

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WAREHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, 28th OCTOBER, 2008 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, EAST STREET, WAREHAM AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Councillor M. Russell (Town Mayor); Councillors Mrs. P. Bowyer - Davis; D. Budd; Mrs. D. Cleaton; Miss M. Cotton; K. Critchley; Mrs. S. Elmes; K. Green; E. Osmond; Mrs. A. Selby; Mrs. C. Turner; Mrs. M. Wainwright and T. Williams.

Officers in attendance – Mr. R. Curtis, Town Clerk and Mrs. A. Dominy, Admin Assistant.

Members of the public 5 – Press 1.

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burns, D. Critchley and Mrs. A. Tighe.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Councillor Osmond, as Chairman of the Wareham in Bloom Committee, reported on the town's achievements in the South/South East in Bloom competition (Gold award) and the invitation to enter the Britain in Bloom UK Finals 2008 at which a Silver Award in the Small Towns category was awarded. The Mayor accepted the award from Councillor Osmond on behalf of Wareham Town, for display in the Council Chamber. Certificates of Excellence had also been awarded by the South/South East in Bloom organisers to local volunteers for their work for the Town. The Mayor presented these awards to both recipients. It was noted that long serving Wareham in Bloom Committee member Mrs Rozeanne Longstaff had also been presented with a certificate of Excellence but had given apologies for non-attendance owing to a prior commitment.

The Mayor congratulated the recipients as well as Councillor Osmond and the Wareham in Bloom Committee for their achievements.

58. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME – an opportunity for members of the public to raise issues of concern or interest e.g. ask a question, make a comment or statement etc. (30 minutes maximum for this item).

None.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

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60. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2008, 2008

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 16th September, 2008 were confirmed after the following amendment –

Page 20 – Minute 52 – line 6 – delete Standing Orders – insert the meeting.

61. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Councillor Osmond reported that with regard to Minute 49, the meeting with the Chamber of Trade Liaison Group, no progress had been made. He requested that a letter be sent by the Town Clerk to Mr. Howlett, representative of the Wareham Chamber of Trade, asking when the next meeting would be.

62. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

None

63. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor reported that both he and the Mayoress had attended the Gurkha restaurant, Sandford, Flag Raising Ceremony, together with Civic Days in Wimborne and Beaminster.

Local events included attending the 1st Wareham Scout Group Annual General Meeting, judging the Carnival Floats and taking part in the procession and attending the Mistover Road Play Area and Tiny Tots Play Group for a photo shoot along with Tops Day Nursery in Carey, to support a bid to the District Council for a contribution towards the planned upgrade of the play area.

He reported that they had attended the launch of the Purbeck Film Festival and welcomed members from the Argentinian Rotary International to the Council Chamber, together with the Sergeant at Mace, for a short presentation on the history of the town.

They had also attended the 60th Anniversary of the sinking of an HMS Illustrious liberty boat in Portland Harbour and the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the Bill of Human Rights at Poole Council Chamber.

The Mayor also reported that he had presented the Wareham Town Council Millennium Trophy for Short Mat Bowls and the cups and medals to the Carey Team, which included Councillor Mrs Selby as a member. Councillor Selby reported that the Trophy would now be kept in the Town Council Offices.

The Mayor also reported that he had attended a Chairman's Seminar at the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils together with Councillor Mrs Elmes.

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64. TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (a) Wareham in Bloom – 18th September, 2008.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

- (b) Amenities Committee – 1st October, 2008

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

- (c) Planning and Transport Committee – 6th October, 2008 and 27th October, 2008

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

- (d) Policy, Resources and Finance Committee – 13th October, 2008

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

65. REPORTS BY DISTRICT COUNCILLORS, COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Purbeck District Council

Councillor Critchley reported that at a Special Meeting of the Full Council on 14th October, 2008 Purbeck District Council had unanimously objected to the Secretary of State's proposals for 2750 extra homes to be built in Purbeck by 2026. These homes were in addition to the 2400 already earmarked as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The District Council had carried out its own consultation on the Secretary of State's recommendations and received an overwhelming response from the residents, with 95% objecting to the recommendations.

