

(PUBLIC) Minutes of Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council
Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Monday 8th October 2018

Present: Cllrs David Owens (Chair), Mrs Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, John Hedley Jones, Bob Walpole and Mike Theodoulou (substitute for Hugh Shepardson)

Officer: Alan Howells (RFO)

(Burry Port Institute, Burry Port 6.30pm– 10.30pm)

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hugh Shepardson.

2. To receive members' declarations of interest

Cllr. John H Jones declared an interest for agenda item 5 in relation to the Town Band.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th July 2018

The Committee unanimously **APPROVED** the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting as a true record.

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. To consider any outstanding invoices.

The Chair went through issues raised by the publishing of the list of outstanding invoices on the Town Council website and notice boards. He noted that the format of the agenda is the same as it has been historically for a long time. It has only been posted on the noticeboard in an attempt for the Town Council to be more transparent.

Following discussion it was agreed that the issue had been made worse by certain social media websites highlighting this genuine mistake and posting it to a far wider audience. It was determined that individuals should have contacted the Town Council offices if there was an issue.

Cllr. Linda Edwards also read out a letter from Mrs Cathryn Dalziel from the Burry Port Scouts complaining about the Town Council publishing the list on the noticeboard and also raising other issues about the facilities at Pembrey Memorial Hall. He also noted that one organisation on the list had visited the office to note that they had no problem with the publishing of the list.

Cllr Owens noted that the office staff had taken down the notices as soon as the issue was highlighted to the Town Council. He also noted that issue had been reported by the Town Council to the Information Commissioners Officer for consideration. The ICC had verbally confirmed that no breach of the GDPR regulations had been breached by the Town Council in publishing these details on the noticeboard. The ICC will record the Town Council's report, but would not be taking any further action.

He also noted that letters of explanation and apology would be sent out to each of the individuals or organisation on the list.

Following discussion on all the issues the following actions were AGREED:

- Regarding the letter of complaint the Chair of Facilities would provide a response to each of the issues raised.
- That the format of the agenda would be changed in the future so that outstanding invoices would be reported in camera.
- The Chair of Facilities will also review with the office the process for issuing invoices in a timely manner.

Following a discussion on the publishing of details on rental invoices the Committee also discussed disclosure of payees and payment to external suppliers which is included in RFO report at the Town Council meetings.

Following discussion it was AGREED to RECOMMEND to the Town Council that the format of the RFO report be changed to remove the names of payees, but that these details would be reported in camera to each individual committee on a monthly basis.

6. To consider the budget monitoring report

The RFO presented the full budget monitoring report, which would be presented to the next Town Council meeting, which included figures to the end of September.

He noted changes to the format, as agreed in previous meetings and the report also included virements agreed previously.

Following a detailed discussion on each of the committee reports it was noted that overall the Town Council's net expenditure is within budget.

7. Update on Annual Return.

Following a request at the last committee meeting, the RFO noted that he had contacted the External Auditor to explain the exceptional circumstances that meant the Annual Return would be submitted late. He has received a response from the Auditor noting that this would be commented on when their final report is submitted.

The RFO also noted that following his decision to relinquish the temporary Proper Officer post work had not started again on completing the Annual Return. This would also be reported to the next Town Council meeting.

8. Consideration of payment by direct debit for all utility accounts.

Cllr. Theodoulou noted the discussion by the Three Chairs that the Town Council consider setting up direct debits to pay all utility accounts.

Following discussion of item 9 it was AGREED that this proposal was postponed until the review and rationalisation of the utility accounts is completed.

9. Consideration of review of energy supplies.

Cllr. Theodoulou proposed a review of energy suppliers for each of the Town Council's facilities.

The RFO noted that currently the Town Council has three different suppliers due to the historical of accounts, as part of the asset transfer of assets and facilities.

Following discussion it was AGREED that the TSO and RFO review the current energy supply accounts, consolidate these with one supplier and submit a proposal to the committee for a future meeting.

10. Update on bank signatories.

The RFO provided an update on the revision of bank signatories.

The Town Council's list authorised signatory list has been amend to remove ex members and include the three committee chairs on the list. The paperwork has been completed and submitted to the bank for processing.

