

PORTBURY PARISH COUNCIL



Portbury Parish Council Meeting 7th May 2019

Chairman's Report

Community Café funding – for item 6

We have funded the rent for the community café for the last two winters in order to minimise the cost burden on the organisers of the event. It is appropriate to review the on-going situation as it is anticipated that the Church will not be available as a venue during the major works going on there at present. Councillors are asked to consider continuing the funding support, including possible needs in June, July and September. We can also put this to the ARM in May to secure a mandate for doing this.

Crime and Disorder – item 7

There was a major theft at the village Hall on the 16th of April when the leadwork on the flat roof at the Village Hall was stolen. The incident was reported to the Police but a lack of evidence as to who performed the act meant that this was not followed up. The circumstances surrounding the incident will be discussed under reserved business.

Planning – for item 8

5 Hillside – [19/P/0465/FUH](#) – a comment was registered along the lines agreed at the last meeting where this item was discussed.

27 Caswell Lane – [19/P/0758/FUH](#) - change of use of outbuilding/garage to residential. This outbuilding/Garage sits within the curtilage of Bracken House, 27 Caswell Lane. When the main house was being re-built it was converted, without permission, into temporary accommodation for the owner of the site. This application seeks to make the residential use permanent.

The site is large and could accommodate increased intensity of use, see below, but this would still constitute development in the green belt. No justification is given to support development in the green belt. No statement of use has been included with the application, as required by NSC Policy. This statement should indicate who will use the building and what relationship the user has to the occupants of the main house.

In the absence of information that describes the intended use of the building Councillors are recommended to object to this application, pending further information. Councillors are asked to consider this recommendation.



[Caswell Cross Cottages – 19/P/0251/FUL](#) – an objection has been registered concerning this application as agreed at the last Council meeting.

Honor Farm – [19/P/0701/CQA](#) – prior approval to convert an existing Barn to residential accommodation.

This application falls within the classification of a General Permitted Development Order, class Q relating to conversion of agricultural buildings. The building in question will not be enlarged, the roof structure will remain but will be modified to suit the residential design. The overall design of the proposal appears to be acceptable and in sympathy with the rest of the site. There is a nominal qualifying prior erection date of 2013 for this to be an allowable development under this classification and this barn satisfies that criterion. Councillors are advised that there seems little reason to object to this proposal, albeit that it constitutes development in the Green Belt.

Newlyn – [18/P/4101/FUL](#) – appeal unsuccessful. The Inspector has determined that the overlooking effect on no51 Mill Lane would still be unacceptable, although again the principle of a development on this site is still upheld.

16 High Street – [18/P/2525/FUH](#) Two storey side/rear extension. The applicant went to appeal against the refusal decision for this application, but that fact did not appear on our weekly/monthly lists of information. It is unlikely that we would have commented on the appeal. The appeal was refused on the grounds that the side extension would disrupt the view from the High Street of the rear garden area.

Planning enforcement –

[Oakham Treasures](#) – no information regarding the appeal concerning the signage on Portbury Lane.

Paddock Lakes – no planning application has been notified to us.

Financial Regs and Standing Orders – review and comparison

On comparing these two documents it is evident that they both cover the rules that apply when buying goods or services, but they differ in the value levels at which more formal procurement processes apply. It would be more sensible for the Financial Regulations to contain the rules for price gathering, and for the Standing Orders to cross reference only.

Having studied other Parishes' regulations, it seems sensible to base the Financial Regulations on the following principles and authority levels;

It is important to ensure that good value for money is always secured when spending from the “public purse”. This does not however mean always accepting the lowest price. It is important when purchasing goods to assess the suitability and quality before selecting an item. In contracts for works or services it is important to assure quality and the risk of scope drift because of inadequate description of what is to be provided. Time should be taken therefore to ensure a clear description of what the Council wishes as an outcome from any purchase before going ahead.

Specific controls proposed are therefore -

Approval of a duly delegated committee or pre-approval of a formal Council Meeting should be secured for items over £500 (as now in standing orders).

There can be single action by the Clerk for any emergency item of repair – up to £500. The Chair must sign this off as soon as practicable. (as now in standing orders).

The Clerk and Chair can jointly agree to procure any item below £500, so long as this is for an “expected” item of expenditure (as now in standing orders). E-mail can be used to also secure the approval of Councillors outside of Council Meetings.

The approval (by Council) must be sought for any grant or a single commitment in excess of £1000. (as now in standing orders)

For items up to a value of £5000 formal estimates must be secured for contracts for works or service. The estimate should indicate as accurately as possible the scope of work. For goods supply contracts the specification of the item should accompany the estimate. In this way the Council can ensure that both value and performance are being achieved. (new authority level)

For items of value between £5000 and £10000 a formal quotation should be secured detailing full scope of work (service) or detailed specification (goods). The person bringing forward the proposal for purchase must provide a comparison report to Council indicating which supply represents the best value for money and why. (new authority level)

For items above £10000 a formal tendering process is required whereby proposals are received by a specified time and are opened in the presence of a minimum of 2 Councillors or 1 Councillor and the Clerk. The tenders can then be recorded and tabulated as received with any qualifications noted in order that a value for money analysis can be carried out.

Should items above £25000 be procured the Council is required to engage a suitable professional person or body to carry out the specification and tendering process. It is proposed to write new clauses embodying the above to replace those currently in the Financial Regulations. The Standing Orders should then be modified to cross refer to these, and perhaps to include the detail in an appendix.

Councillors are invited to consider the above principles and also to review the authority levels suggested here. In recommending these levels I have made reference to other small Councils' regulations and have suggested these levels accordingly.

MAP 29th April 2019