

Ordinary General Meeting held on the 14th October 2019 at Trebanos Hall, Swansea Road, Trebanos commencing at 6.45pm

Present:

Councillor A Nicholson (presiding), Mrs L Purcell, A Richards, K Flynn, R Thomas, D Williams, H Davies, J Jones, V Hotten, G Davies, Ms R Jones and W Thomas

Apologies:

Councillor Ms C Ford, Mrs R Phillips, G Nicholson, Ms S Northcott and B McCarthy (Youth Representative)

11272: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:

Councillor J Jones expressed an interest in the Pontardawe Street Market as he is the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce.

Resolved to be noted.

11273: Signing of the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 9th September 2019:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 9th September 2019, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

11274: Consider Matters raised by Members of the Public:

Several Residents expressed their support for the Pontardawe Street Market which had taken place on the Art Centre forecourt and on Holly Street, once a month during July, August and September but which had been stopped by the organisers following Health and Safety concerns raised by the County Borough over the format. The Residents felt that the Market should be supported as it brought trade into the Town from outside which would support the Art Centre and the local Town Centre. They also felt that the Market encouraged a sense of Community within the Town.

Resolved to be noted.

11275: Defibrillator Mapping Project:

A second meeting of the Partners had taken place. The current Defibrillators had been mapped which showed good overall coverage, but only a limited number of units available 24 hours. The group were now to liaise with the Community to encourage placement of units outside to enable 24-hour coverage. Physical signposting, training and funding was also discussed.

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

11276: Cwmdu:

Council was advised that the action from zone 2 of the Risk Assessment was to be carried out this week.

The Town Council was still awaiting liaison with the Coed Cymru Representative to determine the way forward re an Ash dieback plan. No Ash trees within the body of Cwmdu adjacent to paths would be felled until this plan was available unless they posed a danger to Members of the Public.

All recommended work from the Risk Assessment on trees which were on the boundary with private property would have been addressed by the end of the week.

The volunteers at Cwmdu would be creating a sign for the picnic area. Council would be advised once this had been completed.

Resolved to be noted.

11277: Police Matters:

Pontardawe Statistics

July 2019 – Total crimes 40 (16 violent & 7 Antisocial Behaviour)

August 2019 – Total crimes 37 (11 violent & 8 Antisocial Behaviour)

The PACT meeting had been held on the 10th October 2019. Parking at Jones Street, Quarr Road and the swimming pool had been made a PACT priority however residents permit parking had already been suggested but rejected by most residents. Additional Solutions to the issues were to be discussed.

Trebanos Statistics

July 2019 – Total crimes 20 (12 violent)

August 2019 – Total crimes 9 (3 violent & 3 other theft)

No additional details from the PACT meeting held on the 10th October 2019 were available however the Clerk had confirmed that the spike of violent crimes in Trebanos in July were due to domestic violence at one address over multiple occasions.

Resolved to be noted.

11278: Bench at Alltycham Drive:

The Clerk was in discussion with the County Borough over the location for the new bench.

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

11279: Pontardawe Cenotaph:

Council was advised that both CADW and the War Memorial Trust insisted that any cleaning of plaques would need to be carried out by experts.

The Clerk had contacted one specialist company to obtain advise on cleaning. They stated that cleaning and maintenance was needed on a regular basis to maintain an even colouration. A site survey would be required to obtain an accurate cost, but, an estimated figure was approximately £1500 to £2300 plus VAT. Any access equipment such as scaffolding would be an additional cost.

Resolved that Council will contact other Councils in the Neath Port Talbot area to determine if they had arranged cleaning of their Cenotaphs, what was the cost? What company was used? What was the overall condition of the plaques following cleaning?

In addition, the Clerk will contact CADW to determine if re-patination is recommended to safeguard plaques or if it was cosmetic process only.

11280: Planning:

Meeting held on the 30th September 2019

P2019/ 5241

Applicants Name: Mr Lyn Davies, 3 Cherry Grove, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4PX

Site Location: 4 Cherry Grove, Pontardawe SA8 4PX

Proposed Development: Retention and Completion of three dwellings, detached garage and associated works.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2019/5402

Applicants name: Mr Hanford, C/O Agent

Site Location: Land adjacent to 103 Brecon Road, Pontardawe, Swansea

Proposed Development: Retention and completion of dwelling (original application approved under planning ref no P2016/0457 on the 13.10.2016) and submission of details pursuant of conditions 3,4 and 5 of P2016/0457

Resolved No Objection

11281: Finance Committee held on the 30th September 2019 – Financial Regulations:

The Committee discussed changes to the model Financial Regulations

The recommended changes to the model Financial Regulations are as follows:

- Restriction added to Regulation 11.1.a.ii – Clarifying disapplication of contract regulations to legal professionals limited to those **action in dispute** only – not general legal work
- Update to limits under Public Contracts Regulations – footnote to regulation 11.1.b
- Minor Change to heading Regulation 12

Resolved Council ratified the Committees recommendations.

