

Ordinary General Meeting held on the 8th June 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 R Phillips, Mrs L Purcell, A Richards, W Thomas, Ms C Ford, and V Hotten

Apologies:

Councillor Mrs R Jones and G Davies

11469: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:

None

Resolved to be noted.

11470: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting and Annual General Meeting held on the 18th May 2020:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting and Annual General Meeting held on the 18th May 2020 having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council.

11471: Consider Matters raised by Members of the Public:

None.

Resolved to be noted.

11472: Defibrillator Mapping Project:

Council was advised that the funds for both grants had been paid to the Heartbeat Trust UK. The Trust was to lead with the installation of the units and the Clerk was therefore awaiting guidance.

Resolved to be noted.

11473: Cwmdy Glen and the Working with Nature Project:

The Ash Dieback plan was being addressed by Neath Port Talbot Council however no guidance had yet been issued.

The recently planted hedge at Ynysmeudwy Park was being monitored and maintained by the 'Working with Nature' team during the lockdown, as the Park was closed to the general public.

Resolved to be noted.

11474: Police Matters:

Pontardawe Statistics:

Total Crimes in April were 48 which was up from the March total of 28.

Trebanos Statistics:

Total Crimes in April was 29 which was a large increase from the March total of 4.

The Clerk had contacted the Trebanos PCSO for details of the apparent spike in crime and had been advised that it was due to a small number of families reporting Covid lockdown breaches. The matter had been dealt with by Tai Tarian.

There had also been reports of gatherings involving alcohol and possibly illegal substances adjacent to the Park on the riverbank. Residents had been asked to report these matters to 101 when witnessed.

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

Resolved that the Clerk will contact Welsh Water to request the gate to the treatment works, adjacent to the park is locked when not in use, to deter those gathering in the area.

11475: Alltycham Bench:

Council was advised that the Memorial Bench was now in the process of being manufactured. A request had also been received from Marion Comaskey's daughter to place a plaque in Memory of her mother at Parc Chwarae Teg.

The suggestion was made that the Memorial bench for Marion be placed at Park Chwarae Teg as Mrs Comaskey had worked for many years for a Children's Play area in that area. A second bench could be manufactured for Alltycham Drive in Memory of Councillor Flynn who sadly lost his life during the Covid Pandemic.

Resolved that the Memorial Bench for Marion Comaskey be re-located to Parc Chwarae Teg, and a new bench manufactured in Memory of Councillor Flynn at Alltycham Drive (The Clerk will liaise with the families to ensure that this would be welcome)

11476: Pontardawe in Bloom:

Council was advised that the order for Summer Hanging Baskets had been reduced to the original Hanging Basket scheme, lamp post display and arrangement adjacent at St Peters Church. The additional beehive planters and barrier troughs had been cancelled as the 'In Bloom' festival was no longer to be held during 2020.

The City and County of Swansea had however offered one Beehive Planter free of charge. This had been placed at Heol y Fflin in Trebanos.

Resolved to be noted.

11477: Place Plans:

The original training had been cancelled due to the Covid Lockdown; however, Planning Aid Wales had developed online Planning training which would include training on the creation of Place Plans. This would be available to all Councillors in due course.

Resolved that the Planning Aide Wales online training will be made available to all Councillors.

11478: The Green, Trebanos:

A response had been received from the Solicitors.

The Solicitor confirmed that the section of road from the canal bridge to the edge of the Park had been purchased by the Town Council in late 1990 early 2000. She had also

identified additional registration paperwork for the Park that needed to be submitted from that time.

The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council insurers had been asked to add this portion of land to the Town Council insurance policy.

With regard to the easing of lockdown for the Parks and Children's play areas, the Welsh Assembly Government still recommended that although 'Country Parks' could now be opened to provide additional space for recreation, Children's play areas should remain closed.

The Clerk confirmed that the Children's play areas were being maintained and could be opened as soon as the Welsh Assembly deemed it safe to do so.

Resolved

- That the Clerk will contract the County Borough in the first instance to request the resurface the section of road at 'The Green' owned by the Town Council. The Cost of the resurfacing work will be borne from Town Council Reserves.
- The Solicitor will address the outstanding registration paperwork.
- The Town Council Parks and Children's Play areas will remain closed until guidance received from the Welsh Assembly Government on safe opening.

