

(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Monday 9th March 2020

Present: Cllrs David Owens (Chair), Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, John Hedley Jones, Hugh Shepardson, Bob Walpole

Officers: Huw Thomas (RFO), Shân Loudon

(Upstairs room, Burry Port Institute 10am – 12.30pm)

1. To receive apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

2. To receive members' declarations of interest

Cllrs David Owens and Peter Freeman declared an interest in relation to the relevant determinations applying to them, under item 9.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 10th February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th February were approved as a true record.

Action: Admin Assistant

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

5. To consider the budget monitoring report

The budget monitoring reports for all Committees had previously been circulated. The Acting Town Clerk went through the report with members, identifying any exceptions.

Facilities income is ahead of target at 100.1%. Expenditure is currently under budget at 72.3% but it was noted that the dispute in relation to an outstanding utility cost has been resolved and payment will be made this month.

Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee spend was discussed. It was noted that forums are only able to put ideas forward to Council but are not able to commit the Council to any expenditure. After discussion, it was agreed to refer the issue of parks back to the Facilities and Assets Committee, noting that sustainability and biodiversity needs to be taken into account in future plans.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson informed members that S106 money had been allocated to Trem y Mynydd park.

Action: Acting Clerk to contact Carmarthenshire County Council

The budget monitoring report was accepted by all members.

6. Update on staff and Councillor training

The agenda for the OVW/SLCC Event 20th May 2020 had previously been circulated. However, it was noted that this event was being held in North Wales on the same date as the Town Council Annual Meeting, therefore no one would be able to attend.

The Innovative Practice Awards Ceremony to be held on 26th March 2020 was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that Cllrs David Owens, Mike Theodoulou and the Acting Clerk attend. All members were in agreement.

Action: Assistant Clerk to book

Module 21 “Understanding Local Government Finance, was discussed. It was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that One Voice Wales be requested to provide training on this module at a cost of £399 + trainer travel for all members if they wish to attend. The training would be opened up to other local councils if space permitted. All members were in agreement.

Action: Assistant Clerk to arrange

7. Consideration of minimum councillor training

A statement had been made by One Voice Wales at the Larger Local Councils conference in February as follows:

It was agreed that an e-mail be sent to member councils providing guidance on the development of training plans and include the schedule of Councillor competencies that had recently been prepared to be aligned with relevant training courses. The e-mail to refer to programmed courses and the facility for Councils to request that any of the programmes be delivered on a bespoke basis.

It was agreed to follow this up with One Voice Wales and discuss this item again when guidance had been received.

8. Consideration of the underspend of Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee

The Clerk informed members that this was no longer relevant.

9. Consideration of Councillor Allowances Policy document

A draft policy had been circulated with the agenda and was reviewed in detail.

It was noted that the first determination was mandatory.

Senior roles – Cllr David Owens declared an interest as Chair of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Standing Committee and left the meeting for this point; Cllr Linda Edwards chaired the meeting in his absence. It was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that the Chairs of the three Standing Committees receive the payment of £500 at the end of the financial year, if they so wish. All members were in agreement.

Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs – It was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole that both these determinations be accepted. All members were in agreement.

Compensation for financial loss – After discussion it was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the recommendation is that this determination is accepted. Any payments claimed must be supported by documentary evidence either from an employer or, if self-employed from an accountant. All members were in agreement.

Reimbursement of costs of care – As this is a mandatory requirement, no vote was required.

Mayor – Cllr Peter Freeman declared an interest in this item, as current Mayor, and left the room. It was proposed by Cllr John Hedley Jones and seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson that the recommendation be that a payment of £1,500 be made to the Mayor and this payment should be paid as £500 at the start of their term and that the remaining £1,000 be distributed via the Town Council office, as instructed by the Mayor. All members were in agreement.

Deputy Mayor – The recommendation of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee is that this determination is not accepted. It was noted that if the Deputy Mayor attends an event in place of the Mayor, any donation would come out of his/her allowance and that travel costs could be claimed as per the provisions within the Town Council policy.

After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that any allowances not claimed should be placed into general reserves. All members were in agreement.

It was also noted that three Councillors had resigned during this financial year and it was agreed that the Clerk would write to these Councillors asking if they wished to claim a pro rata payment.

Action: Acting Clerk

This document, with the above recommendations, will be ratified at the March Town Council meeting.

Action: Assistant Clerk for Town Council agenda

10. Update of budget allocation for catering equipment

After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Peter Freeman and seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson that the expenditure for the catering equipment be taken from reserves. All members were in agreement.

11. Consideration of a Long Term Agreement with Utility Aid

The Clerk informed members that the Council currently has a 2 year contract with Utility Aid. They had recently been in contact to enquire if the Council wishes to extend this contact for another 2 years. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole not to extend the contract at this time but to review in 6 months when the initial 2 year contract would expire. All members were in agreement.

12. Consideration of a reserves policy

Copies of a document prepared by the Clerk were circulated. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr David Owens, that the document be submitted to Town Council for ratification. It was noted that capital funds will have a separate bank account and will be reported separately.

Action: Assistant Clerk for Town Council agenda

13. To consider a report on the creation of an Events team

A document prepared by the CDO had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that the cost of an events team would come from the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee budget. A number of observations were made on the job description which will be referred back to the CDO. All members were in agreement, in principle, with the idea of creating an events team.

Action: Assistant Clerk to liaise with CDO

14. To consider any referred matters

Four items had been referred from the Facilities and Assets Committee:

- a) A request to purchase a new container for storage at the cemetery, from reserves. After discussion, it was agreed by all members that this be referred back to the Facilities and Assets Committee to ascertain if the expenditure can be met from cemetery income.
- b) A request to purchase a new container for storage at Burry Port Memorial Hall from reserves. It was discussed that more detail was required in relation to this request, including details of the items to be stored as well as the impact on parking.
- c) A request that the necessary fire prevention works be paid initially from reserves, with reimbursement from the Projects Fund. It was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that this request be accepted, with all members in favour.
- d) A request that the loan be increased by £100,000 to allow full list of works to be undertaken. Currently, a loan of £200,000 has been approved, the cost of increasing the loan to £300,000 will amount to £4,000/year. It was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that this request be accepted, with all members in favour.

Action: refer back to Facilities

Action: Inform Facilities Chair and appropriate staff

As the meeting had now reached 2 hours duration it was proposed by Cllrs Peter Freeman and seconded by Cllr David Owens that Standing Order 1w be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue.

Cllr David Owens informed members of the current cost of outsourcing the Town Council's payroll. Members discussed whether this function should be transferred in house. Cllr Hugh Shepardson proposed that this function continue to be outsourced, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards, with all members in agreement.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr John Hedley Jones and seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the meeting move into camera. All members were in agreement.

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.

15. To confirm the confidential minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10th February 2020

Subject to one addition, the minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a true record.

16. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

17. Consideration of the Schedule of Accounts

The schedule of accounts was discussed and accepted.

18. Consideration of outstanding invoices

Outstanding invoices were discussed.

19. Update on staffing issues

There were no staffing issues.

