

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Pontardawe Town Council held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014, at ARCH Hall, Cefn Llan Road, Pontardawe commencing at 6.45pm**

**9676. Present** Councillors P Williams (presiding), Mrs J Bowen, D Harris, G Davies, H Evans, A Nicholson, Mrs E Puzey, H Pickrell, V Hotten, B Williams, D B Thomas, Ms S Northcott and Ms C Ford.

Youth Representatives – Harri Evans – Mason, Dylan Williams

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs L Purcell, Mrs R Phillips and M James.

**9677. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary interests:** Councillors Mrs J Bowen, A Nicholson, G Davies, V Hotten and Ms S Northcott declared an interest in the Pontardawe and District Youth Facility, Councillor B Williams declared an interest in discussions on School crossings as he is a Governor of Cwmtawe Community School.

**Resolved** this be noted.

**9678. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014:**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

**9679. Sergeant Jayne James:** Council welcomed Sergeant James to her first meeting of Pontardawe Town Council following her appointment to the local division on the retirement of Sergeant Andy Abrahams. Sergeant James gave brief details of her background and confirmed her wish to retain a close working relationship with the Council.

Council Members gave details of a number of issues they would like to see addressed and the following was agreed:

- Sergeant James confirmed that all non emergency crimes needed to be reported via the 101 number from where they would be logged then distributed to the most effective department. This included cybercrime. She would however determine if the 'Crime Prevention Officer' had specific guidelines for online security and would forward it to the Clerk for distribution to Members.
- Sergeant James requested that Council Members advise constituents to report non emergency crime via the 101 number in the first instance; however details could be relayed directly to the PCSOs or via the 'Our Bobby' web site.
- With regard to crime detection rates it was stated that annual rates could be provided from statistics however due to the time scales it was not a useful tool for providing Council with information on the actual crimes solved in the area.
- The Crime statistics provided at the Council meetings were a very accurate representation of the crimes actually taking place in any given area as they were allocated at source.

- Sergeant James confirmed that she would ensure that the local PCSOs could provide details in the PACT meetings of the status of individual crimes as there was not an issue under the Data Protection Act with general information.
- Sergeant James confirmed that cards with contact detail would be made available to Council Members and that if there were any specific concerns she was happy to discuss them directly with Members.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9680. Councillor Tony Randall of Ystalyfera Community Council:** Council agreed to discuss the Ynysmeudwy Football Ground at the beginning of the meeting. Councillor Randall provided details of a proposed scheme to improve the play facilities at the Ynysmeudwy AFC Ground. He confirmed that the ground was owned by the AFC but leased by Ystalyfera Community Council and was situated on the boundary of Ystalyfera Community Council and Pontardawe Town Council. Councillor Randall suggested that a joint venture could be considered at the site to improve the play facilities with part funding from the Community Council, part funding from the Town Council and the balance sourced from grants.

**Resolved** that a joint working party be arranged between the two Councils and the Football Club. Councillors Vince Hotten and Huw Evans are to act as representatives on the committee with powers to co-opt another Member should they be unable to attend.

**9681. Matters raised by members of the public:** None.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9682. Police Matters:** The Clerk provided the following information:

Pontardawe:

The next PACT meeting was to be held on the 16/10/14 at The Cross Community Centre commencing at 6.30pm.

The main PACT priority was anti social behavior at the Park (Additional patrols were to be carried out), and young people cycling the wrong way on 'One Way' streets (Local schools to be contacted to provide guidance to young cyclists.)

Total number of crimes for Pontardawe for August – 36 (Burglary 2, Anti Social Behaviour 8, Robbery 0, Vehicle Crime 5, Violent Crime 11, Public Disorder 0, Shoplifting 0, Criminal Damage 3, Other Theft 6, Drugs 0, Other Crime 1)

Trebanos:

The next PACT meeting was to be held on the 16/10/14 at Trebanos Hall commencing at 6.30pm.

The main PACT priorities were complaints of off anti social behavior at the park (Regular patrols were being carried out.)

Total number of crimes for Trebanos for August – 4 (Burglary 1, Anti Social Behaviour 1, Robbery 0, Vehicle Crime 2, Violent Crime 0, Public Disorder 0, Shoplifting 0, Criminal Damage 0, Other Theft 0, Drugs 0, Other Crime 0)

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9683. Pontardawe & District Youth Facility:** Councillors Ms S Northcott, G Davies, A Nicholson, V Hotten and Mrs J Bowen expressed an interest.

