

(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Tuesday 13th October 2020

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, Lisa Mitchell (substitute for Cllr Hugh Shepardson arr. 2.15pm) Bob Walpole

Cllr Hugh Shepardson (arr. 2.55pm)

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

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

2pm – 3.50pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Hugh Shepardson had given his apologies and Cllr Lisa Mitchell was substituting for him.

2. To receive members' declarations of interest

No declarations were made. Members were reminded to submit their register of interest forms to the office as soon as possible as they were a statutory requirement.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meeting held on Tuesday 23rd September 2020

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

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

None were raised.

5. Consideration of budget monitoring report

The Clerk guided members through the report highlighting the following:

Income

It was ahead of target mostly from the clothing donation banks.

Expenditure

Employees - This was slightly over budget of changes to staffing arrangements.

Insurance – this was a one-off payment which appeared as if ahead of target, but no further expense was expected for this heading.

Subscriptions – most annual subscriptions had been paid.

IT costs – included annual software support contracts.

Licences – most annual licences had already been paid.

Election costs – the Clerk highlighted that nothing had been spent but if necessary, this money was available if a by-election were required prior to the election next year.

In total the budget was £8,700 ahead of target

Cllr Lisa Mitchell arrived 2.15pm

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the report.

6. Consideration of 2020 -21 budget revision

The Clerk advised that the Council was currently 5 months into its financial year and so he had produced a forecast using a standard accounting tool. This meant he created a forecast for the next 7 months using the expenditure over the first 5 to establish a baseline. The exception to this was where he had more information regarding actual spending, such as one-off annual payments that have either been paid or will be paid either side of this revision document. The Clerk had based the forecast on the assumed resumption of facilities use in January, although that now seemed unlikely. This forecast included all of the budget revisions decided upon by each committee.

Using this forecast he had highlighted a few possible revisions which if correct would mean the Council was c. £30,000 down on income but that it would also be c. £20,000 lower on expenditure. The Clerk stated that election costs were being kept in the budget for now in case a by-election was needed.

Members commented that because of Covid 19 and the resultant restrictions, it was inevitable there would be a significant impact on both income and expenditure. It was queried whether or not a by-election was allowed at present, and it was believed unlikely to be possible before March.

It was noted that although the Mayor had not been able to arrange for fundraising events as usual, it would be possible for her to use her fund to support whichever charity she wished.

Members thanked the Clerk and staff for all of their hard work on this matter.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the revision and recommend it for approval by the Council.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

7. Update on asset transfers

In relation to the Station Toilets, members heard that because of the extenuating circumstances there had been delays to this transfer. The Clerk would continue to seek the transfer. It was noted

that although there were quotes on file for doing the necessary works to building, these were over 6 months old and updates to these quotes would be needed.

The Clerk also provided members with an update on the sale of Copperworks, which was that he was in conversation with the buyer and a number of minor issues which had caused delay were being worked out. The purchaser intended to erect a boundary fence along the new boundary and the Council would need to widen an existing entrance to allow continued vehicular access. The Clerk confirmed that the work could be undertaken by Council staff.

In relation to the strip of land at Pembrey Memorial Hall, the Clerk had received a letter from the diocese asking if the Council intended to move forward with the sale, which indicated they were eager to complete on this.

8. Update of capital expenditure programme

It was suggested that a new Sub-Committee of the Facilities and Assets Committee with membership drawn from each of the standing committees be created. The intention was for this to allow a recommendation to be made based on information from each committee. The suggestion was for the Chair of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee to sit as Chair of this sub-committee too. The requested change had been passed as a resolution and member were asked to volunteer. It was noted that Cllr Hugh Shepardson had expressed an interest in volunteering

Cllrs David Owens, Bob Walpole and Hugh Shepardson volunteered for membership of the sub-committee. Members **RESOLVED** unanimously.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

9. Consideration of remote training offered by One Voice Wales

Following an exercise to identify the best available dates from members to receive the Advanced Financial Training, members were asked to confirm which of those dates it would be arranged for.