11282: Finance Committee held on the 30th September 2019 – Remaining Grant Budget:

The Committee discussed the remaining Grant budget for 2019/20

The Committee was advised that a sum of £1011 was still to be allocation although £100 of this had been ringfenced for the Glantawe Lions Tree of Light.

Two Applications had been received for funding and were discussed in full.

The following were recommended.

Swansea Valley U11 District Rugby Team - £500.00

Alltwn Brownies (It was confirmed that this was the only Brownie pack in the area and that they met in Ynysmeudwy Hall) - £411.00

Resolved Council ratified the Committees recommendations.

11283: Finance Committee held on the 30th September 2019 – Precept 2020/21:

The Committee discussed the Precept for 2020/21

The Committee had a full and frank discussion on the Financial Budget for 2020/21 (See Appendix 2)

The Committee recommended the Precept remain unchanged at £183,000.

Resolved Council ratified its recommendation to retain the Precept at £183,000 for 2020/21.

11284: Policy and Resources Committee held on the 16th September 2019 – Christmas:

The Committee finalised arrangements for Christmas 2019 and discussed options for Christmas 2020 once the current Christmas Lights contract had ended.

The Committee was advised that a 25-foot Norway Spruce could be purchased from Woods farm as usual.

The Tree would be transported to Clydach free of charge as in previous years, by Vale Clydach A HIAB would need to be hired to transport the tree from Clydach to Pontardawe. The tree was likely to be erected outside the Art Centre on a Wednesday morning as this seemed to be the least disruptive.

The Town Council's groundsman and staff at the Art Centre would assist with the erection of the tree. The Christmas lights would be placed by Commercial Christmas (the Clerk had been advised that the streetlights could be place late October/early November) – The tree lights would be erected once the tree had been placed.

The Blanchere lights would be placed on the Herbert Street trees shortly as these would remain and would not be removed following the Winterfest.

The Winterfest festivities would begin at 5.00pm on the 6th December at the Art Centre. The Parade would begin at 5.30pm and the official light 'switch on' would take place at 6.00pm

Santa's Grotto would be situated at the Art Centre.

Tesco were to provide up to six volunteers for the evening.

The following was also recommended for the Winter of 2019:

- Fireworks from Pendragon with a budget of £1000. The social media and leaflet campaign should be carried out to advise residents.
- The local's schools should be asked to submit a picture for the advertisement leaflets.
- Lliw Building Supplies should be approached to determine if the Christmas Banner could be placed on their advertisement board at 'The Cross'

The following should be researched for Winter of 2020:

- What Contractors apart from Centregreat were authorised by Neath Port Talbot to erect Christmas Lights on streetlight posts

- Quotes from Centregreat to provide a Christmas Lights full rental contract, erection and dismantling of Christmas lights only and costs for placing an additional artificial tree at 'The Cross'

Resolved Council ratified the above recommendations

11285: Policy and Resources Committee held on the 16th September 2019 – National Development Framework:

A full and frank discussion of the consultation was carried out.

The following comments were made:

- The format of the consultation did not work well on modern technology.
- The colour coding was not suitable for Assisted Technology
- There was too much referral to other documents for basic information
- The consultation was high level and seemed more a 'Wish List' than a plan.

1. NDF Outcomes (Chapter 3)

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree the 11 Outcomes are a realistic vision for the NDF? – Disagree

To what Extent do you agree with the 11 Outcomes as ambitions for the NDF? – Agree with most of them

Aims are desirable but there is no evidence that they are achievable.

The aims for the Urban areas and Countryside are contradictory.

