

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee Meeting

Wednesday 8th July 2020

Present: Councillors Michael Theodoulou (Chair), Peter Freeman, Robert John, Lisa Mitchell, Karen Morris (Vice Chair), David Owens, Moira Thomas, Karen Trimble and Mary Wenman

Absent: Councillor Rachel Evans

In attendance: Huw Thomas (Acting Clerk and RFO), Louise Robinson (Community Development Officer), Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant-Minute Taker)

Via Microsoft Teams 11am to 1.05pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Richard Adler, Les George and Bob Walpole

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

None were declared.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10th June 2020

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED** that the Committee resolve to approve the minutes as an accurate account of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Lisa Mitchell. Members agreed unanimously to the proposal and it was **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Admin Assist.

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

Pg 2 – moving Heritage Board budget.

Members noted that this reappointment had been approved during the annual budget setting exercise.

5. Consideration of the Committee's budget monitoring report

Members noted that the RFO had not prepared a report as no money had been spent to date. He clarified that there would likely be information worth including following on from the next Finance, Governance and personnel Committee meeting

6. Consideration of applications received for financial donations

No applications had been received.

The CDO reported that she had received an email that required the attention of the Committee from Marie Curie Trust as a generic request for funds in light of their inability to fundraise.

Members discussed their support for the organisation and its important work in the community, however the Councils policy and regulations prevented them from giving precedence to national organisations unless they can show how the funds would be ringfenced for local use.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that a response be sent inviting them to apply for a grant and to include a copy of Council policy to guide them, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman.

Members **AGREED** unanimously to the proposal.

ACTION: CDO

The CDO updated members that the Dementia Friends Group had been contacted and would get in touch with the Council once they were able to meet again.

7. Update on grants applied for/received

The CDO stated that she and the CFS had been working together on the application to the Places for Nature Grant, to which they were applying for £50,000 for works to 3 parks and some Community Growing Spaces. A recent conversation with the grant officer had suggested that if the application could be submitted in time for their next panel meeting on 15th July, the Council had a very good chance of succeeding as it was currently the only application. She advised that they believed they would have it finished before the end of the week, but that current costs were around £56,000 and before proceeding wanted an indication of whether or not the Council would be prepared to meet the additional costs, and if they should proceed with meeting the earlier deadline.

Members noted that without the sight of the additional costs and project plan they could not give approval. The Clerk and RFO advised that the project costs could be as high or low as required, but that it shouldn't prevent the Council from making the application if it wanted.

Members discussed many aspects of the application, noting information on how the total sum could be spent, and if any match funding options were available. Members noted that the request had been brought forward which was why they had not yet seen a copy of the application. A discussion followed as to who should consider the application before submission if ready in time.

Cllr Lisa Mitchell **PROPOSED** that the application be considered by a Special Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee meeting before submission, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris.

Members agreed unanimously to the proposal and **RESOLVED** to arrange the meeting.

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

8. Update on the community forums and consideration of first year report

A written update on the Resilience forum had been submitted to the Chair who read it out to those present. Members heard that the arrangements for the water vole survey along the canal path were continuing and provided a Risk Assessment was completed and insurance cover put in place, the requirements of the owner, namely the County Council would be met for permission to undertake the survey. The potential benefits of a survey would be to provide greater clarity when considering the nature of any future building developments adjacent to it and any necessary environmental management schemes also. It was confirmed that the survey would be undertaken by volunteers under supervision.

In response to a query the CDO confirmed that the tree planting mentioned in the first year report had taken place in Waun Sidan, with the donated 210 sapling trees and that this had been in

accordance with the requirements of the donation. The scheme could be applied to again once the current Covid 19 crisis was over and members requested for the Resilience Forum to look at doing so.

ACTION: ref to Resilience

There was an update from the Economy forum that, in light of the adversity that 16-24 year olds currently faced for the near future in relation to employment, that they would be seeking to engage with local employers about taking on apprentices also and considering other options too.

