

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council
Facilities and Assets Committee meeting

Wednesday 5th December 2018

Present: Cllrs Michael Theodoulou (Chair), Peter Freeman, Robert John, Mrs Shirley Matthews and David Owens.

In attendance: Kevin Williams (Technical Services Officer)

Minute taker: Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

Town Band representatives: Graham Howe and Spencer Davies

(Senior Citizen's Hall, Memorial Institute, Burry Port 6.30pm –9.15pm)

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Mrs Karen Francis Morris, Mrs Lisa Mitchell and Mrs Moira Thomas.

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

No declarations were made.

3. Discussion with Graham Howe, Chair of Burry Port Town Band and Spencer Davies.

Graham Howe had been unavoidably delayed and so this item would be delayed until his arrival.

4. To confirm the minutes of the Facilities and Assets Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7th November 2018

The Chair informed members that he had produced a list of spelling and typing errors which he would pass to the minute taker for correction.

No other corrections were requested.

The minutes of the Facilities and Assets Committee held on Wednesday 7th November 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

P4 (4) Re: certification of hall users

After a brief discussion on how best to ensure hall users had appropriate certification in place for their events, members **AGREED** for Cllrs Mrs Shirley Matthews and Michael

Theodoulou were to meet with Shan Loudon (Temporary Assistant Town Clerk) on making improvements to the booking procedure.

ACTION: Cllrs Matthews, Theodoulou and Shan Loudon

P6(11) re: notice boards

In response to a query the TSO confirmed that the rough costings had been found through an initial internet search and that confirmation of requirements was expected from a meeting with the Cemetery Superintendent, before he proceeded with searching for quotes. The initial costings had given him a guide budget of £1100-£1200 for the item.

Members discussed the limitations of the Financial Regulations which at present did not adequately allow for internet searches and costings to count towards one of the three required quotes, although it was noted that evidence of trying to collect three quotes could be sufficient. It was recommended that the matter of online purchasing and quotation be referred to the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee for discussion and a solution.

ACTION: FGP Committee

P7(15) re: prioritisation of investment in assets

Members discussed that the cladding on the pine end of one of the Bowls Club buildings was in a desperate state and would need adding to the list of urgent works. It was noted that although there was no guarantee on receiving the Section 106 funds for the roof repair work, if received, it may also be sufficient to cover the pine end repairs as part of that work.

The TSO advised that at present only a temporary fix could be undertaken. In response to a query he stated that he would need to check if any of the Maintenance Staff had the skills to undertake the repair.

Members felt the repair work could be paid for from the maintenance budget.

Members **AGREED** for the TSO to get costings for the required works.

ACTION: TSO

6. To consider the budget monitoring report

Members were informed that the report sent to them in advance of the meeting had been incorrect and copies of the correct report were distributed.

Whilst discussing the document, members were reminded that the budget target for this month should be about 58%.

Overall income was at 62%, and members noted that both Pembrey Hall and the Cemetery were well ahead of budget while the Memorial Hall was behind. It was felt that there would be a need to market the Memorial Hall in Burry Port better for it to meet its target. Members also noted that Christmas events which would not appear until the next report may well have an impact on the percentage target.

Although the payments for the footpath grant and Service Level Agreement for the toilets had not yet been paid, it was noted that they were only paid once a year, near to the end of the financial year.

A further discussion took place in relation to the income targets, with members noting that the income target had been outperformed every year for the past 4-5 years, which some felt reflected the Council's actions in keeping the rates affordable for charities, local groups and individuals.

Expenditure was broken down into sections as follows:

Cemetery/footpaths

It was noted that the overall expenditure was higher than expected at 75% but this was attributed to additional, unexpected purchases on equipment which would not need replacing for many years to come. Members also noted that the figure shown did not include the recent re-surfacing work on the entrance road although it was believed that that expense had been approved from the reserves rather than the budget.

Halls & Institute

It was highlighted that the current expenditure was shown at 30% which was significantly below the target. This low expenditure was attributed to good financial management while the Committee was operating without regular budget reports. Members were informed the Chair would be meeting with the TSO to discuss the allocation of that budget as there were a number of matters to consider for repair or improvement including the ceiling in the Senior Citizens Hall as well as possible subsidence at the rear of the Memorial Institute.

