

## Appendix 2

Portland Town Council , seeking funding for LGR

PTC acknowledges that WPBC has provided the 'Town services' for Portland as well as for Weymouth. For Portland, that has meant the maintenance of very local services such as Easton and Victoria Gardens, public toilets, children's play areas, cemetery, car parks, allotments as well as maintaining a number of monuments etc .

We recognise that Portland is the smaller community and therefore contributes a smaller share of the council tax income of 16.8% and so it was reasonable for WPBC to have agreed in 2017 that any share of assets of the Borough should be based on parity and fair distribution. We accepted the logic of the thinking that built assets are fixed and therefore be part of the transfer of the asset to the respective Town Council.

Looking at the list of WPBC assets within Portland, two things stand out. One, the assets are mostly the land etc. that was owned by the former PUDC and Two, there has been very little update of infrastructure such as public toilets. The one significant building that was formerly owned on the Island, the former Council Office, was sold 18 months ago for about **300k**.

Having said that we accept that the lion's share of assets should be transferred to Weymouth Town Council , the list of properties and land is quite vast compared to the small pockets of land on Portland. The Portland exception being the Verne and High Angle Batteries which are extensive but as one WPBC officer said are a large liability rather than an asset, and no commercial value and high risk as well as costly to maintain .

So looking in to recent decisions of inward investment, WPBC has correctly invested in Commercial Road office **900k**, public toilets **400k**, sculpture trail **180k** ,Pavilion **240k** , all of these are in Weymouth. There has been ZERO investment in refurbishing or new provision on Portland in the same period in public facilities. And remember the figures above include 16.8% from Portland council payers

Portland Town Council did accept the **50k** from WPBC to release the former Council Office to be sold. PTC could have taken legal action to fight the case of sitting tenant, but that would have been costly to both councils and possibly very protracted. PTC has now got its act together and is hoping to step-up and be a better provider of very local services as well as be an enabler for other service and voluntary sector providers.

The recent PTC community bid for the Brackenbury School site was approved by Dorset County Council even though the bid was significantly lower than the site valuation. DCC were convinced that PTC will provide the opportunity of local services, such as Nursery, Youth, and support to organisations that help the Elderly. So DCC agreed the sale for **100k**, for which PTC had to apply for a Public Works Loan for **200k** to cover the purchase and new boiler and modifications to the building. We were then were successful in being awarded **72k** from South Dorset LEADER funding which will assist greatly with the updating of facilities. The building now known as **Portland Community Venue** will be open very soon and officially be opened in the New Year. The Venue will not only be a place for local services to be provided such as DCC funded Allsorts Nursey , or the Youth Drop-in service which is publicly funded but also advisory services will have a place to run services from . In addition PTC will have a proper office with the added capacity to manage very local services.

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PTC are confident and unanimous it was the right thing to do and thank DCC for the confidence that they gave when they agreed the sale of the property. We add, it also makes economic sense for PTC to purchase the property is a cheaper option than the current renting of inadequate office space.

So the 'ask' is , given the extensive financial investment to public facilities in Weymouth , that mostly will be transferred to Weymouth Town Council , that WPBC agree a grant to Portland Town Council of **250k** ,which is conditional that the grant is put forward to the list below.

The Grant , depending on the amount WPBC offer , could be put towards –

- An early repayment of the Public Works Loan or part thereof
- Update the kitchen at the Venue to enable Island Community Action to provide Lunch Club for the elderly .
- Re-open a public toilet and maintain it , at Victoria Gardens , which would gain a 'Green Flag' status for the Garden and enable the 'Friends of the Garden' to put on more community events.
- Refresh and upgrade the Skate Board park , which needs a bit of TLC to what is a popular youth facility.
- Multi Use Games Area , which PTC has just taken over from DCC will require new fencing and goal posts , if we have some funding for this we are confident we can get match funding from Sports England etc

We do feel that the 'ask' is small compared to the recent investment agreed for facilities in Weymouth but as we said we were looking for parity and fairness , so we have put forward this request on that basis. We do recognise that WPBC would have to make a case for the 250k or an alternative amount that you might be mindful to support, to be approved by Shadow Dorset Executive. Being the smaller partner in any situation is clearly a weak position , and we can only trust that the rationale you conclude is one of fairness as Full Council has already agreed should be the case.

We are ambitious for our local community and believe the future can only be improved by taking on responsibilities locally, working with all service providers and voluntary sector. We have shown by the time and effort to not just make the 'Venue' happen but keep it within budget and not to increase the Precept to finance what is the largest financial undertaking that PTC has ever achieved.

As an organisation we have gained a lot of experience and capacity building in this last year. The one thing I feel proud of is the way all 14 Councillors have worked together through this turbulent time and the fact that on all the main issues, Precept, Venue and LGR we have been unanimous in our conclusions. We are delighted to say we have recently recruited a top class administrator to be our new Town Clerk, and her commercial and business qualities will add a new level as we grow.

We feel confident we can provide very local services as well as working with Dorset Council and other services providers for the people of Portland.

Cllr Ray Nowak , Chair of PTC

For and on behalf of Portland Town Council