

**Ordinary General Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 by virtual platform due to Corvid 19 lockdown restrictions commencing at 7.15pm**

**Present:**

Councillor A Nicholson (presiding), Ms S Northcott, G Nicholson, J Jones, G Davies, H Davies, D Williams, R Thomas, Mrs R Phillips, Mrs L Purcell, A Richards, W Thomas, Mrs C Ford, and Ms R Jones

**Apologies:**

None

**11444: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:**

None

**Resolved** to be noted.

**11445: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020:**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council.

**11446: Consider Matters raised by Members of the Public:**

None.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**11447: Defibrillator Mapping Project:**

Council was advised that the funds for both grants were held by the Town Council although no further action had been taken. The lead on the project was the Heartbeat Trust and the Clerk would liaise with them to determine what action could be taken to move the project along during the current restrictions

**Resolved** to be noted.

**11448: Cwmdu Glen and the Working with Nature Project:**

No work was urgently required from the most recent risk assessment however the Clerk had been contacted by a resident at Waun Gron and informed that there was damage to a tree limb that could potentially cause an issue if it fell. The Clerk requested a review carried out by a local Arborist, who confirmed the issue and recommended the limb removed.

Under emergency powers and with the agreement of the Clerk, Mayor and Deputy Mayor it was agreed to carry out the work as soon as possible. No additional quotes were requested as personal injury or damage to property was highly likely unless action was taken immediately.

The damaged limb was therefore removed by the ARB Team on Councils instruction.

Neil Hinds had now been appointed by Neath Port Talbot Council within the Coed Cymru post. The Clerk would be liaising with him to determine a way forward with the Ash dieback plan.

Council had been advised that a 'Path Closed' sign had been placed adjacent to the path from the Cross to Cwmdu. The County Borough Member stated that this was to be removed as the path had been only temporarily closed during maintenance.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**11449: Police Matters:**

Pontardawe Statistics:

Total Crimes in March of 28 were down from Februarys totals of 37

Trebanos Statistics:

Total Crimes in March of 4 were up from Februarys totals of 3

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

PCSO Sian Jenkins was to move to an alternate post to liaise with schools however the transfer had been placed on hold due to the current circumstances.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**11450: Alltycham Bench:**

The Welsh translation had been carried out and despite the lockdown the manufacturers were able to manufacture the bench however it could not be placed until restrictions were lifted

**Resolved** that Councillor D Williams will review the Welsh translation prior to instruction being given to the manufacturers.

**11451: Pontardawe in Bloom:**

The Clerk confirmed that the order for Hanging Baskets, lamp post displays, barrier troughs and stand-alone displays had been made prior to the lockdown although none of the displays had yet been placed.

Council requested that clarification was obtained from the City and County of Swansea on the current position. If possible the additional displays (barrier troughs and stand-alone displays) that were specifically ordered for Pontardawe in Bloom should be cancelled as the event was no longer to take place during 2020. The original Hanging baskets and lamp post displays should still be placed if possible.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will liaise with the City and County of Swansea to determine a way forward then report to Council

**11452: George V Park:**

No further action was being taken at present due to the lockdown restrictions

**Resolved** that the Clerk will liaise with the Bowls Club once restrictions have been lifted

**11453: Christmas 2020:**

The Clerk confirmed that there was no contact in place at present for 2020 however a Development Committee needed to be arranged to determine a way forward in both Pontardawe and Trebanos.

Neath Port Talbot Special Events had confirmed that they would not consider any Events for the remainder of 2020 at present

**Resolved** that the Clerk will confirm with Neath Port Talbot Council that Christmas Lights will still be permitted and will arrange a Development Committee.

**11454: Personnel Matters:**

**Resolved** that a Personnel Committee will be arranged.

**11455: Place Plan:**

The Clerk was to undergo some initial training on the creation of 'Place Plans' by Planning Aid Wales in order to identify a way forward. However, all training was cancelled. No further action could be taken on this matter until some restrictions were lifted

**Resolved** to be noted.

**11456: Grants 2020/21:**

All grants awarded for 2020/21 had been paid

**Resolved** to be noted

**11457: The Green at Trebanos:**

The Clerk had received no response from the Solicitor despite continual chasing.

