

**Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council**

**Ordinary Meeting**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021**  
**Dydd Mercher 20<sup>fed</sup> Ionawr 2021**

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

**Present: Councillor Michael Theodoulou (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillors Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, Robert John, John Hedley Jones, Karen Morris, David Owens, Andrew Phillips, Hugh Shepardson, Moira Thomas, Karen Trimble and Mary Wenman**

**In attendance: Huw Thomas (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer), Shân Loudon (Deputy Clerk), Paul Mann (Cemetery and Facilities Superintendent) Louise Robinson (Community Development Officer), Kevin Williams (Projects Manager) and Ed Davies (Admin Assistant)**

**Absent: Councillors Rachel Evans, Les George and Stephen James.**

**Via videoconference 7.05pm –7.40pm**

Members noted that Cllr Michael Theodoulou would chair the meeting.

**126. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Lisa Mitchell and Bob Walpole.

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

None were made.

**128. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

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

**129. To consider the budget monitoring report**

Members noted that they had received the high-level summary from the Clerk/RFO in advance of the meeting in addition to the usual report. He proceeded to give members the overview based on that summary.

Members noted that the Facilities and Assets Committee budget was at 70.66% of its expenditure, but that some of that would come back once the Section 106 money had been

received, relating to the works to the new Pembrey AFC pitch. This would put it slightly under budget.

The Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee budget was at 71.83% and members noted that most of their expenditure was for annual bills paid at the start of the year.

It was noted that the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee budget was at 68.59% although there were outstanding payments for Christmas lighting to be made.

The net total stood at 60.77% of the budget. The Clerk/RFO stated that this figure was affected by the grant funding received by the Council and that, assuming expenditure remained at the same level for the remainder of the year, the budget was broadly flat.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou that the high-level summary be provided to members for this agenda item. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

**130. To consider the following planning applications, see attached list**

Members heard the following recommendations from the Planning Sub-Committee:

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Site Address</u>	<u>Description of Application</u>
PL/00930	16/12/2020	Penllwyn Isaf Farm, Mountain Road, Pembrey, Burry Port, SA16 0BQ	The proposed development is for the construction of a concrete slurry storage pit
Members raised no objections to the application.			
PL/00082	14/12/2020	Traeth Le, The Links, Pembrey, Burry Port, SA16 0HU	Demolition of existing dwelling that is on the site currently. To be replaced by a new two storey dormer style dwelling of similar size. Proposed work would include new landscaping to the garden and also construction of new garage at rear of the site
Members raised no objections to the application.			
PL/01056	05/01/2021	16, Elkington Road, Burry Port, SA16 0AA	Proposed Dormer extension, along with a single storey rear extension and balcony. And demolition of existing single storey kitchen extension.
Members raised no objections to the application.			
PL/01090	07/01/2021	11 Randell Square, Pembrey, Burry Port, SA16 0TY	Discharge of Condition 4 (Written Scheme of Investigation) on PL/00711 (Proposed domestic garage and workshop)
Following discussion, members concurred with the comments of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust and do not recommend full discharge until the final report has been completed			
PL/01097	07/01/2021	Land at rear of 7 Gwelfor, Burry Port, SA16 0AH	Construction of a single storey holiday chalet

Following a site visit and after studying the plans, it was unclear as to whether the applicant owned the land over which the permeable paving crosses. On question 8 of the application form, “Pedestrian and Vehicle Access, Roads and Rights of Way” it asks: Is a new or altered vehicle or pedestrian access proposed to or from the public highway? To which the applicant has answered No, yet the plan shows the paving crossing a grassed area on which there are signs which indicate it belongs to the County Council to access a cul-de-sac in Llys Llyfrgell. Members felt they had insufficient information and recommend refusal of the application.

In relation to PL/01097 members discussed whether any further detail had since been ascertained without success.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the recommendations of the Planning Sub-Committee be accepted for submission to the Planning Department. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Projects Manager**

### **131. To receive the County Councillor’s report**

Cllr Hugh Shepardson reported three main items as follows:

In relation to budget setting, it was noted that meetings were taking place all week to consider the budget to be set in March. At present an increase of 4.8% was expected from the County Council, with further increases from the emergency services and the Town Council. He advised that a 4.8% increase from the County Council would equate to £53.98 to the annual bill for a band D property.

