

(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Chairs Committee Meeting

6.30pm Tuesday 9th March 2021

Dydd Mawrth 9^{fed} Mawrth 2021

This meeting was held via video conference under the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) 2020

Present: Cllrs Michael Theodoulou (Chair), Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, Robert John (arrived 18.41), Karen Morris and David Owens.

Officers: Shan Loudon (Deputy Clerk), Paul Mann (Cemetery and Facilities Superintendent), Louise Robinson (Community Development Officer), Huw Thomas (Clerk/RFO), Kevin Williams (Projects Manager)

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

Started 6.30pm end 9.30pm

1. To receive apologies for absence.

All members were present.

2. To receive members' declarations of interest in respect of the business to be transacted.

None were made.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th February 2021.

Cllr Karen Morris **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

4. Matters arising.

Pg1 – re: prioritisation of projects

Members discussed whether or not the current prioritised list for Major Projects set out which works, beyond the most urgent, could be running in parallel. The main concern being that the permission to spend the Public Works Loan which was being applied for would only be drawn down in the up coming financial year. It was queried whether the Major Works working group should be recalled to discuss this issue further or if it could be delegated to staff.

The Clerk/RFO stated that some works had only received approval to proceed as far as the tendering stage. He confirmed that he would be arranging for the opening of the tender documents to be witnessed by 2 Councillors, chosen at random before forwarding them to the architect for assessment. He felt that although the final decision on which contract to go for lay with the Councillors, those decisions should be taken on the recommendations of staff based on expert advice.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris that the Major Projects Working Group should be reconvened to establish the project priorities beyond the most urgent.
RESOLVED.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

Cllr Robert John arrived and joined the meeting 18.41.

Members noted that the group should reconvene with the Chair of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee acting as Chair, with the same membership as previously and for it to make its recommendations to the Facilities and Assets Committee for approval.

5. Update from Chairs of Standing Committees.

The Chair of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee stated he had no update as the Committee would be meeting the day following.

The Chair of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee stated that the Committee had updated all of the training records for Councillors and staff covering the period 2019-2021 and would be recommending that this register be maintained from now on. The Committee had also assessed the Financial Regulations and had recommended changes for the Town Council to approve.

Members noted that the Committee had felt strongly that the review of the Financial Regulations was solely that Committee's responsibility and also expressed their desire for the broader role of the Chairs Committee to be questioned as it seemed to have assumed responsibility over areas of governance such as the review of Standing Orders. It was noted that the Chairs Committee had been formed when the Council did not have a full complement of staff but that the situation it now faced was very different.

Members discussed the situation, with some members of the opinion that the Chairs Committee primarily acted as a space for cross-committee discussion and cooperation in addition to dealing with issues that affected all Committees. It was highlighted that recently the Council had made efforts to reduce the number of meetings taking place and to prevent the duplication of work. It was noted that some of the areas of responsibility for the Chairs Committee may not be easily transferred to the other standing committees. Therefore, to disband it may necessitate some organisational restructuring and a review of the Terms of Reference for each Committee.

Members **AGREED** unanimously for the Clerk/RFO to assess the Terms of Reference for the Chairs Committee and suggest ways in which its responsibilities could be reallocated.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

The Chair of the Facilities and Assets Committee asked members to note that they had reviewed the Fees and Charges for facilities and the cemetery, which were being sent to the next Ordinary Meeting for adoption.

6. Consideration of Standing Orders prior to approval at the Annual Meeting.

The Clerk/RFO and Deputy Town Clerk had created a document which gave members the Model Standing Orders from NALC.

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the notice period be changed to “3 clear days” in both items. **RESOLVED**

Item 3e – Members noted that the next alteration related to the process for allowing the public to make representations to the Council meeting.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the orders be changed to the NALC recommendations. **RESOLVED**.

Item 3i – members noted that the inclusion of this item from the model standing orders meant there was a mechanism to allow public and member presentation and representation at meeting without physically standing.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris to include the item. **RESOLVED**.

Item 3l – members noted that the current version allowed the Council to photograph or record meetings if it so wished via resolution.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that the item be retained. **RESOLVED**.

Item 3s – it was noted that this item related to the process of appointment of the Clerk.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the item be retained. **RESOLVED**.

Item 3w – members noted that the current item gave members the ability to, via a simple majority vote, extend the meeting beyond its two hour limit to conclude its business. Members discussed the definition of the word urgent during its implementation.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John that the item be retained as it is currently set out. **RESOLVED**.

Item 4d – this item related to the Council’s process for setting its organisational structure at the Annual Meeting.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris for the item to be retained. **RESOLVED**.

Item d xiii – this item related to allowing a Committee to deal with any matter not on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair. The Clerk/RFO stated his only reservation was that the discretion be exercised carefully as it allowed the Council to vote on matters the public were not aware of in advance.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the item be retained. **RESOLVED**.

Item 5j vi – this related to the appointments of Chair and Vice Chair and any changes during the year should there be a resignation, to allow reappointment before the next annual meeting.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens for this item to be retained. **RESOLVED.**

Item 5j ix – this was an item taken from the model orders related to reviewing arrangements with other local authorities, not-for-profit businesses and businesses. It was noted that the Council had such arrangements for some of its services and may find itself with more with increasing powers of competence.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou to include this item in the orders. **RESOLVED.**

Item 5j xi – relating to reviewing an inventory of land and other assets at the Annual Meeting. Members felt this was a large item for inclusion at the Annual Meeting and felt it could instead be a headline item of business for the first Committee meetings. It was noted that a complete asset register would be a necessity once the new Local Government Act came into effect.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens for the item to not be included but to be instead dealt with at Committee level at their first meeting. **RESOLVED.**

Item 5j xii – this related to the confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover. On discussion members felt similarly that this item could be dealt with at the first meeting of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee meeting.

