

**Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council**

**Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee Special Meeting**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021**  
**Dydd Mercher 10<sup>fed</sup> Chwefror 2021**

**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, Karen Morris, David Owens, Moira Thomas, Karen Trimble, Bob Walpole and Mary Wenman.**

**Absent: Councillors 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 Zoom 10am to 12.20pm**

**1. To receive apologies for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Lisa Mitchell.

Cllrs David Owens and Les George stated they would have to leave the meeting before 11.30am.

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

Members requested that the documentation received via email relating to agenda items 6 and 11 should not be considered at this meeting as they had been received too late to be given proper consideration. Members discussed whether such items could be considered under agenda item 17 if they were urgent, however the Clerk/RFO advised that it was not the proper place to be raising items that required a decision.

Members unanimously **AGREED** for the two grant applications received and the item relating to the Food Forward scheme, to be referred to the Town Council Ordinary Meeting for consideration as it would meet the following week. **RESOLVED.**

Cllrs Michael Theodoulou and Peter Freeman declared an interest in relation to agenda item 11 due to their links with CBSA, and therefore their abstention in the above decision.

Cllr David Owens declared an interest in relation to the grant application from Burry Port RFC, due to his links with that organisation, and therefore his abstention in the above decision.

Cllr Les George declared an interest in any item relating to Burry Port Harbour.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

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

Cllrs Les George and Karen Trimble abstained from voting as they were not present in the meeting.

**4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes.**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Consideration of the Committee's budget monitoring report.**

Members had received a copy of the report in advance of the meeting and were guided through the highlighted items by the Clerk/RFO as follows:

- Income – this income had been generated by the sale of Christmas lunches and other meals provided by the Meals on Wheels service. There had also been some donations from the community towards the Christmas hampers initiative and a grant received from In This Together for the same.
- Expenditure – materials for the construction of the sleigh that had not been used had already been purchased. He confirmed that the sleigh would be stored for future use.
- Expenditure – there was a capital cost held under community support for the purchase of equipment for the preparation of the meals for the Meals on Wheels service.

The Clerk/RFO stated that a number of the expenditure items were partially covered by grant funding, and that left the overall budget at 61.5% which made it under budget. He confirmed that excepting any virements that were requested or considered, any remaining amounts would be added to the reserves at the end of the year.

In response to a query the Clerk/RFO confirmed that the high percentage shown against the Community Support line was caused as it had not initially been budgeted for but had been included in the revision. He also confirmed that the community contributors to the Christmas hampers initiative had been thanked but that they wished to remain anonymous.

Members requested that the Clerk provide them with a report to show the locations of expenditure of grant income.

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

**6. Consideration of applications received for financial donations**

Members requested that the two applications received overnight be referred to the Town Council meeting for consideration.

**ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

**7. Update on grants applied for/received**

The CDO guided members through her report, stating that £750 had been received from the In This Together fund for use on the Christmas hampers scheme.

She stated that the current grants the Council was benefitting from would come to an end at the end of March, but that she was looking at a number of options from April onwards.

She reported that a request had been received from some members to acknowledge the deaths of Cllrs Richard Adler and Pam Every through the areas benefitting from the Places for Nature grant. The suggestion was to name the orchard being planted the “Every Orchard” and for either or both the Tan y Bryn play area or the “train” in the Burrows Tce play area to be named after Cllr Richard Adler.

Cllr Robert John **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Les George, that provided it met with the families wishes, for all the recommendations to be accepted. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: CDO**

## **8. Update from community forums**

Members were informed that there had been some negative feedback received from non-councillor members of the forums regarding the number of Councillors who form part of the forum. The concern was that, as Councillors are more experienced in expressing their views in the type of meeting, while also harbouring strong views meant they could dominate proceedings.

It was noted that on establishing the forums members had agreed that after a period of 2 years, the position of chair would be opened up to non-councillors also. It was also highlighted that the intended structure included a Community Partnership Board who would sit atop the forums and provide guidance that at present the Town Council had to. It was believed that once that board was set up, the forums would have a clearer identification and concerns regarding its membership could be dealt with by them. It was also noted that one of the intended roles of the CDO was to be the link between the Council and the forums and that it would be possible to have a forum with no councillor on it.

