

Ordinary General Meeting held on the 14th September 2020 by virtual platform due to Corvid 19 lockdown restrictions commencing at 6.45pm

Present:

Councillor A Nicholson (presiding), Ms S Northcott, Mrs L Purcell, Ms C Ford, D Williams, Ms R Jones, and J Jones

Apologies:

Councillor G Davies, R Thomas, and W Thomas

11511: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:

None

Resolved to be noted.

11512: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 13th July 2020:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 13th July 2020 having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council.

11513: To suspend Standing Orders:

To allow discussion of a written statement provided by a Member of the Public, in lieu of attendance at the Ordinary Meeting, which is not possible due to Covid 19 restrictions and which is currently suspended as a legal requirement.

Resolved to suspend Standing Orders on item 11514.

11514: Written Statement received by Pontardawe Town Council in lieu of presentation:

A written statement was received requesting support for a new application for a Pharmacy Licence in Pontardawe. The proposal would increase the number of Pharmacies in Pontardawe to three and would include a request for extended hours.

The Pharmacist had previously worked in the area as a locum and would like a written representation from the Town Council to support his application to the Swansea Bay University Health Board at the end of September.

The proposed Pharmacy would be located at 13-15 Herbert Street which is currently being vacated by 'Sweet Williams' who are to move to larger premises.

The Council reviewed the request and believed that the need for a new Pharmacy was expedient and necessary.

Resolved to provide a letter supporting the application as requested.

11515: Defibrillator Mapping Project:

Council was advised that the defibrillators had now been placed at 4 Herbert Street and Western Garage on Swansea Road. They had also been registered with the NHS and would be monitored in line with the current units.

The Heartbeat Trust did not advocate heated cabinets and therefore at present the cabinets were external but unheated.

There were two schools of thought over the benefits of heated cabinets and Council was unsure of the necessity of heating the cabinets, although all of the previous external units were heated.

Resolved to obtain specialist advice from David Thomas (advisor on Defibrillators units). Should it be recommended the units be heated Council will arrange for the work to be carried out at the Town Council's expense.

11516: Cwmdu Glen:

Emergency work had been carried out on the Ash tree on the boundary with 20 Waun Gron to prevent damage to property. Action had been agreed under emergency measures due to risk.

The path and picnic area from the 'green bridge' at Cwmdu was not signposted as volunteer events were currently suspended.

Neath Port Talbot currently had no formal 'Ash Dieback Plan' however they were currently reviewing Ash trees on the Highways. Neath Port Talbot considered canopy cover of under 50% as the marker for severe dieback. They were therefore reviewing each tree according to risk (height of tree, distance from property or roadways, extent of dieback) to determine if the tree required felling.

Resolved to agree the emergency expenditure, defer the creation of signposting until 2021 and review the Ash Trees within Cwmdu in accordance with risk.

11517: Police Matters:

No PACT meetings were taking place at present due to Covid 19 restrictions.

PCSO Sian Thomas was no longer the contact for Pontardawe. She had been replaced by PCSO Maria Elias, who had previously been PCSO for Godrergraig and Ystalyfera.

Pontardawe Statistics – 48 crimes in June which was equal to the number of crimes in May 2020.

Trebanos Statistics – 15 crimes in June which was up from 10 crimes in May 2020.

There had been antisocial behaviour and littering reported adjacent to the Park and Rugby Ground due to a historic diving platform that had been placed without permission. This had now been removed.

Resolved to be noted.

11518: Alltycham Bench:

Council was advised that the Memorial benches had been placed at Parc Chwarae Teg and at Alltycham Drive.

Councillor Purcell had received thanks from the residents at Haven Brynheulog for the bench placement.

Resolved to be noted.

11519: The Green, Trebanos:

The section of roadway adjacent to Trebanos Park had been added to the Town Council's Asset Register and its Municipal Insurance.

Neath Port Talbot Council had received grant funds to improve cycle tracks in the area and had utilised part of this funding to resurface this area of the roadway as it formed part of the local cycle track.

Resolved to be noted.

11520: Christmas:

The Christmas Lights were contracted with 'Lite' and the final pieces of information were in the process of being forwarded to Neath Port Talbot Council to allow contracts to be prepared.

Vale had confirmed that they would transport a tree to Clydach as in previous years. (The Town Council would be responsible for the transport from Clydach to Pontardawe)

Given Covid 19 restrictions, no physical 'Light Switch on ceremony' or Winterfest would be permitted by the County Borough or Welsh Government and no fireworks would be ordered.