Cllr Karen Morris **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that this item not be included but that the responsibility pass to the Committee level at their first meeting of the year. **RESOLVED.**

Item 5j xvii – relating to the review of employment policies and procedures. Members felt this was a similar issue to those above.

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that this item not be included but that the responsibility pass to the Committee level at their first meeting of the year. **RESOLVED.**

Item 5j xviii – members noted that it was a legal requirement that the Council, at its Annual Meeting review the expenditure incurred under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John for the item to be retained in the standing orders and made clear in that it relates to expenditure in the previous council term.

Item 9a – this item related to the limiting of tabled motions to the responsibilities of that meeting which was in the model orders.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris to include this new item. **RESOLVED.**

Item 9f – this related to the process for decision on what items are to be included on an agenda.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris that the item be retained. **RESOLVED.**

Item 13d and e – both of these items related to the conduct of members in relation to items being discussed in which they may have a prejudicial interest. Members expressed concern at the clarity of the wording and asked the Clerk/RFO to try and re-draft it.

Action: Clerk/RFO

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou for items 13d and e to be re-written and the final approved version to be included in the orders. **RESOLVED**.

Item 14a to c – members noted that these items related to the reporting to Council by the Proper Officer of complaints being dealt with by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Clerk/RFO highlighted that it referenced an earlier order which gave the Proper Officer discretionary oversight relating to these matters. This would allow the matter to be discussed in the most relevant space.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman for all of the items to be included. **RESOLVED**.

Item 15bi – this related to the publishing of notice of meetings to the public. Members noted that it referenced the 5 clear days previously altered to 3. There was some additional material from the model orders that should be included also.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that provided the reference be changed to 3 days from 5 that the recommended changes be accepted. **RESOLVED**.

Members discussed the inclusion of the codes and passwords necessary to allow public access to their meetings on the published agendas. It was **AGREED** to instruct the Clerk/RFO to prepare a paper that outlined the best means of facilitating that access for the public.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Item 15b xvi – this related to what the Proper Officer shall do. The Clerk/RFO stated that the final point was part of the job description and he questioned whether it should also be in the Standing Orders. Members discussed the merits of inclusion.

Cllr Karen Morris **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the item should be retained. **RESOLVED**.

Item 17a – this related to the “Proper practices” when it concerned accounts and accounting statements and was taken from the model orders.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens for the item to be included. **RESOLVED**.

Item 18e and f – the Clerk/RFO advised that he understood this section was updated in relation to any changes to legislation following the exit of the UK from the European Union.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John to include these items. **RESOLVED**.

Items 19b and c – members noted that these items related to the handling of staff matters. Concern was raised at the potential risks involved with retaining the elements which included Councillors in the process.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens for the sections to be removed from the orders. **RESOLVED**.

Items 22a to c – these items related to Councillor relations with the press/media. Provided the references to the Mayor were altered to reflect the previous decision to make that a ceremonial role.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou that provided the above corrections were made, all of the items should be retained. **RESOLVED**.

Item 24a and b – this related to communication with County Council Councillors and involvement in meetings. Members discussed the matter noting that a County Councillor who was not also a Town Councillor was permitted to speak and contribute at meetings at the discretion of the Chair but would not have a vote. It was noted that it did not require them to make a report to the Town Council though, although a request for them to submit a report could be made alongside the delivery of their copy of the agenda.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the item be included with implementation to be left to the Proper Officer. **RESOLVED**.

26a-d – this related to standing orders in general.

Cllr Karen Morris **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that this whole section be adopted. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

7. Consideration of Financial Regulations prior to approval at the Annual Meeting.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the recommendations of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee be accepted. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

8. Consideration of the agenda for March’s Town Council meeting.

Members heard the items submitted for inclusion.

Members discussed whether or not the Spring Newsletter should be discussed by the whole Council, citing concerns raised by the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee around increasing awareness and information about the precept setting.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the issue of the Spring Newsletter and its final approval be referred to the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee for discussion. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

9. Any other urgent business at the discretion of the Chair.

None were raised.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the meeting should proceed in camera. **RESOLVED**.

In camera - That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

10. To confirm the confidential minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th February 2021.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris that the minutes were and accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

11. Consideration of councillor attendance.

Members noted the Clerk's information regarding Councillor attendance.

12. Consideration of a response to community correspondence.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John for the meeting to continue beyond 2 hours. **RESOLVED**.

Members noted the communications received and discussed their responses.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that in relation to the first communication, the information and response prepared by the Clerk/RFO be authorised. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John that the issue of inclusion of that information in the Spring newsletter be referred to the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee for consideration. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John that in relation to the second communication the suggestions put forward be compiled by the Clerk/RFO into the second draft. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

13. Consideration of bowls facility.

Members discussed issues surrounding the Bowls Facility and the Bowls Club.

14. Update on staffing matters.

There were none.

Meeting ended 9.32pm