

Ordinary General Meeting held on the 12th November 2018 at ARCH Hall, Cefn Llan Road, Pontardawe commencing at 6.45pm

Present: Councillor Mrs L Purcell (presiding), Ms C Ford, A Nicholson, Ms S Northcott, G Nicholson, R Thomas, D Williams, G Davies, V Hotten, J Jones (left the meeting at 8.00pm), W Thomas, K Davies, A Richards and Youth Representative B McCarthy.

Apologies: Councillor Ms R Jones and Mrs R Phillips.

11060. Disclosure of Personal or Pecuniary Interests: Councillors Ms S Northcott, A Nicholson, K Flynn, G Davies and V Hotten declared an Interest in discussions on the Budget as they are all involved with PANTRY. Councillor J Jones declared an interest in the discussions on Christmas in Pontardawe as he is the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce.

11061. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 8th October 2018:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 8th October 2018, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

11062. Matters raised by Members of the Public: None.

Resolved to be noted.

11063. Steve Hayes Treasurer of PANTRY addressed Council: Steve provided a history and update of the work being carried out by PANTRY the food bank run by volunteers and situated at Tabernacle Chapel in Pontardawe.

He explained that many organisations were assisting by providing food, rent free accommodation, assistance with funding etc and they were working closely with other organisations to assist those in the community that had fallen on hard times due a variety of reasons.

The demand for the food banks was increasing year by year and the current benefit delay was creating significant hardship for some members of the community, which they expected to continue into the new fiscal year.

The organisation can keep up with demand and current challenges but anticipate the number of individuals in need to be even greater in 2019/20 when additional food and funds would be necessary.

Work is being carried out to identify the main issues being faced by users of the service and the County Borough Members were interested to receive these statistics when available.

The Council thanked Mr Hayes for providing an update on the valuable work being carried out in the community.

Resolved to be noted.

11064. Cwmdu Glen and the Working with Nature Project: The Clerk confirmed that several events and volunteer days were to take place during the Winter months at Cwmdu. Details of these events would be placed on the Town Council Social Media sites and had already been emailed to Council Members.

The proposed Picnic Area was in the process of being cleared and Council was provided with details of various picnic tables that could be purchased for the area.

It was agreed that although wood or recycled plastic would be aesthetically preferable, it was not practical due to its combustible nature.

Council reviewed various metal picnic tables and decided that benches which had floor or low bars between the bench and table were preferable but that the main priority was that the table would need to be securely moored at the site.

The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted the two contractors recommended by Neath Port Talbot Council to carry out the work on the Cwmdru tree Management Report, these were the Arb Team and Arborum, but quotes were still awaited.

Resolved the Clerk will liaise with the 'Working with Nature Project' and obtain a suitable picnic bench. She will bring both quotes for work to be carried out at Cwmdru to the next meeting for discussion.

11065. Police Matters: There were no additional statistics available. The next PACT meetings were to take place in Trebanos Hall and Pontardawe Art Centre at 6.30pm on the 6th December 2018.

Councillor Richards stated that he had been reviewing statistics on crimes in Pontardawe following incorrect news on social media sites. He confirmed that although Pontardawe was the third largest Town in Neath Port Talbot, it had relatively low levels of crime in relation to other comparable Towns in the area.

Also, although the Police Station was not open to the public, some Police Officers were based at the station to allow a quicker response to incidents in the Swansea Valley areas. It was agreed that there was little understanding in the community of the Police presence in Pontardawe and that Members of the Public were unsure of the methods of contacting the Police. Councillor Richards stated he would request a statement from the Police to clarify the position.

Although crime levels were relatively low, there was still crime occurring and Council Members should continue to request the Community report all crime (even low-level crime) in order to ensure that statistics were accurate.

Resolved that Councillor Richards will obtain a statement from the local Police Service which could be placed on Pontardawe Town Council Social Media Sites.

11066. Plastic Free Pontardawe: Councillor W Thomas was attempting to organise a meeting with the steering Committee and interested parties. As Tesco in Pontardawe were keen to be involved Council requested that the County Borough Member for Alltwen and representatives of Cilybebyll Community Council could also be invited to attend.

Council was also impressed with the work that 'Iceland' had carried out to limit their plastic waste and suggested that Councillor Thomas contact this retailer to identify how this has been achieved.

Resolved that Council will be kept up to date with developments.