It was suggested that a 'virtual' switch on could be considered.

Trebanos had Christmas lights on the Community Hall and a tree adjacent to the Community Hall but no lights could be placed on the lamp posts and although it was possible to place a tree at the entry to Trebanos from Clydach, this could not be lit.

It was suggested that a banner might be appropriate however this should be considered for Trebanos, Ynysmeudwy and Rhyd y Fro. Councillor John Jones would review the feasibility.

Resolved to be noted.

11521: Website:

Vision ICT had now responded to our request and had provided information on various web-site designs.

Resolved to be reviewed in a Development Committee.

11522: Relaxation of Lock down Restrictions:

Further guidance from the Welsh Government on the 11th September had reversed some of the initial relaxation measures. It was therefore debatable if Community Halls could be opened in a limited way as was as originally thought.

The requirement for unitary authority input had been removed however there had been a rise in cases which had been attributed to indoor meeting without adequate social distancing.

Although Council was keen to re-open Community Halls, it was important that the re-opening was compliant with guidelines and that the likelihood of a reintroduction of restrictions was not imminent, as this would create confusion for the groups.

The Clerk would be obtaining feedback from One Voice Wales and other Town and Community Councils as there was significant variations in the interpretation of the guidance and would report at the October Ordinary Meeting. The Community Halls would remain closed until then.

Groups would be permitted to meet outdoors in the Community Hall Car Parks providing they completed a risk assessment and followed Government restrictions.

Resolved the Community Halls to remain closed for the present. The position would be reassessed in the October Ordinary Meeting

11523: Planning:

Meeting 27th July 2020

P2020/0604

Applicants name and Address: Mr D Williams, 159 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Swansea SA8 4BS

Site Location: 159 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Swansea SA8 4BS

Proposed Development: Two storey rear extension

Resolved No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

P2020/0598

Applicants name and Address: Mrs Judith Kitson-Jones, 4 Chain Walk, Glynneath SA11 4AB

Site Location: 2 Swansea Road, Pontardawe SA8 4AB

Proposed Development: Change of use from Barbers shop (Class A1) to an ice cream parlour with takeaway facilities (use Class A3)

Resolved No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification, however this venue must be for pedestrians only as there is no facility for vehicles stopping or parking either on the road or in the near vicinity

The committee was also advised the Mount Elim Evangelical Church would be submitting a formal planning application shortly

Meeting 24th August 2020

P2020/0709

Applicants name – Mr DAB Higgins, Townsend Farm, Landimore, Gower, Swansea, SA31HD

Site Location – Gwrhyd Specialist Quarry, Gwrhyd Uchaf Farm, Gwrhyd Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot SA9 2SB.

Proposed Development – Variation of Condition 7 (to extend the time limit for the exportation of aggregate and waste materials) and condition 8 (removal of parts 8d and 8e, relating to HGV Tonnage) attached to planning permission P2017/0036

Resolved No Objections

P2020/0599

Applicants Name – Mrs Judith Kitson-Jones, 2 Swansea Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot SA8 4AB

Site Location - 2 Swansea Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot SA8 4AB

Proposed Development – 2no. non illuminated signs

Resolved No Objections

P2020/0665

Applicants name – Y Hadau Ltd (on Behalf of Sero Homes Ltd) c/o Agent United Kingdom

Site Location – Parc Hadau, Land at Waun Sterw, Rhyd- y -Fro Pontardawe

Proposed Development – Details pursuant to the discharge of conditions 4,6 and : Construction method statement, Construction Environmental Management, Habitat Management Plan attached to planning permission P2019/5554 (development of 35 zero carbon homes along with associated works including landscaping, parking, access, engineering works and ecological mitigation)

Resolved As numerous documents were found to be incorrect the Committee would like the consultation re-issued once the documentation had been amended. There was also no reference to Covid 19 in the documents provided.

Discussed in Ordinary Meeting:

P2020/0784

Applicants name – Mr Ian Roderick, Hazeldene, Pheasant Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe SA8 4DP

Site Location – Hazeldene, Pheasant Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe SA8 4DP

Proposed Development – Works to Ash Tree covered by Tree Preservation Order T290/W3 – comprising of canopy lift and reduction of southern canopy by approximately 2m.