Members discussed what the preferred number of councillors per forum would be, while some highlighted that by setting a limit on the number of Councillors who could attend, it was directly controlling an element of the forums. It was felt by some that the CDO had to advise the forums of the financial implications their decisions may have for the Council. It was also noted that forums would be able to access funding from elsewhere and could undertake whatever work they wished.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou, **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman for the number of councillors on each forum to be limited to three.

In the ensuing vote 7 members voted in favour with 1 against and 2 abstentions. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: CDO**

Members received a verbal update from each forum to accompany the written report. Members noted each and were given an opportunity to ask questions.

The Economy forum reported the Marine Group had presented during the forum meeting, discussing the up-and-coming apprenticeships they have on offer in partnership with Coleg Sir Gar. This will be an amazing opportunity for some young people, leading on to a well-paid career within the Marine industry.

In relation to the resilience forum’s concerns on the rapid decline of the toad population, members were asked to agree for a letter to be sent to the County Council to support the call for it to install

dropped kerbs in the relevant area. The Clerk/RFO agreed to check the planning conditions for recent developments in the area and to include any relevant sections in the response.

Cllr Bob Walpole **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman for a letter of support for the request to be sent to the County Council. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

Members were reminded they did not need to submit a verbal report in addition to a written report, and to specify the issues that required a decision or action from the Council.

It was requested that the issues concerning tree planting raised by the Resilience forum be forwarded to the Environmental Act working group for further discussion.

**ACTION: CFS**

Members **AGREED** to tackle agenda item 13 next so that all members could take part.

### **13. Consideration of Local business vouchers – referral from the Economy Forum**

The CDO described the proposal to members, for the printing of secure vouchers which could be purchased from the Council for spending at local businesses, and that the value could then be reclaimed by the business from the Council. The CDO stated that the new website would allow for the purchase of these vouchers online. The initial run would be of 500 vouchers and would cost £135 to print. She highlighted some of the security features they would have to prevent abuse of the system. She also confirmed that there was strong support from a number of businesses in the community.

In response to a query, the CDO stated that a comprehensive list of all participating businesses would be kept informing those using them and that a poster with a logo would be displayed by the businesses.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman that the Committee approve the purchase of the vouchers. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: CDO**

### **17. Any other urgent business at the discretion of the Chair.**

Members agreed to take one item under this agenda item before continuing with the agenda as set out.

It was noted that the Bowls Club had agreed to meet with the Council on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February. The meeting would allow the Council to establish the position of the club but it was noted that an agreed position for this committee had yet to be set. Members were reminded of the difference between the bowls facility and the Bowls Club and that regardless of the Council's position and relationship with the club there would be an ongoing financial responsibility for the maintenance of the facility which was the responsibility of the Facilities and Assets Committee.

Members were informed that the Council did not have a comparable relationship with any other sports club in the community and that the club's membership had further reduced to about 11 since the start of the pandemic, and so it was unlikely that they would be able to meet their previous financial contributions which had been based on 40 members. It was believed that the club had done little to encourage a growth in membership either prior to or during the pandemic.

Cllr David Owens left the meeting at 11.30am

Members discussed what limitations were placed on the uses of the facility by the terms of the asset transfer. Many expressed a desire to see the site put to greater use to limit the financial impact of the facility to the community. It was made clear to members that they faced a choice in the nature of the relationship with the club, following the incidents during lockdown.

In response to a query, the Clerk/RFO advised that labour costs were a high proportion of green maintenance costs and that the Club's support through volunteering could reduce this. It was noted that this did not take in to account their request for the Council to suspend its charges for the year as a means of subsidising the club.

Members discussed possible changes to the management of the facility on a pay to hire scheme and for the reasonable rate to be set following discussions with the Bowls Club. It was also noted that an agreement could be reached for the Council using the site outside of their playing season.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John for the Council to in principle, continue to support the club and for an arrangement of hiring as they use to be set up. **RESOLVED.**

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

## **9. Update on community support**

The CDO guided members through her report and invited questions. She confirmed that at present, restrictions did not allow users to collect their Meals on Wheels from the Memorial Hall but that it would be permitted once the lockdown rules allow.

