

**(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council**

**Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

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

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

**In attendance: Cllr Michael Theodoulou**

**Officers: Huw Thomas (Clerk/RFO), Shân Loudon (Deputy Clerk)**

2pm – 3.35pm

**1. To receive apologies for absence**

All members were present.

**2. To receive members' declarations of interest**

None were made.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meetings held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

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

**4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes**

A member queried whether the Council were continuing to pay for toilets at Burry Port Harbour. The Clerk confirmed that the Facilities and Assets Committee had agreed to continue with this provision.

**5. Consideration of budget monitoring report**

The Clerk/RFO guided members through the report with the following highlights.

The Facilities and Assets budget was target. The Clerk reminded members that costs for Pembrey AFC would be covered by S106 funding. It was also pointed out that the spend on electricity appears to be high due to issues with British Gas charges but this has now been resolved. The Clerk was asked to supply a summary of utility costs for the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk/RFO**

Finance, Governance and Personnel - Members were informed that the budget was at 72% but that included the annual insurance charge.

The Regeneration and Community Engagement budget was within budget.

## 6. Update on asset transfers

The Clerk informed members that progress has been with regard to the Copperworks transaction as the S106 agreement has been sent to Gomer Williams who are currently reviewing it. All other outstanding issues have been resolved.

The transfer of the Station toilets has not progressed since the last meeting.

A query was raised as to the transfer of the allotments. The Clerk stated that Carmarthenshire County Council have prepared a draft lease which has sent directly to our solicitor.

Cllr Peter Freeman declared an interest as a plot holder and member of the Community Growing Association.

A member asked for an update regarding the section of land at Pembrey Memorial Hall owned by the Church. The Clerk informed members that the Church had agreed to share valuation costs, but no further information has been received. The Clerk was requested to make contact and follow up.

Action: Clerk

## 7. Consideration of 2021/22 budget

A schedule been distributed to members. The Clerk explained how the proposed budget figures had been reached. The Facilities and Assets budget had been reviewed and reductions made, where possible.

There was a discussion regarding the precept and members were informed of the County Council's likely increase. It was noted that currently reserves stand at 3.56 months and the Council's policy states this should not fall below 3 months. This committee can only make recommendations regarding the increase in precept as full Town Council need to approval the final percentage.

It was commented that there is essential work that needs to be carried out ie the roof at Pembrey Memorial Hall.

As the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee was present at the meeting, he was asked to discuss reducing their budget in the committee meeting due to take place the following day.

It was noted that Town Councils may need to increase their precept in order to take on the services that are being reduced by the County Council.

Within the Finance, Governance and Personnel budget, all members agreed that £8,000 budgeted for election costs could be removed. **APPROVED**

Action: Clerk

Discussion took place regarding Councillor allowances. It was noted that this has to be made available to all Councillors. It was agreed to contact all Councillors to ask them to notify the Clerk if they do not wish to accept the 2021/22 allowance. There could then be an opportunity to vire an amount into another budget.

Action: Clerk

A member queried if the memorial board showing members who passed away during their time in office could be delayed to the following year.

**8. Consideration of the external auditor report**

The summary had been circulated with the agenda. The Auditor commented that the Council had not recorded that it had dealt with issues raised in 2017/18 audit. He acknowledged that action had been taken and evidence of this action had been provided to the Auditor. However, the Council did not record in a full Town Council meeting that the issues had been addressed. Therefore, a qualified audit has been issued.

**9. Update on Financial Risk Assessment**

The Clerk stated that he was working with the Cemetery Facilities Superintendent completing the templates provided by Thomas Carroll as we develop an overall risk management strategy.

**10. Update on discussions with Internal Auditor**

The Clerk commented that he has spoken to the Internal Auditor who acknowledged that a half year meeting may be useful. However, this was not possible at present but will be implemented next year.

Action: Clerk to arrange

**11. Update on PWLB application**

The Clerk/RFO informed members that he and officers were completing the paperwork to generate a business plan for submission in February. The rules of the Welsh Government are that an approval to borrow is only granted in the financial year in which it is to be used.

Tender documents have been prepared for some of the major projects but not issued to contractors as yet.

**12. Update on working arrangements**

The Clerk updated members that in order to provide a full service to the community all members of staff are at work. It was noted that the Facilities and Assets Committee had given approval for two additional vehicles to be hired in order that maintenance operatives can travel separately. The Clerk commented that the Council were not as operationally efficient when staff were working from home permanently and therefore flexible measures were being implemented to ensure as few staff as possible were in an office at any one time.

**13. Any referred matters from other Committees**

None had been sent.

**14. Any other urgent matters at the discretion of the Chair**

The Chair raised the issue of declarations of interest and annual register of interests. An article had recently been circulated to all members and the Chair reminded members that they must declare an interest when necessary.

It was noted that four members had not submitted their annual register of interests, despite being requested to on a number of occasions. After discussion, it was agreed that the Chair of this committee would contact these members.

Action: Cllr David Owens

It was also noted that two members had not attended meetings regularly and the Clerk was asked to contact these councillors.

Action: Clerk

The Clerk informed members of correspondence from Dylan Price regarding co-option of a member. The advice is to put up a notice on the Town Council website and/or noticeboards as appropriate. After discussion, it was agreed by all members that the notice be placed as advised.

**APPROVED**

Action: Clerk

Cllr Andrew Phillips **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones for the meeting to 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.

**15. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meetings held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

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

**16. Matters arising**

None.

**17. To consider schedule of accounts**

Members noted the schedule of accounts.

**18. Consideration of outstanding invoices**

Outstanding invoices were discussed.

**19. Update on staffing issues**

Staffing issues were discussed.

Meeting ended 3.35pm