

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Pontardawe Town Council held on Monday 10th October 2011 at ARCH Community Hall commencing at 6:45p.m

8666. Present: Councillors B Williams (presiding), Mrs E Puzey, D Harris, V Thomas, Ms. S Northcott, A Nicholson, Mrs C Lambourne, Mrs J Bowen, Mel Thomas, M James, H Evans, Mrs L Purcell, A E Williams, H Pickrell, Mrs A Davies

Apologies: Councillor D B Thomas

8667. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interest: None

Resolved to be noted.

8668. Minutes silence: The Mayor requested a minutes silence as a mark of respect following the deaths of the Gleision Miners, a young child tragically killed in Alltwen and Councillor Thomas mother.

8669. Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on the 12th September 2011

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting dated 12th September 2011, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

8670. Matters raised by members of the public: A large delegation attended the meeting in order to object to the proposed route for construction traffic to the Mynydd y Betws Wind Farm. The issues were as follows:

- Concern over Emergency vehicle access during the transport of the turbine parts.
- The stability of Gelligron Hill, together with the possible effects on the Cefn Llan Estate should the weight of the vehicles cause additional construction work on the hill to become necessary.
- The volume of construction traffic during the initial stages of the project.
- Why alternative routes were not being considered.

The delegation however commended the Council on their decision to unanimously reject the proposed route through Pontardawe.

8671. Presentation by ESB (Electricity Supply Board): Rob Fellows and his colleagues from the ESB provided a presentation on the proposed route for the Mynydd y Betws Wind Farm traffic. They explained that the organisation had constructed and managed fourteen wind farms in both Ireland and the United Kingdom, and had significant experience in the transportation and construction of large turbines. They confirmed that they were in constant discussions with both the Police and Neath Port Talbot Council, and that there would be a 'dry run' to ensure that all contingencies had been covered prior to the first turbine being transported.

They also confirmed that should any remedial work be required to make the route suitable i.e. removal of street furniture, roundabouts etc. Then temporary measures would be put in place

during the construction period, but that these would all be replaced once the construction had been completed.

With regard to the various concerns he advised the following:

- The times for the transport of the turbines would be decided with the local Police 'abnormal loads officer' and would be timed not to cause disruption to members of the public i.e. in the early hours of the morning.
- Each convoy would have two police escorts together with a civilian escort who would be in constant contact with the Emergency Services to ensure that there would be no delay in response time due to the movement of the turbines. He also confirmed that there were a number of 'passing places' on the route, and that the trailer itself could be moved upwards to provide additional space to allow emergency traffic to pass.
- With regard to the stability of Gelligron Hill, they confirmed that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council had provided assurance that the route was suitable for the weight of the traffic.
- As to concerns over the level of other construction traffic, although the number of Heavy Goods Vehicles travelling the route would increase substantially during the project. This would be for a finite number of weeks (approx 6 weeks) and would not be at the same time as the turbine transport.
- It was also confirmed that both rail and air travel were unsuitable on risk grounds and therefore travel by road was the only option. It was confirmed that the alternative route had been considered through Felindre; however, as this was not an 'A' class road, and therefore it was not wide enough to allow transport of the turbines.

8672. Mynydd y Betws Wind Farm construction traffic: Council brought forward the discussion on the Mynydd y Betws Wind Farm construction traffic.

The Clerk confirmed that Neath Port Talbot Council and Swansea City Council, together with the Welsh Assembly Government had been contacted with regard to this Councils concerns, with the following responses:

- Swansea Council stated that the portion of the route through their area was acceptable.
- The Welsh Assembly Government stated that the route for the construction traffic was the responsibility of the Police and the Borough Council and therefore it would be inappropriate for them to interfere.
- Neath Port Talbot Council stated that they had reviewed the route and were happy that there were no areas of the route that were unsuitable for heavy traffic, and that the Police would ensure that the timing of the transport would not cause difficulties for residents or emergency personnel.

Council discussed in full the presentation by the construction company and the objections rose by the residents, and once again voted unanimously to oppose the current route for construction traffic for the Mynydd y Betws wind farm, through Pontardawe.

It was believed by Council that despite assurances, that the questions had not been given satisfactory answers and that as some work on the access road to the site had already started, there was a distinct disregard with the views of both the Town Council and residents concerns.

Resolved that the Clerk request that the Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the Officer who agreed the route be invited to a meeting with Council, to provide actual details of the tests that have been carried out on the fabric of the route, so that the elected members have actual documentary evidence that the route is safe.

