

Ordinary General Meeting held on the 11th March 2019 at Trebanos Community Hall, Swansea Road, Trebanos, commencing at 6.45pm

Present: Councillor Mrs L Purcell (presiding), A Richards, D Williams, R Thomas, A Nicholson, Ms S Northcott, V Hotten, G Davies, Ms R Jones, Ms C Ford and B McCarthy (Youth Representative)

Apologies: Councillor K Flynn, W Thomas, Mrs R Phillips, G Nicholson, R Smith and J Jones

11132. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests: Councillor Ms S Northcott and A Nicholson declared an interest on the grant to St Peters Church as they are members of the Parochial Church Council, Councillor D Williams declared an interest in the Llais as he is the husband of the editor and Councillor R Thomas declared an interest in the grants to Pontardawe RFC as he is the Secretary, and Pontardawe CS&R Association as he is a Trustee.

11133. Signing of the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 11th February 2019:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 11th February 2019, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

11134. Matters Raised by Members of the Public: None.

Resolved to be noted.

11135. Agenda Alteration: A request was made by the Chair for the discussion on the future of Cwmtawe Community School to be moved to the first item on the agenda following the signing of the previous months' minutes.

Resolved that Cwmtawe Community School be the first item discussed.

11136. Cwmtawe Community School:

Council was advised that a briefing note was shortly to be issued by Neath Port Talbot Council on proposals to close four Primary schools (two were situated in the Town Council area) and amalgamate them with Cwmtawe Community School to create an English Medium 'Super school' for children aged from 3 years to 16 years. Council was keen to discuss matters prior to the briefing in order to encourage the County Borough to respond to specific community concerns, and thereby create a more meaningful consultation, that would fully document the community's feelings. A full and frank discussion was held on the advantages and disadvantages of large schools versus smaller separate schools, and on the issues that would arise at the proposed location of the 'Super school', especially with traffic, parking and safe pedestrian walkways.

Council was also concerned about the effect on staff morale, job security. As the schools were currently very well regarded, Council were also concerned that changes would lead to a reduction in the standards.

The Following questions Council felt needed to be answered by Neath Port Talbot Council regarding the proposals:

- Currently the management team at Cwmtawe is very successful and effective. Why is it a requirement for the Management Team at Cwmtawe to reapply for their jobs in the proposed new school?
- Would the County Borough consider the amalgamation of the Primary Schools without changes to the current Cwmtawe Community School structure?
- Council was concerned that uncertainty would lead to poor staff morale and possibly the loss of key staff. How does the County Borough intend to maintain staff morale and retain key staff during this period of uncertainty?
- Would teachers who found their jobs surplus to requirement in the new school be 'red-circled' and offered positions elsewhere in Neath Port Talbot?
- There are already significant issues with traffic, safe crossing areas, difficulties with dropping off children at Cwmtawe Community School. What changes would be made to address these issues as, if the amalgamated primary school is sited next to Cwmtawe it would add approximately 700 additional children to the problem.
- What is the current proposed transport strategy for the 'Super school'?
- The additional children are of a younger age and cannot be dropped off at distance from the school as there are currently no safe pedestrian walkway to the school. Would the County Borough address this with additional crossing patrol personnel financed by the County Borough?
- Would the County Borough also be willing to look at alternatives for dropping off children and reducing congestion such as an agreement with Tesco or Lidl to utilise their car parking facilities, an additional bridge from the other side of the river, free buses for three- and four-year olds and staggered start and finishing times?
- Currently Nursery provision is provided at the Primary Schools and has been extremely successful in preparing children for school. Bearing in mind there is poor public transport, that nursery provision is for only half a day and that the provision is non statutory, How does the County Council envisage ensuring that all children have equal access to Nursery Provision?
- The Town Council would like the consultation to be effective and to provide the views and highlight any concerns of the local community. Would the County Borough be willing to allow the Town Council to view a version controlled draft consultation document prior to general release, and to accept comments on it?
- Is the proposal merely a cost cutting exercise or do the County Borough have evidence that there is an educational benefit to a larger school? Have they any statistics from other areas that have moved to a similar provision?
- What is the proposed class sizes at the new school? Is this larger/ smaller or the same as the current educational provision?

Resolved that the Clerk will forward the above questions to Aled Evans at Neath Port Talbot Council.

11137. Cwmdu Glen: There were no further updates on the proposed picnic area at Cwmdu.

The ARB Team had carried out the work scheduled in the Cwmdu Tree Risk Assessment for the 'up to 3 month and 6 months' periods. They had however identified that large larch tree close to the boundary with 'Glynteg' on Gelligron Hill had been undermined by disturbance to the root base. This would leave the tree unstable and within falling distance of the property.

The Clerk with the agreement of the Chair had addressed the issue under emergency Standing Orders.

The Neath Port Talbot Council arborist had agreed with the assessment on the trees stability and the Clerk had arranged for the tree to be felled as a priority following discussions with the property owner. Two quotes had been received from the ARB Team and Tenderleaf and the lowest had been accepted.

