

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 11 October 2023, 7pm

Copies of minutes and non-confidential reports are available on request

Councillors Present:

Cllr S Colson, Cllr D McCanlis (Chair), Cllr S McCanlis, Cllr M Stenning, Cllr D Thornton, Cllr L Thornton (note taker in the absence of the Clerk)

The Chair welcomed Martin Stenning as a new Councillor, elected unopposed in the recent by-election. Cllr M Stenning had previously signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Also present: 5 members of the public for part of the meeting, Cllr Steven Pugsley (Somerset Council) in attendance for part of the meeting

- 1) **Apologies for absence were received by the Council**
Cllr L Bloys; Cllr Frances Nicholson (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 iv) 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.**
No items were identified at this point in the meeting.
- 4) **Public Participation** – there were 5 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.

While We Still Can representatives provided an update regarding a current project. This is a group of 12-18 year olds from Minehead and the Porlock Vale who are working in partnership with Stacked Wonky and Somerset Wildlife Trust to raise awareness of the climate and environmental crisis using their creative skills. The “Down to Zero” project aims to fill an empty shop window in the High Street with 350 single use plastic items (350 representing just over 50% of households in the Porlock Vale) and invite people to sign a pledge to give money, time or change behavioural habits to help the environment and reduce dependency on single use plastics. For every pledge signed, the group will remove one piece of plastic from the shop window with the aim of emptying the window between when the shop opens on 4 November and when the shop closes on 9 December, after Late Night Shopping.

Council agreed to help publicise the project by putting posters on social media. It was noted that Surfers Against Sewage may be interested in the origins/brand of the items of single use plastic collected. The Parish Council commended the efforts of the young people engaging so proactively with environmental issues.

The representatives of **While We Still Can** left the meeting.

5) To receive reports from Somerset Council

Cllr S Pugsley provided an update on the following matters:

- Streetlights in West Porlock – the on-going power issues have been repeatedly reported and are being addressed.
- Central car park grassy area – there have been reports of anti-social behaviour and a request for the Parish Council to install appropriate signage.
- Winter maintenance – priority gritting routes are under review. Council agreed that the road to Porlock Weir should be included on the gritting schedule as it is on the school bus route.
- The ENPA Planning Officer for the area including Porlock is Andrew Spiers who can advise on planning and enforcement issues.
- ENPA has deferred the planning application regarding Hurlstone bungalow (ref 6/29/23/006) pending receipt of further information. The application is in an adjoining parish but the development can be seen from Porlock. It is not expected that Porlock Parish Council will be formally consulted regarding this application.

Council requested clarification of when development will commence at the site of the former Porlock Abattoir site (ref 6/27/23/011DC). Local residents have raised concerns about the burning of unsuitable materials on site. Cllr S Pugsley will make enquiries and feedback.

The Clerk is struggling to contact the Highways officer regarding a proposed meeting to discuss the no-loading restrictions in the High Street, electric charging points in Central car park and flexible parking options in the car parks. Cllr S Pugsley will urge the Highways officer to make contact.

Cllr S Pugsley left the meeting

Cllr M Stenning did not take part in the votes for agenda items 6, 7 & 8 as he was not present at the meetings.

6) To approve the minutes for the Full Council Meeting held on 13 September 2023

Cllr L Thornton proposed the following changes of wording:

10 iii/5.3 Public graves – to be allowed at the Cemetery for those that can't afford to pay for a plot at the time of burial.

10 v The Clerk and Cllr L Thornton have undertaken a thorough review of archive records and discovered that minutes from March 1997 to December 2008 are missing.

11 iii Somerset Council Highways department has repainted the single yellow kerb ticks on Porlock High Street between the Post Office and McCoy's Corner.

11 v Cllr L Bloys suggested a few extra log seats along the coast path on the marsh with one by the Memorial.

Council RESOLVED to approve the Full Council Meeting Minutes of 13 September 2023, subject to the amendments above.

PROPOSER: Cllr D Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr D McCanlis. ALL PRESENT AND VOTING IN FAVOUR

7) To approve the minutes for the Extraordinary Meeting held on 28 September 2023

Council RESOLVED to approve the Extraordinary Meeting Minutes of 28 September 2023.

