

**Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council**

**Ordinary Meeting**

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

**Present: Councillor Peter Freeman (Mayor)  
Councillors Richard Adler, Linda Edwards, John Hedley Jones, Lisa Mitchell, Karen Morris, David Owens, Hugh Shepardson, Michael Theodoulou, Moira Thomas and Mary Wenman.**

**In attendance: Huw Thomas (Acting Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer), Shân Loudon (Temporary Assistant Town Clerk), Kevin Williams (Projects Manger), Louise Robinson (Community Development Officer) and Paul Mann (Cemetery and Facilities Superintendent)**

**Absent: Cllr Stephen James**

**Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)**

**(Memorial Hall 7.00pm – 8.30pm)**

**121. Opening prayer**

A prayer was read out by the Rev. Nicholas Jones.

Members observed a minute of silence in memory of the recently deceased Cllr Pam Every. Members wished to note their appreciation of the contribution that she had made to public life as a long serving member of the Town Council and through her charitable work and work with local organisations.

**122. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Robert John and Bob Walpole.


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

None were made.

**124. To consider Police Business if any**

PC Richard Waddell and PS Gemma Davies were in attendance and read out the report. In conclusion it was stated that the increases to some of the expected rates in comparison to the same time last year was due to the way some issues were reported.

PS Gemma Davies introduced herself as the Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant, who apologised for being unable to attend the previous meeting but stated she would attempt to be present at as

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many of the Council meetings as possible as part of the force's drive to be more visible in the community.

In response to a query, PS Davies stated that there was a force-wide project which was reviewing how the local stations operated but had no specific update regarding Burry Port station. Members were assured that the local team would communicate any updates with them as soon as they knew.

Members discussed and **AGREED** to invite the Police Commissioner to attend an Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council to answer their questions.

**ACTION: Temp. Assist Town Clerk**

**PS Gemma Davies and PC Richard Waddell left the meeting at 7.10pm**

**125. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

Cllrs Karen Morris and David Owens intended to abstain due to not being present at the meeting.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED** that the Council accept the distributed minutes were an accurate record of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou.

In the ensuing vote 9 members voted in favour of the proposal with 2 abstention and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes.

**ACTION: Admin Assist**

**126. To receive a verbal update from the Chairs Committee**

Members heard that the Committee had met on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January where they had discussed the following:

- Council committee structure in advance of the Annual Meeting in May and had recommended that each Committee begin the process of review in preparation, with the Chairs to coordinate the work and prepare a report for the Town Council to take a decision.
- Whom to invite to attend to Town Council meetings, with the Headteacher of Ysgol Glan y Môr School and the Police representatives having been selected.
- The by-election process.
- The announcement that Carmarthenshire County Council's scrutiny committees were open to Town and Community Councillors to attend.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** that any member that wished to represent the Town Council at any of the scrutiny committees communicate with the Clerk with appointments to be overseen by the Chairs Committee, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson stated his intention to abstain due to his membership of one of the scrutiny committees.

In the ensuing vote 10 members voted in favour with 1 abstention and 0 against. The proposal was therefore **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Acting Clerk**

Members were informed that information on each scrutiny committee could be found on the County Council website.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the role of the Chairs Committee had changed slightly with the presence of an Acting Clerk and the decision to involve Vice Chairs as part of it, with the result that it was only required to meet once a month as opposed to daily.

Members noted that the Chairs Committee would be reviewing the Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and other documents to assess if and which other changes may be necessary in advance of the Annual Meeting.

#### **127. To consider the budget monitoring report**

The Acting Clerk and RFO had highlighted for members some of the key figures in the report. He reminded those present that each Committee had seen copies of their respective budget reports as well as receiving his run through of key items and given their approval. He reminded members that the expected percentage target for the budget at this time of year should be 66.67%

##### Facilities

Income was shown to be at 88.58% of its target.

The RFO highlighted that without the S106 spend on the play area, the expenditure would show 59.2% however the recently approved purchase of additional storage facilities would bring the expenditure to expected levels and so the underspend monitoring was no longer a concern.

##### Finance, Governance and Personnel

Total expenditure was at 60.87% although members allowances had not yet been paid.

Members discussed and noted that unlike the members allowances which were paid in a lump sum, the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's allowances were drawn down as needed. Members were reminded that in accordance with the scheme, they would need to opt out of the payment if they did not wish to receive it. The RFO added additional information relating to how the payment would be taxed at a basic rate and that it was up to each member who claimed it to ensure if this was correct or not.

