

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee Meeting

Wednesday 13th January 2021
Dydd Mercher 13^{eg} Ionawr 2021

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

Present: Councillors Michael Theodoulou (Chair), Peter Freeman, Robert John, Karen Morris, David Owens (arr. 10.45am), Moira Thomas, 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 Microsoft Teams 10.35am to 12.46pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Les George, Lisa Mitchell and Karen Trimble.

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

None were made.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee meeting held on Wednesday 9th December 2020

Members requested a correction for accuracy.

Cllr Moira Thomas **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris, that provided the correction was made the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

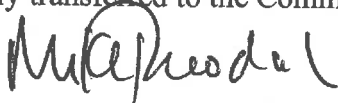
Pg3 item 15 re COVID 19 strategy

Members noted that the item had been deferred until this meeting or when the Clerk/RFO had produced his update on staff requirements. Members agreed to discuss this matter further under the last item of the public meeting agenda.

5. Consideration of the Committee's budget monitoring report

Cllr David Owens arrived 10.45am.

A copy of the report had been distributed to members in advance of the meeting. The Clerk/RFO highlighted that a number of the costs that had been collected in the Events budget had now been appropriately transferred to the Community Support budget.



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The budget was at 51% of its target and so was under budget for what was expected by this time of year.

He confirmed that this report covered up to the end of November and that some of the grant money would not appear on the report until the next meeting.

Cllr Bob Walpole **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Robert John for the report to be accepted.
RESOLVED.

Members agreed to discuss the issues raised recently at other Committee meetings concerning the budget for 21/22.

The Clerk/RFO stated that each other Committee had reviewed their initial budget following the suggestion from the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee for the Council to aim to limit the precept increase. It was noted that the Facilities and Assets Committee had felt this could not be achieved without a reduction of services, although it had made additional adjustments to bring the precept as low as they could manage. In light of this the Clerk/RFO had produced some revised budgetary documents, with the challenge before this Committee to assess where further adjustments could be made to bring that precept increase as low as they could, without reducing services.

The Clerk/RFO highlighted a number of areas for consideration as follows:

Flowers budget

Members were asked to consider if any reduction could be made to this budget.

It was noted that they played a significant role in the mental wellbeing for the community and so a complete removal was out of the question. It was also noted that the Council had recently appointed an apprentice to work on planting with the establishment of a polytunnel. If there was no budget for flowers they may be hampered in their work.

Members discussed several different approaches that could be taken to ensure some floral displays were made without significant costs. It was noted that a preference for perennial planting would see good returns as spending on planting should reduce every year as a result.

Members discussed what would be an appropriate amount. It was noted that there was not sufficient time to request the Cemetery and Facilities Superintendent to enquire about prices.

Cllr Bob Walpole **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Karen Morris that the budget be adjusted to £5000.

Cllr Robert John proposed an **AMENDMENT**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman for the budget to be adjusted to £2,500.

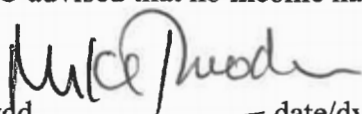
Members voted on the amendment first as follows. 2 in favour, 6 against and 0 abstentions.

Members then voted on the original proposal as follows: 6 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions. The original proposal was therefore **RESOLVED.**

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Income

The Clerk/RFO advised that no income had been budgeted for, which if done would help to offset the increases.

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The CDO advised that her initial estimates had included a £5000-£6000 income as a few of the events should generate an income.

Members noted that although there was an expense associated with arranging events, any income they generated would offset the expenses. Further if the events could not proceed due to restrictions due to COVID 19, then they would not incur an expense either. Following this information members discussed reducing the expenditure while setting a certain amount for income to create a net gain effect. It was felt this would be preferable to a reduction alone without setting an income budget.

Members discussed the Council's obligations in relation to being the Town of Culture for 2021 in relation to this decision.

Cllr David Owens **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole that the budget be reduced to £8000 and that an income budget be set at £2000. **RESOLVED**.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Community grant

Members noted that they increased this budget and discussed whether this was a suitable amount given the other grant pots they had available. The CDO stated that due to the restrictions on face to face meetings, clubs, societies and organisations were not applying for the grants at present.

Members discussed whether the grant scheme could be offset by any unclaimed allowances from members, which the Clerk/RFO confirmed was feasible through virement. Members noted that any decision not to claim their allowance was an individual choice and there was no expectation for them to forgo the payment so as to increase the grant pot.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Mary Wenman that the budget be reduced by £3,900.

Cllr Moira Thomas proposed an **AMENDMENT**, seconded by Cllr David Owens that the budget be reduced to £5000.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the amendment and it was **RESOLVED**.

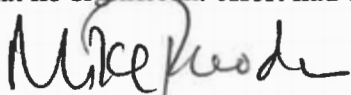
ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Bowls Club

Members noted that although the Bowls Facility was a matter for the Facilities and Assets Committee, the ongoing management and use of it did fall within the remit of this Committee.

Members discussed the current difficulties in the working relationship between the Council and the Club following the Club's breach of lockdown restrictions and subsequent failure to meet with the Council to discuss it. The discussion was far reaching, concerning the number of people who directly benefitted from the Council's continued investment in the facility and the obligations the Council took on when the asset was transferred from the County Council.

It was noted that the initial agreement with the club had been based on the Council receiving the Club fees to offset its running costs of the facility, however their membership had reduced significantly following internal club actions and had shown no signs of increasing prior to 2021. It was noted that no significant effort had been made by the Council to promote the facility or the club.



It was noted that any changes would likely result in an increase to spending in the short term, rather than a reduction and so members **AGREED** not to recommend any changes to this budget.

ACTION: Clerk/RFO

Members also noted the need to agree a future plan with the Club regarding the facility.

The Clerk/RFO confirmed that using the above information he could produce an updated draft document for members to consider at the Town Council Meeting.

Members requested that the Chairs and Vice Chairs have sight of this when it was ready.

6. Consideration of applications received for financial donations

None had been received.

CDO – none come in since agenda gone out.

7. Update on grants applied for/received

The CDO reported that all existing grants were within budget and proceeding according to plan. She had applied to Western Power for and been awarded an additional £750 to go towards the costs of the Senior Citizens Christmas lunch and the Christmas Hampers, which meant that there had been no cost to the Council to deliver those services.

The CDO had also been successful in applying to the Capital Fund for money to purchase a chest freezer and kitchen appliances which would allow the Meals on Wheels team to make more food fresh and so reduce costs going forward.

An update had been received regarding the large grant fund from the Welsh Government, in that the Council had not been successful with its application. The CDO confirmed that she was looking for funding for the individual proposals within that larger one and would update if she was successful with any of them.

The CDO informed members that she was seeking funding for loft insulation for Pembrey Memorial Hall also.

8. Update from community forums

The CDO updated members that the resilience forum had not met in December but would be meeting again, while the Joint Forum would be meeting next week. She had sent out reports from the other forums earlier in the day.

She reported that a recent drive to re-establish contact with lapsed members and to seek new members had been fruitful, and that each forum had ideas to work on for moving forward.

In response to a query, she confirmed that there was a regular schedule for the forum meetings now and gave members the necessary information.