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

Cllr S McCanlis did not take part in the vote for agenda item 8 as she was not present at the meeting.

8) To approve the minutes for the Extraordinary Meeting held on 4 October 2023

Council RESOLVED to approve the Extraordinary Meeting Minutes of 4 October 2023.

PROPOSER: Cllr L Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr D Thornton. ALL PRESENT AND VOTING IN FAVOUR

9) 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.

10) Assets & Property Portfolio – report previously circulated

i) Village Hall car park arrangements for reserved parking. Following an enquiry from a local resident, the Clerk has been in liaison with Savills, the agent for Porlock Manor Estate, to clarify whether signage should be reinstated in the car park confirming that bays 1,2 and 3 should be reserved parking bays for the first three properties on the left in Toll Road. In the absence of a copy of the original lease for the Village Hall car park, the Clerk has advised that the Council should refer to the wording in the draft lease which says that parking in bays 1,2 & 3 should be reserved for “the Landlord and all persons duly authorised by him in that behalf....” The Clerk has advised that as the Council can find no evidence that Porlock Manor Estate has authorized that the bays should be reserved for Toll Road residents, a letter should be sent to the local resident who made the enquiry to advise that the Council will not be reinstating the signage. The Council is willing to revisit this matter if further information comes to light.

Council RESOLVED that the reserved car parking signage will not be reinstated in the Village Hall car park

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

ii) St Dubricius closed churchyard – to consider the quote for works to the yew tree in the front of the churchyard

During a recent site visit at the churchyard, the ENPA Tree Warden reported that the previous Council had requested a quote for works to the yew tree in the front of the churchyard. The ENPA Tree Warden obtained a quote from Three Atop Woodland Services for £925 to trim the top of the yew tree to safeguard the health of the tree. The Council agreed that it was not necessary to obtain more than one quote in this instance. The tree work will be the subject of a Tree in a Conservation Area Planning Application – see agenda item 15 iii).

Council RESOLVED to approve the quote for £925 for works to the yew tree.

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

iii) Noticeboards/signage for OSC, St Dubricius Church & Methodist Church – to receive an update

Council agreed to defer this item to November pending further discussion with the church.

11) Environment & Community Portfolio – report previously circulated

i) Traffic Calming working group – update provided within the Portfolio report.

ii) Late Night Shopping – plans for Late Night Shopping are on-going.

iii) Bench at the marsh near the Memorial – to receive report previously circulated

Council approved funding for a rustic wooden log seat by the Memorial on the marsh. The Clerk will provide details of the proposed seat and the suggested location to Porlock Manor Estate for consideration at the next Estate meeting on 2 November. Council agreed to propose up to £375 for the seat but the exact cost is still to be confirmed as Porlock Manor Estate may be able to help with installation.

Council RESOLVED to approve up to £375 for a rustic wooden log seat by the Memorial on the marsh.

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

iv) Watering of tubs at Old School Centre – to consider adding this responsibility to the seasonal watering contract (previously part of the Job Description for the Caretaker)

Council RESOLVED to add this responsibility to the seasonal watering contract.

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

v) Highways matters

a) To appoint a new Parish Council representative for Highways matters

Council RESOLVED to approve Cllr S Colson as the new Parish Council representative for Highways matters.

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

b) To consider the draft Council protocol for managing Highways issues – protocol previously circulated

Council RESOLVED to approve the draft protocol for managing Highways issues.

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

c) Disabled parking bay – to consider a recommendation to Highways that the disabled parking bay in the High Street be statutory and enforceable rather than courtesy.

Council noted that if the disabled parking bay is statutory and enforceable it can only be used by blue badge holders. This would have the benefit of providing free parking close to the shops for disabled drivers and would relieve pressure on the double yellow lines (where disabled drivers are allowed to park for up to 3 hours) to help ensure space is available for delivery lorries.

Council RESOLVED to recommend to Highways that the disabled parking bay in the High Street be statutory and that this be added to the Traffic Order amendment being proposed for the removal of the no-loading yellow markers in the High Street.

PROPOSER: Cllr S Colson; SECONDER: Cllr M Stenning. ALL IN FAVOUR

The Clerk will request clarification of the time limit and time frame for parking in a statutory disabled parking bay.

