

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council
Facilities and Assets Committee meeting

Wednesday 3rd April 2019

Present: Cllrs Michael Theodoulou (Chair), Karen Francis-Morris, Peter Freeman, Robert John, David Owens and Moira Thomas

In attendance: Kevin Williams (Technical Services Officer, Huw Thomas (Temporary Part Time Responsible Finance Officer Designate)

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

(Senior Citizen's Hall, Memorial Institute, Burry Port 6.30pm –7.45pm)

Prior to the meeting starting the Chair welcomed Huw Thomas who had been recently interviewed and appointed to the role of Temporary Part Time Responsible Finance Officer. Members heard how a different person recently offered the role had had to withdraw due to personal circumstances and with no other candidates to consider the Chairs Committee had had to make an emergency appointment due to the urgent need for a replacement officer with the current RFO (Mr Alan Howells) due to leave very soon. Members echoed the welcome.

1. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Shirley Matthews had sent her apologies. The Chair stated that he had invited Cllr Linda Edwards to also attend but she had been unable to.

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

None were declared.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Facilities and Assets Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6th March

The minutes of the Facilities and Assets Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6th March 2019 had been received by all members in advance of the meeting and the Committee **RESOLVED** that they be accepted as accurate.

ACTION: Admin Assist

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th March as all queries raised were on the agenda.

5. To consider the budget monitoring report

None had been received. Members noted that as they had been previously informed of the reasons for the lack of reports, and that they were hopeful, with the new appointment, they would be able to receive a report soon.

6. Consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members – none circulated.

None had been received.

7. Update on changes to Gerrans Gym to enable 24 hour access

The TSO clarified that the term “24-hour” access was a misnomer as it was mostly to facilitate access for gym goers during times when the Council did not have staff on site. He stated that he had been pricing up options for two solutions to the issue including keypad access for relevant doors or a computer monitoring system. To address the potential issue caused by the alarm system coverage, he was looking at options to set up a two zone alarm system or remove the gym from the main building alarm system for them to find their own solution.

Members heard how the gym goers required access to toilet facilities which was why they needed access to the main building. At the moment staff were having to stay late to lock up after the gym goers had finished, which was not a sustainable situation. To provide a solution to this, as had been previously discussed, the TSO had asked the gym to clear out an old washroom space currently used for storage to allow a plumber to come in and fit a suitable system

Some concern was raised by members over the hours the gymgoers might use the space, while others stated that other membership gyms had similar systems meaning this was fairly common practice.

8. Update on asset transfers

Members heard that there had been no progress on the land of the harbour play area and that they were awaiting a report from Cllr Shirley Matthews on progress with the County Council.

The TSO stated that he had received an email from the Council’s solicitors asking to arrange a meeting as they had to discuss a request in relation to the sale of Copperworks and that there were also updates in relation to the asset transfers, but he had no further information about what this entailed.

Members heard how the priorities at the moment were to secure the land of the harbour play area and for the land around Pembrey Memorial Hall. At present there was no end in sight for the issues surrounding the Memorial Gardens in Burry Port as no deeds had yet been found by the County Council.

Members discussed the land around Pembrey, noting that the Council resolution had been to request all of the land around the Hall apart from a strip of land which the Council had been

offered by the Church in Wales. Subsequent to that decision a complication had arisen with a dispute over ownership of the strip of land between the County Council and the Church in Wales. Also the Town Council had been approached by the Town Band in relation to their need for a more appropriate practice room.

During previous discussions on the subject of a new band practice building, there had been agreement among members to explore options on spare land around Pembrey Memorial Hall, although serious reservations had been raised regarding ensuring sufficient parking provision and the need to maintain the front lawn and the encompassing view as part of the Hall's assets. Members heard how this information had been passed to the Band who would be giving a brief to their architect to ensure that their design proposals provided three times the current parking provision and preserved the vista. As part of this process the Chair suggested that the Council could help meet this parking expansion by purchasing the additional strip of land, provided the ownership issues were legally resolved.

During the following discussion members were assured that no decision to confirm the proposals would be taken until the provisional designs had been produced for consideration. Some members restated their concerns regarding preserving the vista, and the need to increase parking provision. Cllr Moira Thomas stated that she objected to any building at Pembrey as a solution. Members noted that no cost would be incurred by the Council for the work of the architect, as this was an arrangement made by the Band itself. Members also discussed whether there was a possibility to consider the site of the former Ysgol Parc y Tywyn, but it was understood that the County Council already had plans for that site, while there was also uncertainty if any of the recently transferred play areas would be suitable as they would not address the parking issues and were all located in residential areas. Some members felt that locating the new building on the site at Pembrey would add to the usefulness of the Memorial Hall for the community as the intention was for there to be a café included in the design and for the space to be available occasionally for public use.