11479: Clos Nant Ddu:

The Clerk confirmed that a reply had been received from the County Borough stating that the review at the Members Surgery was the only way forward and was based on the most up to date statistical evidence which related to 2018. There was no other method of prioritising.

Resolved

That the County Borough Members would liaise with the Members of the local Community and the relevant Officers and Cabinet Members to attempt to reprioritise action due to the seriousness of the matter.

The Clerk will also write to both the Director of the Environment and the Cabinet Member responsible to request prioritisation of this matter.

11480: Planning:

P2020/0448:

Applicants name: Mr Chris Davies, 50 Peasant Drive, Trebanos, Swansea SA8 4DP

Site Location: 50 Peasant Drive, Trebanos, Swansea SA8 4DP

Proposed Development: Two Storey rear extension

Resolved

No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

11481: Personnel Matters – Committee held on the 1st June 2020:

The cessation of the Groundsman's role at Pontardawe Town Council

The Groundsman's role at Pontardawe Town Council was to cease on the retirement of the present incumbent during June 2020. The work currently carried out by the Groundsman would be carried out by the main Park Maintenance contractor, via other third parties both volunteer and contracted

on a one off basis, and with the remainder of the tasks being carried out by the creation of a new post of 'Park and Community Officer'

The Committee requested that Council ratify the above recommendations.

Resolved

That the Committee's recommendation will be agreed.

11482: Personnel Matters – Committee held on the 1st June 2020:

The job specification for the new role of 'Park and Community Officer' for Pontardawe Town Council

The position was to be created from July 2020.

The specification was as follows:

Part-time role, normally 10 hours per week. Regular working hours will include 2 hours on Saturday (am), 2 hours on Sunday (am) and four hours flexibly between Monday to Friday with the possibility of other hours to accommodate the needs of the service. The role will be subject to a completion of a satisfactory probationary period of 3 months.

Wages - The role will be paid in accordance with SCP 2 (new scale) currently £9.21 ph (2019/20).

Expenses are paid for travel between sites at a rate of 0.45p per mile together with a monthly lump sum of £103.25. A driving license and own vehicle is essential, as the appointed person will be required to work at various locations within the town.

The ability to work on own initiative without supervision is essential.

Job Purpose To keep the Town Council's Parks, and other areas tidy and free from litter and to assist contractors with any other tasks that may be required.

Main Duties

1. To carry out a regular litter collection of Pontardawe Town Council Parks on a Saturday and Sunday before Middy.
2. To empty litter bins in the Parks, and several on the Canal Bank
3. To store all litter collected in the appropriate place (to be advised) for collection.
4. To remove any graffiti identified at the Parks or other locations within the Town Council boundaries.
5. To check park equipment and report damage, vandalism, or dog fouling issues to the Clerk.
6. To carry out any other tasks that may be required by the Town Council on an ad hoc basis.

Person Criteria required.

Essential qualities

1. Friendly, approachable, and professional at all times while representing the Town Council.
2. The ability to perform designated tasks accurately and efficiently
3. The ability to work independently using your own initiative.
4. Availability to work regular weekends
5. A tidy appearance— PPE will be provided, and safety equipment as required.
6. Ability to work outside in all weather conditions
7. Good level of physical fitness
8. Full UK driving licence holder and own vehicle.
9. Good knowledge of the Town Council's Parks, Footpaths and community halls.

The committee was content to offer the position to current and past employees at Pontardawe Town Council in the first instance. Should there be no suitable candidates then the position could be advertised to the wider community in the usual way.

The Committee requested that Council ratify the above recommendations.

Resolved

That the Committee's recommendation will be agreed.

11483: Personnel Matters – Committee held on the 1st June 2020:

The Assessment of Salary for the Town Clerk carried out by Paul Egan, HR Consultant for One Voice Wales on Council's instruction

Council requested an independent review of the Town Clerks grading by One Voice Wales during April 2020. The review was requested to ensure that the post was remunerated in accordance with the National Agreement on Salaries adopted by One Voice Wales in agreement with the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and based on the Local Government job evaluation scheme.

The full assessment and recommendation were forwarded to the Committee prior to the meeting and this was discussed in full by the Committee in the absence of the current Clerk.

In accordance with the One Voice Wales review and recommendation, the Committee recommended awarding the Town Clerk's post, a salary in accordance with SCP 31 (New Scale) which should be backdated to the date of the request for review.