Copperworks

There was an agenda item in relation to the Copperworks so this item was not discussed.

Pembrey Memorial Hall

The overall expenditure was at 63% which was close enough to the target to not be of concern to members, who noted that a number of the maintenance works had been funded from reserves. Members felt that the budget spending was on target but noted there was still a number of works to do.

Parks and Open Spaces

The overall expenditure was shown at 57%. Members noted that a number of maintenance works had been done with funding drawn from reserves and from the asset transfer income. Although the budget spending was on target, it was noted that there was still a large number of works to do.

7. Consideration of budget setting for 2019/20

Members were informed that the Chairs Committee had met on the 4th December to set a strategic plan for the budget setting. They had discussed the need to take out the previously approved loan to cover urgently needed work at a number of the Council's assets.

Graham Howe arrived at 6.50pm

Members were informed that the loan combined with the proceeds of the sale of the Copperworks building would create a fund of between £180,000-£190,000 that could be ring-fenced for Town Council Assets improvements and works, with £4000 ring-fenced for works on parks. The Chairs Committee felt that to simplify the budget setting process, it would be beneficial to deal with the regular budget based on what had previously been done, and to deal with the incomes from the loan and sale as a separate issue.

As Graham Howe had arrived, the Chair halted proceedings with the current agenda item and to go to agenda item 3.

3. Discussion with Graham Howe, Chair of Burry Port Town Band and Spencer Davies.

Members were reminded of a previous discussion between representatives of the Town Band and the Chair in relation to a proposal for a purpose built band room.

Spencer Davies gave a brief introduction, highlighting his role as President and the successes the band have had at competition and the benefit they bring to the community through raising its profile worldwide and improving events held in the community.

Graham Howe addressed the meeting stating the issues the band were encountering with their current premises; the second building on the Copperworks school site, often referred to as "the Band Room". He stated there were concerns regarding the flooring in one section of the Hall, and that at present car parking on practice nights was a major issue in their ongoing relationships with neighbouring residents. Looking ahead at the proposed developments at the neighbouring Copperworks school site, the band believed those parking pressures would only increase, and after previous noise level complaints from neighbouring properties, that they could no longer view the building as sustainable for their intended use.

He stated the bands ambition to grow its international appeal and its local impact through various ongoing projects working in partnership with other organisation and to grow the junior and youth sections, but that the space they have at present will not be large enough to accommodate those plans.

He continued that they had looked at what other town bands had done in setting up a new band room with recording studios, which was a model they were keen to follow, with the aim to make the space and facility partially available to the community.

The Bands aim was to secure a plot of land of 100m² to build a dedicated building with all of the design features needed to reduce the noise impact for neighbours whilst providing modern facilities for the Band and community use. They had identified a plot of land at Pembrey Memorial Hall to the north of the Hall that could suit, although they were open to suggestions.

Graham Howe stated that he had used his work contacts at the Architecture Department of the University of Wales Trinity St David who had expressed a great interest in working with the Band on this project by allowing their students to design the building to meet the design challenges it required, and that he had had positive feedback from Coleg Sir Gâr in one of their lecturers acting as project overseer with their students undertaking some of the project work.

He concluded by stating that the new building would secure the future of the band and that they were confident that, with the links they had already formed, they would be able to secure the required funding to build it, the only issue left to resolve was the land on which to build it.

Members discussed a number of possibilities in relation to extending the use of the building for the community including establishing a café in it as a means of providing income and making some of the space available for hire. Both Graham Howe and Spencer Davies said the band would be receptive to all ideas, although they confirmed there may be a few caveats to the space for hire, due to the need to leave the Bands equipment in the room. It was mooted that there had been calls for the creation of a heritage display space in the area and whether or not there was an opportunity to incorporate plans for that into this building, however members felt there was a risk in trying to include too many varied funding bodies in an application.

