

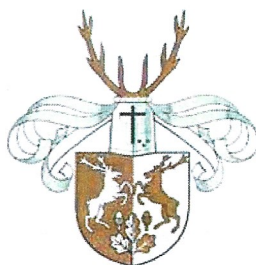
Clerk to the Council

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PORLOCK



Parish Council

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

Signed:

Date:

Minutes of the Porlock Parish Council Meeting
Porlock Village Hall, Wednesday 8 November 2023, 7pm
Copies of minutes and non-confidential reports are available on request

Councillors Present:

Cllr L Bloys, Cllr S Colson, Cllr D McCanlis (Chair), Cllr S McCanlis, Cllr L Thornton

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

- 1) **Apologies for absence were received by the Council**
Cllr D Thornton, Cllr Steven Pugsley (Somerset Council)
- 2) **Declarations of Interest and Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Dispensations**
There were no interests declared at this point in the meeting.
- 3) **To agree any items to be dealt with after the public, including the press, have been excluded.**
Agenda item 17 ii) Employment - OSC Caretaker was identified as a Part B item due to the confidential nature of the item.
- 4) **Public Participation** – there were 2 members of the public in attendance who wished to observe the meeting. Members of the public were reminded that the Public Participation session was restricted to 15 minutes with individuals having 3 minutes each.
- 5) **To receive reports from Somerset Council - deferred**
- 6) **To approve the minutes for the Full Council Meeting held on 11 October 2023**
Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Full Council Meeting Minutes of 11 October 2023.
PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; **SECONDER:** Cllr D McCanlis. **ALL IN FAVOUR**
- 7) **Parish Council vacancies – to receive an update**
There are currently 5 vacancies. 4 vacancies are available for election and Somerset Council will schedule the next by-election in due course. A further vacancy is available to be filled by co-option.
- 8) **Assets & Property Portfolio – report previously circulated**
 - i) **Noticeboards/signage for OSC, St Dubricius Church & Methodist Church – to receive an update**
Council agreed that this matter needed a more comprehensive review and would be an agenda item in 2024.
 - ii) **Cemetery – to consider purchase of mapping software**

The Clerk has suggested the purchase of digital mapping software to help ensure the accuracy of the cemetery map and to improve the efficiency of cemetery administration (see also agenda item 17 iii). Cllr L Thornton is liaising with the software company and will provide a further update at the December meeting.

9) Environment & Community Portfolio – report previously circulated

Council noted that 130 Traffic Survey Questionnaire responses had been received to date. The deadline is 24 November.

Cllr S Colson will keep a log of highways issues to monitor progress and outstanding issues. Updates will be provided in the monthly Environment & Community Portfolio reports which are available on the website. Council noted that the hedge to Porlock Weir had been cut and the clippings have yet to be cleared – this will be reported via the Somerset Council portal.

- i) **Late Night Shopping update** – plans for the Late-Night Shopping event on 9 December are on-going.

10) Finance – supporting documents previously circulated

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

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

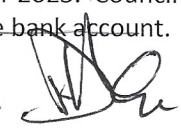
PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S Colson. ALL IN FAVOUR.

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

The Chair signed the Summary Receipts & Payments reports to end October 2023. Council agreed to ~~discontinue the petty cash facility and pay the outstanding balance into the bank account.~~

~~Council **RESOLVED** to discontinue the petty cash facility~~

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

 13/12/23

ii) To approve and sign the final Schedule of Payments for November 2023

Council **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the final Schedule of Payments for November 2023

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

iv) Risk Management review

a) Business Risk Management doc – to review the document previously circulated

Council agreed the proposed minor amendments to the document to improve the systems of internal financial control, including the Clerk to send a pdf of the invoices to all Councillors each month to ensure the approval and authorisation of payments is a robust process. Council also agreed that it would be good practice for the Parish Council to have a named first aider at the Old School Centre and for a defibrillator to be sited at the west end of the village. In the first instance, Cllr D Thornton will ask the Village Hall Committee if they would like a defibrillator at the Village Hall.

Council **RESOLVED to approve the revised Business Risk Management document**

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

b) Annual Fixed Asset Review process – to receive an update

Annual Asset Review forms have been circulated to councillors for all fixed assets. Building and land assets have nominated councillors who have been tasked with completing the Asset Review forms. Community and miscellaneous assets have been grouped into categories to streamline the process. Any potential costs identified will feed into the forthcoming budget setting process. The deadline for receipt of forms is now 16 November.

Risk Assessments are currently being completed or reviewed and updated for each land or building asset.

v) Committee membership – to review

Cllr D Thornton has agreed to join the Staffing Committee to help ensure that a quorum is achieved at meetings.

