

(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Chairs Committee Meeting

6.30pm Tuesday 8th December 2020

Dydd Mawrth 8^{fed} Rhagfyr 2020

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, Karen Morris and David Owens.

Officers: Shân 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)

6.30pm – 7.46pm

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 10th November 2020.

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

Cllr David Owens stated his abstention from voting due to not being present.

4. Matters arising.

None were raised.

5. Update from Chairs of Standing Committees.

No urgent updates were made.

6. Consideration of Town Council priorities.

Members **AGREED** to return to this item following the remaining business as they may guide the discussion.

7. Consideration of time management during meetings.

Members noted the paper and discussed the contents point by point.

The Clerk advised that he had presented this document and that from the following item to staff and all had welcomed the contents and had been reassured by them.

In relation to item 2.1 members asked that it be clarified in the document that a “clear emergency” be defined as being up to the Clerk and responsible Chair of Committee for decision. It was also clarified that the “written report” to follow emergency decisions would be produced as soon as possible depending on workload of staff. Members expressed a preference for the report format used by the CFS at the recent Facilities and Assets Committee meeting for adoption as a standard.

Members **AGREED** to accept item 2.1 on delegation provided the above definition of “clear emergency” be included.

In relation to item 2.2 the Clerk advised that members needed to be disciplined during meetings to reduce the length of the meeting. Also that appropriate rationalisation of working groups/ task and finish groups/ Sub-Committees was needed to allow staff to do their work. He stated that staff were of the opinion that having 4 standing Committees and the Ordinary Meeting as regular meetings was sufficient, and that others could meet much less often than monthly on an ad hoc basis.

Members discussed the issues and benefits of the different types of group, noting that sub-committees would require officer presence whereas the working groups/task and finish groups did not always. It was noted that committees could absorb the work of its sub-committees if there were sufficient reporting, but that this may also make those meetings longer.

Members **AGREED** that each committee should look at its structure and find a solution to reduce their meeting length and/or number where possible.

Another part of item 2.2 dealt with “for information only” items during meetings. Members also discussed item 2.3 including issues of duplication of information at meetings, and occasions where committees ended up discussing items outside of their terms of reference. It was noted that this may be due to the digital meeting format at present and that members did not have a facility for informal discussion outside of meetings. Members were reminded that the Town Council pack received by all members contained information of the work of each committee and that they could contact the Chairs or the office for information, as necessary.

Members noted that if the meeting chair was successful in keeping meetings short, members may be able to and be inclined to remain once the meeting has closed for informal discussions which may have additional benefits for future meetings. Members **AGREED** to try this approach when possible.

8. Consideration of workload.

Members noted that this document listed 21 of the current and ongoing work that the Council had to do.

The Clerk advised that the list was broadly set out in line with how he saw priorities and that some of the items on the list would be permanent or semi-permanent for the next 18 months. He reminded members that staff had expressed appreciation for the document as it made clear to all how much work was being done and attempted. He added that establishing an overarching strategy for the Council may help with how certain items are handled.

He confirmed that following discussion with staff, a large impediment to delivering this workload lay in the limited delegation of responsibilities to staff from committees and having to return for decisions constantly. He felt that with absolutely defined delegated authority within the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders staff may be able to deliver the work more effectively.

Members discussed this and it was noted that it may not be necessary to wait for the Annual Meeting to set out such defined delegated authority as the committees were already able to do so. Members **AGREED** that they would look to delegate authority with caution and care to enable staff to do their work.

It was noted that for committees to do that effectively they would need the Clerk/RFO to identify what he and staff needed from the committees in terms of delegation and instructed him to provide them with that information as required.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

9. Consideration of the agenda for December's Town Council meeting.

Members read through the draft agenda for the Town Council meeting.

Members **AGREED** to accept the agenda with the following changes:

- Removal of the item "urgent information from any Standing Committee Chair"
- Removal of the item on "video conferencing"
- Removal of the "Democracy and digitisation" item.

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

None were presented.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the meeting move to 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.

11. To confirm the confidential minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th November 2020.

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

Cllr David Owens stated his abstention from voting due to not being present.

12. Matters arising.

None were raised.

Members discussed staffing matters.

Meeting ended 7.46pm

Chair/Cadeirydd..... 3 Date/Dyddiad