11. Request for a budget from the Public Engagement and Information Sub Committee.

Cllr. Theodoulou explained that this sub-committee does not have a current budget, as it is a sub-committee under the Three Chair Group. However, at the recent meeting of the sub-committee it was identified that a budget would be needed to progress the work of the sub-committee. Part of this work would be on website development (3,650) and the remainder on public engagement events. It was noted that a budget for this type of work had been created within the Regeneration and Community Service Committee budget.

Following discussion it was proposed that the budget for the website development and 50% of the remainder of the Marketing and public engagement budget be vired for the work of this sub-committee. This proposal was AGREED unanimously.

It was RECOMMENDED that this proposal be referred to the Regeneration Committee for ratification and approval.

12. Consideration of resources required by the RFO to complete budget monitoring reports and year end

Cllr. Theodoulou noted that this issue had been raised at the Facilities meeting in July, due to the RFO covering his post and the temporary Proper Officer post. It had also been raised as budget monitoring reports were required due to the responsibility for budget monitoring changing to individual committees.

He noted that the provision of a budget monitoring report had alleviated these concerns and with the RFO relinquishing the temporary Proper Officer post would allow the RFO more time to commit to his RFO role.

However, following discussions concerns were raised about the continued absence of the Town Clerk and the lack of a temporary Proper Officer.

The RFO noted that he would not be able to commit to additional hours.

Cllr John H Jones noted that the Town Council needs to review its staffing resources, as it was one of the largest community councils in the county.

Cllr. Linda Edwards also queried whether the Town Council needed to review its staffing resources due to the increased initiatives being passed or imposed on the Town Council. Cllr. Freeman agreed that there are staffing issues which need addressing now. Cllr. Bob Walpole queried the use of job share to alleviate the issues.

Following further discussion it was AGREED to consider this item further at the next Committee and Town Council meetings.

13. Consideration of the reports issued by the Auditor General for Wales

The committee noted the reports from the Auditor General, which had been distributed previously. Cllr. Theodoulou noted that these had been noted in the recent One Voice Wales conference.

Following discussion on the reports Cllr Theodoulou agreed to review and prepare a paper on the common themes to report to the next meeting of the committee.

14. Update on Town Council email addresses.

Cllr Owens noted that some Members had updated their e-mail addresses to the new Town Council addresses. He noted that following advice from the Town Council's insurers and One Voice Wales in relation to GDPR requirements it was recommended that all Members need to set up individual Town Council e-mail addresses.

It was noted that the Town Council's IT consultant can provide support in setting these up, either in training session prior to a Town Council meeting or on an individual basis.

Following discussion on this it was AGREED that a reminder would be sent out to all Members and that the issue would be raised again at the next Town Council meeting.

15. Update on Financial Regulations.

Cllr. Theodoulou presented proposals for amendments to the Financial Regulations to update the regulations and bring them in line with Town Council's current practices.

Following detailed discussion of the proposals it was AGREED that the revisions be RECOMMENDED to the new Town Council meeting for approval.

16. To consider referred matters from the other Committees or any other business.

It was noted that there were no further referrals from other committees.

There were three other items raised:

Harbour Playground

Cllr. Theodoulou noted a request from the contractor of the new Harbour Playground for a purchase order to commence the work. However, it was noted that the Town Council's asset transfer of the land was not completed yet, as the County Council needed approval from the Big Lottery for the transfer.

Following discussion on this it was AGREED to proceed with this.

Bowls Club request for Section 106 funding.

Cllr. Theodoulou noted discussions at the last Facilities meeting regarding support for S.106 funding for the Bowls Club for repairs to their “green” pavilion.

Following further discussion it was AGREED that a letter be sent from the Chair of Finance, Personnel and Civic Governance on behalf of the committee to the two Burry Port Town Councillors requesting their support for the proposal of allocating s.106 funding to the Bowls Club pavilion, as this now a Town Council asset transferred facility.

Donations

Cllr Linda Edwards queried why the Regeneration and Community Services Committee now agree donations rather than the Finance Committee. Cllr Owens noted that responsibility for the approval of donations had transferred to the remit of Regeneration and Community Services Committee last year, as it engages more with community groups.