Members agreed that in principle they were in favour of the plan and so discussion moved on to finding a suitable place for the building. The plot suggested by Graham Howe was discussed in more detail, with some members raising concerns that the Bands car parking issues at their current premises may not be any better with a building at Pembrey and could in fact be worse.

The TSO suggested that the space currently occupied by the tennis courts could be large enough and could reduce costs on the project as it would not require landscaping, adding that carparking could be extended into the area north of the Hall instead. Members discussed this idea noting that it may be possible for a tennis court to be included in the re-development plans for Pembrey Primary School currently being considered.

A brief discussion was had in relation to the potential redevelopment of the Copperworks Band Room and land, but it was noted that doing so would not alleviate the Bands concern at the lack of parking.

Members were asked directly if in principle they supported the proposal and it was unanimously **AGREED** that they were.

A further discussion took place to raise questions as to if the completed building should be owned by the Town Council or by the Band. All agreed that a flexible approach would be needed. Some of the facilities that had been made available to the Band were discussed including the use of the Grant Finder software through the university, and what the total to apply for should amount to. All present noted that it was likely that funding bodies would not differentiate much between a project of £100,000 and £200,000 but that the final “product”

needed to be of a sufficient standard and benefit. All felt that it would be beneficial to the project if there were representation from Carmarthenshire County Council too.

As a means of progress members **AGREED** to set up a working group composed of around 3 members of the Facilities and Assets Committee, 3 representatives from the Town Band and an as yet unspecified number from Carmarthenshire County Council if they accept the invitation to involved.

ACTION: Temp Assist Town Clerk

All felt it important for Pembrey County Councillors to be involved. It was clarified for Graham Howe and Spencer Davies that this decision would need approval from the Town Council but that the referred matter was going with the endorsement of this Committee.

Graham Howe and Spencer Davies left the meeting 7.27pm

Members returned to dealing with agenda item 7

7. Consideration of budget setting for 2019/20 (continued)

Members briefly discussed some of the main works that would need to be undertaken with the money from the Copperworks sale and the loan income including:

- Heating system improvements at Pembrey Memorial Hall, split into two phases of boiler improvements and pipework improvement.
- Bringing the upstairs room of the Memorial Institute into regular use.
- Dealing with possible subsidence at the pine end of the Burry Port Memorial Hall.
- Roof repairs at numerous properties.

Members proceeded to discuss the budget to cover the remaining expected undertakings of the Committee.

All members agreed that in relation to income, all headings should be kept at the same level with adjustments for inflation, except for the following:

- “Footpath grant” – as this is a set amount of £4,200
- “Service Level Agreement toilets” – as this was a set amount of £2,500
- “Pembrey Memorial Hall” which should be increased to £6,500

Members felt that although they expected the cemetery to exceed its income target, with the introduction of new, revised fees it was not possible to meaningfully adjust the heading further, and so it should be left as it was.

In relation to expenditure members agreed for all headings to be kept at the same level, with adjustments for inflation except for the following

Cemetery

- “General maintenance” increased to £750
- “Vehicle costs” increased to £5,250
- “Equipment replacement” set to £6,300

- “Equipment maintenance and repairs” set to £1,500

Halls and Institute

- “Cleaning costs” increased to £2,500
- “Maintenance and repairs BP Halls” increased to £8,000
- “Maintenance and repairs Institute” decreased to £2,500

Members noted that there was an expectation for County Council rates to increase

Pembrey Memorial Hall

- “Oil” to be set at £1,750
- “Maintenance costs” increase to £3000

Parks and Open Spaces

- “Toddler Park/MUGA” increase to £3750

Members noted that the budget for the Bowls Club should have been included under this heading but had not yet and that the income from the Asset Transfer should be shown under this Committee’s budget also under its own separate heading.

Members also discussed a recent grant application received by the Regeneration and Wellbeing Committee from the Bowls Club for new club shirts, and lawn mower repair and that Committee’s decision to partially award the grant with an agreement to support the Club to raise the remaining funds.

After discussion, all agreed that the budget for “Marketing and Promotion” would be better located under the Public Engagement and Communication Sub-Committee.