The Clerk and RFO stated that the previously approved apprentice position would be going out for advertisement during this week.

Members discussed what the wages for apprentices was and the methods for employers to operate the scheme. The Clerk and RFO advised that he was monitoring Government guidance for potential employment schemes as they were released.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the Committee request for officers to review the number of apprenticeships the Council could host in all areas of its work and report, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas.

Members **AGREED** unanimously to the proposal.

ACTION: Clerk/Deputy Clerk

The CDO updated members that she had contacted the forum members in relation to attempting meetings digitally with around 40% of the responses so far indicating they had the ability to participate. She asked the Committee if they wished to proceed with that number or wait. She advised that it was easy to set up the meetings and that those unable to attend can be updated on proceedings provided the Forum Leads were happy with the situation.

Members **AGREED** unanimously for the CDO to proceed with setting up a schedule of meetings for the Forums.

ACTION: CDO

9. Update on community support task and finish group

Members heard that the Group had met twice and had three recommendations for them to consider.

Foodbanks

It was understood that from September the emergency foodbanks set up by the County Council would no longer be supported financially by them; the group had discussed what role the Town Council could play in ensuring those in the community who needed the service could continue to access it. Members noted that there were two foodbanks in operation within Pembrey and Burry Port at present, with one covering Penbre, Cydweli and Trimsaran, and the other covering Porth Tywyn and Pwll.

The CDO reported that CETMA, who ran the Pembrey foodbank had approached her to ask whether or not the Council would consider hosting their foodbank on a permanent basis, suggesting that a portacabin could be placed on the tennis court at Pembrey Memorial Hall, as they understood that when restrictions were lifted they would no longer be able to use the premises without paying for its use. She had requested certain information from them regarding the operation for the Committee to consider their request, but it had not been received yet.

The CDO also stated that having spoken to the Burry Port foodbank, they had stated that despite the end of County Council financial support in September, it was being well supported and anticipated they would be able to continue for several months beyond that.

It was noted that the group's initial discussions had been based around the Town Council, as a stop gap measure, continuing the running of the Burry Port foodbank until such a time as it was not needed. It was felt that following discussions that the CDO had had with organisations such as the Trussel Trust that the Council would be in a good position to gain their support. The CDO asked members to note that the Trust were prepared to review their previous position of not supporting a foodbank in Burry Port or Pembrey due to their proximity to a foodbank in Llanelli.

Members discussed the matter at length noting both positive and negative comments regarding the foodbanks from the public. Different supplier and support options were also discussed as part of a wider discussion of costs, which were felt likely to be minimal for the Council beyond staff time for administration and to coordinate volunteers if they followed a different course to that of the County Council.

Members were reminded that the Facilities and Assets Committee had taken a decision as part of an emergency response to the Covid crisis, to allow the foodbank to operate in Pembrey Memorial Hall for free, which did not contradict the Council's policies regarding venue hire.

There followed a discussion of whether the Council policy should be to ensure the continuance of a foodbank for the area through its own set up or via a third sector organisation. It was noted that there may be disruptions caused once the Council began its program of works on its facilities with some urging caution as a result. It was noted that a foodbank run by the Council would be restricted to only supporting those from within its wards.

Members requested more information on workload capacity within the Council and predicted costs, with officers to support further discussion by the task and finish group in advance of the next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION: Clerk, CDO

Fruity Friday

Another recommendation from the group was for the Council to set up a scheme to provide 4 portions of fruit every Friday for free to each child that is registered. This scheme was envisaged as a healthy eating initiative and would be open to all during a 7 week period over the summer. It was believed that healthy eating habits for children had been impacted during recent months caused in part by a reduction in exposure to positive eating habit messaging via schools.

The CDO confirmed that it would be possible for families to pick up their fruit from outside of the Memorial Institute and that her conversations with suppliers had suggested it would cost about £1 per head and that they expected to need to cater for an average of 50 children per week during the 7 week period. The expected cost to the Council was estimated to be £500.

