

**Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council**

**Minutes Regeneration and Community Services Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017**

**Present:** Chair Cllr Robert John, Cllrs Peter Freeman, Mrs Lisa Mitchell (Vice Chair), Mrs Karen Francis-Morris, Michael Theodoulou and Mrs Moira Thomas

**In attendance:** Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant-Minute Taker)

Meeting Room, Memorial Hall, Burry Port 9.40am – 11.30pm

**1. Personal matters**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs Pam Every, Stephen James, Mrs Shirley Matthews and Mrs Mary Wenman.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou wished to state that he had received confirmation from the Ombudsman that the complaint the former TSO had made against him was not going to be investigated and he was now free to discuss matters related to it.

Cllr Peter Freeman had also received notification from the Ombudsman that a complaint made against him by a member of the public was not being investigated.

Members **AGREED** to make a recommendation to the Main Council for a refinement to be made to the tea and coffee making facilities for the main office and meeting room, with the suggestion for a “carry-box” kitted out with clean mugs, spoons, and sufficient tea and coffee, etc to provide for visitors and guests.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the Regeneration and Community Services Committee meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 were approved as a true record.

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

P2 (4) [P2 (4) [P3 (9) to consider the possibility of arranging a “Super PACT” meeting]

The members requested confirmation on the dates for the meeting. This will be clarified with the Clerk.

P4 (6) [to consider applications received for financial donations {Dementia Carers’ Support Group}]

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas asked for confirmation that the group had received their funding and training. Again, this will be clarified with the Clerk.

## 5. Consideration of the Committee's Budget Monitoring report

The Chair handed out copies of 2 documents received from the RFO, the Budget Monitoring report up to 30<sup>th</sup> September and a Budget 2018-19 Working Papers document.

There was a discussion about the lack of detail available in the supplied documents and how a number of questions arose from some of the figures. For example the Budget Monitoring report showed £15,417 is spent of £17,000 budgeted for Wales in Bloom, but it also stated that around £11,000 was outstanding. That would mean a total spend of approximately £27,000 putting it well over budget. There was also confusion over whether these figures included the marketing contributions/allocations and other items.

Without these additional details members did not feel able to have worthwhile discussion of the current Budget Monitoring, or to make decisions in relation to budget setting.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou recommended making a referral to the Finance Committee to meet with the RFO to establish better standards for the reports and to agree a new way of doing this for all Committees. Suggested inclusions were, showing virements and breakdown of related payments. All members **AGREED** to the action.

It was also recommended that the Wales in Bloom Sub-Committee should meet with the Clerk and the RFO to produce a detailed account of that Sub-Committees financial position.

In relation to the Budget 2018-19 working papers, the Chair stated that he felt members could not do what was requested of them with the information they had been given. He asked the Committee what resources did the Council need to undertake the work, highlighting the 5% inflation uplift for consideration in their discussion.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou expressed concern that the document appeared to be suggesting that in 2016-17 Council Community Events Outturn was £55,000 yet in 2017-18 only £8,000 was budgeted. Similarly, the Total Expenditure in the Outturn to 31<sup>st</sup> March was £104,672.95 while only £59,000 was budgeted for 2017-18. He felt that these reports raised so many questions, but no answers were forthcoming. He suggested that the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee should meet with the RFO to discuss these figures, get the detail the Committee needed and to arrange to meet the rest of the Committee to produce the plan.

The Chair stated that the key message from the forthcoming changes to the organisation of local government, was that communities needed to accept that if they want services and events in their community then they had to be paid for.

There followed a discussion about staffing levels in relation to those forthcoming changes, with the consensus being it would likely be met with a mixture of increased hours for current staff as well as new staff being employed, with one potential position being a dedicated fundraiser. It was recognised this would be necessary as the Council's portfolio of responsibility increases, and current staff will have less time to do more work.

The Chair stated that the Committee needed to act quickly as the deadline for creating a financial plan was approaching and at present the spreadsheets did not provide enough information for them

to do so. He added that the Well-Being of Future Generations Act gave Council's a skeleton structure to build from but each Committee would need to consult with the community to expand on it. Any additions are likely to lead to an increase in the precept so their approval is paramount.

There followed a discussion about public confusion over the division of responsibility between Town and County Councils and the means available to address that through local press and the Council's Website.

**Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell arrived and joined the meeting.**

#### **6. To consider applications received for financial donations**

The Chair stated that there was nothing to discuss under this agenda item.

#### **7. Update on Britain in Bloom**

It was acknowledged that Pembrey and Burry Port had won a Silver Gilt award at the Britain in Bloom awards, with the Mayor and 3 Councillors in attendance. Congratulations were expressed to the Wales in Bloom Sub-Committee and all who had assisted in the work.

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas informed the Committee that a report had been produced by Wales in Bloom which gave suggested areas of improvement. Some of them are not the responsibility of the Town Council, like the bunkers in Pembrey Country Park, but she added, suggestions could be made to the relevant organisation.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou expressed his amazement at the prestige of the awards ceremony, but asked Councillors to consider the costs of pushing for a gold award versus the benefit to the community. He was concerned that the drive to win awards was blinkering Councillors from pushing for benefits to the community.

Many Councillors felt that the benefits to the community outweighed the costs, with the less tangible benefits of improved emotional and mental health emphasised. It was also discussed that these and other benefits had not been directly assessed.

