

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council
Finance and Efficiency Committee Meeting

Monday 11th May 2015

Present: Mayor Cllr Andrew Phillips, Cllrs David Owens, Ken Edwards (substitute for Mrs Shirley Matthews), Mrs Pat Jones, Mrs Mary Wenman and Stephen James.

Officers: Melanie Carroll-Cliffe (Town Clerk), Alan Howells (RFO)

(Former OAP Hall, Memorial Institute, Burry Port 9.30am – 1.10pm)

Cllr Mrs Pat Jones left the meeting at 10.45am and Cllr Mrs Mary Wenman left the meeting at 11.15am.

1. Personal Matters

Apologies were received from Mrs Shirley Matthews.

2. To receive Members declarations of interest

Members confirmed their usual declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th March 2015

The minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2015 were approved as a true record.

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes.

P4 Matters arising from the minutes – P3(6) Budget Monitoring - Former Pembrey School

Cllr David Owens referred to the meeting which had been held with Mr Jonathan Fearn of Carmarthenshire County Council to address these issues and requested if there had been any subsequent update from him. The Clerk advised that the matter had been on the agenda for the last Town Council meeting when an update had been provided, including the limited email response from Mr Fearn. Also, further consideration had been given to this at the last Regeneration and Leisure Committee meeting, including a SWOT analysis of the facility, which had been requested by the Committee,

Cllr David Owens noted that he would have wished for the group of Members who had met with Mr Fearn to be reconvened following a response from him. The Clerk emphasised that the email from Mr Fearn had been received on the day of the last Town Council meeting and had therefore been brought to the attention of all members that evening for their consideration. Furthermore, members had been informed that a SWOT analysis was being prepared, at the request of the Regeneration and Leisure Committee.

Cllr Andrew Phillips noted that the meeting with Mr Fearn had originally been arranged with himself, the Clerk, and the two Pembrey County Council Members. The Pembrey Town Council Members had then also been notified of the meeting by the Clerk.

P4 (10.1) Heritage Trail bid

Cllr Stephen James queried if there had been any more progress with the bid.

The Clerk advised that an update had been provided at the recent Regeneration and Leisure Committee meeting. The initial project enquiry had been positively received, but the Group had been asked to refine and reduce the initial costs of the bid.

Cllr Mrs Mary Wenman noted that more emphasis had been put on heritage for the bid. Following discussions, Cllr Andrew Phillips noted that there is a Group in place preparing and supporting this bid.

The Clerk noted that following a referral from the last Regeneration and Leisure Committee meeting, there was an item for discussion later in the meeting on the Heritage Trail bid.

P5 (10.4) Pembrey Memorial Hall security lighting

Cllr David Owens noted that the security sensor on the lighting at the front of the Hall had been installed. However, he referred to the fact that the light at the back of the Hall appears to stay on. The Clerk stated that she would raise this issue with the TSO.

5. Outstanding Invoices

The Clerk reported that she had been in contact with Ann Jones and the Cylch Meithrin in Pembrey to remind them of their outstanding debt. The Cylch had discharged one invoice but there was still one outstanding.

She further advised that she had been in communication with the Cylch regarding their termination date and would be pursuing this further to establish when the room would be available for re-letting.

6. Budget monitoring (February and March)

The RFO presented the reports for February and March.

The RFO advised that up to the end of March 2015, income and expenditure would be 100%, as these figures would be the basis for the end of year return, subject to end of year adjustments.

The RFO provided comments and explanations on each budget heading as follows:

Income

Overall income is within budget, with some end of year accruals to be included for room rental. It was noted that there had been an increase in bookings for one-off events in the Halls during the last year, following the review of Fees and Charges at the start of the year. It was noted that this is encouraging as it reduces the reliance on annual fees to support the Hall.

The RFO noted that the Footpath Grant had been paid for 2014/15.

Members sought clarification on the Cylch leaving Pembrey Memorial Hall, as once the main hall has been vacated, this will assist in maximising the income of the premises. The Clerk will contact the group leader again regarding this.

Expenditure

Employees Costs - On budget.

Administrative Costs - On budget, with a number of budget headings under spent. The RFO noted that the annual Payroll SLA had been paid for 2014 - 15.

