

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council
Facilities and Assets Committee meeting

11am Wednesday 7th October 2020
Dydd Mercher 7^{fed} Hydref 2020

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

Present: Cllrs Robert John (Chair), Peter Freeman (Vice Chair), Les George, Lisa Mitchell (arr 11.10am), Karen Morris (arr 11.38am), Andrew Phillips, Michael Theodoulou, Moira Thomas and Mary Wenman (arr 11.25am)

In attendance: Huw Thomas (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer), Shân Loudon (Deputy Town Clerk), Paul Mann (Cemetery and Facilities Superintendent) and Kevin Williams (Projects Manager)

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

(Burry Port 11am – 1.15pm)

1. To receive apologies for absence

None had been received.

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 Facilities and Assets Committee meeting held on Wednesday 2nd September 2020

Members requested a correction to the written form of a proposal in the minutes.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that the minutes be approved provided the correction was made and was consented by the Chair. **RESOLVED.**

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

Members noted that the Christmas lighting contract was the responsibility of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee.

5. To consider the budget monitoring report

The Clerk/RFO informed members that the report showed that income was down across all headings, except the cemetery.

In relation to expenditure, employee costs were ahead of target because it had been intended for 1 member of staff's wages to be met from a different budget, but that change had not yet happened.

At the cemetery, the costs of electrical works and Covid ppe were currently allocated to here, as an operational rationalisation. As previously stated the costs of the refurbishment of the Chapel of Rest were also allocated here, although these may yet be moved to a different heading.

In the Burry Port Halls and Institute, the cleaning costs were high due to the purchase of new sanitiser dispensers. The works to the entrances for the Hall and Institute meant that the budget showed as overspent, but these costs had been accrued in the previous year. There had also been the structural appraisal and asbestos management reports.

Necessary works to the Copperworks building had resulted in an increase to the maintenance costs and so it was over budget.

In relation to parks and open spaces, the service and repair of the clock in Friendship Square was an unbudgeted cost and so showed as over budget. The works in the Memorial Gardens would prevent the future expense of hire of generators for events.

The works to Pembrey AFC football pitch were funded by Section 106 monies and so this showed in the report as over budget when it would cancel out once the payment was received. In addition, with the remaining funds available the club intended to purchase a container to store their new lighting securely.

Members noted the information with thanks.

In response to a query the Clerk/RFO confirmed that PPE spending was allocated relevant to whether it was justified as a central or general expense.

6. Update from the Parks Working Group

Cllr Lisa Mitchell arrived 11.10am

Members heard that the group had been focusing on the community engagement aspects of the Places for Nature grant while they waited on an update.

Members discussed wider issues around working groups and task & finish groups. It was noted that the Parks Working Group had not yet produced a terms of reference document. There was confusion over what the role of the group was and there was a call for staff to clarify the matter. It was noted that the group was looking at all of the parks in the Town Council's ownership not only those affected by the grant.

7. Update on asset transfers

Although not an asset transfer, the Clerk updated members on progress with the sale of Copperworks, stating that having contacted the buyer directly they had been able to sort through a number of smaller issues that had held up progress, the most notable of which

concerned ongoing access to the "band room" building. A new boundary fence would be raised between the two properties and an existing access widened to allow separate vehicular access to each property. In the meantime, there was an agreement for 6 months to allow access while the works were completed.

Pembrey strip of land

Both parties had agreed to the terms for surveying the cost of the land.

In response to a query the Clerk confirmed that no progress had been made on the transfer of the allotments as he and the solicitors had been focussed on Copperworks.

Members discussed parking issues at Pembrey, noting that the CFS was still reviewing the parking situation and would be reporting to the Committee at the next meeting. It was noted that there had been discussions with the Town Band about relocating, but no updates had been heard for some time. The Clerk was asked to contact the band for an update on the matter.

Cllr Mary Wenman arrived 11.25am

ACTION: Clerk

8. Update on risk assessments

The CFS advised that he had an update in his report which was on the agenda.

9. Consideration of budget revision to include grave digging by contractors

Members noted that this had been referred from the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee.

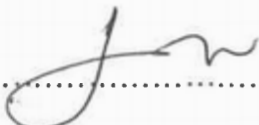
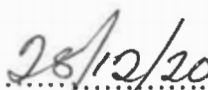
The CFS informed members that at present graves could be dug by Maintenance Operatives by hand or through the use of a contractor. He advised that in using Council staff to excavate, it prevented their allocation to other tasks and took longer, creating two impediments to completion of the work schedule. He also stated that the cost of the hire of a contractor was covered in the value of the plot sale, and that the contractor charges were per grave.

The Clerk/RFO stated that when setting the budget this offset cost had not been factored in, which created the appearance of an overbudget expense when it in fact maintained an income but with a reduced expense.

The CFS stated that the if the Council owned its own excavator this would impact the time it took staff to do the work and therefore the cost/benefit ratio of continued use of a contractor. The purchase of an excavator was being considered for inclusion in next year's budget.

In relation to wider budget revision members requested that officers assess if any minor reductions were possible and advise the committee accordingly. There was consensus that there were unlikely to be major savings to be made.

The Clerk/RFO advised that he had yet to hear if the submitted claim for loss of income had been successful but he was not hopeful. He advised that based on the assumption of

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reopening of facilities from January, that income would be down around £30000. He added that this resumption date was unlikely in his opinion. Members noted the advice and believed they should plan as if they did not expect to receive the grant and for no further income from facilities hire. It was stated that the presentation of this information to the public needed to be made clear so that the budgetary changes were understood.

The Clerk confirmed he and staff would present their findings on potential reductions to the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee at its next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

10. Consideration of capital expenditure programme

Members heard from the chair of the Task & Finish group tasked by this Committee to oversee major projects. The group had concerns about its ability to undertake the task without significant changes, as the task required information and experience from each Committee.

Cllr Karen Morris joined the meeting at 11.38am

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris

- for the creation of a sub-committee of this Committee with membership to be formed of 3 members from the three main Committees and chaired by the Chair of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee.
- each Committee to choose its representatives.
- for this sub-committee to have oversight of major projects and to report to this Committee and to have the necessary delegated authority to make recommendations to the Town Council.

Members discussed the proposal noting a concern raised by office staff at the large number of meetings taking place. Some members also expressed concerns regarding transparency and member involvement, with too many decisions being taken at Committee and sub-committee level for all to feel involved. Others felt that with suitable terms of reference, task and finish groups should only be temporary, while there was a need to have a smaller group to tackle the subject of major projects and make recommendations to the full Council.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

11. Consideration of the schedule of future committee meetings

Members noted that the other Committees had decided to return to their evening meeting schedule. It was noted that this would better allow those who also worked to attend.

In relation to concerns at staff having to work additional hours, the Clerk stated that it was not an issue for their consideration as the Council could be flexible to allow staff to adjust their working hours accordingly.

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou that the Committee meeting be scheduled for 6.30pm on the 1st Wednesday of every month. **RESOLVED**

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