2. Spatial Strategy Policies (Policies 1-4)

To what extent to you agree or disagree with the special strategy and key principles for development in Urban and Rural Areas – Neither Agree nor Disagree

The Rural Area policy is very vague and contradicts the Urban Policy – If funding is concentrated in Urban Areas how can we persuade young people to remain in the Countryside where funding is less (no jobs, poor infrastructure, limited housing)

3. Affordable Housing (policy 5)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the approach to increasing affordable housing? – Agree

What is deemed affordable housing? There needs to some correlation with the income levels in the area. Land prices are usually an issue, the Welsh Assembly should consider compulsory purchase of land. Perhaps the Welsh Assembly could look to replacing Coniferous Forests close to Urban or coastal areas with deciduous forests in the centre of Wales, thereby releasing land for social housing close to the centres of employment.

4. Mobile Action Zones (policy 6)

To what extent do you agree or disagree the identification of mobile action zones will be effective in encouraging better mobile coverage – Agree

5. Low Emissions Vehicles (policy 7)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that policy 7 will enable and encourage the roll out of charging infrastructure for ultra-low emission vehicles – Agree

Reliable and accessible public transport should be a fundamental (low emission buses etc) Electric cars are at present only suitable for flat Urban areas and not for the mountainous terrain throughout the rest of Wales.

6. Green Infrastructure (policies 8 & 9)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the approach to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecological networks – Agree

7. Renewable Energy and District Heat Networks (policies 10 – 15)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the NDF s policies to lower carbon emissions in Wales using - Large scale Wind and solar development – Agree & District Heat Networks – Agree

District Heat Networks are useful for Urban living on flat land and not for valleys and upland areas.

Wave/ Tidal and Waterpower should be investigated.

8. The Regions (Policy 16)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principle of developing Strategic Development Plans prepared at a regional scale – Agree

The Regions need to be in linked to the current Health Board / Council boundaries. There is no adequate link between North and South Wales.

9. North Wales (policies 17-22)

No Opinion

10. Mid and South West Wales (policies 23-26)

To what extent to you agree or disagree with the proposed policies and approach for the Mid and South West Region – Disagree

The area is too large and diverse with upland rural central Wales included with lowland farming areas, the Pembrokeshire Docklands and former industrialised Swansea and Neath Valleys that currently act as affordable commuter belts for the M4 Corridor and Swansea bay all amalgamated together.

It will be very difficult to create effective policies for such as vast diverse area.

11. South East Wales (policies 27-33)

No Opinion

12. Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

We feel there needs to be more emphasis on education especially as it relates to citizenship, awareness of Welsh history and our place in the world, and the naturalisation of people moving into Wales. The divisions exposed by the Brexit vote need addressing and the most vulnerable in our society need protection. Education is one of the primary vehicles for social cohesion and tolerance of others.

13. Habitats Regulations Assessment – No Additional Comment

14. Welsh Language – No Additional Comment (Not enough detail on how the targets are to be achieved)

15. Further Comments – Insufficient details on where the National Forest is to be placed and what trees are to be planted.

It seems that the proposed future of Wales will create two distinct Urban Settlements where most of the housing and employment will be based. These seem to be Costal North Wales with Port Links from Ireland and good road links to Deeside, and Costal South East Wales which would also include Cardiff, Newport and the M4 Corridor to Swansea Bay and Llanelli, with the Rhondda Valleys, Neath and Swansea Valleys acting as Commuter belts for affordable housing for these areas.

The centre of Wales together with Central costal Wales which would include the majority of Powys would be designated Countryside which would include farmland, the National Forest and large Wind and solar farm developments.

There is no indication of a link between North and South Wales or how it is envisaged that young people could be encouraged not to relocate from the Rural to Urban areas.

Resolved Council ratified the above

11286: Budget/ Actual Report for the First Third of 2019/20:

Council reviewed the report at the meeting

Resolved to be agreed

11287: Annual Return for 2018/19 and External Auditors Report:

There was one minor issue:

There are Empty Boxes in the Accounting Statements of the Annual Return. We do not believe there should be figures in the boxes, but they should include a nil or zero to confirm this.

No other matter came to the External Auditors attention.

The Clerk confirmed that in future she would ensure that a nil or zero was included in any boxes where there were no figures to be entered.

Resolved that the External Auditors Report and Conclusion of Audit for 2018/19 will be accepted.

11288: One Voice Wales meeting held on the 18th September 2019:

Council was not represented at this meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

11289: Account Schedule 361 totalling £7080.77 together with Bank Reconciliation:

Resolved that Account Schedule 361 totalling £7080.77 and associated Bank Reconciliation should be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders.

11290: Letter received re Pontardawe Street Market:

Councillor J Jones declared an interest as he is Chair of the Chamber of Commerce

A letter was received re the Pontardawe Street Market and its subsequent closure. The matter was discussed in full and the following facts were confirmed.

