

Porlock High Street Support Group

MINUTES

HELD ON TUESDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2021 AT 8.00 PM

Remote Virtual Meeting via Zoom

The Meeting was digitally recorded and is available at

<https://porlockparishcouncil.org/phssg/>

Group Members Present: Cllr D McCanlis (Porlock Parish Council and PHSSG Chair)
Cllr W Rayner (Porlock Parish Council)
S Weaver (Porlock High Street Trader representing The Big Cheese)
M & D Hawtin (Porlock High Street Trader representing Melody Art)
D Thornton (Porlock High Street Trader representing The Bagatelle)
R White (Porlock High Street Trader representing Churchgate Gallery)
J Dyer (Porlock High Street Trader representing Jana Henrie)
L Thornton (PHSSG Administrator and Minute Taker)

Members of the public present:

David & Sylvia Hancock
Sarah Brice

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had not been received from T Davies & A Lovell, so we hope they will be joining the meeting as soon as possible.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST DISPENSATION

Will Rayner declared an interest as attending as a PPC Councillor and a High Street Trader, as owner of Churchgate Gallery.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY COMMUNICATION OR ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Duncan McCanlis explained that we had been invited by William Collier, Case Manager & Change Champion Economic Development and Inward Investment Somerset West and Taunton Council, to attend a Zoom Group meeting to allow other Fund holders to discuss their experiences. Duncan McCanlis and Lesley Thornton, as Chair and Administrator, will attend on Thursday 11th February and will report back to the PHSSG.

Duncan McCanlis stated that the transition period from Steering Group to formation of the PHSSG was now over and, from now on, we were all involved together and that each Member would be expected to be fully engaged and involved. He asked Members to try and identify areas that they wanted to get involved in, adding that there would probably be a lot of projects that would all need holding by somebody.

Duncan McCanlis advised that he would like to move Item 9 on the Agenda forward to be discussed after Item 6 and before Item 7.

Duncan McCanlis reminded all attendees to leave their microphone on mute and to raise their hand to speak.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Duncan McCanlis noted that two Members of the Public were attending the meeting. He invited them to speak.

Sarah Brice explained that she had just retired from Canal River Trust where she was a Project Manager and would like to offer her experience, if she could get involved in some way.

David Hancock explained that he and his wife, Sylvia, were very interested in helping if they could.

Duncan McCanlis thanked them both for their offers of help.

5. REVIEW PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DOCUMENTATION

Duncan McCanlis explained the importance of each document referred to as Appendices 1 to 5. Appendix 1, the Grant Funding Agreement, he explained, was the Agreement between SW&T and PPC which set out PPC's responsibility for the Fund as recipients. He confirmed that some details had to be updated and that the old Indicative Plan had to be replaced.

Will Rayner asked how the process of paying out the Funds would work. Duncan McCanlis explained that SW&T and PPC would need to approve the first new Indicative Plan which would be drawn up by PHSSG following the consultation process. Any further amendments to the Indicative Plan would then only have to be approved by SW&T. PHSSG would decide how to spend the Fund and would keep records and provide reports, and PPC as ultimately responsible would also keep records of payment made at PHSSG's request.

David Hawtin asked what stage of the process we were at. Duncan McCanlis explained the £25,000 Grant Fund was paid into the PPC bank account in December 2020 and that as soon as we had completed the consultation process and had an approved Indicative Plan, we could then start spending the Fund.

Appendix 2, the Terms of Reference. Duncan McCanlis asked if there were any questions. As there were not, he moved on to Review Composition. Lesley Thornton said it had been suggested we broaden the type of Trader represented and she offered to contact and try encourage a B&B and a pub to join. The Group agreed that this should not be for symbolic reasons as anyone becoming a Member would have to be committed to offering something positive and pro-active to the Group.

Appendix 3, the Timeline of Events, is an ongoing document which would be updated constantly.

Appendices 4 and 5, PPC Standing Orders and Code of Conduct. Duncan McCanlis asked everyone to read them to understand how meetings should be run and how they applied to our work. There were no questions on either.

6. TO DISCUSS HOW TO RESOLVE CHURCHGATE GALLERY VOTING ISSUE

Duncan McCanlis asked Rachael White if she would like to speak.

Rachael White explained that she did not want this issue to get in the way of the work that needed to be done to deliver the project. She offered to stand down.

