

Porthcurno Residents' Association

DRAFT Minutes of Ordinary Meeting on Wednesday 14 September 2022

1930-2130hrs at Clore Learning Centre, PK Porthcurno and via Zoom

Chair : Tiffany Coates (PKRA Chair):
Minute-taker: Louise Court (PKRA Secretary)

1. **Welcome and introductions** – TC welcomed everyone to our first in person meeting for over 2 years.
2. **Apologies for absence and confirmation of quorate** – Louise Court (LC) confirmed the meeting was quorate. She had received seven apologies from members, and from Simon Hocking, National Trust, and Brian Clemens (Clemo), District Councillor. Lucy Coyne and Sue Wear, PKRA Committee members, had both sent their apologies
3. **Agreement of [minutes from 30 June 2022](#)** – these were agreed.
4. **Matters arising** - none
5. **Committee updates**
 - a) Highways and byways

TC reported that although everyone was very pleased that the bridleway was now open, there were concerns still about emergency access given the overgrowth beyond the new work. A resident said it was unfortunate that now such a good repair seems to have been done, this issue remains. LC said she had been in touch with Cormac who had confirmed that they had finished what their work, could not help with the access further up the hill, and did not know who owned it. A resident raised a concern about emergency access once the work started on Maunsell's Hill, as this may require the road on the hill to be closed or access limited.

It was agreed that the PKRA Committee would approach the farmer to ask them what maintenance was planned for the bridleway. It was suggested the PKRA may be able to help to clear the path if needed. The Committee would also approach the District Councillor, Clemo, and the Parish Council. **Action: LC**

In relation to Maunsell's Hill, it was noted that there was a green paint marking on the area but there was some confusion about the timescale as different people had heard different things, and whether the repairs were taking place this financial year or not. Action: PKRA Committee to continue to press for a response from Cormac and seek support from Parish Council and District Councillor. **Action: LC and TC**

TC reported that it was still her understanding that the 20mph speed limit was to be introduced in October this year. Congratulations were again offered to Tiffany for spearheading this initiative, and the PKRA members for their support.

- b) Treasurer's update – John Wheeler, Treasurer, reported the PKRA funds currently stood at £577.48.
- c) Planning applications – LC said the only application that the Committee wanted to bring to members' attention, and that some members had expressed concerns about, was the application to develop Porthcylla (see [here](#)). She explained the background to the application and that the PKRA Committee had made a neutral comment on the outline planning application that had been originally submitted. Since then, a detailed application had been made that the Committee were mindful to object to on behalf of the PKRA. Several of those present agreed, and were not happy with the proposed scale of the development or the implications for increased traffic and access, including whilst the building work would be carried out if the application were successful. When asked, the Minack Theatre said they had not been approached about the owners needing access across their land.

Proposed car park – several questions were asked about what was going on with the field accessed by the lay by at the north end of the Valley, which the current owner (or leasee) was proposing to turn into a car (and coach) park. Figures of the numbers of vehicles that might be accommodated that people had been told varied between 200 and 500 vehicles, that it was planned to be open for 2 months of the year, that there would be electric vehicle charging points, and CCTV. The understanding is that this is a purely commercial enterprise, and that the local resident undertaking the work is leasing the land from the owner. One resident pointed out that a development on this scale would surely require planning permission.

Concerns were raised about the number of people walking up and down the Valley if the car park went ahead, and the safety implications of this.

Given the different information that seemed to be circulating, it was agreed that the PKRA Secretary would write to the local resident concerned to seek some clarity and information about his plans. **Action: LC**

Car parking area opposite Bodellan – A resident raised again this car parking area and asked whether planning permission should have been sought for this, whilst recognising that additional parking for some properties in this part of the Valley is helpful to them. Two PKA Committee committees said they had sought some clarification on this, and how the area would be maintained, at PC meetings, but had not been able to get definitive answers from the PC.

