

**Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council**

**Ordinary Meeting**

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 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, Robert John, John Hedley Jones, Karen Morris, David Owens, Hugh Shepardson, Michael Theodoulou, Moira Thomas, Karen Trimble, Bob Walpole and Mary Wenman**

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

**Absent: Councillors Rachel Evans and Stephen James**

**Via videoconference 11.00am – 12.40pm**

**39. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Richard Adler and Andrew Phillips.

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

Cllr Les George declared an interest in any item related to the harbour due to his role as Chair of Friends of Burry Port harbour.

**41. To confirm the minutes of the Special meeting held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 10am and the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 11am**

Members had received copies of the minutes of both in advance of the meeting.

In relation to the minutes of the Special meeting of Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 10am, Cllr Hugh Shepardson, seconded by Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** they be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

In the ensuing vote 11 members voted in favour with 0 against and 3 in abstention. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes. The abstentions were caused by those members not being present at the meeting.

In relation to the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 11am, Cllr Hugh Shepardson, seconded by Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** they be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

In the ensuing vote members **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the minutes.

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

The Clerk/ RFO reminded members that each Committee had since received copies of their relevant section of the report in its new format, and briefly outlined it. The new format showed two groups of columns either side of each budget heading, those on the left gave details on the month to date while those on the right gave the year to date. The purpose was to allow the Council greater monitoring and control of each budget.

A number of highlights were picked out for members, including:

- Facilities and Assets – circa £840 of expenditure had been placed in the Cemetery’s General Maintenance budget, which were all related to the Council’s Covid response. Members were asked to note that there was no budget for that spending but that the associated costs may be reallocated in the future.
- Facilities and Assets – Bowls Club expenditure was related to a large sum which covered 6 months of work.
- Total expenditure for Facilities was therefore at 10.4% of the annual budget.

**Cllr Mary Wenman joined the meeting at 11.06am**

- Finance, Governance and Personnel – the budget was currently at 13.11% of its year to date spending, which equated a £5242 positive variance to budget.
- Regeneration and Community Engagement – Christmas lights spending of £1581 was for storage of lights.
- Regeneration and Community Engagement – the £969 spent against the community events budget was for food and other donations to the foodbanks as part of the Councils’ Covid response.
- Net Expenditure was at circa £46000 under budget – mainly due to limited activity.

In closing the Clerk/RFO advised that although this report reflected that the budget was underspent up to the end of May 2020, there had been more spending in the following months which would catch up the difference for the next meeting of the Council.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the report be accepted, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas. Members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour.

**43. To receive an update from any Standing Committee Chair as appropriate**

The Chair of the Facilities and Assets Committee had two updates for members that required action. The first was the need for a decision regarding the opening of Council halls and facilities for public use. The CFS required a date with some lead in time to allow necessary works to take place.

The CFS stated that once the Council decided it was opening its facilities to the public, there would still be restrictions on use, but he would need time to get the necessary signage and equipment ordered and then installed, as well as operational Risk Assessments which he advised would require 2 weeks to do.

The Chair gave his preference for hiring to recommence from the start of September to allow plenty of time to implement the works.

Members discussed the situation and asked the CFS a number of questions, to which he gave the following responses

- Restricted activities included singing and shouting, this would prevent the Choir and Opera from resuming practices.
- To reopen facilities needed standard signage with a variety of information and hand sanitizer units.
- The Risk Assessment preparation and equipment order and delivery would take up the majority of the 2 weeks previously alluded to. Installation would be arranged around the usual working schedule.
- Groups would have to prepare their own Risk Assessments prior to access.
- Most facilities had been deep cleaned prior to the commencement of lockdown, excepting Pembrey Memorial Hall which was in use by the foodbank, a deep clean would follow their eventual departure.
- The required signage gave users advice and guidance of safe use, such as 1 person per toilet facility at a time, regardless of the number of cubicles available.

Members discussed whether or not a circular letter or email should be sent out to users notifying them of the date. Members noted that the operational Risk Assessments the Council would have in place, were separate to those required of the users as if it did those too, it would be accepting responsibility for those risks and activities. Members noted the need for an addendum to the existing terms and conditions of use to clarify those requirements.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED** that Council facilities would reopen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September and for Officers to contact existing hirers and organisations advising them of this date, their responsibilities if they wish to return and that it was subject to pandemic advice from the Welsh Government, seconded by Cllr David Owens.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the proposal.