Council was advised that the Pontardawe and District Youth Facility had received no financial assistance for the 2014/15 fiscal year to date from Pontardawe Town Council and therefore there was still £10,000 from the budget available. They had however been informed that one of the self funding groups would not be returning due to budget cuts.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9684. Out of School activities brochure:** The Clerk confirmed that an initial draft brochure was available and was provided for Council Members to view. The Clerk confirmed that the brochure would be available for printing shortly and the web site and social media pages were also due to be launched at the same time.

Council reviewed the draft brochure and was impressed with the work put in by Harri Evans-Mason and the pupils at Cwmtawe School who had provided the art work.

There was some concern over utilising cartoon art work as it was felt by one Member that there may be issues with the exaggeration of features in the drawings, however, Council on the whole was happy for cartoons to be utilised in the brochure and on the web site as exaggeration was usual for cartoon drawings.

It was also suggested that the Welsh side of the brochure be printed 'upside down' to enable the Welsh section of the brochure to be easily read.

The Clerk wished to thank Harri Evans-Mason for all his help in the production of the brochure and in the creation of the web site and social media pages. Harri requested that a copy of the final draft brochure be made available to the school to present to the young artist who had created the designs.

Council requested that a note be included in the brochure or on the web site to specifically thank Harri Evans Mason for the work carried out on the project.

The Clerk confirmed that three quotes had been requested from printers and quotes would be available shortly.

**Resolved** that a draft brochure will be made available for young artist who designed the cartoons and that the printer with the lowest quote will be used to print the brochures.

**9685. Allotment Provision:** Council was advised that Cilybebyll Community Council were still in the process of reviewing the provision of allotments.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will keep Council up to date with developments.

**9686. Cwmdu Glen:** Council was advised that the plan had been discussed in the Policy and Resources Committee which was to be reviewed later in the meeting.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9687. Christmas lights provision 2014:** The Clerk provided the following information:

- 'Vale' in Clydach had agreed to transport a 20 foot Christmas tree from their suppliers in Birmingham to Clydach free of charge.
- The Clerk had been in contact with the tree suppliers and had determined that a 20 foot tree could be source for approx £250.
- The Mynydd y Betws Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund had agreed to provide the grant to purchase Christmas Tree lights, some pea lights for the trees at the Cross and Herbert Street if funds available and to support the LED Flag Project organised by the Art Centre.
- Neath Port Talbot Council had confirmed that the over street banners would be provide for Pontardawe for free.
- The insurance cover for the lights had been added to the Town Council's policy for an additional premium of less that £50.
- The electricity costs for the lights were likely to be approx £500 however accurate figures were not yet available.

The Clerk did however state that there were costs associated with the following which were still to be determined and which could be substantial.

- A HIAB and driver to transport the tree from 'Vale' in Clydach to the Art Centre.
- Ground support staff to place the tree.
- A 'Cherry Picker' and staff to dress the Christmas tree, place the pea lights and place any over street banners – It was likely that these costs would be substantial. However the Clerk was still awaiting costs from both the County Borough and private contractors.

The Clerk confirmed that due to the Mynydd y Betws Grant the Town Council was committed to providing the lighted tree and Christmas lights however additional decorations could be added depending on the level of funds available.

Council was advised that the sponsors to date were Pontardawe Car Sales, Lliw Building Supplies and the Gwrhyd Quarry; however the Clerk was in correspondence with further companies in order to secure additional funds.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will organise an emergency Policy and Resources Committee once the final costs were known to determine what additional decorations can be provided. (Plenary powers to be awarded)

**9688. Trebanos Service Station:** The Clerk confirmed that no additional information had been received however she would chase the County Borough and advise Council once a response had been received.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9689. Swansea Road Crossing:** Council was advised that a response had been received from Neath Port Talbot Council stating that following a review of the position there was insufficient usage at the crossing to warrant the retention of the School crossing warden or the provision of a pelican crossing.

The Clerk also read an email received from Councillor R Phillips requesting Council take action to provide a crossing to safe guard children and older people at Ynysderw House.

Council discussed the position in full and determined that there were a number of extremely dangerous crossings in Pontardawe (most especially outside the Health Centre on Tawe Terrace) however the position on Swansea Road was an issue.

It was also believed that the 20mph zone at the site was 'advisory' only and could not be enforced by local law enforcement.

**Resolved** that a joint letter will be drafted from the Town Council, Cwmtawe School and the Police requesting action taken by the County Borough. It was further agreed that Council Members will include the issue in the next PACT meeting.

**9690. Planning:**

**P2014/0548** Mr Duncan Hadley, Penlan Farm, Penlan Road, Rhydyfro, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4RP.

Site Location: Penlan Farm, Penlan Road, Rhydyfro, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4RP.