Minack Lodge – a resident asked whether there was any new information relating to the development of Minack Lodge, given that the property went back on the market after the planning application was turned down this year, but there was none.

Bracken Bank – Two residents said that they had fortunately spotted a smoking fire during the drought, as the development works continue on this unoccupied property, and both reported this in time for any damage to be done.

Butlers House? - A resident reported they were sad and worried about the continuing empty state and decline of this property at the north end of Minack Lane.

- d) Social activities and events – TC reported that Lucy Coyne, our Social Secretary, has arranged two evening events on 1 November and 6 December to pilot “Valley Voices”. Each event will consist of two short talks by residents, with an interval in between for refreshments and chat. More details will follow.
- e) Committee membership – TC reported that, as LC had said in her recent email, the Committee urgently needed new members and some “new blood”. Both Sue Wear and Susan Kersley were looking to stand down, and Louise Court from the role of Secretary. All had been on the Committee for some years and needed a break! She urged anyone interested to get in touch for a “no obligation” chat, ideally before the AGM.

6. **Updates from external organisations and partners**

a) PK Porthcurno

Julia Twomlow (JT), Museum Director, said that in summary, it had been an “odd” summer, with the Museum recording its quietest August on record due to the heatwave, whilst at the same time recording its highest spend on record. However, numbers have been picking up fortunately. One thing that had been different this year was that the incidents of customer aggression incidents had increased, and that customer behaviour had generally been poorer, leading to increased pressure on the staff sadly.

After 3 years of negotiating, the PK Trust finally took on the car park with just 2 hours’ notice, despite asking the Council for 3 weeks’ notice. This meant suddenly there was no mechanism for people to pay, which had resulted in some of the problems that visitors and residents experienced, but arrangements are now in place with a private parking contractor. Parking seemed to have settled down now, and people are using RingGo to pay. There will be a charge in the winter to enable the toilets to remain open, as the cleaning of the toilets is about £90 per day. She confirmed that refuse bins had been removed without prior notice, but the Porthcurno Coastal Community Team had been able to provide funds (£100) for these to the end of September. She made a plea to local businesses not to use the bins for their own use, as this was simply not sustainable, as the Museum cannot as a charity pay for bins that were used in this way.

A resident commented that the parking machines were not all easy to spot. JT said the one in the “lower” car park will be highlighted in yellow, the same as the “top one”.

Julia gave the meeting the costs of the lease and also the formula for how profit was calculated. On the basis of this, it was clear to residents that the car parking was not going to be a cash cow” that some had thought. She also reported that PK Porthcurno will be required to do about £30k of repairing work to the car park.

Julia reported again on the grant for the bus shelter, which would require some match funding, and the shortlisting of PK Porthcurno for a national award for kids' engagement.

A resident asked about whether the Museum could do more advertising, JT said they did what they could, but it was not always successful or value for money.

She informed the meeting that PK Porthcurno had bid to the Government's UK Shared Prosperity and Growth Fund for the "Return of the Exiles" project. This would include refurbishment of the pub, provision of community space, repairs to the car park, green house and potting shed, changing the use of the derelict toilet block to a visitor centre, and more. Overall the cost of the project was estimated as £4m in total. All agreed this was very exciting. JT said she expected to know the outcome of the application by 6 October.

A resident asked if PKRA members get free entry to the Museum, like local residents do at the Minack. JT said not at present, but if the PKRA wrote to her and asked for this, she would look into it. **Action: LC**

JT reported that after she had met Cornerstone, she understood that they have redesigned the telecommunications mast that so many people have objected to. She had suggested to them that they use some of the brownfield land behind the Museum near existing poles. As the PKRA had themselves been advised by Cornerstone, she expected Cornerstone to consult with the local community.

A resident asked why the Museum was so involved. JT said that the Trustees of the Museum asked to meet Cornerstone so they could explain why the area was so sensitive. It also made sense, given the Museum's history and objectives for them to be involved. She said that in her view it was very likely that a mast would be put up in some form given there is a national government strategy to improve rural communications.