**ACTION: CFS**

The CFS had reported that there were issues surrounding the need for a more suitable refuse bin at the top of the Memorial Park. A small one owned by the County Council which had been located on land the Rugby Club leased had recently been removed. The Rugby Club had also confirmed that they didn't have the facility to empty and clean a bin. The CFS advised that the Council would need to purchase a new bin for between £280-£500 and install it on land managed by the Town Council.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the Council accept the recommendation of the CFS and authorise the above action, seconded by Cllr Robert John.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour of the proposal.

**ACTION: CFS**

The Chairman of the Chairs Committee informed members that they had met to set the agenda for this meeting and a few administrative matters around procedural line management of the Clerk, such as sick leave and annual leave.

They had also discussed the issue of the foodbank in Pembrey Memorial Hall. They agreed for a meeting to be arranged with Cetma, the organisation running the operation with himself, the Mayor, the Clerk and CDO in attendance. Cetma stated that they wished to continue to operate the foodbank for Pembrey and Burry Port and had agreed to look for alternative accommodation with a 3-4 week notice period given. They had since reported some good prospects for a new home, which would allow the Council to prepare to get the Hall in order for hire by the public in due course. The group had sufficient funding to operate until the end of March 2021 and had good sources for additional funding to allow them to continue permanently from March. They did not require funding from the Town Council at present and had agreed to meet with the Council regularly to ensure the Council's work in tackling food poverty issues did not run in competition. This meant that there was no need for the Council to consider running a foodbank at present.

The Chairs Committee had also discussed the need for each Standing Committee to meet in August to set their priorities for the remainder of the year to guide officers actions, as at present the whole Council was only reacting to events. Each list of priorities would then be drawn together by the Chairs Committee.

In response to a query the Chairs Committee Chair stated that the line management of the Clerk was its responsibility according to the terms of reference..

The Chair of Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee stated that in addition, each Standing Committee should be using their Budget Monitoring Report to establish a forecast expenditure to the end of the year, to be used in October for budget setting for 2021-22. Members noted they would also need to reassess their income budgets which would be much lower than anticipated. They had also asked the Clerk to look at staffing arrangements.

The Chair of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee stated that in relation to a request to consider if the conversion of the upstairs room of the Memorial Institute to office space was the most appropriate, the Committee had set up a task and finish group to look at possible alternative uses. These would then be considered by the Committee with any necessary recommendations then sent to the Town Council. It was recognised that decisions on the intended use of facilities was not within its remit, however consideration of alternative uses around community engagement, and so their discussions would be around that matter.

Members noted that this item had been expanded from being only an update from the Chairs Committee, as a response to the current situation.

**44. To consider the following planning applications**

There were two applications for consideration. The Chair of the sub-committee requested for the notification and agenda of the regular meetings to be reintroduced and circulated prior to any meeting.

**ACTION: Projects Manager**

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Name and Address of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Application</u>
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Chair/Cadeirydd.....*J. Mitchell*..... date/dyddiad .....

S/40799	02/07/2020	Natural Resources Wales - Miss Toni Henwood, Natural Resources Wales, Plas Gwendraeth, Heol Parc Mawr, Cross Hands, Llanelli SA14 6RE	Create frontal dune notches, these notches will be aligned with the prevailing wind and extending landwards into the dune. Strip vegetation from an area of frontal dunes and 3 notches will be created to allow the dune to connect the beach front with the interior of the dunes at Pembrey Burrows and Saltings local nature reserve, Pembrey, SA16 0EJ
S/40809	07/07/2020	M Properties - Mark Vizard, St Margaret's Bungalow, Mill Road, Ely, Cardiff, CF5 4AG	Discharge of Condition 6 (Method Statement - pollution prevention) of S/28746, granted 14/07/2015 (Demolish public house and redevelop site with 6 x 3 bedroom and 4 x 2 bedroom terraced houses) at Sea View public house, Gors Road, Burry Port, SA16 0EL.

In relation to S/40799 members discussed a number of issues. Members noted that at least two historic schemes aimed at managing the dunes had failed and there was much scepticism as to the potential for success from the details before them. It was however noted that none present had direct knowledge or experience of the subject but that one member had knowledge related to historic planning application. Some stated that it was likely that planning officers would have drawn on suitable advice when in discussions with the applicant prior to submission. The Resilience Forum lead stated that this application was related to a nation-wide project on sand dunes and that the Town Council had been approached by them to be informed on the project, something the forum had expressed an interest in so doing.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that the Council recommend the application for approval but to state its reservations regarding success, highlighting historic failures and citing the knowledge of Cllr John Hedley Jones in particular, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman.