In relation to the Covid-19 pandemic he stated that as of 4pm there were 429 cases in Pembrey and Burry Port, which was an increase of 300 over the previous six weeks. The rate per 100,000 for Carmarthenshire was currently at 285 while Pembrey and Burry Port’s was at 516.

In response to a query, he stated that he had asked the Chief Executive if there was a known reason for the rise in cases, but that they had not been able to identify any as yet.

Members expressed their concern and speculated that it may be the result of unnecessary congregation as witnessed around the harbour, followed by in home transfer.

In relation to Pembrey School, the panel had now concluded their deliberations and had submitted favourable reports to the County Council and to the Charity Commissioners. The report would now be considered by the Executive Board in due course and the Charity Commissioners had stated that, whilst they had not made a decision on the report, they were more than happy for that report to be considered by the County Council to save time. The County Council would contact the Town Council to formalise the agreement between the Town Council and the school.

Members queried if anything could be done regarding the flooding of the canal path, but it was noted that the weather had been exceptional. At present there had been no conclusion to the dispute over which Council department was responsible for doing the work either.

**132. To receive the Mayor’s report**

Members noted that there was no report in the Mayors absence.

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

Members noted a report sent regarding the work at One Voice Wales.

Members noted that the Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee had attended a Town and County Planning Course earlier in the day, but that much of the information had been unnecessary for the level of their deliberation. The Council would be most involved in the process from 2027 onwards.

**134. Approval of the 2021/22 budget**

The Clerk/RFO informed members that following the further revisions undertaken by each committee he had sent them a document with the updated figures. They showed that at present the precept increase had been brought down to 11.5%. He advised that to reduce the precept to the target of 9.9% would amount to a removal of £8000 from the budget. In response to a query, he stated that he and officers had been through the budget minutely and could not identify any further reductions unless the Council decided not to do some of the work they had budgeted for.

In response to a query regarding the reserves he confirmed that £8000 could be drawn from the Reserves, which were currently at 3.5months of the total budget. The Council policy was to maintain a minimum of three months in reserves.

Members were agreed that in light of the current financial climate and the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, it would be prudent to limit the precept increase as much as possible for residents.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the precept be held at 9.9% and for the remaining amount to make up the difference be drawn from reserves.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou proposed an **AMENDMENT**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman that the precept be held at 9.9% but that the shortfall be made up from grant funding if available in the first instance with the remainder to be drawn from reserves.

Members voted on the amendment first with 11 members voting in favour, 1 in abstention and 0 against. **RESOLVED**

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

**135. Approval of the external auditor report**

Members had received a document outlining the findings of the external auditor report. The Clerk/RFO highlighted that unfortunately the Council had received a qualified report. This was because although they had taken all of the necessary steps to address the issues raised in the report of 2017/18, and evidenced that correct processes had been followed, they had not acknowledged and recorded that during a Council meeting.

Members expressed disappointment to receive the qualified report, which was felt to be unfair as they had not broken any stated rules, only guidelines which used subjective language.

Cllr Andrew Phillips **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards, that the findings of the external auditor report be acknowledged. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Town Clerk**

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee go through the detailed requirements in advance of the next years submission to identify any technicalities. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk**

**136. Approval of the Volunteer Policy (referral from Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee 13/01/21).**

Members had received a copy of the policy in advance of the meeting. Members requested there be inserted a reference to DBS checks being made where necessary.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman, that provided the additional information was included, the Council accept the policy. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: CDO**

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
25 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Special Facilities and Assets Committee
2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020	Facilities and Assets Committee
8 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee
8 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	Chairs Committee
9 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	DRAFT Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards, that the minutes be noted. **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.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John that the meeting move to in-camera. **RESOLVED**.

**138. a) To confirm the confidential minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson, that provided one correction was made, the minutes be accepted as accurate. **RESOLVED**.

**b) Update on staffing matters**

Members noted some advice relating to staffing matters.

**c) To note the following confidential minutes for information:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020	Facilities and Assets Committee
8 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the above minutes be noted. **RESOLVED.**

The meeting ended 7.40pm