Jane Dyer and Melody Hawtin felt Rachael brought a lot to the Group and Jane added that she did not feel it would give Churchgate Gallery any unfair advantage. David Hawtin added that he

and Melody had two businesses but only had one vote between them. He felt this was a way to resolve the issue but was not particularly concerned. Will Rayner felt that the issue, which he said had been raised by a Councillor, should not be a problem if we are being open and transparent throughout.

Jane Dyer proposed that Rachael remained on the Group but with only one vote between Rachael White and Will Rayner. She added she only suggested this for presentational reasons.

Duncan McCanlis explained that, as Will Rayner would always be voting as a Councillor, Churchgate Gallery would then have no vote. Will Rayner said, on that basis, he would prefer to stand down as a Councillor on the PHSSG so he could represent Churchgate Gallery.

Lesley Thornton reminded everyone that the Terms of Reference stated, ‘...one vote per organisation represented.’ She suggested that Will Rayner represented the PPC as an organisation and Rachael White represented Churchgate Gallery as a Trader as a different organisation. She, therefore, felt that both being Members of the PHSSG with a vote each was not at odds with the Terms of Reference.

Jane Dyer asked to amend her proposal. It was agreed that Will Rayner and Rachael White could not vote on this matter.

Jane Dyer proposed that both Will Rayner and Rachael White remain as Members of the PHSSG, with Will Rayner voting as Councillor and Rachael White voting as a High Street Trader, Seconded by Stuart Weaver, with 4 in favour and one abstention. Motion passed.

Item 9 was moved to this point in the meeting for discussion.

9. TO DISCUSS DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE DISTRIBUTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Jane Dyer confirmed that she felt the questionnaire was excellent, being concise and to the point and she felt it was very easy to answer. Duncan McCanlis asked if anyone wanted to suggest any further changes, adding that Anita and Tim from Bramdowns had already emailed to confirm they were happy with it.

Duncan McCanlis explained that the aim was to send it out the next day, Wednesday 10th February, to allow everyone at least a week to return it. He explained it would be delivered as a printed version delivered to High Street Traders and emailed. He asked Lesley Thornton to explain about how we could reach as many as possible by email.

Lesley Thornton explained that she would be emailing everyone on the PHSSG email list and urged all present to forward that on to their contacts. She explained that we were required to consult with the Porlock community as well as the High Street Traders and were asking people to differentiate themselves on the questionnaire, so we should be able to interpret the results correctly. She added that she had contacted the Visitor Centre Manager, Deborah Stanyon, to ask her, very politely, if she could forward the questionnaire on to the email addresses originally contacted by the PVTAs (120 in number according to their documentation) as a follow-up to the original questionnaire – The Visitor Centre/PVTA had suggested publicly that they would be happy to help and had wanted to follow-up on the original questionnaire themselves. However, Lesley Thornton had to report that she had received an email from Mrs. Stanyon declining to help. Lesley Thornton explained that she could probably trawl the internet finding the email addresses of the businesses listed on the Visitor Centre website, but that would be very time consuming, whereas, it would have been very quick for the Visitor Centre to do using their email database.

Will Rayner queried whether we should be contacting businesses further afield in Porlock Vale, such as Porlock Weir, Bossington, etc. Lesley Thornton advised that the Fund could not be spent on Porlock Weir, say, but that we could consult further afield as defined as the Porlock Community.

Stuart Weaver proposed that the Questionnaire as presented goes out Wednesday 10th February, Seconded by Jane Dyer, unanimously agreed.

7. TO DISCUSS CO-OPTIONS TO THE GROUP

Duncan McCanlis confirmed that PPC Cllr Richard Maw will not apply to join the PHSSG, but that Cllr Maw asked PPC to discuss this at their next meeting which will not now be until 2nd week of March 2020. Duncan McCanlis added that co-options are the decision of the PHSSG.

Will Rayner suggested we hold off on co-options until we know what projects we have to deliver. It was agreed this was a good idea.

8. TO DISCUSS BEST METHODS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GROUP MEMBERS

Lesley Thornton explained that this was to assist her, as Administrator, to communicate with the Group, especially if there was something they needed to look and respond to urgently. She confirmed that she would continue to communicate primarily by email and explained that communication this way ensures a paper trail, something that we are expected to maintain and make available if requested. She asked Members to 'Reply to All' if a matter was being discussed by email by the Group as a whole and/or to copy the Administrator so a record of correspondence could be maintained.

She asked if Members could indicate if they were happy communicating by email that way and if they could also suggest a quicker system for alerting Members to an email requiring a response.

The Group response confirmed email was fine and that everyone was happy to receive alerts by WhatsApp or text, although Duncan McCanlis would prefer text messaging.