Cllr Karen Francis-Morris declared an interest in the matter as she stood to benefit from any parking improvements as she lived near to the site.

Members were asked to consider whether or not to seek to purchase the strip of land previously mentioned. Some members expressed that regardless of the outcome of the discussions with the band, the increased usage of Pembrey Hall would require an increase to parking also.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED** that the Committee recommend to Town Council to seek to purchase the additional strip of land from whichever organisation or entity was proven to be the owner, seconded by Cllr David Owens.

In the ensuing vote 4 members voted in favour with 1 against and 1 abstention. It was therefore **AGREED** to pass the recommendation to the next Town Council meeting.

ACTION: Ref to Town Council

9. Update on harbour play area

The TSO informed members that the play area was almost finished, with the turf having been laid down and hopefully taking hold soon. All that remained prior to removing the Heras fencing was for the final fittings to be put in and inspected for safety.

Members discussed opening the play area for public use in time for the Easter holidays with an official opening to happen later. With regards the official opening members discussed which officials to invite including the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Chairman of the County Council.

Members **AGREED** for the TSO to instruct the contractor to make the arrangements for the inspection prior to the Easter holidays.

ACTION: TSO

Members **AGREED** that once a date had been chosen for the official opening that invitations would be sent to the Children's Commissioner for Wales to do the opening and for the Chairman of the County Council to be invited to the proceedings.

ACTION: Temp Assist Town Clerk

10. To receive a report on meetings of the Chairs Committee

Members heard how the Chairs had been continuing to meet daily to deal with general issues that they arrived at the Council. They had also been dealing with correspondence related to potential staffing issues. There had been discussions of implementing the Town Council approved structural changes and how the system would work once the necessary staffing posts had been filled, with the Chairs Committee returning to a regular schedule of meetings.

In relation to the re-structure and composition of the Chairs Committee to include Vice Chairs of Committee the current Chairs had made a commitment to improve political balance and had received agreement from Cllrs Lisa Mitchell and Peter Freeman to stand down as the current Vice Chairs of Committees to allow Labour members to be approached.

There was a discussion of the process and it was understood that previously it had not been decided by the Committee as it needed ratification at the Annual Meeting. It was reported that the proposal would be put forward at the next Town Council meeting before going on for ratification at the Annual Meeting. It was believed that having an expanded committee with improved political balance would place the Council in firmer footings to deal with the issues it currently faced and future problems, better. It was hoped that it would go some way to rebuild trust between all members and that it would receive the support of all.

The meeting schedule of the Chairs Committee would also be changed from the third Tuesday of the month to the second Tuesday to facilitate the preparation of the Town Council Ordinary Meeting agendas.

11. To receive a report from the Chair of the Burial Sub Committee

There had been no recent meeting of the Sub-Committee and the next scheduled meeting was for the 9th April to discuss updates on a number of issues, including the recently installed noticeboards, and the enforcement of rules and regulations.

In response to a query the TSO stated that the ground slumping near to the path for the Cemetery office was caused by settling and that there were plans for it to be adjusted.

12. To consider any referred matters (if any)

None received.

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

The chair raised a number of urgent business items for discussion and invited the TSO to address each with the Committee.

In relation to storage provision, the TSO reported that with the sale of the Copperworks the Council would be losing the storage space they had previously used on the site, and in addition a lack of storage space in Pembrey had previously been identified. As a solution he suggested the Council consider purchasing two containers, with one to be sited at the cemetery and the other at Pembrey.

If approved his intention would be for one container to be sited to the west of Pembrey Memorial Hall to provide equipment storage for Pembrey Community Growing Association, in lieu of the garage they currently used. This would in turn allow the garage to be used for Town Council storage in a location near to the rear entrance for ease of access that would address that issue, including the provision of tables and chairs for events. He added that some minor landscaping would be needed to place the container on the west side of Pembrey Memorial Hall.

Cllr Peter Freeman declared an interest as a member of Pembrey Community Growing Association.

The second container would be located at the cemetery for storing maintenance equipment and the items currently in storage at the Copperworks. He stated that locating the additional container at the Cemetery may also require some minor landscaping to provide the space. He had already sought some quotes to give an idea on prices and indicated an estimated cost of £2200 per container would be needed.

The Chair asked member to voted on approval for a £4500 budget for the TSO to purchase the 2 containers. In the ensuing vote 4 members voted in favour with 2 abstentions and 0 against. It was therefore **AGREED** to approve a budget for the above amount for the TSO to source two containers.

ACTION: TSO

Members briefly discussed a suggestion to plant trees to screen off the containers at the cemetery, and agreed to refer the issue to the Burials Sub-Committee

ACTION: Burials Sub-Cmte

In relation to hiring equipment to do the landscaping work and to correctly site the containers the TSO had sought prices for a suitably sized excavator and dumper to do the work and had identified the best prices as £200 for an excavator and £120 for the dumper.

