

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Ordinary Meeting

Tuesday 30th June 2020

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

Present: Councillor Lisa Mitchell (Mayor)

Councillors Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, Les George, Stephen James, Robert John, John Hedley Jones, Karen Morris, David Owens, Andrew Phillips, Hugh Shephardson, Michael Theodoulou, Moira Thomas, Karen Trimble, Bob Walpole and Mary Wenman

In attendance: Huw Thomas (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer), Shân Loudon (Deputy Clerk), Paul Mann (Cemetery/Facilities Superintendent), Louise Robinson (CDO), Kevil Williams (Projects Manager)

Absent: Cllr Rachel Evans

Via videoconference 11.10am – 12.55pm

24. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Richard Adler.

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

Cllrs Robert John, David Owens and Michael Theodoulou declared an interest in item 12, determination 43 in respect of senior allowances.

Cllr Lisa Mitchell declared an interest in item 12, determination 49 in respect of the Mayor's allowance.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou declared an interest in item 12, determination 50 in respect of the Deputy Mayor's allowance

26. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27th May 2020

Subject to an amendment to page 84, item 11, second and third line change the word "Councillor" to "Town Council", Cllr Bob Walpole proposed that the minutes be accepted seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones. All members were in favour. **RESOLVED**

Action: Deputy Clerk

27. To note the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Friday 5th June 2020

Noted.

28. To receive an update from the Chairs Committee

Cllr Michael Theodoulou reported that the Chairs Committee had met on a number of occasions. The Committee had short listed a candidate for the position of Town Clerk/RFO as well as interviewing and appointing a Deputy Clerk.

Cllr Peter Freeman had attended a remote meeting on 24th June with the community policing team. His report is detailed below:

“Reports were given by Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant Gemma Davies.

A general report was given along with matters specific to the various neighbourhoods. The occurrence of wildfires are being dealt with in cooperation with Fire and other emergency services. A lot of work has taken place to identify and issue warrants to individuals associated with drug misuse. Fly tipping is a problem throughout the neighbourhoods. We were asked that instances of Fly Tipping should be reported to the neighbourhood team for a pattern to be established and acted upon. It was reported that training is taking place and with the conclusion of training we should see an uplift in officers. Questions were invited from participants and I raised some points for the Pembrey and Burry Port community. Numerous complaints have been received regarding altercations between walkers and cyclists along the coastal path and canal walkways. The Police are aware, and they have begun foot patrols. However, as could be expected, people tend to behave when they see a uniform. Patrols will continue and they have been successful in introducing additional signage to advise pedestrians and cyclists.

I again raised the future of the Burry Port Police Station and staffing levels. I was again assured that there are no plans to close the station. Staffing arrangements have been changed to place all officers on a 24-hour rota so there will be accessibility to officers around the clock.

An individual in Burry Port has been going around people's houses uninvited. A Community Protection Notice has been issued to this individual. This allows officers to take appropriate action should he continue. “

It was agreed that Cllr Freeman would circulate contact details to all Councillors.

With regard to fly tipping it was noted that this should be reported to Carmarthenshire County Council.

It was commented that horse riders had been using the canal path, which is not a bridleway. Carmarthenshire County Council will be putting up “no horse riding” signs shortly.

There was discussion about whether Burry Port police station is manned 24 hours. It was proposed by Cllr Mike Theodoulou and seconded by Cllr Les George that the Police Commissioner be asked to attend a meeting of the Town Council to share future plans. All members were in favour. **RESOLVED**

Cllr Peter Freeman noted that a new Superintendent has been assigned to this area, Ifan Charles, and it was agreed to also issue the invitation to him.

Action: Deputy Clerk

29. To consider the following planning applications

The Chair of Planning, Cllr Moira Thomas informed members that one planning application had been received since the agenda had been issued - S/40774. Members of the Planning Sub Committee had discussed this application via email and had no objections. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Moira Thomas and seconded by Cllr Karen Morris that Town Council ratify the decision of the Planning Committee that the application be recommended for approval. All members in favour. **RESOLVED**

Action: Project Manager

30. To receive the County Councillor's report

Cllr Hugh Shepardson provided an update, stating that committees such as Planning, Licensing and some Scrutiny committees were starting to meet again. Libraries in Carmarthenshire are to open with a click and collect service from Wednesday 1st July. Rights of way are reopening. There will be a phased opening for markets. In respect of the Country Park the second phase of opening occurred on 26th June. The outside toilets and the road circuit are now open with the restaurant offering a takeaway service.

With regard to the 14 affordable houses at Garregllwyd, the contractors are now back on site.

It was noted that the Council have not received an update for Burry Port. The Clerk commented that he had previously invited Burry Port County Councillors to either attend meetings or submit an update. After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk contact them again.

Action: Clerk

One councillor asked for an update on Pembrey School. Cllr Shepardson informed members that the Independent Panel had met and drawn up a report which needs to be submitted to the Executive Board.

31. To receive the Mayor's report

Cllr Lisa Mitchell reported that, due to the pandemic, she had not been able to be active in the community but hoped this would change in time. She had however been interviewed by Robert Lloyd from Wales online.

32. To receive reports by elected members as Council representatives on outside bodies

Cllr Michael Theodoulou informed members that he had recently attended a meeting with the Minister for Local Government and Housing, Julie James. A number of items were discussed including the recovery from the current crisis, in which One Voice Wales are involved and the changing role of Town and Community councils. County Councils are under huge pressure, with budgets not increasing to meet demands. Decarbonisation was discussed with the proposal of a small grant scheme, administered by One Voice Wales, to be made available to councils.