8673. Noise pollution from local Public Houses: Councillor Purcell confirmed that a meeting had taken place on the 28th September 2001 between herself and the Town Clerk, together with representatives from Neath Port Talbot Council Environmental and Licensing departments. The meeting was to discuss the ongoing noise issue from some of Public Houses in Pontardawe. Both ongoing noise pollution and the one off issues were discussed, together with the action that could be taken.

The Officers from Neath Council explained that they were in the process of improving the out of hours service to the public for one off issues and had provided log sheets for residents close to some Public Houses to determine if there was an ongoing problem with specific establishments. Councillor Purcell confirmed however that a test of the out of hour's service did not work. We have however been advised that the problem has been dealt with and have received written details of the process to be followed in the event that there is a future issue.

Councillor Purcell confirmed that details of the new procedure would be printed in the community magazine, and also requested that if anyone had details of where the process fell down in future, she would like them to contact her.

Resolved that the Clerk will put a note of the process for informing the County Borough of a noise issue in the Town Council office window. The Clerk will also request that the County Borough inform the Pontardawe members when a Temporary Event Notice is to be issued.

8674. Police Matters: Council was advised that the information from the most recent 'Keeping South Wales Safe' journal was as follows:

- Community Officers across Neath and Ponardawe had organised a PACT football tournament which had attracted over 50 young people from across the sector.
- The police in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council have arranged for officers to be available each Friday at the 'One Stop Shop' in Pontardawe between 1400 hours and 1600 hours.
- Two males were arrested on suspicion of a series of burglaries in Pontardawe.
- Pontardawe Neighbourhood policing team together with the Roads Policing Unit have carried out regular mobile and foot patrols in the local car parks in Pontardawe as a result of complaints of vehicle annoyance.

Council was also advised that PCSO Mark Jones from Ponardawe had been presented with a community volunteer award for his work with the Pontardawe and District Youth Facility.

Resolved to be noted.

8675. Cefn Llan Resident Association - Application for Grants for the New Playground: Council was advised that the WREN grant application would be reviewed in November.

Resolved to be noted.

8676. Ynni'r Fro Programme: Despite continual efforts it has been impossible to initiate contact with the organisation.

Resolved that no further action be taken.

8677. Herbert Street Improvements: The Clerk advised Council that John H Morgan of the Civic Society had called at the Office and had provided contact details. The details had now been forwarded to Gareth Nutt at Neath Port Talbot Council, who would attempt to arrange a meeting with Mr Morgan to determine the new position of the slate tablets from the Ornamental Fountain.

Resolved to be noted.

8678. County Borough Council/ Community Councils liaison forum: Councillor Northcott and Williams attended the meeting on the 10th October 2011, and provided Council with a summary of the important issues.

Resolved to be noted.

8679. Winter Christmas Trees: Council was advised that at present these were still being costed.

Resolved to be noted.

8680. Church Street –Additional Lighting: Council was advised that following consultation with Neath Port Talbot Council over the proposed light for the rear of Church Street, it was determined that as the lane was not the responsibility of the County Borough, they would not be in a position to provide a light.

Resolved to be noted.

8681. Traffic Matters: Council was advised that the original story in 'This is South Wales' stating that a member of the public had stated he had staged an accident, had been removed and therefore no further action could be taken.

Neath Port Talbot Council had however confirmed that the maintenance of roundabouts was being carried out on a regular work rota, and that the pot holes in Waun Sterw would be

addressed immediately. In addition they stated that there was a possibility that the lay-by may be included for resurfacing in next year's programmed works.

Resolved to be noted.

8682. Planning:

Meeting dated 19th September 2011

P2011/0537

Applicant: Waste Recycling Group Ltd, Buckden Landfill Site, Station Farm, Brampton Road, Buckden. PE19 9UH

Site location: Pwllfawatkin Waste Management facility (Tip 871), Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe.

Proposed Development: Retrospective Planning application for continued operation of engineering operations and final restoration.

Resolved No objection.

P2011/0612

Applicant: Mr Nigel Clifford, NAAMEC, 4 The Birches, Clydach, Swansea, SA65NJ

Site location: Plots 9 & 10 Lloyd Street, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4DR

Proposed Development: Two detached dwellings.

Resolved to object due to the following:

The Town Council has specific objections to plots 9 & 10 of the Lloyd Street development, as these plots will require development of land that is in essence colliery waste. Initial reports have already identified Arsenic contamination, and an engineering solution to the problem, but have not assessed the coal content of the colliery spoil and the risk from combustion and sulphide attack.

The Town Council also feels that the area is unstable, and requires a great deal more investigation prior to any consideration of permission. Indeed report 375.0/0/0305 stated that there were significant slope stability issues in the location, and the overall stability of the plots. These issues do not seem to have been addressed.