Following a discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Marketing and Promotions budget be included in a separate heading outside the Administration heading for future years.

Civic expenditure - On budget.

Cemetery/footpaths – Currently under budget overall, with electricity slightly over budget.

Hall and Institute – Currently, most budget headings are within budget, but electricity is over budget, but in line with previous years.

The expenditure on materials is over budget. The RFO noted that was due to expenditure on banners and signs promoting the forthcoming entry to Wales in Bloom and Britain in Bloom having been coded to this heading.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that these items of expenditure should be re-coded against the Marketing and Promotion budget.

Hall and Institute Refurbishments – Members were informed that the full grant of £10,422 for refurbishment works had been received from the County Council but this had not been received until the start of the new financial year.

Copperworks - On budget, with a number of budget headings being under spent.

Former Pembrey School - On budget overall, with the Electricity budget overspent. The RFO noted that a rebate was due on this account. It was suggested by a member that the TSO look into the possibility of LED lighting, which is more efficient.

Pembrey Memorial Hall - On budget.

Special Projects – Under budget, with each budget heading being within its allocated budget. Cllr Mrs Mary Wenman requested that the “MUGA” budget heading be changed to “Toddler Park and MUGA” for future reports.

Cllr David Owens queried the expenditure to date to the Youth Club for new equipment from the Earmarked Reserve.

The Clerk noted that only limited expenditure had been presented so far. This item had been discussed at the last Town Council meeting where it was agreed that the Club would be contacted to review their future expenditure plans. The Town Council would also review the allocation to the Youth Club at the end of the 2015/16 financial year.

Net operational expenditure is just over 90%, subject to end of year adjustments and is therefore on budget for the year.

The Clerk updated members that in relation to expenditure, a review of the annual insurance had been undertaken with quotes sought from three providers for this financial year.

Following this, a new provider had been approved. This had resulted not only in an improved policy being obtained, tailor made to the Town Council's requirements, but also a significant saving on the previous year of £6,000 per annum for a three year agreement.

7. **Consideration of proposed new Financial Regulations**

The RFO presented the revised proposed Financial Regulations which had been prepared based on the new One Voice Wales template and incorporated details from the previous Financial Regulations. The Committee went through each of the sections in detail and discussed proposals or amendments to the document.

Following the discussions, it was **RECOMMENDED** that the revised Financial Regulations be presented to the next Town Council's Annual meeting for approval.

8. **Further consideration of the appointment of an internal auditor.**

Following discussion and a request from the Committee at its meeting in March 2015, the RFO noted that three separate quotations had been sought for undertaking the Council's annual internal audit review for 2014-15. The RFO reported the details of the quotations, with one organisation not able to provide the service this year. It was recommended that they be considered again in the future.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Charles and Company, a local accountancy practice, with experience of auditing other community councils in the area be **APPROVED** to undertake the internal audit review for the financial year 2014-15.

9. **To consider/approve the recommendations of the Fees and Charges Sub Group for new charges for the 2015/16 financial year**

The RFO referred to the report and schedules, which had been circulated previously, which included the recommendations of the Fees and Charges Sub Group on changes to the hire fees and charging list for 2015/16 for the following categories:

- Annual rentals for the Halls.
- Ad-hoc rentals for Halls and premises.
- Ad-hoc rentals for additional facilities.
- Cemetery fees for Burry Port Public Cemetery.

Following discussion, it was **RECOMMENDED** that the recommendations of the Fees and Charges Sub Group be presented to the next Town Council meeting for approval.

10. **Consideration of applications for financial donation.**

The RFO noted a number of applications for Financial Assistance which had been received, along with the appropriate completed application forms and financial details. The Committee considered each of these in turn and made the following decisions.

10.1 Burry Port Male Choir

The application related to assistance for the day to day running expenses, provision of music, uniforms, transport, print costs and maintenance of staging equipment and keyboard. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £100.

10.2 Burry Port Male Choir Ladies Association

The application related to assistance for an event to be held on 15th May. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £100.

10.3 Burry Port Opera

The application related to assistance with the cost of performing the annual opera in the Hall. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £600.