A bill is currently with Welsh Government which will require all Town and Community Councils to digitalise. One Voice Wales is being consulted in relation to this. The current legislation that allows Councils to meet remotely will remain in place.

Emphasis is being placed on training and after a 5 year transition period only Town Clerks with an appropriate qualification will be appointed, even for community councils with a very small precept. There is also a move to ensure all Councillors attend training, particularly in respect of finance and planning.

The taxation of councillor allowances is being taken up with the recommendation that they should be tax free.

It was commented that pre lockdown it had been agreed to arrange training on financial matters for members of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee with an invitation to any other Councillors to attend. Once allowed, this training will be organised.

Action: Deputy Clerk

It was also noted that prior to the restrictions planning training had been investigated.

It was commented that throughout the country it is difficult to recruit new councillors. Cllr Theodoulou informed members that the Welsh Government has agreed to invest in a recruitment campaign prior to the next local elections.

33. Consideration of holding future Town Council meetings via video conferencing

It was proposed by Cllr Moira Thomas and seconded by Cllr Karen Morris that the Town Council continue holding meetings remotely via Teams as currently.

However, before a vote took place, Cllr Michael Theodoulou commented that he felt a number of organisations are making limited attempts to go back to normality. It was noted that Burry Port Memorial Hall has sufficient space to allow for members to meet, allowing for social distancing. Technology was discussed and the Clerk informed members that he had been researching this and that meetings could be a combination of those physically present in the hall and those unable to attend dialling in remotely.

It was agreed to hold the July Town Council meeting via Microsoft Teams.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou proposed that the Town Clerk prepare a report prior to the next Town Council meeting providing costings of the equipment required to facilitate remote and physical meetings, seconded by Cllr Stephen James. All in favour. **RESOLVED**

**Action: Clerk to prepare report
Deputy Clerk to note on agenda**

34. To approve the 2019/20 Annual Return

The Clerk took members through the report item by item. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the report be accepted as an accurate record of all transactions. All members were in favour and the Annual Return was duly signed by the RFO. Due to the meeting taking place remotely, the Return was sent to the Mayor for signature. **RESOLVED**

35. To approve the Councillor Allowance Policy for 2020/21

The declarations of interest made at the start of the meeting were reaffirmed.

Cllr David Owens informed members that the Independent Review Panel publish a report every year in February. The policy has been recommended for approval by the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee. It was noted that the policy needs approval at this time as the Mayor's allowance is paid at the start of the financial year.

Determination 42 - a payment of £150, is mandatory and paid at end of year. It was noted that this amount is currently taxed but that this might change in the future.

Determination 43 – senior roles, the Council must make available an annual payment of £500 each to a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 members. It was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr Stephen James that this payment is made available to the Chairs of the Standing Committees, with the proviso that no Chair can receive more than one payment of £500. 13 members voted in favour, with three abstentions due to declarations of interest. **RESOLVED**

Determination 45 and 46 – reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs. Cllr Hugh Shepardson proposed that these determinations be accepted, seconded by Cllr Stephen James. All members voted in favour. **RESOLVED**

Determination 47 – compensation for financial loss. It was proposed by Cllr Stephen James and seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that this determination be accepted. All members voted in favour. **RESOLVED**

Determination 48 – reimbursement of the cost of care. No vote required as mandatory.

Determination 49 – payment to Mayor of up to a maximum of £1,500. Cllr Lisa Mitchell declared an interest. There was discussion relating to the amount to be awarded as it had remained at the same level for a number of years. It was proposed by Cllr Stephen James and seconded by Cllr Hugh Shepardson that the recommendation of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee that a payment of £500 be made to the Mayor at the start of their term be accepted. 14 members voted in favour, with one abstention, due to a declaration of interest and one against. **RESOLVED**

Determination 50 – payment to the Deputy Mayor up to a maximum of £500. Cllr Michael Theodoulou declared an interest in this determination. The recommendation of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee was to recommend rejection of this determination. Cllr Hugh Shepardson proposed acceptance of this recommendation, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris. 15 members voted in favour, with one abstention, due to a declaration of interest. **RESOLVED**

36. Consideration of the formation of a Capital Expenditure Committee

Cllr David Owens informed members that the formation of this committee had been discussed at each of the Standing Committees which had differing views. It could either be a new committee or managed by a current committee. It was noted that it had been previously agreed to keep committees to a minimum, due to staff workload and that there is a committee structure currently in place where the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee look at what should be provided to the community, the Facilities

and Assets Committee look at how these services can be provided and where they can be housed with the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee deciding where the money comes from.

It was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou that capital expenditure be part of the remit of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee. All members were in agreement. **RESOLVED**

Action: Deputy Clerk FGP agenda

37. To note the following minutes for information

Date	Meeting
10 th June 2020 – DRAFT	Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee
15 th June 2020 - DRAFT	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee
14 th May 2020	Chairs Committee

Noted.

A query was raised as to the insurance for the Bowls Club. The Clerk informed members that volunteers who carry out works are covered as if they are employees of the Town Council.

12.50 Cllr Robert John left the meeting.

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

38a) Update on staffing matters

One staffing matter was discussed.

b) To note the following confidential minutes for information

Date	Meeting
15 th June 2020 - DRAFT	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee
14 th May 2020	Chairs Committee

Noted.

The meeting ended at 12.55pm.