Resolved No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

P2020/0777

Applicants name – Mr & Mrs Daniel Picton, 8 Davies Road, Pontardawe, SA8 4PH

Site Location – 8 Davies Road, Pontardawe, SA8 4PH

Proposed Development – Two Storey rear and single storey side/ rear extension.

Resolved No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

P2020/0693

Applicants name – TFMG Holdings 001 Limited, 12 High Street, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4HU

Site Location – 73 High Street, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4JN.

Proposed Development – Change of use of shop to residential accommodation in association with existing dwelling, removal of shop front and construction of front extension

Resolved Councillors note that works have started on this proposed development prior to the granting of planning consent, on 27.07.2020. The commencement of the works has significantly impacted the front of the existing shop in particular the window which previously had a distinct visual and character appearance in the community in line with the neighbouring properties and surrounding area. Significant development works such as these should not have been undertaken prior to the granting of planning permission. Therefore, the town council would appreciate if the planning department could fully investigate the works that have been undertaken to date so that appropriate measures can be taken, and then a fair decision can be made on the application.

- It is also noted there is a proposed change of use from a commercial business to a c3 residential.

P2020/0665

Applicants name – Y Hadau Ltd (on Behalf of Sero Homes Ltd) c/o Agent United Kingdom

Site Location – Parc Hadau, Land at Waun Sterw, Rhyd- y -Fro Pontardawe

Proposed Development – Details pursuant to the discharge of conditions 4,6 and 7: Construction method statement, Construction Environmental Management, Habitat Management Plan attached to planning permission P2019/5543 (development of 35 zero carbon homes along with associated works including landscaping, parking, access, engineering works and ecological mitigation)

Resolved Council is extremely unhappy that despite the initial documentation being incorrect only 14 days had been allowed for the Town Council to fully review the revised documentation which they assume is now fully correct. They would therefore like both confirmation that the documents are now fully correct and an extension in the time for review to allow a full and frank discussion on the plans.

An email had been received from Neath Port Talbot Council re unspent section 106 funds for the upkeep and improvement of Public Open Space at Gellideg Playground’ designated under planning application P2015/0778

Resolved To request clarification from Neath Port Talbot Council on the criteria for the funding as no details of such funding had been advised to the Town Council at any time.

11524: Eco and Wellbeing Committee held on Monday 17th August 2020 by virtual platform due to Corvid 19 restrictions

Meeting to discuss various proposals for projects over the short, medium, and longer term
There were many ideas to improve and increase the prevalence of nature throughout the Pontardawe Town Council area that could be considered in the short, Medium, and longer term. Some funding was available for projects that could be organised in the short term however these would need to be directed towards projects on Town Council owned land initially due to the time scales for grant applications. There would however be further funding opportunities at a later date. The Town Council could therefore look at creating funding partnerships and agreements with other Councils or third sector organisations in readiness.

Short term projects

These projects could be considered on Town Council owned land with applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund. (Application deadline would be the end of October with action to be carried out by the end of March 2021)

Ynysmeudwy Park – A hedge had already been planted at Ynysmeudwy with the top tier of the park being allocated for wildflowers and natural management. This could be added to by the inclusion of additional bug houses and fruit trees. The friends were also interested in natural seating and coverings such as those found in Godrergrraig Park.

Trebanos Park –Natural management could be considered at the children’s play area to encourage wildflowers on the grass banks. Tree and hedge planting could be considered for

the edge of the rugby field provided it did not impede either the rugby pitch or the spectator area as the rugby field was leased to Trebanos RFC.

Parc Chwarae Teg – Although the park was leased from Tai Tarian, there was already agreement to planting in place however we would need to liaise with Rhyd y Fro Gardening club.

Medium term projects

Canal Bank – Additional seating and planting could be considered on the Canal Tow Path. The Town Council had received agreement from the Canals and River Trust to some planting in two areas between Holly Street and Herbert Street however unfortunately the trees planted at that time did not thrive due to footfall over the planting area. Further planting could be considered however with barriers to prevent damage to plants

Fairy/ Gruffallo trails – These trails could be included in areas of Cwmdu in the Medium Term or in areas adjacent to the river at the Recreation ground in the longer term as additional partnership agreements were required (see below).