9. TO DISCUSS DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE DISTRIBUTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

This item was discussed immediately before Item 7. See above.

10. TO DISCUSS A PROPOSAL TO SET ASIDE A SMALL PART OF THE FUND TO COVER EXPENSES FOR PRINTING, PHONE CALLS, SOFTWARE, ETC.

Lesley Thornton explained that whilst people may be happy to give their time for free, they may not want to incur expenditure. She suggested people could claim for things like printing costs, phone calls and any software/equipment that had to be purchased to carry out the administration of the Group. She asked if the Group should purchase its own Zoom account as this would be more convenient than using the PPC account which always involved the PPC Clerk in extra work. Duncan McCanlis confirmed that Zoom cost £15 per month on subscription and this could be stopped and restarted at any time. Will Rayner suggested a limit was placed at this amount for claims.

Duncan McCanlis proposed in principle to pay costs, excluding for time, to anyone who incurs them to a limit of £15 per month, Seconded by Will Rayner, and unanimously agreed.

Tim Davies and Anita Lovell (Porlock High Street Trader representing Bramdowns) joined the meeting having been unable to get on line previously.

Duncan McCanlis summarised what had been discussed and agreed, and asked if Tim and Anita had any questions. They confirmed they were happy with the decisions taken and that they were happy communicating by email, advising that WhatsApp was better than text due to poor phone reception.

11. TO DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF A TRADERS OF PORLOCK GROUP

Duncan McCanlis asked Stuart Weaver to lead off on the idea to form a Porlock Traders Group. Stuart confirmed that he and Rachael White would need to get feedback on this and were worried it might be seen as competition to the PVTA. He also felt it may be better to wait until shops were open so they could have a face-to-face approach.

Jan Dyer commented that it should not be contentious as there was not a body that represented them fully. Rachael agreed. Melody Hawtin did not think a website for Traders was needed as the PVTA website is fully inclusive. Lesley Thornton disagreed, saying the PVTA was a Tourist Association, not a Trader Association and a Traders website could eventually include other trades like builders, electricians, etc. which would hopefully benefit everyone, including residents, in Porlock. Will Rayner added that he would like to try a different approach to the PVTA and that too much marketing was never a bad thing.

Duncan McCanlis suggested Traders would need a separate organisation to run it, but we could help it form.

12. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Lesley Thornton asked if we could approve the minutes of the meeting on 27th January 2020.

Duncan McCanlis asked if everyone had read the minutes.

Will Rayner proposed to approve the Draft PHSSG steering Minutes 27.01.21, Seconded by Stuart Weaver, and unanimously agreed.

Duncan McCanlis asked if the Marketing Plan emailed just before the meeting could be discussed at a meeting where it is on the Agenda.

Melody Hawtin asked if she could talk to the Church about their project.

Stuart Weaver suggested we must wait for the questionnaires to be returned as we can not decide to spend any money until we have an approved Indicative Plan.

Jane Dyer asked if anyone had remembered Denise Sage's Gorilla Gardeners. Lesley Thornton confirmed she had been in touch.

David Hancock asked if his plan emailed to the Group would be sent out with the questionnaire. It was confirmed it would be considered once questionnaires were returned along with any other ideas sent in.

David Hawtin commented that he had joined the PHSSG and had submitted his Marketing Plan as he has ideas and wants to formulate these ideas. He felt more weight should be given to ideas coming from Members.

Duncan McCanlis confirmed that he appreciated that people are getting on and doing things but that we have to follow due process.

13. Date of next meeting

Duncan McCanlis asked if we could set the date of the next meeting and to suggest items for the Agenda. He suggested adding the Questionnaire results and forming the Indicative Plan in very broad terms. Also, the Marketing Plan, Admin cost including to discuss employing an Administrator.

Lesley Thornton advised that we would need three clear days between publishing an Agenda and the date for the meeting. She also suggested that she may need a day or two to collate a report regarding the returned questionnaires, so suggested Friday 19th as shown on the timeline. She added that it may be a difficult job to create the Indicative Plan in one shot, so we may need to adjourn for the weekend and finish on, say, the Monday.

The Group discussed the likely uptake of the questionnaire. Anita Lovell felt people would need a lot of encouragement to engage with it. Jane Dyer said she was more optimistic as it was easy to answer. Lesley Thornton urged everyone to help to promote it and to encourage people to return it.

Duncan asked if everyone was happy to set the date for the next meeting as Friday 19th February at 8pm. The date was agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.28pm