Proposed Development: Two storey rear and single storey side extension with roof terrace.

**Resolved:** No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

**P2014/0872** Mr Peter Cole, 65 Brecon Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4PD.  
Site Location: 65 Brecon Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4PD.

Proposed Development: Vehicular Access.

**Resolved** No Objection.

**P2014/0731** Mr Andrew Rickson, Brook Cottage, Llanguicke Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4PL.  
Site Location: Jasmine Cottage, Llanguicke Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4PL.

Proposed Development: Retention and completion of detached two bed bungalow and associated car parking.

**Resolved:** No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

**9691. Finance Committee held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 – Outstanding grant applications:**

The Committee recommended on awarding outstanding grant applications:

The committee was advised that from the original budget for general grants of £6000, £1961 was still to be allocated.

It was agreed that any applications from national charities would not be considered at the review as funds had already been allocated for this purpose in April 2014. It was also agreed that any application without the relevant documentation would also not be considered.

The requests under review were as follows:

- **Groundwork's:** The committee was advised that Groundwork's had requested assistance with third party funding for the adventure playground at Riverside. They required £2000.

The Committee recommended that funds not be made available as the balance of the grant budget may be required to support the 'Light up Pontardawe' project for Christmas 2014.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendations will be ratified

**9692. Finance Committee held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 – Precept 2015/16**

**The committee recommended on the budget and precept for 2015/16:** The Clerk produced a breakdown of expenditure for the current financial year (Appendix 1) which included actual expenditure for first half year and projected expenditure for second half year. This was discussed fully and a number of pertinent questions posed.

The proposed budget for 2015/16 based on the expenditure for the current year was set out (**Appendix 2**). This was again thoroughly discussed. The Clerk explained the basis of the budget was to ensure that there were sufficient funds available to support Councils current obligations and to maintain a reasonable general reserve. She confirmed that due to the current austerity measures no additional funds would be added to specific reserves next year.

The Clerk confirmed that the expected rate of inflation was approximately 1.5% and these together with projected pay increases, third party funding for the WREN Grant and Youth facility support had been factored into the calculations.

Unfortunately due to unexpected elections costs in 2014/15 and the loss of rental income from one of the self funding groups at the Youth Facility, some funds were likely to be required from the General reserve for 2014/15.

The Committee recommended that the precept be increased to £163,700 for 2015/16.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendation will be ratified.

**9693. Personnel Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014: The Committee to review current Contracts of Employment and rates of pay:**

The Committee reviewed the current contracts of employment for the office cleaner, Cleaners in charge and groundsman – They suggested one amendment to the groundsmans statement.

- Requirement for grass cutting at the parks should also specifically include the land at Maes y Llwyni.

The Clerk confirmed that there were no additional recommendations from the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) for updates to the Contracts of Employment for the Clerk or other employees.

The Clerk confirmed that as yet the National Joint Council had not agreed a pay rate however the Unions were requesting that there be a minimum increase of £1 on scale point 5 to achieve the living wage and the same flat rate increase on all other scale points.

Currently the living wage was £7.65.

The Clerk also stated that the hourly rates for cleaners in the area varied from £6.30 per hour to £7.00 per hour. The committee was therefore aware that the Town Councils cleaners were currently being paid close to the lower end of the scale.

A suggestion was made that the cleaner's hourly rate be increased to scale point 8 which was close to the higher end of the general cleaners rates for the area at £6.92 per hour. The Council could then increase further should the union's request be agreed by the SJC.

The Clerk confirmed that an increase to SCP 8 would create additional wage expenditure of approx £445 per cleaner.

The overall additional wage cost would therefore be approx £1335pa should the increase be implemented.

It was suggested by the Committee that no other changes be made to salaries until negotiations had been finalized with the SJC.

The Committee recommended that the Cleaners in Charge rate of pay be increased with immediate effect from £6.46 (scale point 5) to £6.92 (scale point 8) - For all other employees, there would be no change until the position was agreed by the Standard Joint Council.

The Clerk also explained that the hourly rate for the cleaners had been raised to the new minimum rate from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 in line with previously agreed recommendations.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendation will be ratified.

**9694. Policy & Resources Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014: This Committee to review the Cwmdu Glen Management plan:** The Committee was provided with copies of the plan and reviewed it in full. They had the following observations which they wished clarified prior to agreeing the plan in its entirety.

Objective: Maintain and enhance accessibility and interpretation, and increase use.

Under 'maintain footpaths' it states that Registered paths are maintained by C&W Team. Existing permissive paths are maintained by Streetcare.

