

(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Tuesday 14th September 2021

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

Present: Cllrs Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, John Hedley Jones, Andrew Phillips, Hugh Shepardson and Michael Theodoulou.

Absent: Cllr Robert John.

Apologies: Cllrs David Owens and Bob Walpole

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

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

2pm – 2.50pm

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Linda Edwards took on the role in her capacity as Vice Chair.

1. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs David Owens and Bob Walpole

The Clerk/RFO read aloud a letter from Cllr David Owens as per its instruction. The letter contained his resignation as Chair and as a member of this Committee and detailed his concerns and reason for his resignation.

Cllrs Michael Theodoulou and Peter Freeman declared an interest and did not take part in the discussion.

Members expressed their disappointment at the situation and discussed the given reason for the resignation. Members **AGREED** unanimously to send Cllr David Owens a letter of thanks for his work.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Cllr Hugh Shepardson wished it to be recorded that while it may be lawful to give free rental what is important in this matter is what would be the perception of the general public to this decision if they knew that the current Mayor Councillor Mike Theodoulou was the Chief Executive of the charitable body and Councillor Peter Freeman was a Director of the organisation.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Andrew Phillips for a referral to be made to the Facilities and Assets Committee to reassess their decision to not charge rent to the Food Forward project in relation to the policy and procedures of the Council. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

Cllrs Michael Theodoulou and Peter Freeman abstained from the voting due to their declared interest.

Members noted that the first item on the agenda for the next meeting would be the appointment of a new Chair, and requested the Clerk/RFO communicate to Cllr David Owens the actions taken and to ask him to reconsider his decision.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

2. To receive members' declarations of interest.

Agenda item	Councillor	Interest
1	Peter Freeman	Personal – is a member of the Board of Directors for CBSA who deliver the project
1	Michael Theodoulou	Personal and prejudicial – is an employee of CBSA who deliver the project

3. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meeting held on Tuesday 13th July 2021 and the Special meeting held on Tuesday 13th August 2021.

Cllr John Hedley Jones **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson that the minutes of the meeting of 13th July were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the minutes of the meeting of 13th August were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated his abstention as he was not present at the meeting.

4. To confirm the in-camera minute of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meeting held on Tuesday 13th July 2021.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson that the in-camera minutes of the meeting of the 13th July were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

5. Consideration of budget monitoring report.

The Clerk/RFO brought members attention to the major exceptions highlighted in his report for this Committees budget and gave the following explanations:

Employee costs – the discrepancy was caused by the even distribution of the budget against the timing of the costs incurred.

Training – this was the provision of training for the Kickstarters which would be reimbursed by the scheme.

Telephone and general – this was caused by the purchase of postage stamps.

IT costs – this was caused by the annual charge for the BACAS cemetery software.

Stationery and bank charges – Due to the Council banking more cash from the Meals on Wheels service, it was also paying more for banking costs.

In total this put the Committee's budget at £11,000 over budget however this contained a number of annual costs and so the discrepancy should even out over the course of the year.

The other Committee's with budgets overall percentages were also highlighted to members, with no concerns raised.

6. Consideration of schedule of accounts.

Members noted the corresponding accounts matched with the stated exceptions.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou that the schedule be accepted. **RESOLVED**.

7. Update on asset transfers.

Pembrey lease

Members noted that all parties who had requested a copy of the draft lease had received a copy. The Council's comments had been lodged with the solicitor in preparation for the revision process. Once a revised lease was in place it would be reviewed by the Facilities and Assets Committee.

Station Toilets

Members noted that following the decision at the last Facilities and Assets Committee meeting the Clerk/RFO was proceeding with the transfer of this asset.

8. Update on risk assessment.

Members noted that the process of loading the paper risk assessments into the new software was gradual and there were no updates to be given at this stage.

9. Update on appraisals.

Members noted that all staff appraisals bar the Clerk/RFO's had been completed. There had been a lot of positives arisen from the process especially in terms of training needs.

10. Consideration of revised draft training policy.

Members noted that the request to include in the policy that members of particular Committees are to undertake training in relevant One Voice Wales modules, had been done.

Members noted that although it was not a requirement of the Council for the members of its Planning Committee to undertake training on planning issues, the Deputy Town Clerk had made arrangements for two of its members to undertake the training provided by Planning Aid Wales.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson to refer to the Planning Committee to consider whether or not to make it compulsory to complete this training to be a member of the Committee. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Ref to Planning

Members **AGREED** to include on their next agenda to identify what if any training should be compulsory for members of this Committee. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

11. Consideration of working towards a paperless office.

Members noted the paper produced by the working group created to look at this issue.

It was noted that meeting remotely could prove a barrier to successfully implementing this policy due to members requiring a minimum of two screens or devices while meeting.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that it be placed on the next agenda to look into options for the Council moving to a hybrid meeting set-up, to allow those Councillors who chose to, to attend meetings in person. **RESOLVED**

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the paper be accepted, and it be referred to the Town Council for consideration at the October Ordinary Meeting. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: Ref to TC

12. Consideration of revised reserves policy.

Members discussed the draft revision of the policy prepared by the Clerk. Members felt that while it gave greater scope in terms of its application, a loose interpretation could give rise to situations whereby it does not provide the protection it is intended to. Members asked for an absolute minimum level of reserves to be established, and **AGREED** for the Clerk/RFO to provide illustrations of options to satisfy this criteria.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Members requested that when they consider the revision, they also consider the dates of operation of the policy and the frequency for review intervals.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

Members asked the Clerk/RFO to investigate if all restricted fund spending by the Council had been given approval at the Full Town Council meeting.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

13. To consider electricity supply contract.

Following consideration, Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the Clerk/RFO look at forward pricing electricity supply contracts in advance of the renewal in June 2022. **RESOLVED.**

14. Consideration of outstanding invoices.

There were none.

15. Update on staffing issues.

Members noted the recent resignation from the Maintenance team and the decision by the Facilities and Assets Committee to review the structure as a replacement is recruited.

Meeting ended 2.50pm