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PORLOCK



Parish Council

Parish Room
Old School Centre
West End
PORLOCK
Somerset TA24 8NP

Signed: *SEE END. PG 6*

Date: *14.02.24*

Minutes of the Porlock Parish Council Meeting
Porlock Village Hall, Wednesday 17 January 2024, 7pm
Copies of minutes and non-confidential reports are available on request

Councillors Present:

Cllr S Colson, Cllr D Heath, Cllr D McCanlis (Chair), Cllr S McCanlis, Cllr M Stenning, Cllr D Thornton, Cllr L Thornton

Also present: Cllr Frances Nicholson (Somerset Council) in attendance for part of the meeting, 2 members of the public in attendance for part of the meeting

1) Apologies for absence were received by the Council

Cllr L Bloys, Cllr Steven Pugsley (Somerset Council)

2) Declarations of Interest and Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Dispensations

Cllr D McCanlis and Cllr S McCanlis declared an interest in agenda item 12 v) c) as they are High Bank car park permit holders.

3) To agree any items to be dealt with after the public, including the press, have been excluded.

Agenda item 16 as the Parish Council will be discussing legal advice and agenda item 17 as the Council will be discussing confidential staffing matters.

4) Chairman's announcements

The Chair highlighted an incorrect report published in the 5 January 2024 edition of the West Somerset Free Press, which made reference to Parish Council minutes from September 2023. The Chair read out the approved minutes as follows:

The Council received a Code of Conduct complaint in June 2023 via the Somerset Council Monitoring Officer, who has since investigated the complaint and confirmed to all concerned that the complaint has not been upheld. This is one of at least 5 that have been received from the same person or on behalf of the same person, from the same organisation in the past 3 years, all of which have not been upheld.

5) Public Participation – there were 2 members of the public in attendance.

Members of the public were reminded that the Public Participation session was restricted to 15 minutes with individuals having 3 minutes each.

Nigel Lamacraft

Where is the Parish Council Chairman's board?

COUNCIL: The Chairman's board has been updated and will be installed in its usual place on the wall of the Village Hall.

Is there an update on the War Memorial?

COUNCIL: Additional quotes are being organised for works highlighted in the Inspection report. A working group meeting is due to be scheduled. Two members of the public have agreed to join the working group.

Is there an update on the traffic survey?

COUNCIL: 222 responses have been received from the traffic survey and the report is currently being reviewed by the working group. The report will be presented at the February Full Council meeting. The PCSO will be asked to organise some random speed checks in the village.

Why is the Public Participation session in advance of the approval of minutes on the agenda?

COUNCIL: Draft Council minutes are published on the website and made available in the library. This provides an opportunity for members of the public to read the draft minutes in advance of the Council meeting at which they will be approved and to raise queries in the Public Participation session as appropriate.

At the December Council meeting, there was a suggestion of a Public Meeting in order to discuss Somerset Council asset and service devolution (question raised on behalf of David Hancock)

COUNCIL: Related matters will be discussed at agenda item 11.

6) To receive reports from Somerset Council

Cllr F Nicholson highlighted the following matters:

- There is currently no threat to the recycling centre at Minehead.
- Somerset residents will soon be able to dispose of some DIY waste free of charge at Somerset recycling centres but they will need to book ahead.
- Somerset Council asset and service devolution – see agenda item 11

7) To approve the minutes for the Full Council Meeting held on 13 December 2023

Council RESOLVED to approve the Full Council Meeting Minutes of 13 December 2023.

PROPOSER: Cllr S McCanlis; SECONDER: Cllr S Colson. ALL VOTING IN FAVOUR.

Cllr M Stenning, Cllr D Thornton and Cllr L Thornton did not take part in the vote as they were not present at the meeting.

8) Parish Council vacancies – to receive an update

There are currently 4 vacancies and Somerset Council has scheduled the next by-election for 15 February 2024 with the deadline for nominations 19 January 2024.

9) Assets & Property Portfolio – report previously circulated

No matters raised.

10) Environment & Community Portfolio – report previously circulated

i) To approve Cllr D Heath as a member of the Portfolio

Council RESOLVED to approve Cllr D Heath as a member of the Portfolio

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S McCanlis. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Cllr S Colson will follow up highways matters raised in the report: broken road sign on road to Porlock Weir and flooding at High Bank.

11) Somerset Council asset transfer and devolution opportunities for Parish Councils – to receive an update

In December, the Clerk wrote to Somerset Council to register interest in the services highlighted below. Somerset Council has since responded with additional information as follows:

Highways Steward (in conjunction with the Local Community Network) – the cost per operative is in the region of £50k per year, including van and equipment. The stipulation from the contractor is a commitment to a year's funding. This service could be shared between parishes.