The Chair asked members to vote on approval for the equipment to be hired by the TSO. In the ensuing vote all members indicated their approval. It was therefore **AGREED** to approve the TSO to hire the necessary equipment.

ACTION: TSO

The TSO highlighted that a report into the operations of the cemetery had identified that there were no Risk Assessments in place for the works the maintenance team carried out. He suggested that a solution would be for two members of the maintenance team to be sent on Health and Safety Management training to ensure every task had Risk Assessments in place. He asked members to note that this was a legal requirement. He had identified suitable training which would cost £1000 for both members of staff to receive.

The Chair asked members to vote on approving the training. In the ensuing vote all members indicated their approval and it was therefore **AGREED** that the arrangements be made.

ACTION: TSO

The TSO distributed to all members drawings of two options for proposed redevelopment of the upstairs room in the Memorial Institute. Members heard how the current plans to increase the staff numbers would necessitate an increase of office space. At present the plan was to remove the meeting space from the Clerks office to provide additional workspace in that room. In the longer term this solution would not suffice and so the TSO had instructed architects to draw up plans for turning the upstairs room into usable office space and a Clerks office. The plans showed two options, one which involved converting the current space only while the other involved conversion and some additional building work to convert the flat-roof areas into storage space and kitchen facilities for staff use. He explained that the second option would be more expensive but that if the first option was chosen they would also have to approve further works to repair a leak caused by the flat roof and for re-rendering of the walls. He clarified that both plans provided disabled access via an elevator and that the architect had drawn the plans up to meet with fire regulations, meaning although there was no fire escape, there was a refuge area.

He confirmed that the Committee had approved the architect he had used and that he was seeking further approval to ask a Quantity Surveyor to price up the options. In relation to what would happen to the existing office space and Clerk's Office, members speculated that it could be used to provide additional rental space for the Council.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED** that the approval to approach a Quantity Surveyor to price up the options, seconded by Cllr David Owens.

In the ensuing vote all members indicated their approval and it was therefore **AGREED** for the TSO to instruct a Quantity Surveyor to provide prices for the works.

ACTION: TSO

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.

14. To confirm the confidential minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th March 2019.

The minutes of the Facilities and Assets Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6th March 2019 had been received by all members in advance of the meeting and the Committee **RESOLVED** that they be accepted as accurate.

ACTION: Admin Assist

Members discussed matters arising.

15. To consider the Schedule of Accounts.

None had been received. No further discussion

16. To consider the commercial activity report.

The TSO gave members a run-through of the most recent commercial activity report on the following issues:

- Sale of Copperworks – a request for a meeting from Council’s Solicitor had been received.
- Play maintenance and repairs – some repairs undertaken recently and awaiting the results of the annual assessment report.
- Replacement oil tank at Pembrey – the causes of delays to completion of the wall around the new tank were noted, with a new completion target set for the end of April.
- Replacement Heating System at Pembrey – the design stage was near completion and would hopefully be going out to tender in April/May.
- Legionella Risk Assessments – TSO to read the report and action any recommendations.
- Maintenance works to the Bowl Club – members discussed the work needed on the roof of the workshop/store, noting the costs. Works would be undertaken by Council staff and would start as soon as possible, with weather and other work constraints allowing. Members noted that the costs had been budgeted for from the 2018/19 budget.
- Construction of wildflower memorial garden at the cemetery – These works are completed and members were invited to inspect the new area.
- Headstone testing – this was for the Burials Sub-Committee to discuss but members noted that a report had been received.
- Tree survey – members noted that those works that could be done by Council staff would be, but it may be necessary to engage a contractor to do any specialist works recommended by the Tree Survey.

- Structural survey of Burry Port Memorial Hall – members discussed the actions taken on the report and the TSO sought permission from the Committee to commission the structural engineer to draw up the designs for the lean-to structure, at the fee he quoted. Members agreed unanimously to the proposal and it was therefore **RESOLVED** for the cost to be met.
- Works to conform to fire regulations – members were asked to note that there had been insufficient budget in 2018/19 to action all of the recommendations but the extension of the fire detection system to cover the Memorial Institute had been completed and the works to improve the stage fittings was underway. Members further noted that the outstanding works regarding the door upgrading did not yet have a budget allocated.

The TSO added that Incredible Edible Carmarthenshire had called regarding the repair to the fence of the Corner Garden on the corner of New Street/Church Road. Members **AGREED** for the cost to be drawn from the Maintenance Budget.

ACTION: TSO/RFO

Members thanked the TSO for his work, highlighting the quantity of work the report covered.

17. Update on the sale of Copperworks

This item had been dealt with earlier in the agenda.

18. Consideration of staffing matters

Members discussed staffing issues in detail.