11067. Christmas in Pontardawe 2018: The Clerk provided the following update:

- Tree to be transported from 'Vale' to Pontardawe Art Centre on the 14th November
- Commercial Christmas would PAT test and erect the lights on the Christmas Tree when erecting the hired Christmas Lights
- No dates yet as to when the lights would be in place.
- The exterior Tree and Lights had been purchased and would be delivered to Trebanos Hall this week. The Hall Committee would arrange for A&B Electric to erect the lights and tree. Pontardawe Town Council would cover installation costs. The Hall Committee would cover half the cost of the decorations with the remainder being covered by the Town Council. The Christmas Window Competition in Trebanos was being organised by the Trebanos Hall Committee.
- The Fireworks could not be set off from St Peters Church due to changes in the regulations. Arrangements for them to be set off from the Bypass Car Park were being discussed with Neath Port Talbot Council Special Events Department.
- The Fireworks display was to be carried out by Pendragon who had been recommended by Neath Town Council and who had carried out a similar display some years ago in Pontardawe.
- A leaflet drop to advise residents in the centre of Pontardawe of both the Winterfest and the Fireworks would be carried out prior to the event to allow Members of the Public to make suitable arrangements for Pets.
- The Christmas Parade would begin in Church Street and would follow High Street and Herbert Street to the Art Centre. Santa's grotto would this year be situated in the Pontardawe Heritage Centre. Tesco in Pontardawe had kindly donated the gifts for the children.
- The lights for the Cross had been purchased and would be erected by Town Council personnel prior to the Parade.
- Lliw Building Supplies had agreed to a message from the Town Council being placed on the billboard at 'The Cross' and provided details of the company who managed the Art work on the board, a mock-up was viewed by Council who were mainly happy with the design but wished the lettering made clearer. The Clerk confirmed that the banner could be used for future years in alternative locations
- The Clerk was in touch with Blanchere and hoped to have details of the lights donated by the Chamber of Commerce that had been presented by 'Revive and Thrive' magazine, shortly.

Resolved that the proposed actions will be carried out and Council kept informed of developments

11068. Mayoral Robes and Chains: The Clerk provided Councillors with Section 358 of the Governance and Accountability for Local Council's Wales Practitioners Guide 2011 which stated

'Councils will first record most Assets in the Asset Register at their Purchase cost. In some cases, this may not be known, and a proxy cost substituted, usually the insurance value, or where the asset is land or is not insured, the Council estimates value based on external advice'

There did not seem to be any precedent for valuing assets at a sale value and she therefore cautioned Council, not to ignore the practitioners Guide on Asset Values, regardless of Personal Opinion.

The Clerk had made enquires with Vaughtons Ltd (specialists in Civic Regalia), the silversmith at Mountain Pass Jewellers, and had reviewed various Auction sites but although there were secondary markets for Military and Masonic Regalia there was none for Town Council Regalia.

Regarding obtaining a valuation based on scrap, it was likely that there would be a cost to obtain the valuation.

Councillor Hotten disagreed and offered to support the cost himself of an online auction valuation of the Mayoral Chains.

Given the different Opinions without a viable compromise the Chair proposed a vote to determine if further time should be allotted to the subject or if a vote on the future of the Mayoral Regalia should be taken.

11 Councillors voted to cease discussion and take a vote of the future of the Mayoral Regalia
2 Councillors voted to continue discussion.

The Chair then proposed Council vote on whether to accept Councillor Hotten's offer of a further valuation with the view to disposing of the Chains and Robes, or to retain the Civic Regalia.

11 Councillors voted against a further valuation, with the view of disposing of the Civic Regalia

1 Councillor abstained

1 Councillor voted for a further valuation.

Council was keen that the history of the Chains and the Town Council be made available to the wider community and therefore asked the Clerk to contact the Pontardawe Heritage Centre and Council Insurance Company to determine if the Regalia could be displayed.

Resolved that for the various reasons stipulated in this meeting and the meeting held on the 8th October 2018 no additional valuations of the Mayoral Regalia will be obtained and both the Mayoral Robes, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Mayor's consorts Chains will be retained. The Clerk will also contact the Pontardawe Heritage Centre and Insurance to determine if the Regalia could form part of an exhibition.

11069. Planning:

Planning Committee held on the 29th October 2018

P2018/0706

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Richard Coombs, 36 Pillmanwr Road, Malpas, Newport NP20 6WG.

Site Location: 51 High Street, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4JH.

Proposed Development: Part two storey part single storey rear extension.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2018/0877

Applicant: Mr M Evans, A&M Taxis, c/o agent.

Site Location: 8 James Street, Pontardawe Swansea SA8 4LR

Proposed Development: Retention of advertising sign.

Resolved to be noted.

P2018/0885

Applicant: Mrs E Brett, 69 High Street, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4JN

Site Location: 69 High Street, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4JN

Proposed Development: Two storey side and rear extension.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2018/0884

Applicant: Mr & Mrs C John, 214 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4BX

Site Location: 214 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4BX

Proposed Development: Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension plus raised patio

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

Please note however that one of the drawings shows the house number incorrectly as 241

P2018/0395

Applicant: Coastal Housing Group C/O Agent

Site Location: Land adjacent to 40 Maes yr Ysgol, Phase 6 Parc y Dderwen, Pontardawe, Swansea.

Proposed Development: Construction of 8 dwellings: Retention of completion of engineering works (relating to land levels/ retaining structures as an amendment to Planning Permission refs P2010/0880 and P2006/1780) (Amended plans and supporting information received on 28.08.18 and 28.09.18)

Resolved Council is pleased to support additional social housing in the area but wishes the Unitary Authority to ensure that planning restrictions placed on contractors in relation to the area's trees are adhered to.

They also wish to ensure that contractors honour the restrictions on works traffic especially during school pick up and drop off times.

