

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council

Minutes Regeneration and Community Services Committee Meeting

Wednesday 7th March 2018

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

In attendance: Richard Staton (Technical Services Officer), Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant-Minute Taker)

Meeting Room, Memorial Hall, Burry Port 9.35am – 11.25am

1. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs Pam Every and Mrs Shirley Matthews.

A request had been received from both members for the Committee to consider changing the meeting date from the first Wednesday of every month as they both had outside commitments that clashed.

The Committee discussed the request and agreed that with a new structure being finalised there was no need to change the planned meetings, however the new Committees, once populated could decide on their scheduled meetings to accommodate their membership.

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 7th February 2018

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated that in the absence of the Clerk, he had been asked by the Chairs Committee to assist in ensuring the Office continued to operate. Due to the Clerk's absence the minutes, although prepared had not been proofed or edited but a decision was made to share them with members as they were necessary to the meeting.

Admin Assistant left the meeting at 9.40. Minutes taken by Chair in his absence.

P3 (5) [P2 (4) – P7 (11) – to consider entry by the Town Council to the One Voice Wales Innovative Practice National Awards Scheme 2018)

Members asked that they also see a copy of the entry for the Best Heritage Initiative.

ACTION: ADMIN ASSIST

Cllrs Mrs Moira Thomas and Mrs Karen Francis-Morris declared an interest in the matter as members of the Heritage Group.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou informed the Committee that he had written to Graham Davies to arrange a meeting and that that would take place once the issues surrounding the Freedom of Information

(FoI) requests had been resolved. He added that the Chairs Committee had considered the Council's response to the FoI requests and had referred the matter to the Audit Sub-Committee to assess.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou continued; an initial review was undertaken, and the requested correspondence was delivered to Mr Graham Davies by Monday 5th March. An internal investigation commenced, and the Information Commissioner's Office were contacted. The case was now closed. The internal review identified the failures and a meeting had been arranged with Mr Graham Davies to discuss them on the 7th March.

Admin Assistant returned to the meeting 9.50 and resumed taking the minutes.

Members were informed that they would have an opportunity to find out what the identified failures were in a full report prepared for the Town Council at its' next meeting on 21st March.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou confirmed that safeguards against this happening again would be put in place and discussed with the Clerk on her return to work. He clarified that mis-communication had been the root cause of the problem.

P4 (6) consideration of the Committee's Budget Monitoring report

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas stated that she had raised her queries on the "Wales in Bloom Dinners" spending but had yet to receive a response.

Members discussed that they had been requesting the information for a while and would need the following from the RFO by the next meeting of this Committee:

- An accurate breakdown of the spend on flowers
- Separate breakdowns for both of the dinners
- Details of how much and from whom with regards the financial contributions made.

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell suggested that to assist Sub-Committees and working groups with their budget management they be provided with a cover sheet or letter for meetings. Many members indicated their support for such an action.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated that this matter was already referred to the Civic Governance and Personnel Committee but understood there had been unavoidable delays in the arranged meeting with the RFO.

P5 (7) Update on budget setting for the 2018/19 financial year

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas enquired if the Committee was aware that the £17,000 budgeted for the floral budget, included the proposed work on the roundabout and the "hatchet-men" display.

The members discussed this and agreed that they had been aware.

P5 (9) Update on the Community Care Campaign

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas indicated the following corrections (in italics):

- Cllr Mrs Shirley Matthews had agreed to *arrange the table displays and table cloths* for the event
- The Clerk added that the event was being *attended* by the Dementia Carers Group.

- Cllr Mrs Shirley Matthews had agreed to *assist with* the parade

P7 (9) Update on the Community Care Campaign

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas stated that the events had not been put up on the website as had been instructed.

There followed a discussion of this issue and the wider issues of the Council's social media presence. It was noted that the web manager could only do as instructed and needed to be provided with content, however the Council did not have a structure to produce or approve that and the Clerk could not be expected to do that on her own. Some members pointed out that the proposed structure currently under consideration included a Sub-Committee to deal with this and felt that this demonstrated that it needed approval quickly. The Chair also stated that the current guidance on the way Council's deliver on the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was further reinforcing the need for the new structure.

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas also asked if there was any update on the retrieval of ownership of the Council's Facebook page but was informed that there was no update on the appeal as yet.

P7 (13) To consider the response received from Carmarthenshire County Council in relation to the Town Council's concerns regarding bus transportation to Ysgol y Strade

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas asked if the prepared response had been sent yet, but it was not known.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated that apologies had been received from the Dementia Carers' Group, who had meant to be attending and addressing this Committee meeting. He wished to address the recent criticism in the press and at meetings, of the Town Council and its relationship with the Dementia Carers' Group. He wished it to be noted that the Group had received 6 financial grants from this Committee during the last two years, and that the Council had worked with the Group and spent £725 to ensure the Council signage was dementia Friendly.