There is however one portion of the path between Rhyd y Fro and the 'Green Bridge' which is part of the 'Circular route' but which is not a registered path but is a Pontardawe Town Council permissive path, which is in need of a great deal of maintenance on both the trees and the path which is in places being eroded and is not suitable for walking.

The Town Council would like this portion of the path to be individually noted as it's likely to require grant funding to re-cut the path in a more appropriate place to prevent continual erosion.

Objective: Protect and restore historical features.

The plan proposes a 'secret garden' at the current walled garden at Glanrhyd however there was a suggestion that this area may be suitable for allotments which would provide a community growing facility in line with the Welsh Assembly Governments paper on improving the availability of allotments and community gardens.

The committee recommended that the above issues and suggestions were reviewed by the County Borough prior to any agreement of the plan by the Town Council.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendation will be ratified.

**9695. Policy & Resources Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014: This committee to discuss the new 'Model Standing Orders':** The Clerk advised the Committee that the only changes within the new Standing orders were in relation to 'Code of Conduct Complaints'

The current Standing Orders stated that 'All complaints relating to breaches of the Code of Conduct by Community and Town Councils should be reported to the 'Public Ombudsman for Wales' however the revised Standing Orders states that 'Upon notification by the County Borough that it is dealing with a complaint that a Councillor or non Councillor with voting rights has breached the code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall.....report this to Council.

It further stated that were the notification in the above standing order relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of the Council of this fact and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined'.

The Committee was concerned that the standing orders removed the Town Council's recourse to the Ombudsman and placed the whole of decision making process with the County Borough. The Committee therefore recommended that clarification was sought on the matter and that the new Standing Orders were not adopted until the position was made clear.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendation will be ratified.

**9696. Policy & Resources Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014: Review of 'A Shared Community' – Charter Agreement (Plenary Powers awarded):** The Committee reviewed the Charter agreement and had a number of concerns:

The introduction stated that the charter was an 'Equality of Partnership' however the wording of the document presented a number of specific responsibilities for the Town and Community Councils while the wording for the County Borough was very vague and included statements such as 'encourage accountability'.

The Committee was unhappy that 'locations specific' issues were to be removed from discussion.

The Committee was unhappy that the document had no specific time scales for actions or specific actions but instead included statements such as 'as soon as possible' and 'where appropriate and reasonable' as these were subjective statements.

They were also unhappy that there was no requirement for services provided to Town and Community Councils to be ongoing and that the document actually stated that there was no requirement for services to be continued if departmental capacity was overstretched.

The document stated that the Town and Community Councils will engage with the local community however there was no statement that engagement was informal and that no formal methods which could have cost implications would be imposed at a later date.

There was also concern over the method of agreeing priorities as the only forum currently available was via One Voice Wales, which was not subscribed to by all Town and Community Councils in the area.

The Committee was unhappy with the document in its entirety as it was vague and unfocused and not a viable working document. The Committee therefore recommended that the current Charter was rejected.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendation will be ratified.

**9697. Policy & Resources Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014: Review of the 'Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill (Wales) (Plenary powers awarded):** The Bill was reviewed by the committee who had no comment.

The Committee recommended that the Bill be noted.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendation will be ratified.

**9698. Policy & Resources Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014: Review of the 'Reforming Local Government White Paper' (Plenary Powers awarded):** The Committee reviewed the White paper prior to the meeting and provided the following observations:

The committee stated that although some Town and Community Councils were ineffective, there were many that were very effective in their roles.

The committee agreed to the use of Neighbourhood Management plans and community action groups; however these groups were not democratically elected and were therefore not accountable to the general populace. It was agreed that they should act in partnership with Town and Community Councils.

No mention was made of the impact on the democratic process of the merging of the unitary authorities and the increased need for local democratic representation, within the local wards.

The Committee was concerned that as the white paper could have a very serious impact on Town and Community Councils, that they should be considered 'stakeholders' when further consultation exercises are scheduled.

The Committee also wishes to state that the document is vague on the role (if any) that Town and Community Councils would play in the future, and are further concerned about the impact on local democracy following the merger of unitary authorities should Town and Community Councils be replaced by unelected Neighbourhood action groups.

**Resolved** that the Committee's recommendation will be ratified.

**9699: Clerks Report Actual/Budget for the first half of 2014/15:** The Clerk confirmed that 'Parks and Open Spaces' were over budget by 6% once adjustments had been made for the boulder project at Trebanos park which had been covered by grant funding.

General Admin was 31% over budget due to the unexpected cost of the election at the Trebanos ward however funds had been made available from general reserves to cover.

There was approx £1900 available from the original budget for grants of £6000.

The Youth Facility had not utilized any funds during the first half of 2014/15 and therefore £10,000 was still available.