P2018/0880 – Felling of Oak Tree on land opposite 10 Uplands Road, Pontardawe. This application has been withdrawn as the work is to be carried out on the trees by Neath Port Talbot Council and therefore no planning permission is required despite TPO.

Discussed in the meeting:

P2018/0575

Applicants name: Mr & Mrs Gibson, 7 Compass Road, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4LS.

Site Location: Rear Garden area of 7 Compass Road, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4LS.

Proposed Development: Detached split level dwelling with associated engineering works, access on and off-street parking (Amended plans and Arboricultural Method statement and tree survey/ root protection area plan received on the 29.08.18)

Resolved Council objects due to concerns over access.

Town and County Planning Act 1990

Appeal by Mrs Kasia Morgan

133 Ynysmeudwy Road, Ynysmeudwy, Pontardawe SA8 4QJ

Planning Report APP/Y6930/A/18/3215464

Planning Application Code P2018/0223

Proposed Two Storey rear extension and creation of parking area to the front of the dwelling.

Resolved as any objection had already been reported this will be noted.

11070. Balance of the Grant Funding for 2018/19 together with the Precept for 2019/20:

Full Council discussed the recommendations of the Finance Committee held on the 22nd October 2018 together with additional information that had been received between the date of the Committee and the Ordinary Meeting.

The Council reviewed the figures in Appendix 1 (Current Actual/Budgets costs for the 1st half year 2018/19 and the projected costs for the 2nd half of 2018/19) together with the draft proposals for the 2019/20 Fiscal Year. The draft proposals were amended within the meeting to consider information which was not available to the Committee. This has produced Appendix 2 (1)

The Committee agreed to a small increase in the Precept for 2019/20 to £183000 which equated to a 4% rise. This considered proposed additional costs for maintenance to the trees at Cwmdu Glen but did not include Fireworks for 2019/20 which could be provided from Reserves if successful in 2018/19.

Council was advised that there was £1600 still available from the 2018/19 grant budget with three local applications pending (The Town Council does not look to provide small grants to National Charities after the initial grant allocation early in the year):

The following grants were awarded:

Swansea Valley and District Rugby - £311.10 (Purchase of playing kit for the Under 11yrs team)

Trebanos RFC Juniors - £288.90 (First Aid Kits)

Glantawe Outdoor Education Academy - £1000.00 (Cwmtawe Community School disengaged pupils)

The organisations were able to apply for further grants in 2019/20.

The grants given are in the interest of, and will bring direct benefit to, this area or any part of it, or all, or some of its inhabitants.

The Town Council discussed PANTRY and the possible effects on the community of insufficient funds being available due to increases in the number of people in need during 2019/20. It was agreed that PANTRY would benefit from an 'Emergency Fund' which could be called on if they were suffering from seriously depleted funds. The Town Council has therefore earmarked £5000.00 from its General Reserves for 2019/20 which can be called on by PANTRY as a 'Last Resort'. It was agreed that on receipt of an Official request for funds from PANTRY the Clerk could provide these funds up to the value of £5000.00 for the 2019/20 fiscal year. Emergency earmarked funds for PANTRY would be discussed and agreed annually.

As there were several Town Councillors involved with PANTRY it was agreed that there was enough scrutiny of the organisation to allow an official request to be granted without recourse to other criteria.

A vote was taken to decide on the provision of an 'Emergency Fund' of £5000.00 for PANTRY for 2019/20 and unanimously agreed. None of the Town Councillors associated with PANTRY took part in the vote.

Resolved that the above grants to the Swansea Valley and District Rugby, Trebanos RFC Juniors and Glantawe Outdoor Education Academy be awarded. It was agreed that £5000.00 would be ringfenced for 2019/20 as an Emergency Fund for PANTRY. They further agreed that the Precept for 2019/20 will be £183000.

11071. Minor Authority Governor Rhyd-y-Fro School: Council was advised that a Minor Authority Governor was required for Rhyd-y-Fro School. Council appointed Councillor R Smith in his absence.

Resolved Councillor R Smith will be the Minor Authority Governor for Rhyd-y- Fro School.

11072. Accounts Schedule 350:

Resolved that Accounts schedule 350 totalling £21138.40 together with the Bank Reconciliation be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders.

11073. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales draft Annual Report: The Report was forwarded to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

11074. Pedestrian Safety Concerns in relation to the A474 at the 'Jubilee Bypass':

Councillor Flynn raised the issue and had produced a letter detailing the issues that could be forwarded to the County Borough.

Resolved that Councillor Flynn’s letter be forwarded to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council by the Clerk on behalf of Council. Copies of the letter will be emailed to Councillors, for information.

11075. Draft Gambling Policy 2019: The Report was forwarded to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

11076. SLCC Membership: Council agreed to fund SLCC Membership for a further year.

Resolved that the Town Council will fund SLCC Membership for a further year.

11077. Urgent Road Safety Matters: The Clerk confirmed that the Traffic Officer on Swansea Road had returned to work.

Resolved to be noted.

11078. Next Meeting of Council: The next meeting of Council will take place on the 10th December 2018 at Trebanos Hall commencing at 6.45pm.

Signed **Dated**