As stability of the land is an issue with many areas of the Swansea Valley and has been an issue in Trebanos for many years, it is vital that this is taken into account prior to any permission being awarded to build family homes in an area which is honeycombed with mine workings and

has significant water issues. The stability of the plot together with the overhang could create a significant risk to families in these dwellings if the issues are not addressed prior to building.

The Town Council therefore objects to the proposal on the grounds that all the relevant investigations have not been made, and that the area presents significant risk to health and wellbeing.

Resolved that a further planning meeting be scheduled for Monday 17th October 2011 at 6.00pm.

8683. Development Meeting 19th September 2011 – Local Development – ‘Pre Deposit Plan’

Housing

The Committee agreed with delivering ‘Moderate Growth’

Strategic Options: Although the Committee agreed that additional housing in the Rhyd y Fro area would be beneficial on one level, with an increase in residents providing a possible increase the number of children in Rhyd y Fro School. They believed there were serious issues that would need to be addressed prior to any additional construction.

- It is important that any development include affordable housing in order to support the community by encouraging younger people together with those on lower or no income to remain in the area. It is also important that contractors be compelled to provide this housing, and that sufficient safeguards are included in the planning agreement in order to police these provisions.
- Planners should ensure that there are sufficient controls on the contractors to ensure that the terms of the planning i.e. retaining trees under TPO’s or providing affordable housing are complied with.
- A full review would be required of the Sewage system in the area to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to allow the addition of fifty additional dwellings in the area, and that any observations by the relevant Water Authority are taken on board and addressed prior to any construction taking place.
- That there are sufficient funds available to improve the infrastructure of the area prior to construction being carried out.

Employment

Strategic Options:

- The Committee agreed to support the protection of the site adjacent to the ‘Lidl’ store

- The Committee agreed to the expansion of existing businesses

However the Committee did not agree that the way forward for this community was for the support of small business and additional retail as this provided very little quality employment with only 'part time' 'minimum wage' positions.

It was agreed that the County Borough should actively encourage medium to large non retail business with incentives to relocate to this area, in order to create quality well paid employment for local people, together with good training and apprentice opportunities for the young people of the area.

Swansea Canal

Strategic Options:

- The Committee agreed to focus restoration on the stretch of canal between Trebanos and Ynysmeudwy.

They did not agree to the abandonment of the safeguarding /potential to restore between Ynysmeudwy and Ystalyfera for the following reasons:

- The canal in this area is still a tourist attraction.
- Canal walks encourage interest in nature and the environment
- It is an aid to exercise and healthy living by providing a pleasant environment for walking and cycling.

Although, the committee did concur that any improvement to this stretch might be outside the time scale for this plan.

Renewable Energy and Wind Farms

The Committee agreed to the WAG Strategic Search areas and that outside these areas that areas for small wind farms would be identified. They also agreed that 'Developer contributions' should be used to support local communities.

It was however agreed that access and the route of construction traffic was a major issue and should be fully discussed and agreed prior to agreement for the placement of a wind farm.

Mineral (Coal and Aggregates)

The Committee felt that it was inappropriate to comment on this section without clarification on what constituted an 'appropriate' area for exploitation and also without a clearer definition of a settlement.

Welsh Language

The Committee agreed to the strategy to protect the Welsh Language in the Welsh Language boards 'Area of special Language importance' but were unsure why Pontardawe had not been included.

They also agreed that development proposals in Welsh speaking areas be supported by a: 'Welsh Language Impact assessment' and a 'Welsh Language Action Plan'.

Transport

It was agreed that there should be a network of cycle and walking routes for everyday use and also that bottlenecks should be targeted to tackle congestion.

However, although the Committee agreed with car sharing practices and community transport they felt that the most important issue was the lack of affordable regular public transport to support commuters to the major employment areas.

The Committee also suggested that a version of the 'Oyster card' should be introduced by the County Borough to ensure that travel had standardized fares and that alternative bus companies would be willing to accept a standard ticket.

Environment

The Committee agreed that countryside and wildlife especially Priority Habitats should be protected and also stated that the proposed abandonment of the safeguarding of the canal at Godrergraig would therefore go against this principle as this was a priority habitat. They also agreed with designation of 'Green Wedges', 'Special Landscape areas' and the Green space strategy within Urban Areas.

The Committee did however request that 'the rec' in Pontardawe continue to be designated a recreational facility.

Sustainable and Healthy Communities

The Committee agreed that the location of new developments should avoid areas of noise/ air pollution and flood risks and that there should be improved access to facilities at a local level but were unsure what the 'secure by design' principles were and also what a mixed use development might be.

Resolved that the decision of the Committee be ratified.

8684. Policy & Resources Committee 26th September 2011: This Committee, met to discuss the criteria for providing additional hanging basket brackets and hanging baskets in Pontardawe.

