the amount of work that would be required initially to transfer the information from the current website to the new one and suggested that the project be deferred for six months. However, other councillors considered that the project should proceed without delay particularly as Councillor Parker had agreed to assist with the input of information.

RESOLVED that

1. The Town Council approve the purchase of the LC-905 package so that the new website's logical structure can be set up and existing information from the current website be copied. Access to the new website only to be available to Town Council members for review. The launch of the new website to be scheduled to coincide with the end of the notice periods of the current Webmaster and website hosts. The total cost not to exceed £1,000 in year one and £600 in years 2 and 3.
2. The Town Council approve the purchase of Adobe Acrobat Standard Version 9.0 for the office. The total cost not to exceed £400.
3. Before proceeding with the project confirmation that they can be added to the Town Council's system be obtained from North Somerset Council's IT department.

1576 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Knight presented the report of the Planning Committee meeting held on 2nd July 2008.

RESOLVED that the report and recommendations thereon be APPROVED, subject to the following –

08/P/1323/F LAND ADJOINING 16 ROATH ROAD, PORTISHEAD

Erection of a dwelling following demolition of existing garage and car port.

Add to final paragraph –

In addition, the Town Council is concerned about the amount of surface water in the High Street and would suggest that on this and similar developments, sufficient soakaways be provided on driveways to prevent excess water from flowing down roads and pavements into the Town Centre.

The report of the meeting held on 2nd July 2008 is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

1577 RECREATION & WORKS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the report and recommendations thereon be APPROVED, subject to the following –

Councillor Mrs Cruse presented the report of the Recreation & Works Committee meeting held on 25th June 2008.

RESOLVED that the report and recommendations thereon be APPROVED, subject to the following –

RW789 PORTISHEAD SKATEPARK PROJECT

Councillor Mrs Cruse reminded members that at the 12th December 2007 meeting of the Town Council a resolution was passed supporting the efforts of the Portishead Skatepark Project to establish a new skatepark facility in Portishead (Minute No. 1528). The resolution also gave the Town Council's in-principle support for an assessment being made of a site at Kilkenny Field and urged North Somerset Council to provide any necessary assistance to the Skatepark Project. The Town Council also suggested that alternative sites should be explored further.

Councillor Mrs Cruse suggested that it would be more appropriate for the Town Council to reiterate this resolution rather than the recommendation put forward in RW789.

Whilst a majority of councillors indicated their support for this consistent approach, a few members considered that the reference to alternative sites should be deleted. On being put to the vote this amendment was defeated.

On a point of information Councillor Pasley informed members that he had been in discussion with partners at the Health Centre about using a parcel of land in their ownership fronting Wyndham Way. He also suggested that land on Avon Way could be suitable. Investigation into the use of both of these areas was continuing.

Other councillors commented that –

- The NSC Executive Member had already turned down the site at Kilkenny Field and it was a waste of time and effort to continue pursuing this site.
- The Health Centre site had originally been sold to the Health Authority by the Town Council to enable the cottage hospital to be built. The Council should offer every assistance for this option.
- Concerns about the continuing costs of a skatepark.

RESOLVED that

The Town Council reiterates the resolution passed at its 12th December 2007 meeting (Minute No. 1528) –

Portishead and North Weston Town Council –

1. Supports the efforts of the Portishead Skatepark Project in its endeavours to establish a new skatepark facility in Portishead.
2. Gives its in-principle support to the Portishead Skatepark Project in pursuing the assessment of a location at Kilkenny Field as a suitable location for this new facility.
3. Urges North Somerset Council as landowners to provide all necessary assistance to the Portishead Skatepark Project in its endeavours.

4. Feels that there could be alternative sites that have not been fully explored and would urge that a further assessment be made. The Town Council would prefer a more central site.

RW793 RENOVATIONS TO THE FOLK HALL

The Chairman confirmed that he had inspected the quotations to replace the main hall radiator system and recommended that Quotation B, in the sum of £2,400 be accepted.

RESOLVED that

Quotation B in the sum of £2,400 (net) be accepted.

The report of the meeting held on 25th June 2008 is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

1578 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

RESOLVED that

Pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by S.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that its consideration would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Clerk also left the meeting.

REPORT FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE

The Report from the Staffing Committee was presented. The Chairman of the Town Council read out two additions to the Report.

Resignation of Town Clerk

Following a wide ranging discussion on the implications of the resignation, after 16 years of service, of Mrs Rendle from her post as Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, and the legal advice available it was

RESOLVED

The Town Council endorses the decision to consult Solicitors on Employment Law and authorises payment of the fee, not to exceed at this time £5,000.

Recruitment of a new Clerk of the Council

After a full and lengthy discussion on the various merits of different courses of action and the need for the full Council to consider and take important decisions it was

RESOLVED

1. The opening hours to the public of the Town Council office be kept at 10am to 12 noon Tuesday to Friday.
2. A feasibility study be undertaken to determine whether or not any financial administration can be out-sourced to a suitable local company in order to support the role of the new Responsible Financial Officer.

The members of the study group be limited to four, being Councillors Walters, M Cruse, Hazelton and Mrs Lord. The study group to report back to the Staffing Committee prior to a special extraordinary or scheduled meeting of the Council.

3. The hours of work of the new Clerk be determined by the Staffing Committee after the results of the feasibility study have been assessed and any action thereon agreed.
4. A sum not exceeding £5,000 is allocated for expenditure on this whole recruitment process.
5. The Chairman of the Council be authorised, after consultation with the study group, to make temporary arrangements to ensure the continuing functioning of the Town office before a new Clerk is in post. The cost at this stage not to exceed £5,000.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm

..... Chairman

13th August 2008