10.4 Pembrey and Burry Port Gardening Club

The application related to assistance to support the payment of specialist topic speakers at monthly meetings and in general support of the ever increasing running costs of the annual craft and gardening show. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £200.

10.5 Pembrey and Burry Port Scout Group – Beaver Group

The application related to assistance to provide a balanced programme of activities. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £100.

10.6 Pembrey and Burry Port Scout Group – Cub Group

The application related to assistance to provide a balanced programme of activities. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £100.

10.7 Pembrey and Burry Port Scout Group – Scout Group

The application related to assistance to provide a balanced programme of activities. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £100.

10.8 Pembrey Brownies

The application related to assistance to replenish book supplies, assist with club subscription etc. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £100.

10.9 Pembrey Football Club

The application related to assistance for the upkeep of the pitch and changing rooms. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £200.

10.10 Pembrey Parish Church

The application related to assistance to maintain the public graveyard and grass cutting costs. This was **APPROVED**, with a grant awarded of £100.

11. **Consideration of making a financial donation to the Burry Port Children's Football Festival to be held on 30th /31st May2015**

The Clerk referred to a referral from the Town Council meeting of 18th March 2015 regarding consideration of making a financial donation to the Burry Port Children's Football Festival to be held on 30th /31st May2015, following the recent presentation to the Town Council meeting by the organisers. Following discussion, it was **APPROVED** that a donation be awarded of £200.

12. **Consideration of a request for financial assistance from Cruse Bereavement Care.**

The Clerk referred to the request for financial assistance from the organisation which had been considered previously by the Committee. The Clerk advised that further information had now been received from the organisation, as requested by the Committee which she provided details of. Following discussion, it was **APPROVED** that a donation be awarded of £50.

13. **To consider any referred matters from the other Committees.**

The Clerk reported that there were a number of referrals from the recent Regeneration and Leisure Committee meeting.

13.1 Heritage Trail bid

The Clerk referred to further information from the Heritage Trail group which has been considered by the Regeneration and Leisure Committee. Following the Group's success with its initial project enquiry, it had been asked to refine and reduce the initial costs of the bid. Also it had to strengthen the sustainability aspects of the project.

Following the discussions at the Regeneration and Leisure Committee meeting, the Committee was recommending that the Council support the ongoing maintenance of the display boards and IT up to £500 per annum in the future, if the overall project bid is successful.

Following discussion, it was **APPROVED** that the Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Town Council that if the grant is successful, the Town Council would commit to contributing £500 per annum towards the maintenance of the boards and IT, for the term of the Council.

13.2 Planning Application for the Copperworks site

The Clerk referred to a request for additional expenditure of £403 for an ecological survey required as part of the planning application for the Copperworks site. This expenditure would be in addition to the previous expenditure approved in relation to this application.

Following discussion, the additional expenditure for the ecological survey was **APPROVED**.

13.3 Additional van for maintenance works

The Clerk referred to a request for an additional van over the summer period to support the increasing maintenance work undertaken by the operatives across the Town Council area.

Following discussion on hiring or purchasing a new vehicle, it was proposed and **APPROVED** that the Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Town Council that an additional vehicle be purchased up to a maximum of £10,000 to support the increasing maintenance work. This would be financed initially from the Earmarked reserve, or General reserve if further funding is required.

13.4 Refurbishment of Burry Port Memorial Hall flooring

The Clerk referred to a referral for consideration of refurbishment of the oak flooring in the Memorial Hall. An initial quote of £2,480 had been received to undertake this work.

Following discussion, it was **APPROVED** that the Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Town Council that this expenditure be incurred, subject to the TSO seeking to obtain three quotes for the work.

13.5 Request for a new Clock for Burry Port Memorial Hall

The Clerk referred to a referral for consideration of the purchase of a new Clock for the Memorial Hall. It is estimated that this would cost about £50.

Following discussion, the additional expenditure of £50 for the new clock was **APPROVED**.

14. **Any Other Competent Business**

The Clerk referred to correspondence received recently from the English Methodist Church for financial assistance towards equipment to improve facilities at its hall and improvements to its car park. This had been received after the closing date for the latest round of applications for financial assistance.

Following discussion on this, it was requested that the Clerk write to the Church to request that it submits an application for financial assistance at the next round of applications for financial assistance.