

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee Special Meeting

Wednesday 9th December 2020
Dydd Mercher 9^{fed} Rhagfyr 2020

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

Present: Councillors Michael Theodoulou (Chair), Peter Freeman, Les George, Robert John, Lisa Mitchell (arr. 7pm), Karen Morris, David Owens, Moira Thomas, Karen Trimble, Mary Wenman and Bob Walpole.

Absent: Councillor Rachel Evans

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

Via Microsoft Teams 6.30pm to 8.07pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

None had been received.

2. 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 Burry Port harbour.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11th November 2020.

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

None were raised.

5. Consideration of the Committee's budget monitoring report

Members **AGREED** to discuss their budget setting priorities for 21/22 alongside the report so as to guide the Clerk/RFO on where adjustments to the next budget draft could be made.

The Clerk/RFO guided members through the exceptions of the report, highlighting the following:

- the first part payment for the Christmas lighting had been made.
- With the introduction of a new line for Community support, the costs associated with that had now been transferred from the Community Events line. Doing so created a credit in the report but the totals remained the same.

- The budget total was at 45%, while its target for the 7th month is 58% and so it was under the revised budget.

Members agreed that they should focus their revisions on those new lines that they had agreed to introduce before moving on to existing lines. They also agreed to consider whether or not it was now appropriate to consider including a budget for income.

Members were **AGREED** that the Clerk should consider their discussions during the remaining items on the agenda when redrafting the budget for 21/22 also.

6. Consideration of applications received for financial donations

None had been received.

7. Update on grants applied for/received

A paper had been distributed to all members and its contents were noted.

8. Update from community forums

Members had received a pdf report from a number of the forums in the previous week. The CDO also confirmed that a report for the Joint Forum had been sent prior to the commencement of this meeting, and that the Health Forum had met on the 8th December and that their report had been sent out via email to all members later on that same day.

Members noted all of the received reports.

Members noted that there may be opportunities for the Economy and Resilience Forums to work together on the idea of Local Vouchers and a Circular Economy.

In response to a query the CDO confirmed that the CFS had applied to two sources for free tree saplings for planting.

Members **AGREED** to consider item 15 next as any decision on it may impact other items.

15. Consideration of strategy for responding to the COVID-19 crisis

Members discussed the contents of a paper that had been distributed to each of them. Some expressed concerns at the Committee and Council taking on too much work following discussions at other recent Council meetings about the volume of work faced by staff, although it was noted that the report suggested possible areas of activity. It was noted that some of the items on the list would be duplicating services available to the community already via other bodies and the Council should avoid that where possible and seek to signpost instead. It was also noted that the Health Forum had started looking at some of these issues too.

Members noted that the Chairs Committee had discussed the principle of the Council not seeking to take on additional work while it had such an extensive workload and so had asked the Clerk to provide the Council with an assessment of resources to be able to fulfil the workload schedule. It may therefore not be pertinent to consider this document without that information.

Some members expressed concern that the Council may be preparing for a worst case scenario that may not play out and that too much was unknown for firm commitments to be made now.

Cllr Mary Wenman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Les George that a list of contact details of organisations and bodies who could provide support for the vulnerable and those affected by restrictions from Covid-19, on the website. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: CDO

Cllr Lisa Mitchell arrived at 7pm

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that consideration of this paper be deferred until January or when the Clerk/RFO had provided their update on staff requirements. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

9. Update on community support

Members were informed of a suggestion for a “pledge” scheme, whereby members of the community would be asked to pledge their time, or to do particular tasks for others in the community as a means of providing support to each other.

Members discussed the workload impact of the scheme in relation to the previous item. Members also discussed whether or not the community support working group was still needed while the report from the Clerk/RFO on staff requirements to meet existing workload was awaited. Many members felt that the group had generated a number of useful ideas and initiatives to the benefit of the community and that although there would be a pause on implementing new schemes, there was worth in generating ideas.

The Clerk/RFO reminded members that the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic was already included in the list of 21 projects.

Cllr Lisa Mitchel **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole that the community support group continue to meet as at present.

Cllr David Owens proposed an **AMENDMENT**, seconded by Cllr Les George that the community support group continue to meet as at present but that any idea or initiative they generate has to be evaluated against staff resources.

Members voted on the amendment firstly and returned a unanimous verdict in favour.

RESOLVED.