Porlock Library (already a Community Library Partnership) - none of the proposed changes for the Library Service impact any of the Community Library Partnerships. Porlock CLP contract is due for renewal 2026.

Number 10 bus service from Minehead to Porlock Weir - there are no imminent plans to withdraw Somerset Council funding to this service. However, the funded bus network is under constant review. If Somerset Council do plan to make any significant changes to the network, they are obliged to undertake a public consultation.

Cllr D McCanlis and Cllr S Colson attended an LCN meeting in early January but there was very little additional financial information available from Somerset Council. The LCN is taking proactive steps to preserve key highways services for example verge trimming, gully/drain clearance and the provision of salt bins.

Council noted that there was no immediate threat to services in Porlock and that the Parish Council has significant financial reserves to draw on if necessary – see 12 v) b). Further information will be available on 20 February 2024 when Somerset Council sets its budget.

12) Finance – supporting documents previously circulated

i) To approve and sign the bank reconciliation to end December 2023

Council **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the bank reconciliation to end December 2023.

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S Colson. ALL IN FAVOUR.

ii) To receive the Detailed & Summary Receipts & Payments reports to end December 2023

The Chair signed the Summary Receipts & Payments reports to end December 2023.

iii) To approve and sign the final Schedule of Payments for January 2024

Council **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the final Schedule of Payments for January 2024.

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S McCanlis. ALL IN FAVOUR.

There are still two outstanding LNS invoices for the West Somerset Morris Dancers and the refreshments provided by the Church.

iv) Rialtas Cloud finance software – to consider quote for second user

Currently only the Clerk/RFO has read/write access to the financial software. Council agreed that it would be useful to have the option for more than one officer to have read/write access and for agreed councillors to have read only access. *or as agreed Cllr*

Council **RESOLVED** to approve funding for Rialtas Alpha multi-user and Cloud access for 2 users (Option 2 in the quote) £850 for 23/24 / £937 for 24/25 excl VAT

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr D McCanlis. ALL IN FAVOUR.

v) To receive draft minutes from the Fin Com meeting of 4 Jan 24 and consider for approval the following recommendations:

- a) **To approve the draft 24/25 budget (version 4 to include proposed amendments) and precept of £93,940 (Fin Com mins item 7 i).** This represents a 15% increase on last year's precept and equates to £134.58 annually for a Band D property. A thorough budgeting process took place alongside a review of the Earmarked Reserves and the increase in precept can largely be attributed to the need to prioritise staffing levels to ensure that the Council is run in an efficient manner.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the draft 24/25 budget (version 4) and precept of £93,940

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S Colson. ALL IN FAVOUR

- b) To approve a new EMR Devolution with an allocation of £25K (Fin Com mins item 7 ii)

No budget/precept allocation has been made for devolution for 24/25 as the situation is uncertain with regard to Somerset Council service and funding cuts. However, Council agreed that it would be prudent to establish an EMR for devolution and that this would need to be reviewed throughout the year. It may be that the Parish Council will need to budget for devolution and asset transfer in 25/26.

Council RESOLVED to approve a new EMR Devolution with an allocation of £25K

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S McCanlis. ALL IN FAVOUR

Cllr D and S McCanlis declared an interest in the next agenda item (as they are High Bank car park permit holders) but remained in the room as no discussion took place and they did not take part in the vote. Cllr D McCanlis asked Cllr S Colson, Vice-Chair to take the Chair for this agenda item.

- c) To approve a 4.7% increase in High Bank car park fees for 24/25 (Fin Com mins item 7 iii)

Council RESOLVED to approve a 4.7% increase in High Bank car park fees for 24/25

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr D Heath. MAJORITY OF THOSE VOTING IN FAVOUR – 4 IN FAVOUR; 1 ABSTAIN

- d) To approve that the Council goes out to tender for the Grounds Maintenance contract in Autumn 2024 (Fin Com mins item 9)

- e) To approve that the Council goes out to tender for the Toilet Cleaning contract in Autumn 2024 (Fin Com mins item 10)

Council RESOLVED that the Council goes out to tender for the Grounds Maintenance and Toilet Cleaning contract in Autumn 2024

PROPOSER: Cllr D Heath; SECONDER: Cllr D Thornton. ALL IN FAVOUR

- f) To approve that the Council organises a meeting with PVCIC. (Fin Com mins item 11 ii). See agenda item 16 ii)

Council RESOLVED to organise a meeting with PVCIC to address the following matters: progress of the renewal of the lease between the Council and the PVCIC; securing the future of the Lovelace Centre; working together to promote tourism within Porlock. See agenda item 16 ii)

PROPOSER: Cllr D McCanlis; SECONDER: Cllr L Thornton. ALL IN FAVOUR

vi) Committee membership

- a) To approve Cllr Don Heath as a member of the Planning Committee

Council RESOLVED to approve Cllr D Heath as a member of the Planning Committee

PROPOSER: Cllr S Colson; SECONDER: Cllr D Thornton. ALL IN FAVOUR

- b) To approve Cllr Don Heath as a member of the Staffing Committee

Council RESOLVED to approve Cllr D Heath as a member of the Staffing Committee

PROPOSER: Cllr S Colson; SECONDER: Cllr D Thornton. ALL IN FAVOUR

vii) Committee TOR

- a) Committee TOR – to review involvement of non-committee member councillors and consider amendment of TOR

Council agreed in principle that non-committee member councillors could attend and participate in committees but could not vote.