The District Council was one of many with investments deposited in the Icelandic banks. The District Council had a total of £2 million invested with these banks and now awaited the outcome of receivership arrangements.

Councillor Critchley also reported that the new Fitness Suite was now open to the public at the Purbeck Sports Centre. The facilities included 35 gym exercise units and 2 new exercise studios and a new children's soft play area. The project cost £700,000 and was the result of three months refurbishment at the Centre, the work having been completed on time and within budget.

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Dorset County Council

Councillor Budd reported that he had attended the County Council Seminar on the Regional Spatial Strategy and was one of the County Council's representatives at the South East Dorset Planning and Transport Committee at which it was agreed to recommend that member Councils object to a wide range of issues and in particular to development in Green Belt, which includes that at Lytchett Minster. The County Council's Cabinet had adopted the recommendations, as had other Councils in Dorset.

He also reported on the possible closure of the Wareham railway level crossing by Her Majesties Railway Inspectorate on safety grounds due to improper use. Network Rail and British Transport Police had visited the crossing to promote safe use. He had been advised that a number of users had been issued with fixed penalty notices for improper use of the crossing, including ignoring of the red stop lights. He had been advised that it was proposed to install a CCTV camera which would operate if someone ignored the red light, and a loud speaker would also give a verbal warning.

Councillor Budd also updated Members on the progress of the review of education in Purbeck. Proposals would be outlined to Councillors in November with a public consultation following early in the new year. There were currently around 1,000 surplus places in schools in the Purbeck Pyramid and it was necessary for the County Council to address this over-provision. The issue of a two or three tier system of education in Purbeck was certain to be raised during the review.

Representatives Reports

Councillor Elmes reported that she had attended the Patrol Joint Committee Meeting in London. All other Members present were from Shire Counties and Metropolitan Councils and she was the only member present from a Town Council. It appeared that the Committee was intended for Councils who issued Parking Penalty Tickets with Traffic Wardens, rather than those authorities who administered a car park. Councillor Elmes recommended that we did not send a representative to that meeting in future.

Councillor Mrs. Wainwright reported that she had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Royal British Legion – Wareham Branch – Women's Section. This was a very interesting meeting which discussed the facilities available to servicemen returning from their tours of duty.

She also reported that she had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils where the guest speaker was Karen Jaggs, Community Safety Officer. Inspector Peter Holland, Safer Neighbourhoods Officer, was also in attendance.

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Councillor Wainwright also reported on the Age Concern – Helping Hands – meeting who are currently reviewing their client register and the Dorset Age Partnership meeting held at the Purbeck Centre which discussed many interesting topics and advised members that a Falls Screening Booklet was available for information.

66. PRESS COVERAGE OF NEWS IN WAREHAM

Mr. Andy Martin, News Editor of the Bournemouth Echo attended the meeting by invitation to address concerns raised under a Motion at the last Council Meeting regarding a perceived lack of press coverage in the Wareham Area.

Mr. Martin reported on the changing role of the newspaper in modern society, the current fall in newspaper sales and their future. The internet provided a news facility and therefore played a large part in the drop in the sale of newspapers, particularly amongst younger people (most 15 – 24 year olds, it seemed, rarely read newspapers, including undergraduates). He advised that the Bournemouth Echo was no different to any other newspaper, in this respect, and largely relied on advertising for its revenue.

He reported that he had lost 6 reporters in the last year, there was now more to do with less staff and the Echo Office in Wimborne had also closed. The newsroom had changed over the years and the Echo now had a News Editor, a Picture Editor, and a Web Manager policing the public comment page, making it a multi media news room constantly updating breaking news.