Council **RESOLVED to approve that Cllr D Thornton join the Staffing Committee**

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

11. Community Plan – to review progress and receive any additional input

The purpose of the Community Plan is to provide a record of what priorities the Council has agreed and is working towards. Councillors have provided some preliminary feedback and suggestions. Cllr S Colson will begin to assemble a draft document for further comment. The aim is to have an initial Council approved draft in time for the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2024 to receive input and comments from the public.

12. Climate & Ecology Bill – to consider draft motion from Zero Hour (organisers of the cross-party campaign for the bill)

The Climate & Ecology bill is a private member's bill which aims to address the challenges posed by climate change by creating a whole-of-government approach to deliver a net zero and nature positive future. Cllr D McCanlis and Cllr S McCanlis will draft a press release for Council approval and a letter to the local MP requesting support for the Climate & Ecology Bill and also write to Zero Hour expressing the Council's support for the bill.

Council RESOLVED to support the Climate & Ecology Bill and take the actions as detailed above

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr S Colson. MAJORITY IN FAVOUR. Cllr L Bloys voted against.

Cllr F Nicholson arrived at the meeting

13. Policy Review – to consider draft policies/documents for approval (previously circulated)

i) Use of Old School Grounds policy appendices: draft application form and charging schedule

Council approved the draft application form subject to minor amendments of wording. Council agreed that the person completing the application form should be aged 18 or over. The application form will encourage users to contact the Parish Council if they do not have Public Liability Insurance in place for their proposed activity or event. Council agreed to refer consideration of the charging schedule to the Finance Committee. The Use of Old School Grounds policy and application form will be made available on the website.

Council RESOLVED to approve the draft application form subject to the above amendments and refer the charging schedule to the Finance Committee Meeting on 4 December

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

ii) Library:

a) Safeguarding policy

The Clerk has received advice from Somerset Council regarding the process for escalating a safeguarding incident in the Library and this is reflected in the draft policy.

Council RESOLVED to approve the Safeguarding policy for the library

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

b) Safeguarding guidance for volunteers

The wording of the document needs to be amended to clarify that it is applicable to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Point 8 will be amended to confirm that photographs will always be taken on an iPad issued by Somerset Library Service.

Council RESOLVED to approve the Safeguarding guidance for volunteers subject to the above amendments

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

c) Health & Safety guidance for volunteers

The wording of the document will be amended to confirm that a Council representative should be present in the building if a Library volunteer agrees to work alone. Council agreed to take advice from the Fire Officer to clarify fire safety instructions and to update the guidance accordingly.

Council RESOLVED to approve the Health & Safety guidance for volunteers subject to approval of the document by the Fire Officer.

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

d) Barring policy

The Clerk has circulated the Somerset Library Service Barring Policy for consideration. This document could be amended for use by Porlock Library to provide a process for dealing with disruptive behaviour. **Council RESOLVED to approve a Barring policy for Porlock Library based on the template provided by Somerset Council**

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

5. To receive reports from Somerset Council – deferred (see above)

Cllr Frances Nicholson provided an update on the following matters:

- The next Local Community Network meeting is due to take place on 9 November. The LCN has three focussed sub-groups: Highways, Economic Regeneration and Affordable Housing. Cllr S Colson and Cllr D McCanlis will be attending the next LCN meeting and a report will be provided for the December Council meeting.
- Wessex Water implemented an emergency road closure in Porlock last week including a night-time road diversion. The utility company will schedule permanent reinstatement works which will involve a planned road closure at a time that is not too disruptive for the community
- Somerset Council has declared a financial emergency in response to soaring costs and demand for services. A number of measures have been proposed to try to reduce the predicted funding gap for 2024/25. Cllr F Nicholson expressed the hope that decisions would continue to be made at a local level rather than by Central Government.

Cllr F Nicholson left the meeting

14. Planning

i) WTCA 23/12 Village Hall car park, Porlock TA24 8QD

The Parish Council is the applicant for this planning application for works to trees in a Conservation Area.

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

15. Arrangements (including legal agreements) with other bodies

i) PVCIC lease – to receive an update

Council noted minor amendments to the wording of the clause: Schedule 1 Part 2 4.1 & 4.6, as approved by Full Council at the Extraordinary Meeting of 28 Sept 2023 and recorded in the confidential report as an appendix to the minutes. Schedule 1 Part 2 4.1 & 4.6 relate to the use of the outside space. The Parish Council has now approved the draft lease which will be sent to the PVCIC solicitor.

16. Reports from outside bodies – to receive reports previously circulated

Council noted the following reports: Library.