Council RESOLVED that each Committee should review its TOR and make recommendations for amendments to Full Council

PROPOSER: Cllr M Stenning; SECONDER: Cllr L Thornton. ALL IN FAVOUR

b) **Planning TOR – to consider adding consideration of Licensing applications to the TOR**
Council **RESOLVED** to add consideration of Licensing applications to the Planning TOR
PROPOSER: Cllr D Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr D McCanlis. ALL IN FAVOUR

13) Planning

i) **To receive the draft minutes from the Planning committee of 4 Jan 2024**

Council noted that the minutes of the Planning committee of 4 Jan 2024 were now approved

ii) **To note any other planning matters – no other matters raised.**

14) Community Plan – to review the revised draft document and receive further input from councillors

The revised draft Community Plan had been previously circulated. Council reviewed the document and agreed whether objectives were short-term (this year), mid-term (next year) or long-term (3-5 years). The Community Plan will be updated accordingly and re-circulated.

Currently Cllr S Colson and Cllr D McCanlis have been leading on the Community Plan but encouraged other councillors to engage and form a working group. Cllr S McCanlis agreed to join the working group and Cllr L Thornton will help out as time allows. The draft Community Plan will be presented to the community at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2024.

15) Reports from outside bodies – to receive reports previously circulated

Council noted the following reports: Library, Village Hall, CCT projects, LCN.

There were no questions raised. Reports will be available on the website.

In accordance with Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Parish Council's Standing Order 3 d) the press and public will be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of item 16 as the Parish Council will be discussing legal advice and item 17 as the Parish Council will be discussing confidential staffing matters.

Council RESOLVED to go into closed session for agenda items 16 and 17

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S Colson. ALL IN FAVOUR

Members of the public left the meeting.

16) Arrangements (including legal agreements) with other bodies

i) **Doverly Manor Management Committee – to receive an update re Charity status and consider the Fixed Asset Review report (confidential report previously circulated)**

Cllr D McCanlis and the Clerk will be attending the DMMC AGM and Committee meeting on Monday 22 January 2024. The solicitor has recommended that the DMMC charity should be reinstated with the Parish Council as Custodian Trustee. The Charity Commission is currently reviewing the situation.

Council noted that this process may incur a change in financial liability and councillors indicated that they would be minded to provide financial support as necessary in order that there was no cost impact for DMMC. A report will be sent to DMMC members in advance of the AGM as a supporting document for the scheduled discussion about charity status. This report will be filed with the Council minutes.

ii) **Old School Centre premises – to receive an update re the PVCIC draft lease and consider the use of the shared premises (confidential report previously circulated)**

Council expressed concern that the draft lease was sent to the PVCIC solicitor week commencing 13 November and no feedback has been received. The Council's solicitor has contacted the PVCIC solicitor to request an update regarding the lease renewal process. The Council will be requesting a meeting with PVCIC representatives (see 12 v) f)) and this matter will be included as a matter for discussion.

Council noted that the revised staffing structure (part-time Admin Officer and full-time Clerk) will have an impact on the workspace within the Parish Office which is currently shared with the Lovelace Centre.

This matter will also be included as a matter for discussion at the meeting with PVCIC/Lovelace Centre representatives.

The Clerk left the meeting at this point and Cllr S Colson took the minutes for agenda item 17.

17) Employment – to receive the draft mins from the HR & Staffing Committee meeting of 16 Jan 2024 and consider the recommendations

The following recommendations of the HR & Staffing Committee were AGREED, per the details in the confidential report:

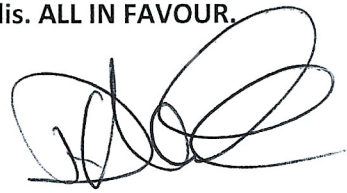
- Clerk handover, as amended;
- Offer to successful candidate;
- Contractual terms.

Cllrs. S Colson and S McCanlis will coordinate the offer with the PPC Clerk.

Cllr. D McCanlis will discuss the handover and other matters with the PPC Clerk.

PROPOSER: Cllr S Colson, SECONDER: Cllr S McCanlis. ALL IN FAVOUR.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm



14/02/24