**Resolved** that a complaint should be made.

**11458: Planning:**

Response to Planning considerations 17.4.20

A planning committee could not be arranged due to initial restrictions. Online meetings had not yet been agreed by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Members of the planning Committee were therefore requested to individually review the application and provide individual responses which could be forwarded to Neath Port Talbot Council.

**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 to 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 the premises.

Councillor Responses forwarded to Neath Port Talbot Planning on the 17.4.20

1. They have referred to the existing premises being used by separate businesses. Can there be some clarification that the proposed development does only refer to a restaurant in the first floor and that the B&Neill be in a third floor. This will not impact on those pre-existing businesses.
2. The plan makes use of an old site plan, (the library has not been in the location indicated for many years.) It is designed that people planning to use the B&B can use the "lane" for

drop off before moving to a "proper" car park. However, the area proposed is used by very young children using the nursery in one of the buildings, and the access to the car park of the Dillwyn public house. This is not a suitable place for cars to be using as a drop off point for either the B&B or the restaurant.

3. The use of the car park behind the Castle public house is not fully owned by Neath Port Talbot Council and may lead to confusion for users not fully aware of the usage.

I have concerns about this proposal as it will result in the loss of existing A1 shop units along the entire frontage. This would lead to the isolation of this part of Herbert Street and the Cross from the main retail core and undermine the vitality and viability of the shopping centre.

Pontardawe has recovered in recent years to provide a centre with low vacancy rates and a vibrant mix of compatible and complementary uses which has strengthened its retail function. There are existing vacant A3 units at the former Jubilee club site which has had permission to be subdivided into two.

The use of either of these A3 units would satisfy any need identified for the applicant's business and would serve to anchor the bottom end of Herbert Street and strengthen rather than weaken the retail function of Pontardawe shopping centre.

There is also a potential vacant A3 unit at the Barclays Bank site on High Street.

On this basis I propose that the Town Council objects to this application.

Planning Committee held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**P2020/0315**

Applicants Name: Mr Jamie Watkins, 58 Heol y Llwynau, Trebanos, Swansea, SA8 4DD

Site Location: 58 Heol y Llwynau, Trebanos, Swansea, SA8 4DD

Proposed Development: Proposed Two Storey rear extension.

**Resolved:**

No Objection provided there is Neighbourhood Notification

**P2020/0330**

Applicants name: Mr Chris Davies, 18 Sycamore Lane, Pontardawe, SA8 4LL

Site Location: 18 Sycamore Lane, Pontardawe, SA8 4LL

Proposed Development: Conversion of existing garage into a family living area with a scheme for replacement car parking

**Resolved:**

No Objection provided there is Neighbourhood Notification. (There must however be sufficient car parking post development without reliance on, street parking)

**P2020/0340**

Applicants name: Mr Jeff Davies, Jubilee Club 98 Herbert Street, Pontardawe SA8 4ED

Site Location: Jubilee Club 98 Herbert Street, Pontardawe SA8 4ED

Proposed Development: Change of use from Social Members Club (Use Class D2) to a Public House (Use Class A3)

**Resolved:**

No Objection provided there is Neighbourhood Notification

Planning reviewed in the Ordinary Meeting

**P2020/0357**

Applicants name: Mr Ashley Thomas, 29 Sycamore Lane, Pontardawe, SA8 4LL

Site Location: 29 Sycamore Lane, Pontardawe, SA8 4LL

Proposed Development: Retention of garage conversion to living area together with proposed scheme for replacement car parking.

**Resolved:**

No Objection provided there is Neighbourhood Notification. Council is concerned however that the replacement car parking will require the removal of trees.

**11459: Corvid 19 Emergency Response Report:**

Due to the unprecedented position caused by Covid 19 and the subsequent lockdown, numerous Emergency Decisions were required at short notice to protect staff, Councillors and Members of the Public. The decisions were made with the agreement of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk.