He continued that the decision to not waive fees for local groups or charities was taken by the whole Council with the support of the Labour members and that it had been taken in conjunction with the improvements to the grant structure. He stated that Cllr Mrs Amanda Fox had been very vocal in her criticisms of the non-waiving of fees but had not mentioned the grants previously awarded nor that her husband was a Trustee of the Dementia Carers' Group.

He stated that this criticism was being directed at a time when attempts were being made to rebuild bridges and working relationships between Councillors and felt that any recent progress made may have been undone.

Cllr Peter Freeman stated that the calls to allow the representative of the Dementia Carers' Group to address the Town Council at its last meeting were barred by the Council's Standing Orders as they approach the Clerk for permission in advance of the meeting. He expressed in strong terms his disapproval of the actions of the Labour members and accused them of using the Dementia Carers Group as a political tool.

In reference to the online article where these criticisms were made, the Chair pointed out that a photograph of Labour members, accompanied the article and he asked them if they had been approached to make a financial donation to the Dementia Carers Group as Town Councillors as was stated in the article.

Labour Town Councillors present responded that they hadn't made any contribution.

The Chair stated that the article was vindictive and reminded those present of the total sum the Council had granted to the Dementia Carers Group in the previously mentioned 6 separate awards. He felt that without the Council's financial support the Dementia Carers' Group would have struggled to establish itself in the way it has. He wished it to be noted that although dementia was a priority for the Council, it was not its sole priority.

Cllr Mrs Mary Wenman stated that she did not use Facebook and had not seen the article in question.

The Chair stated that the article had been shared by the Labour group Facebook group and that by association the statements in the article were being made in the name of all Labour members. He therefore demanded those present make a response.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou read aloud an excerpt of the article to confirm that the Labour group are attributed to the statements. He stated that he was upset by the article and that the problems it causes won't go away as they are very controversial. He added that this incident would make it very difficult to persuade the other members to agree to Labour's proposed alterations to the new Council structure currently being decided.

The Chair stated that he was very angry about this issue and that he would strongly oppose the proposed amendments. He demanded that Labour members give assurances that they can be trusted and of what they would do to rectify what had been done in their name, in a public statement.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated he had written a response to the article to the Llanelli Herald.

Cllr Mrs Karen Francis-Morris indicated that she was upset to find out about the article and at her inclusion without consultation.

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas stated that in small groups this Council was managing to work well together.

The Chair stated that the perception of the Independent members was that some Labour members were being brow-beaten to act in a particular way.

Cllr Peter Freeman indicated his support for Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas statement and added that the problems seemed to arise when the whole Town Council met together.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated that if a retraction or correction was not made in relation to the article he would have to respond on Facebook.

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell stated that at many of the meetings the focus was on negative matters rather than positive working, which she felt was an impediment to progress.

The Chair issued a plea for those associated with the article to get their opinion expressed and the corrections made.

Cllr Mrs Karen Francis-Morris stated that there were also issues on the Independents side of the argument as there was private Council information getting to the public.

Cllr Mrs Mary Wenman suggested that Mrs Dorothy McDonald be invited to meet the Council to help improve the relationship, however Cllr Michael Theodoulou responded that any such meeting would need to include others from the group to be beneficial.

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

This agenda item was dealt with concurrently with agenda item 3 and so the meeting moved to the next.

5. Consideration of the Committee's Budget Monitoring report

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated that this report had mostly been agreed in previous discussions.

There followed a discussion of whether the Council would enter into the Wales in Bloom competition for 2018. It was acknowledged that the entry date had passed, and the Chair suggested that the Council leave it for this year and approach a future competition refreshed.

The TSO was asked if he needed decisions from the Sub-Committee in relation to planting. He responded that he had contacted the supplier to discuss prices and stated that they had been frozen at the same as last year. However, he added that the growers would have needed notification in November of required colour schemes, etc to meet a specific order, and that the Council would have to make use of what was available instead.

The TSO was instructed to leave the choice of colours schemes to the discretion of the supplier. He was also told to work within the budget he was given and to look at opportunities for more sustainable planting through perennials. He was instructed to arrange to meet with Cllrs Robert John, Michael Theodoulou, Mrs Shirley Matthews, Mrs Moira Thomas and Mrs Karen Francis-Morris for any further decisions he required.