Also in relation to the allowances, members noted that any member who only served for part of the year was eligible for a pro-rata amount. Members also discussed their previous decision for unclaimed allowances to be put into a ring-fenced area to supplement the existing Community Grants or to provide a new pot of funds for community support. It was believed that a detailed proposition that would withstand scrutiny by a general audit was required to ensure the created fund was not in breach of any financial regulations.

Cllr Mary Wenman **PROPOSED** that the Acting Clerk and RFO examine the feasibility of establishing a system whereby any unclaimed members allowances were placed into a ring-fenced fund for the community, seconded by Cllr David Owens.

In the ensuing vote 11 members voted in favour with 0 against and 0 abstentions. It was therefore **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Acting Clerk and RFO**

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### Regeneration and Community Engagement

Members were asked to note that the total expenditure was at 45.24% but that the expected labour charge attached to the Christmas lighting would bring the total to close to expected levels.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** that the Council follow the advice of One Voice Wales for paying Members Allowances at the end of each council year, seconded by Cllr David Owens

In the ensuing vote 11 members voted in favour with 0 against and 0 abstentions. It was therefore **RESOLVED**.


**ACTION: Acting Clerk and RFO**

### **128. To consider the following planning applications**

Members were informed that the sub-committee had met the previous day, discussed the following applications and made the following recommendations:

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Name and Address of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Application</u>
S/39934	10.12.2019	Richard Stradling - Business & Projects Manager, CCC - Dept of Communities, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen, SA31 1LE	Consent to display an advertisement at Pembrey Country Park, Factory Road, Pembrey SA16 0EJ: The proposed sign is going to be constructed of graduated cut wooden sleepers set side by side at ground level to form a structure that will be approx. 10m wide and 2m at its highest point. The fascia of the sleepers will be smooth to allow for lettering to be fixed to the structure. The wording will read "Croeso: welcome" "Parc Gwledig Pen-bre". The wording will be constructed of powder coated aluminium with 30mm returns. Individual lettering will range in height from 261mm - 515mm and will be white in colour.
Members had no objections and recommended the application be <b>APPROVED</b> , with 11 in favour, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.			
S/39977	17.12.2019	Carmarthenshire County Council - Jonathan Fearn, Parc Myrddin, Richmond Terrace, Carmarthen, SA31 1HQ	The construction of a BMX pump track 130m long, 2m wide at Pembrey Country Park, Factory Road, Pembrey, Llanelli, SA16 0EJ
Members had no objections and recommended the application be <b>APPROVED</b> , with 11 in favour, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.			

An additional application had been received after the agenda had been distributed that was also considered as follows:

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S/39469	13.01.2020	Mr Jonathan Mark Davies 139 Pencoed Road, Burry Port, SA16 0PS	Proposed new build annex
Members had no objections and recommended the application be <b>APPROVED</b> , with 11 in favour, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.			

**ACTION: Projects Manager**

The Sub-Committee had also deferred discussion of a consultation document until the next meeting to allow them to read through it. Discussion concerning arranging for a training session for Councillors was also had, with a decision to defer until the 4 additional Councillors had been appointed to allow their participation.

Members noted that there was no provision within the Standing Orders relating to the process of appointment of Chairs of Sub-Committee's.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the appointment of Cllr Moira Thomas as Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee, the addition of Cllr John Hedley Jones to the Sub-Committee's membership and his appointment as Vice Chair be approved, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou

In the ensuing vote 11 members voted in favour with 0 against and 0 abstentions. The Council therefore **RESOLVED** to accept the proposal.

Members were reminded that if they were unable to attend meetings at any level, they had a responsibility to ensure a substitute went in their place whenever possible.

**129. To receive the County Councillor's report**

Cllr Hugh Shepardson reported that Pembrey Country Park had recently announced the development of a BMX cycle track, although no costings had been released yet, it would be located opposite the ski slope.

He also reported that the budget sessions last week had confirmed the 4.89% increase to the precept although final confirmation of the settlement was yet to be received. He pointed out to members that the County Council had protected all schools budgets.

Members discussed public concerns on child safety and transport to school, highlighting again their concern at the high potential dangers faced by any who was forced to use the A484 as their walking route to school. It was noted that the County Council's position was restricted by the rules and regulations as set by the Welsh Government, and that those would need to change to allow the County Council to alter its stance on the matter.

There was confusion as to what the current policy was with some reporting there had been a reduction in available public bus provision.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** that the Acting Clerk contact the County Council to seek clarification on the current policy, seconded by Cllr Richard Adler.

In the ensuing vote 11 members voted in favour with 0 against and 0 abstentions, it was therefore **RESOLVED** to accept the proposal.

**ACTION: Acting Clerk**

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** that the Town Council congratulate the County Council and the County members for Pembrey Ward for the level of investment in Pembrey Country Park, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas.