In the ensuing vote, 11 members voted in favour, 3 in abstention and 0 against. The Council **RESOLVED** to make its recommendation.

**ACTION: Project Manager**

In relation to application S/40809 members noted that the application related to the developer having met the conditions as set out in a since lapsed application. Members discussed whether or not their giving a recommendation for approval would constitute approval for that prior application also, but it was not believed to be the case. Members also queried if any of the lapsed application's properties were allocated for social housing or affordable housing, but no detail was known and it was believed that the application was being re-submitted.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that the Council recommend the application for approval, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the proposal unanimously.

**ACTION: Project Manager**

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

Cllr Hugh Shepardson provided his report as follows. The police authority had relocated the dog handling unit to the former helicopter site at Pembrey airfield.

Cllr Moira Thomas stated that she had been sent an email the previous night from the County Councillors for Burry Port giving their report, which she read out as follows.

“The Covid-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge our community has faced in living memory and quite rightly, as Community Representatives, our roles have had to adapt to ones we wouldn't normally carry out from places we wouldn't normally work from.

The focus on the health and livelihoods of our residents has taken precedence over other issues that concern them as we strive to reach something that once again will resemble normality.

Over the last few months we have been involved in:

**Development Sites:**

- Liaising between residents and JEHU regarding the Gwdig Development.
- Worked closely with Glanmor Terrace residents on the Eco Housing build including twice stopping work due to the threat of damage to their properties. We are now in the process of agreeing a more suitable method.

**The Foodbank:** It has been very successful and our wholehearted thanks goes out to all donors, volunteers and to the Officers and Staff from the Town Council who have all helped with this success.

**Collections:** Through the Foodbank we have also co-ordinated for those shielding. Prescription pick ups from Glangwili Hospital and local pharmacies, as well as shopping and the volunteers have also stayed for a chat when invited to by those living on their own.

**Friends of Burry Port Harbour:** We've been liaising between Carmarthenshire County Council and the Marine Group to get information for a FoBPH information request, which the Chairman and Secretary have thanked us for our efforts.

**Marine Group:** We've been informed that the new dredger is at its trial stage. After this a Certificate of Authorisation will be sought to allow it to be used commercially.

**Former Windsor Site:** Although the Planning Application was about to run out, due to the fact that the owner had commenced demolition, he secured permission for 10 dwellings in perpetuity.

This pandemic has kept us busy over the last few months through dealing with more varied and contrasting individual concerns, as well as other issues which we cannot expand on due to their sensitive nature and as prescribed by the Data Protection Act, 1998.”

Members discussed the report, with many feeling the proper route for such correspondence should be via the office and Clerk rather than a member, and disappointment that the report was not given personally. The Clerk stated that an invitation had been sent to both the

County Councillors on 9<sup>th</sup> July for them to attend this meeting and that he had offered to move the relevant item to the start. Members expressed frustration at not being able to question their representatives.

There were many upset that the report did not mention the lack of toilet facilities around the harbour at present and the negative impact this was having on the residents, tourists and environment, with report of some resorting to use the dunes. Many noted some inconsistency from the County Council on the application of their toilet strategy with some communities receiving greater financial investment and support, where their tourism levels were recognised. There were calls to make the case to the Council as to the necessity of the facilities, temporary or otherwise, at Burry Port. Concern was also raised at the removal of a bin near to the beach at Tywyn Bach and an increase in litter, and at the increasing use of the harbourside car park by camper vans overnight.

In relation to overnight camping at the harbour the Clerk confirmed that the nearest toilet facilities for them to use was the station toilets which were left in a very poor state by Monday mornings as a result. Members discussed the need for signage to discourage them from emptying their camping waste in public toilets as it was not fair to other users. It was also noted that with the restrictions on use of existing facilities within pubs and restaurants, public facilities were needed even more in the present situation.