Cllr Lisa Mitchell **PROPOSED** that on the basis of the above information the Fruity Friday scheme be set up, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas.

Members agreed unanimously to the proposal and **RESOLVED** to establish the scheme.

ACTION: CDO

Members discussed at length the need to take a holistic approach to tackling the issues faced by the community, with many noting the need to work with other organisations or groups to achieve all

that was needed. Concern was raised by some that the expected schedule of works to council properties may interfere with the delivery of any of the schemes or projects put forward. Some believed that it was preferable to provide the community with what was required as a priority and tackle obstacles to delivery when they arose.

Meals on Wheels

The CDO advised that the suggestion was to trial a 1 day a week service. Members requested greater detail on the costs and systems that would need to be in place for it work and asked the CDO to bring them more details for the next meeting.

ACTION: CDO

The task and finish group members and staff were thanked for their work as it was already proving worthwhile

10. Consideration of the Town Council’s report for the Public Services Board

Copies of the report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Members were very pleased with the contents and congratulated the authors, giving their unanimous endorsement for its submission to the Public Services Board.

ACTION: Clerk

11. Consideration of Town wifi ongoing costs

Members had received a breakdown of the usage of the town wifi previously, with the CDO highlighting that it suggested usage was very low. It was noted that the Council was coming to the end of the initial contract and needed to make a decision as to what it did for the future.

Members noted that although they were not currently getting value for money but they had not put in much effort to make it work with the community and local businesses as an asset for all their benefits.

Members **AGREED** unanimously for the Clerk and RFO to produce a report on what was needed to make it a useful resource.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

12. Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding

Members discussed whether or not the Community Forums should be charged for usage of Council facilities, although it was believed that prior to them being constituted, they were loosely Council groups and so shouldn’t be charged. It was believed that their being constituted would be within 2 years of them having been formed. After that time, a decision would be needed on whether they should be charged or not. Members noted that the forums and all voluntary organisations were able to apply for funding from this Committee’s grants to pay for a meeting venue if necessary.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that provided the typographical errors were corrected the Memorandum be approved, seconded by Cllr David Owens.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously in favour.

ACTION: CDO

13. Any other urgent business at the discretion of the Chair

Members wished to discuss that as 6 months had passed since the Council decision to renovate the upstairs room of the Memorial Institute, whether it was still the correct course of action to seek to install the Council offices there.

The need for additional office space was queried given that recent alterations to buildings at the cemetery had already reduced that necessity. It was highlighted that with the increase in projects and potentially additional apprenticeships that the Council was intending to take on, they would need additional office space to deliver that. Some suggested that it may be more appropriate for the Cylch Meithrin to be based upstairs.

Members were asked to note that there was already planning permission in place for conversion of the room into office space and that officers were in the process of taking the work out to tender. A halt in the process would cause delays and potentially additional costs. Some members were concerned at the public perception of the Council undertaking such a building project in the current climate. Members noted that the Clerk had been asked to provide a report to the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee on the options for accommodating existing staff.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to proceed beyond 2 hours, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris.

Members **AGREED** unanimously

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED** that a referral be made to the Town Council to review its decision on the renovation works to the upstairs room of the Memorial Institute and for the current proposal to be put on hold, seconded by Cllr David Owens.

In the ensuing vote 7 members voted in favour with 1 against and 1 abstention.

ACTION: Ref to Town Council

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED** that the meeting move in camera to allow decisions to be taken, seconded by Cllr Lisa Mitchell.

Members **AGREED** unanimously to the proposal.

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.

14. To consider the Schedule of accounts

No schedule had been produced as there had been no payments.

15. Consideration of staffing matters

None

Members requested a referral to the Facilities and Assets Committee a query on available space in the Bowls Club facility.

ACTION: Ref to Facilities

Meeting ended 13.05