The Emergency Decisions made on Councils behalf are as follows:

- Town Council Community Halls and Parks were closed from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Caretakers continued to receive full pay despite the closure. Furloughing was not available to any employee of an organisation receiving its funds from public sources and therefore the cost would be borne from Town Council funds. As this has already been budgeted for however there would be no Financial issue.
- Our groundsman continued review both footpaths and parks although no work was undertaken by him. A full risk assessment was carried out to ensure his safety. He had reported that he had encountered no one during his reviews.
- Footpaths and parks had continued to be maintained by our contractors. It is their responsibility to assess the risk to their own employees and to take appropriate measures to mitigate.
- It was agreed to cancel the April Ordinary General Meeting
- Following guidance, virtual meetings were permitted by the Welsh Assembly Government. It was therefore decided to conduct the May Annual and Ordinary General Meeting together with future meetings while under Covid restrictions by virtual means.
- Numerous platforms were reviewed however Zoom was elected as the most effective due to its ease of use. Zoom had not been recommended by One Voice

Wales due to perceived security issues however a risk assessment had been carried out by the Town Council. The security issues were considered minimal for Pontardawe Town Council due to the transparency of Town Council business discussions. Additional measures or protocols would be decided in the event confidential business is to be discussed.

- The rules for the Public entrance to meetings had been relaxed until May 2021. It was therefore agreed between the Mayor, Deputy and Clerk that rather than allow Members of the Public to attend zoom meetings (where 'spamming' could be an issue) instead Members of the Public would be invited to provide a written statement which could be read by the Clerk. A copy of the draft minutes would also be placed on the web site immediately following the meeting although this would state that the minutes were unagreed. These would then be replaced by the 'Agreed' minutes the following month.

**Resolved:**

To be noted.

**11460: Annual Return for 2019/20:**

Council reviewed and agreed the Annual Return for 2019/20

**Resolved:**

That the Mayor sign the Annual Return on behalf of Council as soon as possible.

**11461: Internal Auditors Report for 2019/20:**

Council reviewed and agreed the Internal Auditors Report which showed no issues or recommendations

**Resolved:**

That the Internal Auditors Report for 2019/20 will be accepted by Council.

**11462: Actual/ Budget Report for the final third of 2019/20:**

Council reviewed the report

**Resolved:**

To be noted.

**11463: Advise for Council following the death of Councillor Flynn:**

Council was advised that due to Corvid 19 lockdown restrictions, Councillor deaths and subsequent Vacancies could not be addressed as usual. Guidance was awaited from the County Borough.

It was however suggested that a Memorial Bench should be placed for Councillor Flynn.

**Resolved:**

That the Clerk will make enquiries with the relevant organisations and with Councillor Flynn's Family.

**11464: Account Schedule and Bank Reconciliation:**

**Resolved** that Account Schedule 367 totalling £9393.79, Account Schedule 368 totalling £17525.91 together with Bank Reconciliations should be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders.

**11465: Letters for Thanks:**

Letters of Thanks had been received from the Welsh Air Ambulance and Marie Curie for grants provided

**Resolved** to be noted.

**11466: Neath Port Talbot Credit Union:**

The Clerk confirmed that the Neath Port Talbot Credit Union was still in operation however their satellite office in Pontardawe would not be reopening following any ease in lockdown restrictions due to lack of use.

**Resolved** to be noted however Council were disappointed

**11467: Urgent Road Safety Matters:**

A review had taken place by Council Members to determine the additional number of steps to be taken in order to utilise the underpass rather than use the crossing adjacent to Ynysderw Road, which was considered dangerous. There were approximately 5 times more steps required in order to utilise the underpass to access the Primary Health Facility. This was considered unacceptable for those with mobility issues.

There had been significant issues for residents at Clos Nant Ddu due to several accidents that had damaged properties in that area. Lockdown restrictions were exacerbating the position due to less congested roads and residents were concerned about danger to pedestrians and residents within properties adjacent to the road.

The County Borough Members were in discussion with Gwalia and County Borough Officers to identify a solution due to the continual danger to both residents and pedestrians however current suggested solutions could take over a year to finalise

**Resolved** that the Clerk will contact the County Borough to request that immediate solutions be identified for this area, due to the considerable danger to residents and pedestrians

**11468: Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of Council will take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at ARCH Hall or by virtual platform depending on lockdown restrictions.

Signed ..... Dated .....