

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council
Facilities and Assets Committee meeting

Wednesday 22nd July 2020
Dydd Mercher 22^{ain} Gorffennaf 2020

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

Present: Cllrs Robert John, Peter Freeman, Les George, Lisa Mitchell, Karen Morris, Andrew Phillips, Michael Theodoulou and Moira Thomas.

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

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

(11.00am –1.30pm)

1. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Mary Wenman had sent her apologies

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

None

3. To confirm the minutes of the Facilities and Assets Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th June 2020

Cllr Michael Theodoulou proposed that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman; and members agreed unanimously

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

In response to a request for an update on the former site of Ysgol Parc y Tywyn, the Clerk informed members that the matter was being looked at between two County Council departments.

Cllr Peter Freeman Declared an Interest due to his membership of the Pembrey Community Growing Association, following a request for information on the siting of a polytunnel on the site. Members heard that officers had been asked to identify possible locations for the previously agreed to polytunnel to be sited, and so had approached the association to discuss the possibility with them. No actions had been taken, as there was no decision by Committee yet, although it was noted that the work of the Task and Finish Group set up to look at floral matters, had been interrupted by the Covid-19 crisis.

It was noted that improvements to the Growing Association plots had formed part of the recent lottery funding bid.

Members were informed that following a meeting with representatives of the County Council they would be sharing data on their commitments regarding grass cutting in the area, including their schedule.

Some members raised concern at the maintenance of certain parts of the town, highlighting areas where brambles and bushes extended onto footpaths, which could cause an injury. A report on actions at the County level was requested and Members asked the Clerk to contact the Burry Port ward representatives for either a written or verbal report on their action to date.

The Clerk stated that he had previously contacted them following a previous request, but the response had been that there was no update to give. He confirmed he would ask again.

ACTION: Clerk

Members discussed the memorandum of understanding that has been agreed by the County Council and Town Council on the working relationship between representatives of each, which included detail on the situation when County Councillors did not sit on their wards Town or Community Council, noting they had a responsibility to keep the Town Council informed.

Members also noted that they were able to contact the County Councillors individually to raise these issues.

5. To consider the budget monitoring report

The Clerk and RFO highlighted that he had changed the format to reflect the information being requested by members, to allow its use as a tool for budget control. He highlighted that the left-hand columns showed the month to date information, while the right-hand side showed, the year to date spending.

The budget showed information to the end of May. He asked members to note that, excepting the cemetery there was no income, with the current projection, assuming resuming the resumption of facility hire in August, showing a £12,000-15,000 reduction in income.

In relation to expenditure a large number of items related to the Councils' Covid response had been allocated to the Cemetery Maintenance budget which it may be possible to move to other budgets in due course.

A large recent expense for the green maintenance of the Bowls facility was for 6 months of work. In total the Committee budgets was at £22,803 (10.4%), which was 6.3% lower than the expected monthly figure, however there would be a number of items forthcoming which would increase that number as more work was undertaken.

Members noted that at present cleaning staff were not working at Pembrey Memorial Hall, as the foodbank who presently used it had agreed to undertake the cleaning themselves while they used it.

Members expressed their thanks for the report and their appreciation for the new format.

6. To receive a report from the Parks Working Group.

The CFS stated that the application for the Places for Nature grant had been submitted following the recent approval at a special meeting of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee. The Clerk confirmed that the funding body had not yet met to make their decision on the application. He added that following on from the meeting with the County Council representatives the previous day, the Clerk stated that he had been informed of an improvement grant offered by the County Council, which could be used to find the additional funds needed to reach the additional project goals beyond the £50,000 available from the Places for Nature grant.

It was reported that the working group’s activities had been restricted by the Covid crisis, but they had started putting together some ideas. Members noted that the Places for Nature application primarily dealt with two of the parks and asked the working group to consider those, particularly in relation to the previous discussion on mega-parks or reimagining of the spaces, so that a budget could be set for works.

There followed a discussion on community engagement, with the working group highlighting that the Covid crisis had hampered their work with previously identified key stakeholders in the form of schools and groups, and they had not yet managed to design a consulting method. Some urged caution on the form of the consultancy work, as the Council would be unlikely to be able to deliver everything the community wished for.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris, **PROPOSED** that a special meeting of the Facilities and Assets Committee be arranged for August to discuss this in detail.

Members agreed unanimously and **RESOLVED** to call the meeting.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

Members discussed funding concerns, noting the length of time taken for the sale of the Copperworks building, although it was highlighted that the delays to that sale had been caused by the work of solicitors.

Members of the Parks Working Group stated they would arrange a meeting to discuss a timeline and achievable goals.

Action: Parks Working Group

7. Update on asset transfers.

Members were notified of a communication from the County Council stating that the telephone kiosk outside of the Post Office in Pembrey would soon be decommissioned, and enquiring if the Town Council had any interest in taking on responsibility for the kiosk itself. It was noted that other communities had made use of the spaces in creative ways, however the kiosk in question was not of the classic “red-box” design.

Members **AGREED** unanimously not to seek the transfer of the kiosk.

ACTION: Clerk

The Clerk informed members that he had arranged a meeting with the new solicitor for later in the week and had had it confirmed that there were staff working on their current cases including for the transfer of the Station Toilets

8. Update of risk assessments

In response to a query the CFS confirmed that there were currently 3 members of staff with First Aider training. He asked members to note that he had been asked to set out the need and requirements for risk assessment related to this Committees delegated responsibilities, however, for that process to be undertaken correctly, it required a complete policy from the Town Council and its activities. The report he had therefore produced set out what was needed for Risk Assessments to be put in place.

