

Ordinary General Meeting held on the 13th July 2020 by virtual platform due to Corvid 19 lockdown restrictions commencing at 6.45pm

Present:

Councillor A Nicholson (presiding), Ms S Northcott, G Nicholson, H Davies, Mrs L Purcell, A Richards, J Jones, Ms R Jones, G Davies, and V Hotten

Apologies:

Councillor Mrs R Phillips, W Thomas, and Ms C Ford

11489: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:

None

Resolved to be noted.

11490: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 8th June 2020:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 8th June 2020 having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council.

11491: Consider Matters raised by Members of the Public:

None.

Resolved to be noted.

11492: Defibrillator Mapping Project:

Council was advised that the Heartbeat Trust hoped to install the unit at the Town Council Office in July/August. They were attempting to contact Western Garage to arrange for the unit to be installed at this location.

The Clerk confirmed that all the current units were operational apart from the unit at Pontardawe Taxi's as currently the office was closed.

Resolved to be noted.

11493: Cwmdu Glen and the Working with Nature Project:

There were numerous topics to be discussed including the Ash Dieback Plan, grants available, Neath Port Talbot joint ventures and ideas from Members of the Public.

Resolved that an Eco and Wellbeing meeting will be arranged. Both Neil Hinds and the Friends of Ynysmeudwy Park would be invited to attend.

11494: Police Matters:

Pontardawe Statistics:

Total Crimes in April were 48 and in May were also 48.

Trebanos Statistics:

Total Crimes in April was 29 which had reduced in May to 10.

No PACT meetings were being held at present due to the lockdown measures.

There were still issues at Trebanos adjacent to the river where people were congregating. The Clerk confirmed that she had written to Welsh Water to request the gate to the

treatment plant was locked when not in use to deter vehicular access however many of the people congregating were parked elsewhere and on cycles.

The Police had confirmed that the area was now designated a Covid 19 hotspot which would include additional patrols and Antisocial Behaviour referrals. The Police were also to liaise with Neath Port Talbot Environmental Health Department to tackle the littering in the area.

Resolved to be noted.

11495: Alltycham Bench:

Council was advised that both benches were now ready for delivery however although the bench destined for Alltycham Drive could be placed easily, the Clerk needed to source assistance for the delivery of the bench to Parc Chwarae Teg.

Councillors G Davies and J Jones offered to assist

Resolved to be noted.

11496: Place Plans:

The 'Planning Aide' Wales training had been emailed to each Councillor

Resolved to be noted.

11497: The Green, Trebanos:

The Clerk confirmed that the County Borough could carry out the task by the local ward Member requesting 'shavings and scalplings' on a without prejudice basis, subject to availability at a cost of approx. £3500 to £4000. There was however no time scale for the completion of the work.

Several Councillors were concerned that the time scales could be extremely long and were uncomfortable with the state of the road surface due to the large potholes which might not be addressed for some time.

Resolved

The Clerk will obtain costings for private contractors to address the issues at the site.

11498: Clos Nant Ddu:

The Clerk confirmed that a reply had been received from the Director of the Environment and the Cabinet Member stating that the review at the Members Surgery was the only way forward unless the Ward Members were willing to re-prioritise current projects.

Unfortunately, as the current projects were also urgent this was not felt to be a solution to the problem.

The County Borough Member was currently in correspondence with the Police to determine what action could be taken by them to improve the situation.

Residents had been informed.

Resolved to be noted.

11499: Park and Community Officer:

Paul Baker the previous groundsman had expressed an interest in the new part time position which was to be created shortly.

Resolved that Paul Baker will be employed as the new Park and Community Officer

11500: Christmas Lights:

The contractors had attended the site and had noted that one of the original brackets used for the 'Nadolig Llawen' signs on Herbert Street was no longer in place. They suggested therefore that the banner be placed further down Herbert Street where the anchor points were available.

The scheme final cost considering small amendments was £18409.00

Resolved to be agreed.

11501: Pedestrian Crossing:

A reply had been received from the Director of the Environment and the Cabinet Member stating a more robust central pedestrian refuge was being investigated for the A474 Herbert Street Bypass by officers to address the issues raised.

Resolved to be noted.

11502: Planning:

Meeting held on the 22nd June 2020.

P2020/0502

Applicants name: Mr Paul Holmes, 105 Parc Gilbertson, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, SA8 4PT

Site Location: 105 Parc Gilbertson, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, SA8 4PT

Proposed Development: Single storey garage.

Resolved:

No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2020/0283

Applicants name: Mr Anthony Williams, 327 Brecon Road, Penrhos, Ystradgunlais

Site Location: 5-15 Herbert Street, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4EB.