12. Finance – supporting documents previously circulated

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

Council RESOLVED to approve and sign the bank reconciliation to end September 2023

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

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

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

iii) To approve and sign the final Schedule of Payments for October 2023

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

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

Cllr D McCanlis and Cllr S McCanlis declared an interest and left the meeting for this agenda item as they are High Bank car park permit holders.

Cllr S Colson took the Chair for this agenda item.

iv) Business rating for High Bank car park – to consider applying to the DVO to request that the rateable value of the site is merged

Currently individual permit holders are liable for the business rates for their parking bays and are billed direct by Somerset Council. Unless permit holders own other businesses they are eligible for Small Business Rate Relief. The Clerk has advised that the administration and billing is onerous and confusing for all parties. The Clerk has suggested that the Parish Council apply to the District Valuation Office to request that the rateable value of High Bank car park is merged in order that the Parish Council pays the business rates on the whole site. Permit fees are reviewed annually and the Parish Council could consider an increase to mitigate the extra cost.

Council RESOLVED to apply to the DVO to request that the rateable value of High Bank car park is merged in order that the Parish Council pays the business rates on the whole site.

PROPOSER: Cllr D Thornton; SECONDER: Cllr L Thornton. MAJORITY IN FAVOUR.

v) Risk Management review

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

This document was approved in March 2023 but will in future be reviewed annually as part of the Risk Management review process. In the absence of the Clerk, Council agreed to defer this item to the November meeting.

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

Annual Asset Review forms will be circulated for all fixed assets. Building and land assets have a nominated councillor who will be tasked with completing the Asset Review forms by the deadline advised by the Clerk. Community and miscellaneous assets will be grouped into categories to streamline the process. Any potential costs identified will feed into the forthcoming budget setting process.

Risk Assessments will be completed or reviewed and updated annually for each land or building asset.

13. Community Plan – to consider the process and timeline (report previously circulated)

This item previously appeared on the agenda as Strategic Plan. The purpose of the Community Plan is to provide a record of what priorities the Council has agreed and is working towards. 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. Cllrs S Colson and Cllr D McCanlis will continue to lead on this item.

Council RESOLVED to approve the proposed process and timeline for the Community Plan.

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

14. Policy Review – to consider draft policies for approval (previously circulated)

i) Use of Old School Grounds policy - Council noted that an application form and a charging schedule will be necessary as appendices to the policy. Council agreed that the wording of point 6 of the latest policy draft be amended a) to include the requirement to clarify who is providing the Public Liability Insurance for the event and b) to note that the Council may provide assistance with the production of a Risk Assessment as necessary.

Council RESOLVED to approve the draft as a working policy subject to the above amendments to point 6.

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

ii) Safeguarding policy - required to support the Volunteer Agreement for the Library. The draft policy is still under review while the Clerk takes advice regarding the process for escalating a safeguarding incident in the Library. This item will be deferred to the November meeting.

iii) Retention policy – the Clerk recommended that the Council follows the guidelines published by the National Association of Local Councils.

Council RESOLVED to follow the NALC guidelines for document retention.

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

iv) Accessibility Statement for website – the current Accessibility Statement is available on the website.

Council RESOLVED to approve the Accessibility Statement on the website.

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

15. Planning

i) To receive the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 20 September 2023 and note the consultation response

Council received the draft Planning Committee minutes from 20 September 2023 and noted the consultation response for 6/27/23/012 which was submitted to the ENPA Planning Authority.

ii) Council noted that a Planning Application would be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council for works to the trees in the Village Hall car park.

iii) Council noted that a Planning Application would be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council for works to the yew tree in the rear of the closed churchyard of St Dubricius. Council noted that a planning application would also need to be submitted for works to the yew tree at the front of the closed churchyard of St Dubricius.

16. Employment – to receive the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 20 September 2023

Council received the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 20 September 2023 and noted the following staffing updates:

Admin Officer - Caroline Harding is now in post and is currently working three mornings per week.

Caretaker – the position has been advertised and the closing date for applications is Sunday 15 October.

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

Council noted the following reports: CCT Projects, Library and Village Hall.

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

The meeting closed at 8.56pm