6. To consider applications received for financial donations

Cllr Michael Theodoulou informed the Committee that in the absence of the Clerk he had been asked by the Chairs Committee to go in to the office daily to help action urgent matters.

He therefore had two requests to present.

The first was from Air Ambulance Wales with their Children's Air Ambulance drive. Members discussed that as a national organisation it was not eligible for the financial donation but that in previous years the Council had supported them through an organised event.

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell suggested that they be invited to the Earhart events in June and an opportunity to fundraise for them could be found there.

ACTION: EVENTS SUB-CMTE

The second request was from Cruse Bereavement Care, however members discussed and agreed that it was not a local charity and was not eligible for the financial donation.

7. Update on the 'Community Care Campaign'

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell provided the Committee with an update. Due to the recent extreme weather the St David's day parade and event had been called off however she had managed to get the booking for the marquee postponed to a future event to transfer the cost.

There followed a short discussion where Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell was informed that there were Heritage Lottery Fund grants available to help pay for events tied into the Amelia Earhart anniversary.

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell continued, that the children's artwork that was to be exhibited during the St David's Day events would be put up on display at some point soon with more details to follow. She had been made aware that the children of Burry Port Community Primary School had made a dragon for the event and felt the Council should arrange something to thank them and give them the opportunity to display their efforts.

In relation to the Earhart anniversary events on the 16th June, she had spoken to Mr Les George who had provided her with loads of information on the subject to assist with the preparations.

With regards the Mayors concert on 20th April, the Mayor had asked for it to be a school's concert and the Sub-Committee was making the necessary arrangements.

Other upcoming events included on 22nd September there would be a Local Hero Awards; on 9th November there was to be a sponsored Boogiethon for Children in Need; and on 10th November there was going to be a Remembrance Day commemoration concert in conjunction with the Royal British Legion. The dates for all of these events would be put on the website.

ACTION: ADMIN ASSIST

Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell added that there was follow up work to do on the Bee Friendly campaign and with the Dementia Carer's Group in providing dementia information for children via schools

Cllr Michael Theodoulou suggested to the Committee that Cllr Mrs Lisa Mitchell be tasked with presenting the Dementia Carer's Group with their replacement cheque when she next met with them regarding the dementia information for children.

The Committee **AGREED** unanimously and suggested that Cllr Mrs Karen Francis-Morris accompany her for the presentation.

ACTION: CLLRS MITCHELL AND MORRIS

8. Update on arrangements for the Amelia Earhart 90th anniversary commemorative event

This agenda item was dealt concurrently with agenda item 7 so the meeting moved on to the next.

9. To consider correspondence received from Keep Wales Tidy

Cllr Michael Theodoulou stated his confusion as to the relationship between Keep Wales Tidy and the recently discussed local litter picking group. He suggested that as the Facilities Management Committee was dealing with them, that the email be referred to them also.

The Committee **AGREED** unanimously.

10. To consider the "Future Generations Framework for Projects", together with the related guidance, recently issued by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The Chair stated that the Council had previously received the objectives of the framework and that the attached document provided further detail of how the Town Council was to deliver on them.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou proposed that this matter be referred into the relevant section of the approved structure, as they would be best placed to take action.

11. To consider any referred matters from the other Committees (if any)

There were no referred matters however, following the recently approved protocols, Cllr Michael Theodoulou read aloud the relevant correspondence that had been received as follows:

- An email from One Voice Wales asking for responses to the Autism Bill consultation currently running.
- An email from Aging Well in Wales via One Voice Wales asking for strategic partners feedback via a survey.
- An email from Owen Phillips of the Wi-Fi Towns initiative providing an update that Antur Teifi had been selected as the preferred contractor.
- An email from Hywel Dda Health Board providing the report on non-emergency patient transport across Wales.
- An email from CAVS seeking support from the Town Council to promote volunteering opportunities.

Cllr Mrs Moira Thomas stated that there were reports of a particular vehicle driving dangerously around Ysgol Glan y Môr. She wished to know if there was a means for the Town Council to support the complaints.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou said that in the absence of the Clerk he wasn't sure but that as Councillors they could support the complaints.

Cllr Michael Theodoulou wished to inform members of developments with regards the proposed play area being constructed adjacent to the harbour. The chosen site would not be available until after the harbour wall repairs had been made and so the decision had been taken to move the location slightly to avoid those issues. The potential contractors had been notified and could not see a problem with altering the designs. He stated that he would be asking this Committee and the Facilities Management Committee to meet and agree which contractor would deliver the play area. The final two applicants were invited to attend and give presentations for their consideration and the meeting would take place on Wednesday 14th March in Pembrey Hall at 9.30am.