Longer term projects – These would require partnership agreements, leases of land from the County Borough or agreement from Welsh Government

Green Wall at the Art Centre

Grass or moss roofs (bus stops)

Unadopted land at Riverside or the Glanrhyd Estate not currently leased by Neath Port Talbot Council

Wildflowers on Bypass road

Wildflower planning on open ground (map of open ground in the Pontardawe area would be required) – bee friendly stops

Further discussions would be required to move forward the Mediums and Longer-Term projects

The Committee recommended the Clerk liaise with the Coed Cymru Officer to determine if the shorter-term projects could be funded via the current grants available.

Resolved That the Committee's recommendation will be ratified

11525: Clerks Holiday week commencing 7th September 2020:

One week's holiday had been granted to the Clerk from the 7th September 2020 in agreement with the Mayor. The Clerk had also requested 21 hours relief cover over Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of that week.

Council was content to award the holiday and relief cover but had experienced some issues with the emergency cover protocols in place during the Clerk's absence.

Resolved That the Clerks Holiday and relief cover be agreed. The Clerk will review current emergency cover protocols in order to improve their efficiency.

11526: Councillor Vacancies in the Pontardawe Ward:

The Clerk had received confirmation from Neath Port Talbot Council Election Services, that no request for election had been received for either of the two vacant posts in the Pontardawe Ward.

Under sections 116 &117 of the Local Government (Wales) measure 2011 a public notice would be placed in the Office window and on social media to advise the Community that the vacancies would be filled via co-option. The Clerk would allow these to remain for 30 days.

She anticipated that the Co-option for both seats could take place at the November Ordinary Meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

11527: Damage to Gelligron Verges:

Damage had been reported on numerous occasions at Gelligron following heavy vehicle transit.

Following a discussion with the transporters, Police and Clerk however alternative traffic management had been trailed.

Councillors reported no damage to verges following the alteration of traffic flow in that area.

Resolved to be noted.

11528: Report Actual/Budget first third Apr-Jul 2020:

Council was provided with the report prior to the meeting.

Resolved to be agreed.

11529: Account Schedule 371 and 372:

Resolved that Account Schedule 371 totalling £17930.00 and 372 totalling £10535.02 together with bank reconciliations should be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders.

11530: NALC 2020-21 National Salary Awards:

Council agreed to accept the NALC National Salary Awards for the Caretakers, Park Operative and the Clerk as in previous years. They also agreed to back date the award to 1st April 2020 for permanent staff as recommended.

Resolved that the NALC national Salary Awards will be accepted and backdated as recommended.

11531: Pontardawe Art Trail:

Council was advised of a proposal to develop and Art Trail in Pontardawe

Resolved that the matter will be discussed in a Development Committee

11532: Neath Port Talbot Council re Dog waste bins and relocation of litter bin:

Council was advised that Neath Port Talbot Council had place stickers with QR Codes to allow people to quickly advise the County Borough of full bins.

The also stated that they would move the additional litter bin outside the Art Centre that would cause difficulties during festivals due to the placement of the stage. This would however not be a priority so might take some time.

Resolved to be agreed. Also details of the QR Codes should be shared on the Town Councils social media page.

11533: Boundary Commission Final Report:

Council was advised that the Boundary Commission had accepted the alternative recommendation to retain the autonomy of Trebanos. Pontardawe would retain two County Borough Councillors and Trebanos would retain one. There would be a change in the boundary between the two wards to address the Elector numbers.

Resolved to be noted.

11534: Email re lockdown rules:

Addressed earlier in the meeting

Resolved to be noted.

11535: Consultation on sustainable farming and our land: simplifying agricultural support:

The consultation was forwarded to Councillors prior to the meeting

Resolved that the consultation will be discussed in a Development Committee

11536: Email received from Ystradowen Community Centre:

The email requested financial assistance for the Luncheon Club however it stated that the recipients were from the Ystradowen, Cwmtwrch, Ystalyfera, Ystradgunlais, Colbren and Abercrave areas.

The Council were impressed with the work being carried out but felt that they were unable to offer financial assistance as the club was for residents outside of the Town Council area.

Resolved that the Clerk will contact the Community Centre to explain the position

11537: Urgent Road Safety Matters:

Council was advised that there was likely to be severe disruption in Pontardawe as major road works were planned for the Gwachel Roundabout. Following the work however there were plans to resurface this area of the road in 2020/21.

Resolved to be noted.

11538: Next Meeting:

The next meeting of Council will take place on the 12th October 2020 at ARCH Hall or by virtual platform depending on lockdown restrictions.