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

17. Employment – confidential Staffing Report previously circulated as a supporting document

i) To note the new Local Government NJC pay scales to be backdated to 1 April 2023

The Local Government Pay Award for 2023/24 has now been confirmed. All staff on the NALC contract will automatically be paid in accordance with the updated pay scales and will receive backdated pay to 1 April 2023 as appropriate.

ii) OSC Caretaker – at the discretion of the Chair, this item was moved to the end of the meeting.

iii) Admin Officer

a) To consider additional hours for cemetery administration

Council agreed to offer the Admin Officer an additional 4 hours per week to the end of December. The Admin Officer will work with Cllr L Thornton to review and update cemetery administration procedures.

b) To consider Cemetery training for the Admin Officer

SLCC has training available in January 2024 at a cost of £165 plus VAT. The Clerk will circulate the link to the training course. Council noted that there is money available in the staff training budget for 2023/24.

Council RESOLVED to approve a) additional Admin Officer hours for cemetery administration and b) funding for cemetery training for the Admin Officer

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

The Parish Clerk left the meeting at this point and Cllr L Thornton took notes for the remainder of the meeting.

iv) Parish Clerk/RFO

a) To consider payment of overtime worked from 1 July 2023

The Clerk has worked an additional 81.75 hours since 1 July in order to manage the workload. In line with contractual terms, Council agreed to pay these hours at the normal rate.

Council RESOLVED to approve payment for the additional hours worked since 1 July 2023

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

b) To consider payment of travel time on top of monthly contract hours

The Clerk is contracted to work 25 hours a week but travel time each week takes 3 hours from this, making the work even harder to complete in the hours available.

Council RESOLVED to approve payment for travel time on top of monthly contract hours

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

The Clerk has also suggested attending the office fortnightly rather than weekly where possible to try to manage the workload in the hours available.

c) To consider the recruitment of a full-time Parish Clerk/RFO including pay scale

The Clerk has recommended that the Clerk/RFO role should be full-time in addition to the part-time Admin Officer role. In view of the fact that the current Clerk does not wish to work full-time hours, the Council agreed to advertise for a full-time Clerk with the proposed pay rate in line with SALC's recommendation given the responsibilities of the PPC Clerk, dependent on qualifications and experience.

Council RESOLVED to advertise for a full-time Clerk/RFO

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

Council may consider job share with some home working to encourage as many applicants as possible.

d) To consider the budget and process for advertising including the draft job advert

The position will be advertised in the WS Free Press and on the NALC/SALC/PPC website. It was agreed to extend the closing date to after Christmas to allow more time for applicants to apply, especially from NALC/SALC advert. The date/time of Noon, Monday 15th January 2024 was agreed. It was also agreed that two fortnightly adverts would be placed with the WS Free Press, with a third after Christmas if needed, dates to be 17th November and 1st December 2023, for the first two adverts. A budget of £500 was proposed.

In order to fund advertising via Indeed, a further budget of £500 was proposed. It was agreed that applicants would be required to complete the PPC application paperwork which would be made available on the PPC website, to discourage applicants, particularly from Indeed, simply emailing a CV without necessarily having a real commitment to applying for the role.

Council RESOLVED to approve £1000 for advertising for the Clerk/RFO role as detailed above

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

e) To consider the delegation of the recruitment process for the Clerk to the Staffing Committee with final appointment to be approved by Full Council

Council RESOLVED to approve the delegation of the recruitment process to the Staffing Committee with final appointment to be approved by Full Council

PROPOSER: Cllr D McCanlis; SECONDER: Cllr S McCanlis. ALL IN FAVOUR

Council RESOLVED to go into closed session for agenda item 17 ii) because of the confidential nature of the subject to be discussed

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

A confidential report will be filed as an appendix to the minutes for agenda item 17ii)

ii) OSC Caretaker

a) To consider the appointment and contractual terms for the Caretaker

Council agreed to appoint Andy Bamber as the Caretaker. The draft contract previously circulated was agreed subject to confirmation of starting date.

Council RESOLVED to approve the appointment and contractual terms for the Caretaker

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

b) To consider arrangements for holiday/sickness cover

Council agreed to offer holiday and sickness cover for the Caretaker to Dominic Heathfield.

Council RESOLVED to approve holiday and sickness cover for the Caretaker, contractual terms to be confirmed.

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

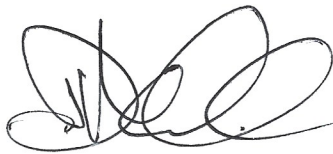
c) To consider a budget for the purchase of hand tools for the Caretaker

Council agreed to provide tools and PPE for the new Caretaker as required.

Council RESOLVED to approve a budget of £250 for the purchase of hand tools for the Caretaker.

PROPOSER: Cllr L Bloys; SECONDER: Cllr L Thornton. ALL IN FAVOUR

The meeting closed at 9.15pm



13/12/23