Councillor Osmond commented on the perceived lack of press coverage in the Wareham area. He drew attention to the fact that in respect of the South and South East in Bloom Competition results in September 2008, Wimborne had received coverage for being awarded a Silver medal but Wareham, who achieved Gold (the only town in Dorset to do so), was not even reported on. He also commented on the lack of articles relating to Wareham in the Swanage and Wareham Advertiser. In particular, the letters column did not seem to reflect local news stories or matters of interest to local Wareham people very often and was much smaller than it had been in the past. He felt that there should be an equal coverage of press items and advised that the Wareham Chamber of Trade would not be advertising their Christmas feature in December 2008 since there was a feeling that the Advertiser did not support the town.

Mr. Martin responded that the role of newspapers was not dictated by those who paid for advertising and his job was to treat news on its merits. It was, however, part of his team's role to support activities and community initiatives etc and he had issued instructions to try and reflect more news from Wareham. Efforts were being made to try and make the best use of space available but advertising

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reflected current economic conditions and the Advertiser had shrunk to half its size compared to two years ago, giving considerably less space for news and letters from local people. This had also had a knock on effect with the Echo, whose Purbeck page was now down to three issues per week accordingly. The role of web-based news was becoming increasingly important and constant updating was now a normal activity to reflect a demand for up to the minute news.

Questions were raised with regard to the loss of journalists and how this could be overcome. Mr Martin reported on the role of 'Citizen Journalism' and the fact that the public could contact any Echo Office with news features at any time or by e-mail. Councillor Mrs Elmes agreed that the Echo's response to articles she had supplied during her recent year in office had been very good. Mr Martin looked forward to an improvement in the future and stated that he was willing to attend again in 12 months if Council thought it necessary.

Local freelance journalist Mr David Radcliffe expressed his views on local news coverage to Mr Martin and the Council. The Mayor thanked Mr. Martin for attending the meeting and his informative presentation.

67. REPORT OF UP TO DATE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME AGAINST BUDGET AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY MEMBERS AND PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

A copy of the up to date consolidated income and expenditure account showing transactions dated 28th October, 2008 was handed to and acknowledged by each member of the Council.

RESOLVED that the report of up to date expenditure and income against budget and accounts dated 28th October, 2008 and current payments totalling £17,150.33 be approved.

68. TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET – FINANCIAL YEAR 2009 - 2010

Members had been circulated with a budget sheet proforma to set the Council's budget for 2009/10 and also requested to note a series of forthcoming budget meetings which would culminate in a recommendation for the next overall Council budget and the annual precept to Purbeck District Council at the 13th January 2009 Council meeting.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs Selby, seconded by Councillor Williams and

RESOLVED that it be delegated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Human Resources Panel to set a date for consideration of that Panel's budget recommendation.

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Following further discussion, in which it was agreed to set a budget of £400 for a possible 'Beating of the Land Bounds' ceremony with Poole Borough Council in the Spring of 2009, it was

RESOLVED that the proposed budget for 2009/10 as attached to these minutes be agreed for submission to Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and that the schedule of forthcoming budget meetings be noted.

69. CONCLUSION OF AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2008-10-27
Members had been circulated with a copy of the Annual Return and the External Auditor's report including one matter which had been brought to Council's attention which the Town Clerk reported on to the satisfaction of the Council.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

70. WAREHAM TOWN WALLS - TREE REMOVAL/PATH REPAIR/VEHICLE AND BICYCLE DAMAGE

Members had been circulated with correspondence received from the Senior Landscape Architect, Purbeck District Council regarding progress on the Wareham Walls Management Plan and measures to mitigate damage caused by vehicles and bicycles.

RESOLVED that the correspondence be noted.

71. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE MAYOR DEEMS URGENT

The Mayor reminded Members of the Remembrance Day Parade on Sunday 9th November, 2008 and to meet in the Council Chamber by 10.15 a.m. at the latest (robes to be worn).

He also advised Members of a Charity Firework Display on Saturday, 8th November, 2008 to be held at The Quay.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

..... Town Mayor