The committee discussed in full the criteria for providing additional hanging baskets to retailers in the Town Centre.

It was agreed that there was to be no increase in the boundaries. The hanging baskets are currently provided for Herbert Street, for James Street from 'The Cross' to the lane adjacent to the 'Old Vic' public house and High Street from 'The Cross' to just prior to the Pontardawe Taxi garage.

It was also agreed that the provision of hanging baskets was to improve the appearance of the town, and was not intended to be a provision of baskets for each retailer.

The Committee did however identify a need for brackets and Hanging baskets for a section of High Street, including 'The Castle' Public House.

The Clerk confirmed that the brackets were custom built and that the price of the brackets was dependant on the number of brackets that were ordered.

It was also agreed that Local Authority buildings such as 'The Cross Community Centre' and the 'Art Centre' should be expected to contribute to the whole cost of the baskets each year.

It was recommended by the committee that retailers in the catchment area for hanging baskets be advised that if they request baskets or brackets, they would now need to cover the cost of the bracket. The Town Council would then cover the cost of weight testing and one hanging basket per establishment. Should the retailer wish more than one basket, then the retailer would need to cover the cost of the additional brackets and also the cost of the additional baskets and weight testing.

Resolved that the recommendations of the committee be accepted.

8685. Policy and Resources Committee dated 28th September 2011: This Committee, met to discuss the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2012/13.

The committee members had reviewed the Draft report in full prior to the meeting, and stated that the report had merit but did not go far enough. They believed that there was potential at this time to make significant savings, which could be utilised to safeguard front – line services but that this had not been addressed.

The committee recommended that the above view be noted.

Resolved that the recommendations of the committee be accepted.

8686. Budget 2012/13: The Clerk requested that a Finance meeting be scheduled to discuss the budget for 2012/13

Resolved that the meeting be scheduled for 24th October 2011 at 6.00pm.

8687. Trebanos Park: The Clerk provided an update on the initiatives at Trebanos Park.

- The litter bin had now been received for placement adjacent to the Teenage Shelter
- The area around the small swings was being regularly brushed and the gaps between the tiles filled when necessary
- Trebanos RFC had undertaken a great deal of work to renovate the old toilet block and hoped that it would be available as a refreshment stand and storage area prior to Christmas this year.
- Cwmtawe Community and Trebanos Primary Schools were both interested in planting daffodils this month in Trebanos Park to promote ownership of the park by the children.

Resolved that the information be noted. The Clerk also to organise the daffodil planting and invite those Councillors who want to attend. A press release should also be arranged.

8688. Accounts schedule 270: totalling £15161.96.

Resolved to be agreed under financial regulations.

8689. Public Toilets at Pontardawe: The Clerk advised Council that there had been some queries over the future of the public toilets at Pontardawe. Neath Port Talbot Council had however confirmed that the toilets would need to remain closed until negotiation with the Insurance Company following the fire had been completed. As a temporary measure the toilets at the library, Art Centre and Cross Community Centre were available to members of the public. Neath Council had also confirmed that the County Borough Council members would be kept abreast of developments.

Resolved to be monitored.

8690. Lions Club – Tree of Light: The Clerk confirmed that she had received a letter requesting a donation to the ‘Tree of Light’

Resolved that requests for donations will be discussed in the Finance meeting scheduled for the 24th October 2011.

8691. Bench at Alltycham Drive: The Clerk advised Council that an email had been received from the resident adjacent to the seat on Alltycham Drive, complaining of litter and anti social behaviour.

Resolved that the Clerk will look into the placement of a litter bin at the site and will request that the PCSOs monitor the area to identify if anti social behaviour was still an issue.

8692. Cycle Park requirements: A number of emails had been received with regard to the provision of cycle parking in Pontardawe Town Centre. The Clerk confirmed that according to the regeneration plans, a cycle park would be placed adjacent to the Art Centre.

Resolved to be noted.

8693. Ancient Fir Trees at Alltycham: Council was made aware that the ancient fir trees adjacent to the new housing development in Alltycham Drive were due to be felled. It was however requested that an attempt be made to safeguard these ancient trees.

Resolved that the Clerk would contact the County Borough.

8694. One Voice Wales Training Champion: The Clerk provided full details of the new One Voice Wales training champion initiative.

Resolved to be noted.

8695. Polling district review: The Clerk provided details of the current polling station provision.

Resolved that it be suggested that Bethesda Chapel in Ynysmeudwy be put forward as another location.

8696. The Next Ordinary Meeting: Council was advised that the next ordinary meeting would be held on 14th November 2011 at Trebanos Hall.

Resolved to be noted.

Signed Dated