Tenderleaf felled the tree successfully on the 11th March 2019 at a cost of £525 plus VAT.

Resolved to be noted.

11138. Police Matters: There were no additional statistic available. The next PACT meetings were both to be held on the 25th April 2019 at 6.30pm. (Trebanos Hall and Pontardawe Art Centre)

Council was advised that there had been no new issues raised at the previous Pontardawe PACT meeting.

In Trebanos, residents had been advised that an operation to address dog fouling was in progress.

The results of the consultation on the proposed installation of speed bumps to reduce speeding on Swansea Road was awaited.

Resolved to be noted.

11139. Email received re Pedestrian Crossing at the Bypass in Pontardawe:

The Clerk read the email received from Neath Port Talbot Council, which stated that the reasoning behind the refusal had already been advised, in previous correspondence to Council.

Council Members were disappointed that a full response had not been received.

Resolved that the County Borough Members for Pontardawe will make enquiries.

11140. Planning: Meeting held on the 4th March 2019.

P2019/0108

Applicants: Mr D Allfree, 143 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe SA8 4BS.

Site Location: 143 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe SA8 4BS.

Proposed Development: Two storey rear extension, plus two storey side extension which includes car port at ground floor and reduction of front boundary fence by 1.0 meters.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

P2019/0144

Applicants name: Trebanos Rugby Club, 123 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe SA8 4BN

Site Location: Trebanos Rugby Club, 123 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe SA8 4BN

Proposed Development: Single storey rear extension

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

P2019/0146

Applicants name: Mr David Richards, Llwyncelyn House Kennels, Pontardawe Road, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4ST

Site Location: Llwyncelyn House Kennels, Pontardawe Road, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4ST

Proposed Development: Change of use from a residential dwelling to mixed use residential dwelling and dog breeding kennels plus retention and completion of single storey dog breeding kennel building.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

Town and County Planning Act 1990 Appeal by Mr & Mrs Gaunt – Morris

Site at Land adjacent to 47 Danygraig Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4DS.

(Planning Application code P2018/0911 – Ref APP/Y6930/A19/3221806

Proposed: Dwelling (outline all matters reserved)

Resolved No additional comments

11141. Finance Committee to review the tenders for Park and Footpath Maintenance for the Summer of 2019 held on the 18th February 2019:

In accordance with Standing Orders the tenders were received sealed and were opened in full Council in the presence of the Chair, Councillor Purcell at the February 2019 Ordinary Meeting.

Tenders were received from Tawe Landscapes, Glantawe Landscapes, JPB Tree Services and PJC Forestry.

All the tenders were reviewed in full by the Committee, who recommended that the contract be awarded to Tawe Landscapes, Pennod Newydd, New Street, Godrergraig.

The decision was made as the company has extensive experience with local authority maintenance as they are currently contracted by Ystradgunlais Town Council, Tawe Uchaf Town Council, Powys County Council (for the South Powys area) and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Their tender was also the lowest received at £11485.00

The Committee recommended Tawe Landscapes be awarded the Summer 2019 Park and Footpath Maintenance Contract

Resolved that Tawe Landscapes, Pennod Newydd, New Street, Godrergraig be awarded the Summer 2019 Park and Footpath Maintenance Contract.

11142. Finance Committee to discuss the grants awards for community organisation for 2019/20 held on the 18th February 2019:

Councillor Jones declared an interest in applications from the Pontardawe Heritage Centre and the Pontardawe Chamber of Commerce and took no part in the discussion on these matters at the Committee meeting.

Councillors Ms S Northcott, A Nicholson, D Williams and R Thomas also declared in interest in the Ordinary meeting.

The Committee discussed the grant applications in full and recommended the following grants for 2019/20:

- Llangollen 2019 - £100.00
- Eisteddfod Genedlaethol - £100.00
- Swansea Bay Age Cymru - £50.00
- Teenage Cancer Trust - £50.00
- Marie Curie - £50.00
- CISS (Cancer information and support service) - £50.00
- Wales Air Ambulance - £50.00
- Pontardawe Community Sports and Recreation Association (Assistance with Maintenance) - £800.00
- Pontardawe Chamber of Trade and Commerce (Summerfest and Winterfest) - £3000.00
- Pontardawe Rugby Football Club (Carnival, Ponty Proms and Fireworks Display) - £1500.00
- Pontardawe Heritage and Visitors Centre - £500.00
- Royal Air Force Cadets (Photocopier – Recruitment campaign underway) £450.00
- Heart for the Valley Show - £500.00
- Western Beacons Mountain Search and Rescue - £500.00

£100.00 was also earmarked for the Glantawe Lions Tree of Light as the Mayors Fund benefitted annually from this source.

Requests were also received from Rhos Short Mat bowls and Rhos Football club, however due to the number of requests received for 2019/20 it was felt that those grants could not be awarded as the organisations were also able to apply for grants from Cilybebyll Community Council and from their County Councillors Community Benefit fund.