The Chair stated that as a Council they needed to look to capture the positive feelings and pride gained by the achievement and working them into the future plans of the Council. He added that the information from the report and letter from Wales in Bloom should be published on the website.

#### **8. To consider Christmas lighting/ Christmas Carnival**

The Chair read out a report the Clerk had prepared which outlined what services the Council paid for in relation to Christmas lighting, and clarified that the "string-lighting" was owned by the Council. The company employed to manage and store the lighting was awaiting notification of where to deliver and erect the lighting.

There was a brief discussion about what responsibilities the Council Committees held and what work the Carnival Committee (a voluntary community group) undertook. It was clarified that the Carnival Committee organises the Christmas parade and separate fundraising events, while the Town Council arranges for the Christmas trees and street decorations.

As the Clerk was not present it was **AGREED** for the Chair and Vice Chair to meet with the Clerk to ensure the Town Council's preparations were in hand.

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas asked if it was possible to ask the Clerk for the Wales in Bloom flags and banners, damaged by recent storms, to be fixed while mobile working platforms were in place during the erection of the Christmas lighting.

**Cllrs Mrs Lisa Mitchell and Mrs Karen Francis-Morris left the meeting.**

**9. To consider arrangements for the Senior Citizens' Christmas lunch**

There was a brief discussion during which it was clarified that the organisation of this event was solely the responsibility of the Town Council. It was decided that the Chair and Vice Chair would meet with the Clerk to check the state of the arrangements.

**The Chair moved to deal with item 11 next until all of the Councillors had returned to the meeting.**

**11. To consider the current consultation on the review of electoral arrangements for Carmarthenshire County Council (referral from Town Council meeting 18/10/17)**

The Chair informed the members that a copy of the document prepared by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, was available for any of them to read in the office.

There was a brief discussion of the contents of the document which were described by the Chair as relating to the competency of Town and Community Councils in Wales. It recommended an increase of Town and Community Council responsibilities, provided they met certain criteria, which have been discussed at a previous Town Council meeting. He added that it was apparent the Welsh Government were in disagreement with the Commission over some of their findings.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou had attended the event where the review was presented. He informed the members that the recommended boundary changes only affected the number of County Council seats. Pembrey was a borderline case where it may change from being two seats to one. He reminded members that the Town Council's resolution had been to ask the Clerk to prepare a letter to the Commission to give strong representations over their projected population growth figures.

The Chair stated that the conflict may have stemmed from disagreement over the inclusion of proposed and/or approved developments that have not yet begun.

There followed a discussion about the nature of the devolved responsibilities (from County Council to Town and Community Councils), and that it would benefit Councillors to hear from Rhodri Glyn Thomas (as a member of the review panel). It was suggested he be invited to discuss these matters with them directly.

**Cllrs Mrs Lisa Mitchell and Mrs Karen Francis-Morris returned to the meeting.**

**12. To consider a consultation on the draft guidance prepared by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales on the conduct of community reviews by principal councils (referral from Town Council meeting of 18/10/17)**

**The Chair stated that agenda item 12 had been discussed concurrently with agenda item 11 and so moved to return to agenda item 10.**

**10. To consider a 'Community Care Campaign'**

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell began by stating that this idea had come about after she had suggested the Committee arrange a series of fundraising events to deal with the roof repairs for Pembrey Memorial Hall. At that time a more general report of how the Committee and Council could arrange this was asked for, which she had prepared and which was discussed. In the report she identified four areas for the Council and Committee to look to support the local community, as follows:

- A) food bank appeal
- B) creating opportunities (eg trade training taster events)
- C) clothes bank appeal
- D) protecting heritage

The Chair responded by saying it was necessary for the Committee to follow up on this report as the Council could use this to help it build for the coming years and would allow them to find a mechanism to help people without being condescending.

There followed a discussion about the need for this in the community, and how the Town Council needed to fill the gaps in care being left by the County Council in the forthcoming legislation. It was recognised that great work was being undertaken by volunteer groups and organisations, such as the Carnival Committee, to create a sense of community, and to support charitable causes in the community, but that it was not fair to rely on them solely, that the Town Council should be doing more.

Councillors expressed strong support for the report, highlighting that pride was a serious barrier to helping people before it was too late. They also discussed the dangers of trying to do too much, and that “protecting heritage” may be more relevant to the Facilities Committee and care should be taken to ensure no overlap with the Pembrey and Burry Port Heritage Group.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou **PROPOSED** Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell be installed as Chair of the new “Events” Sub-Committee, which was seconded by Cllr Robert John. Councillors were all **AGREED** on the matter.

The first meeting of the Sub-Committee was arranged for 10am on Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> November.

**13. To consider the consultation on the draft Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan (referral from Town Council meeting of 18/10/17)**

Not all of the members had yet read the Plan as they had not received copies of it. The Chair informed them it was available online, and he gave a brief overview of its contents. He stated that he felt there were a few contradictions within it and it was **AGREED** for the Clerk to send copies of the Plan to all members in advance of the next meeting and for the issue to be put on the agenda. Members were reminded that the Plan addressed issues in the short, mid and long term and they should bear that in mind when considering the Plan.

**14. To consider any referred matter from the other Committees (if any)**

There were no additional referred matters from the other committees.

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell asked if it would be possible to put a date in the diary for a St David’s Day parade and for a discussion to be had with the Chair of the Welsh Sub-Committee.