Urban Foundry who organised the successful street markets in Mumbles had approached Pontardawe several years ago with the intention of holding a Street Market at Pontardawe. Unfortunately, at that time there was significant opposition to the closure of Herbert Street by local traders. As Urban Foundry did not at that time feel there was an alternative to the closure of Herbert Street, the market was not considered viable.

During 2019, Urban Foundry once again proposed a monthly street market at Pontardawe with the alternative venue of the Art Centre forecourt and the closure of part of Holly Street as this would allow Herbert Street to remain open, but would encourage footfall from outside the Town into the Town Centre which it was believed would benefit the Art Centre and Town Centre traders.

The alternative venue was agreed, and the market was held successfully in July and August. Although crowd barriers were available, the decision was taken by Urban Foundry not to utilise them as they believed it may have restricted the flow of pedestrians into the market area.

Several Residents complained to the County Borough that there was a danger to pedestrians with this approach and as a result of Health and Safety concerns the County Borough requested, Urban Foundry consult with local traders to determine if Herbert Street could be closed to solve the problem. Unfortunately, no consultation took place which led to severe concerns by traders and others when signs were placed stating the closure of Herbert Street for the markets.

Urban Foundry then decided to cancel the October and November markets due to perceived difficulties.

The Town Council had been and was still fully supportive of the Monthly Market and believed that there was a simple solution that would allow the Monthly Markets to continue while addressing the Health and Safety issues.

They believe that the original venue of the market with the closure of Holly Street was the most effective and gave rise to only limited issues from traders in Herbert Street. Those issues it seems related to the method of diversion which could be altered to address those issues.

The Health and Safety issue at Herbert Street could be addressed by the placement of Crowd Barriers which would allow Herbert Street to remain open. This was trialled at the September Market and seemed effective.

Resolved that the Town Council support the reinstatement of the Market as soon as possible at the original location of the Art Centre forecourt and Holly street but with the use of Crowd barriers to address the Health and Safety issues rather than the closure of Herbert Street. A meeting should also be arranged with the following participants.

- Representatives of Urban Foundry
- Councillor John Jones, Chair of the Chamber of Commerce as representative of the traders
- A representative of the Town Council
- A representative of The Art Centre
- Members of the SAG team at Neath Port Talbot Council

The meeting could then address other issues such as diversions and any additional issues that require a solution.

Council would also liaise with the Art Centre to assist with publicity in the form of leaflets or other to promote both the market and the traders within Pontardawe.

11291: Email re ARCH Community Hall Car Park:

An email was received from a private individual who wished to purchase a proportion of the Community Hall Car Park to extend a private garden area. Neath Port Talbot Council had requested they contact the Town Council as although the land was owned by Neath Port Talbot Council it was leased to the Town Council.

Council Members were sympathetic to the resident but felt that it would be inappropriate to agree to the reduction in Public Parking space in this area as public parking was already very limited.

Resolved that permission will not be granted to allow purchase of part of ARCH Community Hall Car Park.

11292: Pontardawe Cross:

Neath Port Talbot Council confirmed that weed killer had been applied to the paving at Pontardawe Cross and power washing would take place shortly.

Resolved to be noted.

11293: Closed Gelligron Facility:

Neath Port Talbot Council confirmed that at present the building was surplus. The County Borough was looking for commercial tenants for the building.

The Car Park was unofficially being used by residents for additional parking however the County Borough had requested residents who wished to park in that area contact the County Borough to obtain temporary parking permits to legitimise the use of this space temporarily.

No additional information was available at present.

Resolved to be noted.

11294: Road Resurfacing:

Neath Port Talbot Council had completed all scheduled resurfacing work in Pontardawe, Trebanos, Rhyd y Fro and Ynysmeudwy for 2019. Officers would be meeting with County Borough Members in November to determine priorities for 2020.

Resolved to be noted.

11295: Environment Wales Act 2016:

It was agreed to discuss the Act together with requests for additional biodiversity within the area in a Policy and Resources Committee

Resolved that a Policy and Resources Committee will be arranged.

11296: Neath Port Talbot draft Rights of Way Plan:

Council was provided with the plan prior to the meeting and were dismayed that Pontardawe and Rhyd y Fro were underrepresented.

Resolved to be noted.

11297: Next Meeting:

The next meeting of Council will take place on the 11th November 2019 at Ynysmeudwy Hall, commencing at 6.45pm

Signed Dated