The Committee also wished to thank Paul Egan, HR Consultant for One Voice Wales for his full and thorough review.

The Committee requested that Council ratify the above recommendations.

Resolved

That the Committee's recommendation will be agreed.

11484: Development Committee held on the 1st June 2020:

This Committee to discuss the Christmas Lights Contract from December 2020:

The Three Contractors were:

Commercial Christmas – The Company had provided the Christmas Light displays for the previous three years. (One off scheme)

Lite – New proposal (3-year contract)

The Christmas Decorators – New Proposal (3-year contract)

As it was important to identify the relative abilities and restrictions of the companies to provide decorations requested, both of the Companies who were to provide proposals but who had not previously provided a scheme at Pontardawe met with the Clerk to walk through the Town.

All three were requested to provide a costed scheme based on the 2019 display for seventeen lamp post displays for the lamp posts on the Cross and Herbert street together with two rows of festoons and the placement and removal of the Town Council owned Christmas tree lights on the main tree outside the Art Centre.

The contractors were also asked for the cost of providing an artificial tree on the cross as an addition and for attending the 'switch on' although it was unlikely this would take place in 2020 due to Covid restrictions

Commercial Christmas agreed to a cost of £7200 (£9000 original cost less 20%) for the main scheme and had previously quoted a cost of approximately £2000 for an artificial tree at 'The Cross'

Lite provided a comprehensive scheme at a cost of £13344 which included additional Nadolig Llawen banner on the entrance to Herbert Street. They could provide a lighted artificial scheme at 'The Cross' for £2100.00

The Christmas Decorators provided a comprehensive scheme at a cost of £6792 but were unable to provide detailed costings for the 'switch on' and would not be able to provide a lighted Christmas tree at the Cross. They instead suggested lighting the three trees on the cross with pea lights and a large 'Nadolig Llawen' decal on the Cross at a cost of £4822

Lite also provided costings for additional lights for the street around 'the Cross' however these would not be considered until the decision on supplier had been agreed and would not form part of the decision-making process.

The Clerk confirmed that she had received verbal confirmation from all suppliers that the Covid restrictions would not affect their supply lines.

After a full and frank discussion, the Committee decided that they would rather a change of supplier from previous years and would therefore not wish to re contract Commercial Christmas. They also wished an artificial tree at 'The Cross' as part of the 2020 display.

The Committee felt that as 2020 had been an exceptionally difficult year for many in the Community and as it was unlikely that many (if not all) of the usual Pontardawe Festivals would be cancelled, they wished statement lights in Pontardawe that would provide some extra festive cheer during dark times. The Committee felt that additional funds from Reserve could be added to the original budget to increase the display. The Clerk confirmed that Reserves could support additional costs in this area for 2020 however for future years this would be precepted.

It was agreed that the scheme provided by Lite was the preferred, with the addition of the artificial Christmas Tree at 'The Cross'

Once the decision on supplier was made, the Committee reviewed additions to the scheme and decided to add a 'Nadolig Llawen' banner on High Street together with additional lamp post displays for High Street

The Total cost for the scheme was £18294.00 from Lite although there may be a slight price adjustment required.

The Committee requests that Council ratify the above recommendations.

The Clerk also confirmed that Lite had checked with their installers, 'Centregreat' that the installation of an artificial tree at the Cross and overhead banners on High Street and Herbert Street were possible and that they had no issues.

Resolved:

That Lite be contracted to supply the Christmas Lights at Pontardawe for a 3-year period at a cost of approximately £18500 per annum.

11485: Account Schedule and Bank Reconciliation:

The Clerk also confirmed that the Insurance Brokers had provided a comprehensive Insurance scheme as in previous years. The cost of the total scheme was an increase of less than £70.00 on the previous year and totalled £7843.81

Resolved that Account Schedule 39 totalling £16719.80 together with Bank Reconciliations should be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders and the Insurance costs will be noted.

11486: Correspondence:

None.

Resolved to be noted.

11487: Urgent Road Safety Matters:

The County Borough Members and Clerk were to request the County Borough review crossing issues at Pontardawe bypass due to the current dangerous or unsuitable solutions provided.

Resolved that the Clerk and County Borough Members contact Neath Port Talbot Council

11488: Next Meeting:

The next meeting of Council will take place on the 13th July 2020 at Trebanos Hall or by virtual platform depending on lockdown restrictions.

Signed Dated