A brief discussion took place where it was noted that at present the Council’s labour costs were shown under the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee’s budget. Members were asked to note that it would be beneficial when understanding what its facilities cost, to know how much was being spent on labour too, and with that in mind the labour costs would be shown under the relevant headings for each Committee as part of the plan to create “business groupings” in the budget. With the creation of the new heading of “Staff Costs” it was felt that “Facilities – Training” should be moved from “Parks and Open Spaces” to the new heading as staff training was not limited to one area of Facilities spending.

ACTION: RFO

There followed a brief discussion of what the potential increase to the budget was likely to be. No certainty could be got at present but it was believed to be below 5% and that that would, primarily be to cover the increase in staffing costs. All present felt strongly that the reasons for the precept increase would need to be communicated well with the public.

8. Consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members – Email from One Voice Wales regarding Tree Charter Day

Members **AGREED** that this email would best be dealt with by the Resilient Wales Forum led by Cllr Bob Walpole.

9. To receive a report on meetings of the Chairs Committee

A report was given to members stating that they had been discussing the setting of the budget for 2019/2020 and that an update was going to the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee at its next meeting to look at in detail. The Chairs had discussed their concerns on the Council taking on too much work.

10. To receive a report from the Chair of the Burial Sub-Committee

Members were informed that an engineer had come to the office to update the Cemetery software and to provide training to staff on how to use it. Staff reported that the engineer had advised that the software would operate best over a “sequel server” system to be used in the way they intended to use it. Staff had contacted the Council’s IT support to enquire about setting that up.

11. Update on Asset Transfers

Members were informed that the license to begin construction of the play area had been received and that the process of drawing the Section 106 money was under way as the invoices were beginning to come in. County Councillors had been asked to assist via enquiries to ensure the process went smoothly.

Members were also updated that the lease for the remaining land at Pembrey Memorial Hall was still in process.

12. Update on the sale of Copperworks

As there was sensitive information to be discussed members agreed for this agenda item to be taken in camera at the end of the agenda.

13. Update on the wildflower garden at Dolau Fan Cemetery

As there was sensitive information to be discussed members agreed for this agenda item to be taken in camera at the end of the agenda.

14. To consider an estimate received in respect of works to Bowls Club

As there was sensitive information to be discussed members agreed for this agenda item to be taken in camera at the end of the agenda.

15. Consideration of a letter received from a member of the public regarding park/tree maintenance

Cllr Michael Theodoulou declared an interest as the letter was written by a daughter’s family member. Cllr Peter Freeman took over as Chair for this agenda item.

The TSO gave members a synopsis of the communications received and the situation, stating that a tree growing within the Memorial Park, with limbs that partially extended over a neighbouring property was dropping its leaves into their garden. As the residents of that property were both elderly and one was registered disabled, they were requesting the Council cleared away the leaves, as they no longer felt able to do so themselves, and to cut back the overhanging branches. He advised that after looking into the situation he had established that there was no legal responsibility to do as had been requested, he also highlighted that as there were a large number of properties adjacent to the Memorial Park, if the Council agreed to do this it may have to do the same for all of the properties.

Members discussed whether or not there were any tree preservation orders in place on any of the trees but no certainty could be got. Members discussed that unbalanced cutting of branches may also make the tree unsafe anyway.

The TSO stated that he was in contact with Carmarthenshire County Council to try and establish the management plan and systems they had in place prior to transferring the asset to the Town Council, these included the annual tree surveys. As yet he had not had success in securing the document but he would continue to chase. He stated that the County's policy on these issues was not to cut back any tree limbs unless they were assessed as dangerous or were physically touching adjacent buildings.

ACTION: TSO

Members discussed the issue and **AGREED** for a response to be sent indicating that the Council would not cut the branches back unless they were assessed as dangerous or in physical contact with their building nor would they collect the leaves that fell in their garden and that if they needed assistance, to contact Care and Repair Carmarthenshire, or a similar organisation for help.

ACTION: TSO

16. To consider any referred matters (if any)

Members were informed that a letter concerning the Centenary Fields programme had been referred to this Committee by the Regeneration and Wellbeing Committee but that the closing date for any application had passed.

No other matters had been referred.

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

None was raised.

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.