The Committee did however recommend that these alternative funding sources be brought to the attention of the organisations.

The Committee also awarded £500.00 to the Llais although this was omitted from the original Finance Committee minutes in error.

In the Ordinary General Meeting Council also awarded £100.00 to the St Peters Church Flower Festival and £469.00 to the Friends of Pontardawe Art Centre.

The £469.00 was to be used to purchase an upholstery cleaner. Council did stipulate that this cleaner would need to be made available to other community groups in the Pontardawe Town Council area.

The total revised value of the grants awarded for 2019/20 were £8869 from a budget of £11000. The balance of £2131 would be retained for grant requests later in the year.

The grants are awarded for the benefit of all or some of the residents within the Pontardawe Town Council area.

Resolved that the above grants for 2019/20 totalling £8869.00 be awarded.

11143. Development Committee required to discuss the possibility of 'Pontardawe in Bloom' for 2020 and the Winterfest:

Resolved that a Development Committee will be arranged.

11144. One Voice Wales Committee held on the 6th March 2019:

Councillor Ford provided the following notes from the meeting:

a. Presentation from James Davies (Planning Aid Wales)

-Discussion on the planning/policy structure for Wales

-Place Plans for Communities

Communities develop plans that account for local issues (more so than the LDP) that can be adopted.

There is need to consult with the public (via survey etc) to examine areas of concern/potential development before developing the plan.

If seriously considering Planning Aid Wales and the Local Authority are to support and there are funds available.

b. Matters arising

- The Environment Wales Act (2016) –

Community and Town Councils have a duty under the Act to support biodiversity by protecting and promoting it.

The Welsh Government is drafting guidance.

-Concerns over the taxable allowances for Town and Community councillors-

One Voice Wales are fighting for the payment to be non-taxable as there have been instances where this has negatively affected people.

-New Local Government Bill

New this year- still in the drafting stages but draws on the concept of

'The Power of Competence' (can be used instead of the power of well-being)

However, there are three factors that *must* be met to utilise this which are:

(These are still draft at present)

1. Clerk to be qualified (yet to be decided)
2. Percentage of elected Cllrs.
3. Not had a qualified audit in the last 3 years

-Issue of Bi-election costs

The issue is being taken to Welsh Government by One Voice Wales to see what can be done in the future to significantly reduce the costs.

c. New Courses

-Shape my town – Toolkit for preparing a town and community plan

-Community engagement

d. Awards

-Coming soon- sharing best practice of Town Councils across Wales

Resolved to be noted.

11145. Account Schedule 354 and Internal Audit:

Resolved that the Account Schedule 354 totalling £16414.10 together with bank reconciliation be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders. It is further agreed that Lyn Llewellyn continue as Internal Auditor for future years.

11146. Monthly Market at Pontardawe: Council was advised that a private 'not for profit' company wished to begin a quality monthly market from 4pm to 8pm on a Friday evening. The market was intended to compliment the current traders and to bring people from outside the area into the Town Centre. The proposed market would be situated outside the Art Centre and on to Holly Street with Herbert Street to remain open.

At present the company was discussing the feasibility of a market but full consultation would be carried out with the Chamber of Commerce, local shops and residents prior to any action being taken. They merely at this stage wished to determine if the Town Council was in favour in principle.

The Town Council discussed the proposal in detail and was happy to support the initiative in principle but wanted the full consultation carried out with shop holders, the Chamber of Commerce and any residents who would be affected by the proposed market.

Resolved to be noted.

11147. One Voice Wales Membership 2019/20: Council wished to continue membership of One Voice Wales for 2019/20 at a cost of £1049.00

Resolved the Town Council will continue Membership of One Voice Wales for 2019/20.

11148. LGPS Employee Pension rates confirmation 2019/20:

Up to £14400 – 5.5%
£14401 - £22500 -5.8%
£22501 - £36500 - £6.5%

Resolved to be noted.

11149. Urgent Road Safety:

- SWT had altered their morning timetable for Students attending Neath College. Students on the early bus were now arriving at the college some time prior to the opening of the college. The later bus was arriving with insufficient time for students to get to lectures. Councillor G Nicholson was to provide details by email.
- There were significant issues with very large Welsh Water lorries attending the site adjacent to the Park at Trebanos. The adopted road from Swansea Road to the Green was not suitable for such large vehicles which was causing severe damage to drains in the road. There was also concern that the bridge was not sturdy enough for these vehicles. The Trebanos Town Councillors would contact their County Borough Member but wished a letter forwarded to Welsh Water from the Town Council in addition.
- There were still significant problems for disabled residents due to the lack of dropped curb stones at Home Bargains in Pontardawe. Although the County Borough had agreed to the installation there was no time scale.

Resolved that the Town Clerk will take all appropriate action.

11150. Next Meeting: The next meeting of Council will take place on the 8th April 2019 at Ynysmeudwy Hall, commencing at 6.45 pm

Signed Dated
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