ACTION: CDO

10. Consideration of Kickstart scheme placements

Members noted the paper that had been distributed previously. It proposed that the Council should agree to take on several placements, with 2 being based underneath the CDO’s responsibility. It was clarified that the UK Government paid their wages and NI contributions and that the Council would receive a £1500 grant per placement to cover their training and other costs which would be for a maximum of 6 months. The Gateway employer for the scheme will be from Carmarthenshire County Council and applicants will be found by Job Centre Plus.

Members queried whether the CDO had sufficient time to take on the mentoring and oversight of 2 placements. The CDO stated that in conversation with colleagues in the office they believed the

placements would be undertaking tasks she currently did and so would likely free her up to do more work.

The CDO also confirmed that assessment would be undertaken by her and in conjunction with a mentor from the coordinating body at the Department for Work and Pensions and that the placements would start once the Department for Work and Pensions gave the go ahead.

Cllr Lisa Mitchell **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the 2 placements be approved.

In the ensuing vote 10 voted in favour with 1 abstention and 0 against. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: CDO

11. Consideration of extending Christmas lights (referral from Town Council 18/11/20)

Members discussed this item noting that it was too late to do this for Christmas 2020. Some members wished to consider extending the lights for the year following but it was noted that there would not be sufficient budget unless it was accounted for in the budget for 21/22. Members discussed the need for a costing for the suggested extension, and how long it would take to find out.

Cllr Lisa Mitchell **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas that the issue be looked at in advance of Christmas 2021 and to use any budget underspend if possible. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk

12. Consideration of Town Council website

As requested the CDO had provided members with a report and estimated costs for a new website to ensure it met all of the accessibility requirements. It was noted that it would be two websites, one for the main information and another for community engagement. It was noted that the new website would be easier to manage by staff and had better tools and facilities for the Council to make use of. There would also likely be a reduction in the cost of the domain charges.

Members discussed the benefits to efficiency in the office and for community access to information.

The Clerk/RFO advised that there was no budget for this however there were some possibilities for virement if members wished to proceed.

Cllr Lisa Mitchell **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas that the costs for a new website be included in the budget for 21/22. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

13. Consideration of planted Christmas trees in preparation for Christmas 2021 (planted in January 2021)

Members were informed of the costs to purchase Christmas trees for planting in January 2021, so as not to have to purchase new cut trees every year for the Christmas display. They would be mature trees to ensure they were impressive for display by Christmas 2021 and afterwards.

Members discussed the environmental and financial benefits of the investment.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman that the Committee approve the planting Christmas trees in January 2021. **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: CDO

Members asked the CDO to speak with the CFS on potential locations for a discussion to be held during the January Committee meeting.

14. Consideration of assessing staff costs for events and projects for inclusion in this Committee's budgets

Members discussed the referred matter in detail, noting that at present, maintenance staff were taken away from their normal duties to provide assistance and technical work for events. This created an impediment to the delivery of their work schedule and could result in delays. It was noted that detailed projection of the staffing requirements for events was not yet known as the pandemic would impact on an unknown number of events.

Members noted that they had previously agreed to the establishment of an events team of part-time staff but that this had been put on hold due to the pandemic.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that each event planned, should incorporate an assessment of staffing requirements. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: CDO

15. Consideration of strategy for responding to the COVID-19 crisis

See above.

16. Consideration of Town of Culture 2021 programme

Members noted the list that had been distributed in advance, in particular that it was based on the planned event list for 2020 with a few small additions to emphasise Welsh culture.

The CDO advised that the estimated costs she had budgeted for were generous and that she had made income projections were very low. A decision had been taken previously to use the £13,000 events budget to deliver this programme for 2020 and she recommended the same action be taken again. In total there would be 12 main events through the year with a few existing smaller activities that would be branded as part of it.

The Clerk/RFO advised that he was happy to incorporate the proposed income into the budget as if the events happened there would be an income, while if not there would be no expenditure. He also confirmed that given previous discussions he would produce that report on staffing resources urgently to ensure members were happy for this programme to be delivered.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Lisa Mitchell that the list be approved provided it met the Clerk/RFO's satisfaction on staff resources and that the Committee monitor and review each event. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: CDO

17. To consider any referred matters (if any)

Members noted the papers discussed at the recent Chairs Committee meeting and their decision to accept them.

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

None were raised.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Lisa Mitchell that the meeting proceed in camera. **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.

19. To confirm the confidential minutes of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11th November 2020

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED.**

20. To consider the schedule of accounts

Members noted the schedule.

The meeting ended at 8.07pm