A resident said this may be the case but why did it need to be so big, and what was the point in locating it so near the sea, rather than further inland.

In response to a question from a resident, JT said there were no plans to open the café in the evening, as it was not financially viable.

Another member asked whether the Museum had "a plan B" if they did not get the grant. JT said that continuing discussions with the brewery about options was one option. Or they could "chunk it up" into smaller projects and approach different grant funding bodies.

A resident asked about disabled parking facilities in the car park. JT said that there were some disabled parking spaces, but not a discount or additional parking time (as some Cornwall car parks do). She agreed to will speak to Premier (the contractor) about the options available. **Action: JT**

- b) Minack Theatre - Zoe Curnow (ZC) reported that the theatre was slightly ahead of budget and visitor numbers. In the longer term though, consideration was being given

about programming in the context of climate change and extreme weather conditions. Eight performances in the last fortnight had to be cancelled, which was unprecedented.

She ran through the end of season programme and decisions that had been taken around the Proms fireworks. She said if any resident was concerned about knowing about fireworks or when they might take place in the year, to contact her.

She said nothing was planned this winter in terms of works, and there are some emerging concerns around long-term structural issues of what Rowena Cade built, e.g. Romeo and Juliet balcony use is currently being restricted.

She said the theatre was doing all it could to restrict coaches, and was interested in how buses are serving the community and long term plans for services as this impacts them and visitors.

A member asked what was happening about the café as there was planning permission for work to this. ZC said will be refurbishing and replacing windows at some point. She said the current entrance point seems to be working well but would welcome feedback on this.

She confirmed that the current booking system is to be retained. She said this manages numbers and reduces the “turn around” of people coming to the theatre then being turned away.

Residents thanked Zoe for her efforts, and it was noted that these, together with the new yellow lines, and what had probably been a slight reduction in visitors to the area generally this year, had all contributed to less traffic and fewer traffic problems, which residents appreciated.

A resident asked about the sign to the Minack at the entrance to Old Cable Lane, which had been raised at a previous meeting. ZC said this had not been out up by the Minack; JT said she would investigate.

On another signage matter, ZC agreed that the various signs and posters that had been put up in Porthcurno (and beyond) for Pride and Prejudice was unacceptable, and these had been removed where possible.

More generally, she said there was a need for the Minack to be “smarter” about signage, and she was looking at this.

A member queried whether Minack staff were now trained in traffic management to manage the occasional problems on the hill. ZC said the team are not trained. She did look at this some time ago, as previously discussed at these meetings, but it was not affordable or viable. She will look at this again, but staff are able to stop and manage traffic on Minack Lane (as it is owned by the Minack) and stop them coming down, which was really useful.

She said that if there was ever a problem, residents should ring the Minack main number if needed, and it can be diverted to the Duty Manager.

Another resident asked Zoe please to consider having back something like Katy's Hot Pot, which was a fantastic facility for residents, as well as visitors. ZC said she was looking at options.

- c) National Trust – Louise read out the written update that Simon Hocking had kindly provided (attached)

- 6. **Reduction of bus services** – Residents had received conflicting information about the winter bus timetable. Some had been told that there would be no service to Porthcurno. Others said there would be a reduced service by another bus company. TC reported that she was trying to get information from Clemo, the District Councillor and the bus company.

- 7. **Any other business**
 - a) Porthcurno Coastal Community Team - JW, Treasurer, asked how much money was left in the Porthcurno CCT fund, held by the Parish Council. SW thought there was about £15,000k left, although some had been spent on keeping bins in the car park. It was agreed we needed to get some more information and feed in to what this should/could be spent on. Action: PKRA Committee.
 - b) Death of the Queen – the meeting acknowledged the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II, and the new appointment of the Duke of Cornwall.

- 9. **Date of next meeting** – The next meeting is the AGM on 1 December 2022 at 7.30pm.