In the ensuing vote 10 members voted in favour with 0 against and 1 abstention. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to accept the proposal.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson stated his abstention was due to his being one of the County members for Pembrey Ward.

**130. To receive the Mayor's report.**

The Mayor stated that following on from the previous meeting he had not attended any official functions in his role as the Mayor due to the Christmas and New Year break, excepting his appearance on a segment for Heno on S4C relating to the launch concert for the Town of Culture 2020.

**131. To receive reports by elected members as Council Representatives on outside bodies.**

Cllr Michael Theodoulou reported on a recent meeting of the One Voice Wales joint Committee meeting with the Wales Local Government Association. They had discussed the impact of cutbacks on services and which services County Councils may seek to pass responsibility to Town and Community Councils. It was noted that the Town Council may need to assess what it believed it could deliver on behalf of the community should it need to.

Members discussed the potential impacts on the ratepayers and how important the continued provision of services was important to many members of the community.

**132. Approval of the 2020/21 budget.**

The RFO distributed copies of the updated budget documents.

Members were informed that each Committee had looked at their budgets following the first draft and had followed the advice of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee to reduce the increase as much as possible to limit the impact on the rate payer. Over subsequent adjustments the Committees had reduced the increase to 13.4%. Members heard that a Chairs meeting had been held to discuss the matter and it was decided to try and reduce this to a single figure increase if possible. The RFO had drafted an option which limited the increase to 9.9% but which required the 3.5% difference to be drawn from reserves, which would lower the reserve level from 4.35 months to 4.02 months. This would equate to a 27p increase a week to a Band D property.

The recommendation of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee was to seek a 9.9% increase with the remainder to be drawn from reserves.

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Members queried a number of issues, noting that a number of capital improvements had been confirmed within the Special Projects budget which would be funded from the sale of Copperworks and the loan, which wouldn't impact on the precept. There was concern that the recommendation would put the Council at greater risk should an unexpected issue arise during the next financial year. There was detailed discussion of overcommitting the Council to projects which could overrun the remaining term of the Council, although the historic lack of investment in Council facilities was noted by all, many felt an increase to the precept would potentially tie the next Council to projects this Council had selected.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou proposed an amendment, to keep the 13.4% increase, but this was not seconded by anyone.

The Council then voted on the recommendation from the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee to accept the budget for 2020/21 with a 9.9% precept increase with the difference to be drawn from reserves.

In the ensuing vote 10 members voted in favour with 1 against and 0 abstentions. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to accept the budget for 2020/21.

**ACTION: RFO**

Members noted that the fees and charges relating to Dolau Fan had not been set yet and an update would be brought before the Council in February for approval.

**133. Consideration of the Biodiversity report as the basis for the Town Council's Annual Report**

Members noted that it was a requirement by law to produce an Annual Report, although there was little available guidance as to how it should be presented. The Resilience Community Forum had been tasked with drafting a document which they had done. It was also noted that this was a work in process which could be improved over the coming years. The report needed approval by the Town Council to meet the legal requirement.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the report be accepted provided a requested addition of mention of the Town Council's role in managing Dolau Fan cemetery and maintenance of public rights of way, seconded by Cllr Richard Adler.

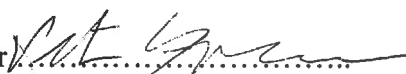
In the ensuing vote 11 members voted in favour with 0 against and 0 abstentions. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report be accepted.

**ACTION: Acting Clerk and RFO**

**134. To note the following minutes for information:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	Facilities and Assets Committee
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** that the minutes be noted, seconded by Cllr Richard Adler.

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In the ensuing vote members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal and it was therefore **RESOLVED** to note the minutes.

**135. To consider communications received**

One letter had been received earlier in the day from a thankful parent in relation to the efforts of the staff with providing the service of letters to Santa. Each received letter was responded to personally with the final letter being delivered on Christmas Eve. The thanks contained in the letter were echoed from many compliments that Councillors had received from the public. All members wished for these thanks to the staff to be recorded.

**136. In camera discussions**

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the meeting move to in camera, seconded by Cllr Richard Adler.

In the ensuing vote 11 members voted in favour. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to move the meeting to in camera.

**Ed Davies, Louise Robinson, Kevin Williams and Paul Mann left the meeting 8.30pm**

*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.

137.

a) **To confirm the confidential minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

The minutes of the above meeting were approved.

b) **To note the following confidential minutes**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	Facilities and Assets Committee
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee

Noted.

c) **Update on staffing issues**

Staffing issues were discussed.