Halls were 20% under budget however this was to be expected as heating costs increased in the second half of the year.

The £2000 Rights of Way budget had been transferred to Parks to cover part of the costs of the tree felling at Trebanos Park.

Wages and salaries were 4% over budget due to costs of sickness cover during the first part of the year.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9700. County Borough Council/ Town Council Liaison Committee:** Councillor Peter and Bob Williams attended on behalf of Council and commented that there was no effective representation from the County Borough and that the issues regarding the Charter had not been originally identified. They did however confirm that the Town Council's concerns had been put forward in the meeting.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9701. One Voice Wales Committee:** Unfortunately Councillor Nicholson was not able to attend the meeting.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9702. Banking Provision:** Council was provided with details of the issues to be addressed if electronic banking were to be considered following the repeal of S150 (5).

It was agreed that although the current position was secure it was time consuming and expensive. Electronic Banking would be more efficient however additional safeguards would be required.

Additional considerations would be:

- Eternal Fraud – Passwords and pin number would be secure and appropriate computer controls (fire walls/ antivirus/ spyware etc) would need to be in place
- Fraud or Error by Council employees: Checking and control procedures together with adequate insurance would need to be in place.
- A checking mechanism such as dual passwords would provide a similar control to the dual signing of checks.
- In practice it may also be possible to set agreed control limits with the bank to prevent large payments without additional authorization.

The Clerk confirmed that additional insurance cover could be provided to cover electronic banking and that computers were already covered by adequate computer controls however Lloyds Bank did not provide a service with dual password facilities.

The Clerk advised Council that only Unity Bank had this facility and did operate specific accounts for Town/Community Councils. The Society of Local Council Clerks had also recently transferred their banking functions to Unity Bank.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will review the possibility of switching the Councils Banking to Unity.

**9703. Accounts Schedule 304 and Bank Reconciliations:**

**Resolved** to accept the schedule 304 totaling £15444.43 together with the bank reconciliations, in line with Standing Orders.

**9704. Review of Designation Landscapes in Wales:** Council was provided with the relevant documentation.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9705. Email re additional litter bins:** Following a request to the County Borough additional litter bins were to be placed at Cwmtawe School, Ffordd Parc Ynysderw and the Bye Pass Car Park.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**9706. Plaque at the 'Toll House', Swansea Road, Pontardawe:** The Clerk confirmed that Neath Port Talbot Planning were investigating the location of the plaque from the 'Toll House'

**Resolved** that the Clerk will keep Council up to date with developments.

**9707. Tree of Light grant request:** Email received from Glantawe Lions requesting a £100 grant towards the 'tree of light' for 2014. The funds raised were to be donated to the 'Mayor's Fund' which for 2014 was MIND.

**Resolved** that a grant of £100 will be provided by the Town Council.

**9708. Minor Authority Governor at Trebanos School:** The Clerk advised Council that following the death of Councillor Mel Thomas there was a vacancy for a Minor Authority Governor at Trebanos School.

Councillor Mrs Eryl Puzey was nominated by Councillors Vince Hotten and Gary Thomas. Councillor Charlotte Ford was nominated by Councillor Andrew Nicholson and Councillors Ms Sue Northcott.

The vote was by a show of hands with Councillor Mrs E Puzey receiving 5 votes and Councillor Ms C Ford receiving 6 votes,

**Resolved** that Councillor Ms C Ford be the Minor Authority Governor at Trebanos School.

**9709. Welsh Language Commissioners draft enforcement policy:** Council agreed to review in a Policy & Resources Committee.

**Resolved** that a Policy and Resources Committee will be arranged for 6.00pm on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

**9710. Consultation on the withdrawal of subsidized bus services:** Council agreed to review in a Policy & Resources Committee.

**Resolved** that a Policy and Resources Committee will be arranged for 6.00pm on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014. (Plenary Powers awarded).

**9711. The Cross Community Centre:** An email was received requesting the Town Council look to take enter negotiations with Neath Port Talbot Council in order to retain the 'The Cross' Community Centre at Pontardawe.

**Resolved** that no action be taken until the actual position regarding the future of 'The Cross' has been made official.

**9712. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales –draft annual report 2015/16:** Council was provided with details prior to the meeting.

**Resolved** that a Policy and Resources Committee will be arranged for 6.00pm on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

**9713. Urgent Road Safety Matters:** Council was advised that there was insufficient signage for adequate directions to Pontardawe Welsh School.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will contact the County Borough request that additional signage is made available

**9714. Date and time of next meeting:** The date of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at Trebanos Hall commencing at 6.45pm.

**Signed .....** **Dated .....**