The CDO confirmed to members that the service was provided by an enthusiastic and dedicated group of volunteers who were happy to continue with their work.

## **10. Consideration of the document "A strategic plan for responding to the Covid 19 crisis".**

The CDO gave her support to the document and the Clerk/RFO highlighted that some members had raised concerns with him about potential legacy issues for services or projects whose funding was due to run out.

The CDO gave a quick verbal update on the legacy costs currently faced by the Council and stated that she hoped there would be grants available to assist with those costs.

Members discussed whether or not they should wait for the report from the Clerk, but were reassured that any project the Council adopted would have a business and financial plan attached for consideration. It was noted that the effects of the pandemic were wide ranging and would be long lasting and so such a document was valid.

Cllr Bob Walpole **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman that the Committee refer the document to the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council with a recommendation to adopt.

In the ensuing vote 9 members voted in favour with 0 against and 1 abstention. **RESOLVED.**

**ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk**

**11. Consideration of next stage of the Food Forward project**

Members requested that this item be referred to the next Ordinary meeting of the Town Council for consideration.

**ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk**

**12. Consideration of future youth council**

Members were informed of the benefits of creating a youth steering group to work with the Town Council to set up a youth council. Members discussed previous efforts to have youth involvement and potential pitfalls. Members were concerned that between the combined pressures of exams and the pandemic any efforts the Council made would be hampered. It was noted that any steering group would need to incorporate more points of view than those from school youth councils.

The CDO reminded members that the proposal was to seek to establish the steering group from 2022 and that she was already in communication with Ysgol Glan y Mor and some of the primary schools.

Members discussed potential obstacles that may put off participation with an election forthcoming.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Michael Theodoulou for the meeting to continue beyond the 2 hour limit. **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Bob Walpole **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris to accept the recommendation from the submitted report to work towards setting up a youth council from 2022. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: CDO**

Cllr Les George left the meeting at 12.00noon

Members took a short break for 5 minutes. 12.03pm

Meeting resumed 12.08pm

**13. Consideration of Local business vouchers – referral from the Economy Forum**

See above.

**14. Consideration of allocation of Time Credits for volunteers**

Members noted an update from the Flowers working group who had allocated 50% of the budget to annual planting with the remainder for perennial and wildflower planting.

The CDO stated that she was currently receiving 50 time credits per month for allocation to the volunteers which are meant to be given out at 1 credit per hour of voluntary work. It was highlighted that that there were roughly twice that number of hours worked a month and she needed a Committee decision on how to allocate them. She had not yet informed the volunteers of the availability of the time credits.

Members asked about the costs associated with accessing more time credits through the scheme which the CDO agreed to find out but reminded members that it had not been budgeted for. She

also expressed doubt that all the volunteers would accept the vouchers. It was noted that volunteering had a strong tradition in the community even prior to the creation of the time credit scheme.

Member noted they did not have the means to assess each volunteer's situation to determine if they would benefit from the receipt of the credits.

Cllr Karen Morris **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Moira Thomas for the 50 credits to be allocated by the CDO. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: CDO**

**15. Consideration of the renewal of Grant Advisor software**

The CDO informed members that the Council had benefited from £75,000 worth of grants from accessing the software and that she had been able to signpost a number of community groups to available grants also. She stated that the cost of the access to the software had increased slightly to £2,056+VAT for the year.

Cllr Mary Wenman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris for the software access to be renewed. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

Members noted that as the renewal would need to be drawn from the budget for 2020/21 the Clerk/RFO would have to vire the amount from areas of underspend.

**16. To consider any referred matters (if any)**

None were referred.

**17. Any other urgent business at the discretion of the Chair**

Members heard of an organisation known as NEST who gave advice to tenants and homeowners on how to pay their bills and installation improvements that were available to them. It was noted that the Council could decide to participate in the scheme.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman for the company to be invited to present their scheme to this committee for consideration. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: CDO to contact Deputy Clerk for agenda**

Cllr Karen Morris **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole for the meeting to 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.

**18. To consider the schedule of accounts**

Members noted the schedule.

Meeting ended 12.22pm