The Clerk stated that there was already a strong basis for such a policy in existence, but this hadn't been pulled together and approved by the Council.

Members noted that this was a legal requirement and that to date risk assessments had had to be undertaken ad hoc. A discussion followed about the merits of hiring a consultancy to undertake the work, the associated costs and the length of time it would take for the Clerk to produce the policy document for the Council to consider and decide, followed by the remaining Risk Assessments. Members noted the potential costs if the documentation was not in place correctly, and the added security using a contractor to do that work would bring,

The CFS advised that using a consultancy would be advantageous as it would provide the Council with an excellent template for risk assessments in the future, and that the work of producing so many risk assessments in-house could become a full-time job. He stated that other neighbouring Councils used consultancies too.

Members discussed whether any support on this issue was available from the County Council or from One Voice Wales but no certainty was got.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that the Committee adopt the report prepared by the CFS as an interim document to inform any risk assessments. Members **AGREED** unanimously.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas for the Clerk and CFS to prepare a policy document for consideration by Town Council, and to provide a cost assessment for the available options. Members **AGREED** unanimously.

ACTION: Clerk and CFS

9. Consideration of renting two storage containers, one for the cemetery, one for Burry Port Memorial Hall

The CFS highlighted the costs for rental of one container for 18 months as being circa £2400, while purchase costs were circa £2600. He stated that re-sale value was tied to the condition

of the container and given the intended use he did not anticipate much deterioration in value. He reminded members that one container was needed at the cemetery for the long term whereas that for the Memorial Hall would not likely be needed beyond completion of the planned renovation works.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** that approval be given to purchase two containers as previously set out, and for the matter to be referred to the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee for it to be drawn from the general reserves or virement, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas.

Members **AGREED** unanimously.

ACTION: Deputy Clerk

10. To consider any referred matters (if any).

Members discussed the proposals for the renovation works to the upstairs room of the Memorial Institute. Some members were concerned that the proposed use as office space was not the most appropriate use on behalf of the community. Members noted the following

- current office accommodation was inadequate, and that the Council was likely to need to expand its team and use of available facilities
- the space could be used in ways other than as office space
- the need to invest in Council facilities
- improving council office space allowed for better working on behalf of the community and potentially increasing services offered
- Staff working conditions had changed in light of the Covid crisis, and so office requirements had changed, perhaps for good

The Projects Manager stated that to date the proposed alterations had cost the Council circa £1500 in addition to staff time. He stated that the major fabric changes such as the installation of the elevator and extending onto the flat roof would greatly benefit the whole building, but that the internal use and layout options could be changed as they did not necessarily impact on the building control approvals. He confirmed that no external fire escape formed part of the plans on the advice of the architect, as the area was unlikely to have a greater number of people than the fire safety measures allowed for.

Members noted that there would be improved value for money on any building projects if they formed part of a larger contract, and that approving building improvements piecemeal could cost the Council more. Members discussed how the projects were to be funded, noting the previously agreed to loan and proceeds from the sale of Copperworks, although there would be limitations as some could only be spent on capital investment.

Members **AGREED** unanimously to set up a working group to look at the intended use of the facilities following the renovation works. Cllrs Peter Freeman, Les George, Lisa Mitchel, Karen Morris and Moira Thomas volunteered to sit on it, and the Projects Manager and CFS were asked to advise it if necessary.

ACTION: Deputy Clerk

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

There was none.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that the meeting move in camera, seconded by Cllr Lisa Mitchell. Members **AGREED** unanimously.

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.

12. To confirm the confidential minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th June 2020

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that the minutes were an accurate record, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman. Members **AGREED** unanimously.

13. Matters arising

Members noted that the Cemetery gates would be installed following other safety works at the Memorial Institute and that the CFS was following up on the work to the Friendship Square Clock.

14. To consider the Schedule of Accounts

Members discussed the schedule, noting a water bill and Bowling Green maintenance charge.

Members requested the Clerk and RFO prepare a cost analysis related to water safety testing.

Members discussed wider issues surrounding use of Council facilities

Cllr Les George **PROPOSED** that a meeting be arranged with the group in question, seconded by Cllr Andrew Phillips.

Members **AGREED** unanimously.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED** that as the meeting had now reached two hours, a vote be taken to allow the meeting to continue, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas. Members **AGREED** unanimously.

15. To consider the Project Managers report

The Projects Manager answered a number of questions related to his report.

16. Consideration of the Cemetery/Facilities Superintendent report

The CFS confirmed that the benches in the cemetery were private property and not the responsibility of the Council unless they are unsafe.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** that staff look to open the play areas as soon as practicable, seconded by Cllr Lisa Mitchell. Members **AGREED** unanimously.
ACTION: CFS

Members were updated on difficulties faced by the workforce in making the play areas safe to use and the response of staff. A course of action was **AGREED** unanimously.
ACTION: Clerk

Members discussed storage at Pembrey Memorial Hall.

Members **AGREED** unanimously to refer to Regen the issue of photographing staff undertaking work in the community.
ACTION: Ref to Regen

Cllrs Les George, Lisa Mitchell and Michael Theodoulou left the meeting at 1.20pm.

Members discussed the reopening of venues for hire but took no decision.

Cllr Andrew Phillips **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris to approve a request by the CFS to erect scaffolding at Pembrey Memorial Hall and the Memorial Institute for undertaking remedial works. The matter was referred to the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee for payment. Members **AGREED** unanimously.
ACTION: Ref to FGP

Members discussed tree safety on Council property, and requested the CFS compile a list of all Council owned trees and commission a survey.
ACTION: CFS

17. Consideration of staffing matters.

None

Meeting ended 1.29pm