

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Special Town Council Meeting

Friday 11th September 2020

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

Present: Councillor Lisa Mitchell (Mayor)

Councillors Linda Edwards, Rachel Evans, Peter Freeman (left 10.08am), Les George, Robert John, John Hedley Jones, Karen Morris, David Owens (left 10.08am), Andrew Phillips, Hugh Shepardson, Michael Theodoulou, Moira Thomas, Karen Trimble, Mary Wenman and Bob Walpole.

In attendance: Huw Thomas (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer), Shân Loudon (Deputy Clerk), Paul Mann (Cemetery and Facilities Superintendent [left 10.08am]) and Ed Davies (Admin Assistant)

Absent: Councillors Stephen James

Via videoconference 9.30am – 10.25am

57. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Richard Adler.

58. To receive members' declarations of interest in respect of the business to be transacted

None were declared.

59. To discuss matters regarding the Memorial Park Bowls Club

The Clerk informed members that he had received information that the Bowls Club had held a presentation evening in the facility at which more than 30 people had been present and that no register of attendance had been taken. Additionally, it was understood that alcohol may have been sold at the event. For clarity he stated that the Town Council had not been informed in advance of the event taking place, and as such there had been no staff on site to provide a count and control.

Members were reminded of the current agreed relationship with the Club whereby the facility and grounds were a Town Council asset while the Club remained a separate organisation, focussed on their club activities. In return for the club fees, the Council provided the Club with money to match their annually set budget, with a shared responsibility for ongoing maintenance dependant on level of complexity and required expertise.

The Club had had a recent drop in membership which had affected the amount of the fees they were able to pay, however the Covid crisis had completely disrupted their ability to play and so had requested in this financial year a suspension of their fees. While this had been agreed to, they would also not be receiving their budget from the Council. Future meetings had already



been arranged to discuss the future maintenance arrangements as the Council now had a dedicated Cemetery and Facilities Superintendent.

The Clerk had briefed the Chairs of Regeneration and Community Engagement and Finance, Governance and Personnel Committees along with the Vice Chair of the Facilities and Assets Committee (in substitution for the Chair) yesterday afternoon on the situation. They were in agreement that in response the Council needed to take prompt and firm action by closing the facility immediately.

Members discussed the matter in depth, noting the seriousness of the situation, particularly in light of recent events at Drefach Cricket and Football Club, and the wide-ranging impact such irresponsible actions could have on the community.

Members discussed what evidence they had of the event, noting that at present it was an eye witness account, although a member of the Club board had confirmed in a telephone conversation with the Clerk that the event had taken place and that more than 30 people had attended but that they had had no more than 30 in the clubhouse at any one time.

There was uncertainty as to whether holding this event was a criminal offence and which bodies and organisations needed informing of this incident, although members were certain that the sale of alcohol on unlicensed premises was an offence. Members were keen to ensure that they undertake every step they could in relation to this matter.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole that the Bowls Club facility be closed with immediate effect until further notice, for the Clerk and representatives of the Council to meet with representatives of the Bowls Club following this meeting and to inform all necessary public bodies and organisations of the event, to be followed by a public statement on the matter.

The Clerk had prepared a draft statement which was read aloud to members before they voted on the proposal. No amendments were suggested and members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour.

ACTION: Clerk

Members noted that Pembrey AFC were holding an official opening but that they had worked closely with the Clerk to ensure adherence to the official guidance.

Cllr David Owens declared an interest as a family member was involved with Pembrey AFC.

Cllrs David Owens and Peter Freeman and the CFS left the meeting due to a prior engagement (10.08am).

60. To consider a public statement regarding Town Council facilities

The Clerk advised that considering the above decision the Council should look at its position regarding all of its facilities. He had prepared a statement the previous day which he read out to members for consideration.

Members requested that any public notice be sent to each facility user or group as a courtesy and to be put on the notice boards.

Members noted that an announcement earlier in the day from the Welsh Government showed that from Monday indoor gatherings would not be allowed to exceed 6 in number, in addition to other measures. Consideration was given to whether or not the Council should go beyond that and close all of its facilities for external hire. Assurance was given that internal use of buildings for the working of the Council would be able to continue as this would only affect venue hirers.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson that the Council should close its facilities to outside hirers, excepting key services. **RESOLVED**

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that the meeting move to in camera, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones. In the ensuing vote all members voted in favour. **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.

10.13am Ed Davies left the meeting.

61. To consider staffing matters

A staffing matter was discussed.