Members discussed the options open to the Council for tackling this issue. Cllr Mary Wenman **PROPOSED** that the Clerk prepare and send a letter to the Chief Executive, the Cabinet and County Councillors, outlining the case for making improvements to the provision of toilets at Burry Port harbour, seconded by Cllr Les George.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk**

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

The Mayor reported that with many restrictions still in place there had not been much for her to attend. She had nominated Burry Port RFC and Ty Mair Family Centre as her charities for the year, in recognition of their community support efforts during the Covid crisis. She had registered to take part in Tenovus' Walk the Waterfalls event at the end of August, with raised funds going to the local group.

She reported that she had been invited to attend a police virtual meeting earlier in the week. The police had mostly been dealing with some anti-social behaviour and were still working on a recent incident in Pembrey related to a young child. She gave details of a new community messaging service which informed those registered of crime prevention news and events at [www.DPCM.co.uk](http://www.DPCM.co.uk)

She stated that there was a timeline of events for her to attend, but there was no certainty if they would go ahead at present.

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

There were none to be made

In relation to a request for signage around the harbour by the RNLI, members **AGREED** to refer it to the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee.

**ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

**48. Consideration of holding future Town Council meetings via video conferencing to include consideration of costings**

The Clerk directed members to the document sent out earlier that morning. He highlighted the significant difference in cost which he stated reflected the significant differences between the products on offer. He stated that these had been got to allow members to consider the larger question of if remote meetings would continue in the current method, via a blended approach or otherwise. He reminded them that both options presented may be providing an expensive solution to a short term problem.

Members referred to a previous report to the Council, that the Welsh Government would be making it a legal duty for Town and Community Councils to digitise and provide a blended solution in the future. This would allow those who were otherwise unable to attend in person to participate in meetings; and that members of the press and public could follow proceedings remotely also. The current Minister was understood to view it as an important aspect of improving democracy in Wales.

Members noted that in relation to Covid 19, the advice and guidance from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales all indicated a strong likelihood of an eventual second surge in cases and a return to stricter measures as a result, and therefore a need for meetings to continue in this manner for the foreseeable future. It was felt by some that if there would be a legal duty to make these changes, then the Government would have to make funds available for Councils to adopt them, and so urged restraint on finding a solution just yet.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris for the item to be retained on future agendas until a decision could be taken.

In the ensuing vote 13 members voted in favour with 0 abstentions and 1 against, and the Council therefore **RESOLVED** to defer the item to the next meeting.

**ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

Cllr Peter Freeman stated his vote against was because he felt the Council should digitise its proceedings immediately.

**49. Consideration of the document “Role of Mayor/Deputy Mayor/Chair/Vice Chair”**

The above paper had been circulated with the agenda. After discussion, members agreed that the document be adopted for use by the Town Council. **RESOLVED**

**50. Update on community support**



The CDO reported a number of summer holiday events that she was organising, as a result of the Community Support Task and Finish Group, all of which would be done within the guidance and laws regarding social distancing. These included the following:

- Teddy bears picnic in Memorial Park.
- Sports day in Memorial Park – as schools had not been able to hold their own
- Sandcastle competition with support from RNLI.
- Bike maintenance day

Members heard a request from a member of the public to use the Memorial Hall to make some music recordings for their undergraduate degree, however it was noted that as singing and shouting were prohibited indoors at present, the Council would have to refuse. The Mayor confirmed she would inform the person in question.

**51. To note the following minutes for information**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	Chairs Committee
24 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 - DRAFT	Facilities and Assets Committee
8 <sup>th</sup> July 2020 – DRAFT	Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee
13 <sup>th</sup> July 2020 – DRAFT	Regeneration and Community Engagement Special Committee
15 <sup>th</sup> July 2020 - DRAFT	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the minutes be noted, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole. Members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour.

**52. In camera**

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the meeting move to in camera, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman. In the ensuing vote all members voted in favour and it was **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.

**12.34 Ed Davies left the meeting**

**53a. To confirm the confidential minutes of the Special meeting held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 10am and the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 11am**

It was proposed by Cllr Hugh Shepardson and seconded by Cllr David Owens that the above minutes be approved as an accurate record. All members were in agreement.

**RESOLVED**

**b) Update on staffing matters**

The Clerk updated members on staffing issues.

c) To note the following confidential minutes for information

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	Chairs Committee
24 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 - DRAFT	Facilities and Assets Committee
8 <sup>th</sup> July 2020 – DRAFT	Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee
15 <sup>th</sup> July 2020 - DRAFT	Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee

Noted.

The meeting ended at 12.40pm.

Chair/Cadeirydd.......... date/dyddiad .....