

(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Wednesday 13th April 2021

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

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

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

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

2pm – 3.20pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Linda Edwards.

2. To receive members' declarations of interest

Members noted a concern that members should improve the recording of declarations of interest. Members agreed that in the interests of promoting transparency it would be best to adopt the practice of clearly stating their declarations, indicating its nature and whether it was a personal or prejudicial interest.

Members **AGREED** unanimously for the Clerk/RFO to investigate and report in due course.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

3. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meetings held on Tuesday 9th March 2021

Members noted a correction on page three to use plainer language in relation to an item related to the budget monitoring report.

Cllr Peter Freeman **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

Pg4 re: Financial regulations

Members noted that the Chairs Committee had accepted without question the recommendations of this Committee on the Financial Regulations which would be going through to the Town Council for confirmation.

5. Consideration of budget monitoring report

Members had received copies of the budget monitoring report for each committee and the high-level report.

The Clerk/RFO guided members through the main highlights for noting as follows:

Facilities and Assets

- Overall spend was at 97%.
- He reminded members again of the balancing effect of the Section 106 money and the spending at Pembrey AFC.
- Additionally, there was a further contribution from the Places for Nature.
- He advised that he expected the final budget to be over mostly due to the additional cost of providing temporary toilet facilities at the harbour which had not been budgeted for. The spend on that item amounted to about £9000.
- In response to a query on the income at the cemetery, he reminded members that they had adjusted the budget due to the pandemic, which had included a reduction of the budgeted income at the cemetery. However the figure shown was on target for the original budgeted amount.
- In response to a query on high electricity charges, he stated that there were a number of issues. An investigation into services had shown that across all facilities the Council was paying less than budgeted for on heating and gas but more on electricity to roughly the same amount. This had since been adjusted. Also there had been a discrepancy on the electricity bill, with the Council being charged for 2 meters it did not have responsibility for, which was still being resolved. He advised that an expected credit note was due soon that would cover some of the overspend.

Finance, Governance and Personnel

- Employee costs would be over budget at the end of the year as the structure budgeted for was different to what was in effect.
- As no elections had been called, this budget would be reallocated to cover that difference.
- The costs of insuring the additional vans had pushed the insurance budget slightly over.
- Each of the over spent budgets had only been done with approval from the full Council with acknowledgement of the risk.

Regeneration and Community Engagement

- Community resilience income versus spending was broadly flat.

Overall, the final position would depend largely on the value of year end accruals.

Cllr Andrew Phillips **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that the report be accepted.
RESOLVED.

6. Update on asset transfers

Members noted that each of the agenda items which began with “update” were items requested by the Committee or Chair, which was believed to provide a streamlined way of working.

The Clerk/RFO updated members on the sale of Copperworks, stating that he had already reported to the Facilities and Assets Committee who had given some direction on this.

Members were agreed that a decision to impose that deadline could only be made at the Town Council meeting and that an instruction from the Facilities and Assets Committee could only be a recommendation. It was noted that a number of the Major Projects planned by the Council depended on the proceeds of the sale and so its completion was a necessity.

The Clerk/RFO stated that it would be included on the Ordinary Meeting agenda, and that as he was in contact with the solicitor on a daily basis at the moment.

Regarding the draft lease for Pembrey Memorial Hall and associated lands, the solicitor had requested some amendments from the County Council regarding sub-lease arrangements and that the solicitor had written to a representative of the Pembrey Community Growing Association (PCGA).

Cllr Peter Freeman declared a personal interest as a plot holder with PCGA. The Clerk/RFO advised that it was not prejudicial as the item was for information only.

Regarding the strip of land at Pembrey the Clerk/RFO informed members that the Church had sold the land at auction to an unknown buyer. Members discussed how the strip would be delineated to prevent accidental trespass and asked the Clerk/RFO to establish the identity of the new owners and make the enquiry.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

7. Update on working arrangements

The Clerk/RFO stated that no significant changes had happened regarding working arrangements during the last month and he could see no reason for changes to the system in the short term. Once restrictions allowed staff to share vehicles with other precautions in place, the additional vehicles would be taken off hire.

8. Update on risk assessment

Members heard that there had been little progress on this. The base document that concerned this Committee was a hard copy created a few years ago and work was being done to incorporate it into the new system so as to avoid duplication.

9. Update on appraisal process

The Clerk/RFO stated that he would begin with the senior staff in the first instance as the results of those would impact on the overall direction and the appraisals of staff below them also.

10. Update on pay progression

Members heard that no information had been received as yet from the County Council of the inflationary rises. They were also reminded that they had previously agreed that increments would be performance based.

11. Update on Annual Register of Interests

Members noted that one councillor had not as yet completed their Annual Register of Interest and that staff continued to chase him on the issue.

Members **AGREED** for the Clerk and Chair to compose a formal letter asking for the information.
ACTION: Clerk/RFO

12. Consideration of Terms of Reference prior to Annual Meeting

Members discussed the following points from the Terms of Reference.

Point 2 – it was felt that as this Committee was appointed by and reported to the full Town Council this point should reflect that relationship.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Andrew Phillips to remove point 2 entirely.
RESOLVED.

Point 14 – members **RESOLVED** to reword this point to refer to “identifying and arrangement of member training”.

Point 15 – members **RESOLVED** to reword this to better reflect their role and the Clerk’s in identifying and arranging staff training.

Point 20 – members **RESOLVED** that the point should make it clear that it is only in reference to sub-committees of this committee.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

13. Consideration of meeting schedule

Members were informed that the current meeting schedule created a huge amount of work in the second week of every month with three Committee meetings and at least one community forum meeting.

Following discussion, Cllr Andrew Phillips **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole for the next meeting of this Committee to be held on the first Tuesday in May at 2pm and for this issue to be on the agenda at the next meeting. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

14. Any referred matters from other Committees

There were none.

15. Any other urgent matters at the discretion of the Chair

Members discussed whether or not the Major Projects working group should meet if no confirmation of the loan had been received or not. Members **AGREED** that the meeting should be postponed if no confirmation of the loan had been received prior to 16th April.

Ed Davies left the meeting 3.10pm and Shân Loudon continued the minutes

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.

16. To consider schedule of accounts (copy enclosed)

It was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson, seconded by Cllr Andrew Phillips that the schedule of accounts be accepted.

17. Consideration of outstanding invoices

One outstanding invoice was discussed.

18. Update on staffing issues

There were no staffing issues discussed.