Proposed Development: Change of use from Class A1 and A2 units with flats above to restaurant (Class A3) with 8 no guest bedrooms and 1 no guest suite on first floor, alteration of fenestration on rear elevation, extraction flue and new steps to rear of premises (Amended Plans retaining unit serving Sweet William)

Resolved:

Council continues to Object for the following reasons.

1 There are no altered plans available on the web site and therefore adequate consultation cannot take place.

2 Despite the retention of Sweet William there will still be a reduction of retail units in this area which Council believes will be detrimental to the Town Centre.

3 The unadopted lane is already overcrowded with the access to the Dillwyn, the Heritage Centre, and Little Steps. Council does not believe there is sufficient space for deliveries, pick up and drop off. Bins etc

4 Little Steps has pick up and drop off of young children. Council does not believe that additional vehicles in this area is safe.

5 More consultation is required as this is a contentious rather than non-contentious issue.

Meeting held on the 29th June 2020.

P2020/0283

Applicants name: Mr Anthony Williams, 327 Brecon Road, Penrhos, Ystradgunlais

Site Location: 5-15 Herbert Street, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4EB

Proposed Development: Change of use of 5-9 Herbert Street from vacant A1 unit and Funeral Directors to restaurant (Class A3) with 8 guest bedrooms and 1 guest suite on first floor, alteration of fenestration on rear elevation, extraction flue, and new fire escape at rear of premises (Amended Plans retaining unit serving Sweet William)

Resolved

Although the Committee was pleased to see the alteration of the plans to retain Sweet Williams, the plans still reduce the number of retail outlets in Pontardawe. The Committee was also still concerned about Parking and Access at the rear of the building due to pick up and drop off at Little Steps. For these reasons, the Committee continues to object to the recommendations. (All Planning Committees have plenary powers)

Discussed in the meeting:

P2020/0283

Applicants name: BT Payphones, 4th Floor Monument TE, 11-13 Great Tower Street, London EC3R 5AQ.

Site Location: Junction Holly Street/ Herbert Street, Pontardawe

Resolved

Council wished to object to the removal of this facility as it was used on average eight times per month.

11503: Clerks Report re Town Council Website

Given the technical nature of the web-site and the requirement that the new web site not only comply with the current accessibility requirements but that it was also coded in such a way that would allow upgrading, the Clerk requested that Council allow discussions with only one company under Standing Order 18 (a) iv (Contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 can be exempt from the tendering process due to special circumstances).

One Voice Wales had used Vision ICT and had confirmed that many Town and Community Council's in Wales had used this company. The Clerk had obtained feedback from Neath Town Council and Carmarthen Town Council who were happy with their platform's performance.

Ordinarily local companies would be utilised in the first instance however due to the technical nature of the project this was not possible on this occasion

The Clerk had spoken to Clydach Community Council who had won an award for their web site. Unfortunately, their website had been created by a Councillor and not a commercial company.

The Clerk confirmed that the new website would be fully bilingual in the same manner as the current website and Councillor Daniel Williams offered his help in any translation work if this were required.

Resolved

That Vision ICT would be contracted to create the new Pontardawe Town Council website.

11504: Account Schedule and Bank Reconciliation:

The Clerk provided a quote from Acorn Chemical Services for specialist Water testing services for the three Community Halls at a cost of £1161.00

Resolved that Account Schedule 370 totalling £20297.08 together with the Bank Reconciliation should be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders also the quote from Acorn should be accepted.

11505: Email re litter from My Green Valley:

The extensive email had been forwarded to Council Members prior to the meeting.

Councillor Richards explained that a meeting had been held between the County Borough Members and 'My Green Valley' to discuss various initiatives that could be tried to encourage people to be more aware of litter and dog waste disposal. There were also numerous grants available for organisations who tackled these issues.

'My Green Valley' were now to take some of the initiatives forward.

Resolved

That the Clerk will identify if current dog waste bins in Neath Port Talbot had a telephone number to inform the County Borough of full bins. If not she will source some for the Pontardawe area.

The Town Clerk will also attempt to have the new bin on the Art Centre forecourt moved as the current placement will interfere with the stage during festivals.

11506: Crossing Patrol Officer:

The Crossing Patrol Officer was back at her post from the date of the reopening of the schools. Neath Port Talbot Council had completed the relevant risk assessments and had provided guidance on safe working due to Covid 19.

Resolved to be noted.

11507: Minor Authority Governor:

The term of office for the Minor Authority Governor for YGG Pontardawe had come to an end. Councillor Gary Davies was however happy to be nominated for a further term.

Resolved that Councillor G Davies will be the Minor Authority Governor for YGG Pontardawe.

11508: Relaxation of lockdown restrictions:

Council discussed the easing of lockdown restrictions in full and were provided with additional details on the practicalities.