Members **RESOLVED** for the training to take place on 27th October between 6.30pm and 8pm.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

Members noted that an email would be sent to those attending with the requirements. An invitation would be extended to all Councillors to attend now the date had been chosen.

The Clerk reported that having investigated the matter there were two packages available for “Planning” training. The first was for £7.50 for a year subscription to online training for the sub-committee members or £150 for all members to have access. He highlighted that the training budget was this committee’s responsibility and so it was being asked to approve it.

In the following discussion, members noted that to allow substitution at the sub-committee it would be beneficial for all members to have access to the training. Members **RESOLVED** to approve the training for all Councillors.

ACTION: Deputy Clerk

10. Consideration of accepting card payments

The Clerk reported that with the new Meals on Wheels scheme it was apparent a new means of accepting payments was needed. This was due to many of the users being vulnerable or sheltering

and so not keeping cash in their houses to pay for the service, and so a large number had no means to pay. Two card machine options had been sourced for members to consider as part of if this was something they wished to do.

Members discussed the situation noting the potential benefits for the range of facilities and services the council offered that would benefit from having a card payment option.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree in principal for the Clerk to progress with a card payment system provided his first having investigated cheaper options.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

The Clerk advised that there would be no change needed to the Financial Regulations and that this Committee had delegated authority to do this.

Ed Davies left the meeting at 3.05pm. Shân Loudon took over taking minutes.

11. Consideration of funding for harbour toilet rental

Members discussed the need for the temporary toilets at the harbour to stay in place until the end of the year. It was understood that there is high usage. It was proposed by Cllr Peter Freeman and seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the portaloos remain in place until the end of December 2020.
APPROVED

ACTION: Projects Manager to extend contract

Members requested an appropriate notice informing the public of the extension of this service be put on the website, social media and noticeboards.

Action: CDO to draft statement

12. Any referred matters from the other Committees

A number of referrals had been received from the Facilities and Assets Committee.

Firstly, the Facilities and Assets Committee had agreed for works to refurbish the roof at Pembrey Memorial Hall. Prior approval to repair the leaks had been given, but the condition of the roof had worsened and so to safeguard the building and prevent further damage a total refurbishment was needed. The Committee had seen three tenders and chosen the contractor based on the advice of the Projects Manager and value.

Members noted that proceeds from the sale of Copperworks could only be spent on capital projects such as this.

Cllr Andrew Phillips **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole that the financing of the works be approved and drawn from the reserves, prior to Copperworks sale proceeds.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

The second referral from the Facilities and Assets Committee was for the works to the upstairs room at the Memorial Institute to be moved forward to the tendering phase. There would be a cost implication from the architect in drawing up the specifications to enable contractors to tender.

Following discussion members **RESOLVED** unanimously to refer this to the Major Projects Sub-Committee for further discussion.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

The third referral was that the Facilities and Assets Committee had approved the appointment of a Health and Safety consultant to carry out the risk assessments on behalf of the Council. This was not a budgeted for item and so approval from this Committee was needed to identify how to fund it.

Following discussion, members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour of the first year costs being met from reserves.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

The fourth referral from the Facilities and Assets Committee was linked to their above decision as the chosen consultants also offered a service which covered personnel and governance. Following discussion, it was noted that Carmarthenshire County Council already provide the Town Council with an invaluable Human Resources service under an SLA and so this section of the contract should not be included.

Cllr David Owens left the meeting at 3.30pm. Cllr Linda Edwards took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting, while Cllr Hugh Shepardson sat in substitution for Cllr David Owens.

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

There were no urgent matters.

Cllr Lisa Mitchell **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the meeting more into camera. **RESOLVED**.

14. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meeting hold on Wednesday 23rd September

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Linda Edwards and seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson that the minutes were an accurate record. All members were in favour with one abstention due to not being present at the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

There was a request for an update on the motorhome situation but none was available.

15. To consider schedule of accounts

These had been circulated to members with the agenda and were noted.

16. Consideration of outstanding invoices

An outstanding invoice was discussed.

17. Update on staffing matters

The Clerk updated members on staffing matters.