- Public Houses and Restaurants

The County Borough Member provided additional information on the actions that could be carried out by local Public Houses in the short term (Currently only beer gardens and purchase of Alcohol for off-site would be available. It was anticipated that further relaxation of the lockdown rules would allow service indoors in August)

The County Borough Member also confirmed that all Events such as live music required a 'Temporary Events Notice' prior to commencement.

On-Sales

Customers would receive waiter service, sitting at tables outside the premises on their own land and could use the conveniences within the building with social distancing which would be monitored by the landlord.

Off-Sales

Customers could enter the premises to purchase alcohol, but consumption would be off the premises. Use of the conveniences within the Public House would be allowed, with social distancing.

Council wished to support the local Public Houses as much as possible as they were being severely affected by the current restrictions however they were pleased that the position was to be monitored closely to ensure that clientele also supported the phased re-opening by acting in an appropriate manner, using the facilities provided and not littering.

- Pinch Point Barriers at Herbert Street

The Barriers had been moved to the left-hand side of the street as this posed the greatest issue with social distancing, unfortunately this now removed the disabled parking bay. Following a discussion it was agreed that the additional space was required to allow social distancing outside the chemist and therefore there was no option but to remove the disabled bay in this area temporarily, however, an alternative temporary disabled parking bay could be placed further down the street.

- Re-opening of Children's play areas and Community Halls

The Clerk confirmed that she had been in correspondence with Officers at neighbouring Town and Community Councils and the following actions were considered necessary to open both facilities safely.

Children's play areas

The CDC website stated the following:

Outdoor areas, like playgrounds in schools and parks generally require normal routine cleaning, but do not require disinfection.

Do not spray disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds- it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19 to the public.

Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.

As the surfaces are constantly in the weather (sunlight kills the virus, rain washes the surfaces and fresh air disperses virus) then social distancing is the only additional measure that would be required. The Clerk recommended that following a full risk assessment, social distancing signs or banners were placed at the Town Council owned parks.

The Parks had been maintained by the contractors throughout the period. The Contractors were covered by their own risk assessment and policy to ensure staff safety

The Groundsman had been working throughout the period until his retirement. A full risk assessment was completed to allow safe working. Given the changes in the circumstances however a revised risk assessment would be carried out for the new Park and Community Officer.

It is likely therefore that the Parks can open safely on the 20th July 2020.

Community Halls.

To enable safe use of the Community Hall some restrictions would need to remain for the present. All restrictions would be regularly reviewed to ensure that as many of the community as possible were able to utilise the Halls facilities:

The additional rules recommended are as follows:

- The usual groups i.e. slimmer's world etc could utilise the Hall facilities however the Caretaker would specify the numbers allowed each session to ensure social distancing was possible.
- A 30-minute change over between groups to prevent a bottleneck at the entry and exit
- All groups would need to allocate one member as their representative. That representative would be responsible for collecting contact details for all within their group. The information should be held for 21 days then disposed of. If individuals are not willing to provide details then they would not be permitted to enter the facility
- Groups would be provided with disinfectant spray and disposable wipes, surfaces, doorknobs, light switches etc must be wiped down at the end of the session
- We will set up a designated bin for tissues and cleaning materials which will be double bagged and left for 72 hours before being put out with the refuse
- The Hall Caretaker must have contact details for the group's representative.
- Hall caretakers must clean regularly as usual, however disinfectants used on surfaces and floors will be checked to ensure they kill viruses

- No one off parties for the present
- No use of the kitchen at present (snacks and drinks can be brought by groups but in their own containers and all food taken away after each session)
- Sanitizer station at the entrance
- Liquid soap in the toilets and paper towels for drying hands (not hand driers or cloth towels)
- Signage/ risk assessment and training for caretakers
- Caretakers should have sufficient protective clothing for the present (normal rubber gloves would be sufficient)
- As the Welsh Government does not suggest masks at present we would not suggest mandatory face covering.
- Additional discussions would need to take place with the organisers of Youth Clubs and Creches give that social distancing in these groups would be more problematic.

The Clerk would also identify cleaning products, PPE and equipment that may be required to clean the Community Hall in the event that we are informed that an infected person has attended the facility. The equipment such as disinfectant sprayers were likely to be more than a few hundred pounds to purchase however this specialist cleaning equipment could be stored at the Town Council Office and requested by the Caretaker when required. The Halls could be opened as soon as all actions had been completed following the 20th July 2020.

Resolved that the Clerk will take the action required to open both the Children’s play areas and Community Halls in a safe manner and also request a temporary disabled parking bay on Herbert Street

11509: Urgent Road Safety Matters:

None.

Resolved to be noted.

11510: Next Meeting:

The next meeting of Council will take place on the 14th September 2020 at Ynysmeudwy Hall or by virtual platform depending on lockdown restrictions.

Signed Dated