

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Pontardawe Town Council held on Monday 9th February 2015, at Trebanos Hall, Swansea Road, Trebanos commencing at 6.45pm

9802. Present Councillors P Williams (presiding), Mrs J Bowen, G Davies, Mrs E Puzey, V Hotten, B Williams, H Evans, Ms S Northcott, A Nicholson, D B Thomas, D Harris, M James, Mrs R Phillips and Ms C Ford.

Youth Representatives – Harri Evans – Mason & Thomas Hutchins

Apologies: Councillor Mrs L Purcell and H Pickrell.

9803. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary interests: Councillors Mrs J Bowen, A Nicholson, Ms S Northcott, G Davies and V Hotten declared an interest in the Pontardawe and District Youth Facility.

Resolved this be noted.

9804. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 12th January 2015:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12th January 2015, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

9805. Matters raised by members of the public: None.

Resolved to be noted.

9806. Members Training DVD: Councillors viewed the Information Commissioners Office training video on 'Freedom of Information' and 'Data Protection'.

Resolved to be noted.

9807. Police Matters: The Clerk provided the following information:

Pontardawe:

The PACT meeting was held on the 5/2/15 at The Cross Community Centre at 6.30pm.

Patrols were ongoing outside Languicke School to deter speeding and dangerous parking.

Crimes for December 2014 for Pontardawe were – Burglary 2, Anti Social Behaviour 16, Vehicle crime 3, violent crime 11, Criminal Damage 19, Other Theft 4 – Total 55.

Trebanos:

The next PACT meeting was to be held on the 19/2/15 at Trebanos Hall commencing at 6.30pm.

The PACT priorities continued to be preventing anti social behavior at Trebanos Park.

Crimes for December 2014 for Trebanos were – Anti Social Behaviour 1, Vehicle crime 1, violent crime 1, other crimes 2 – Total 5.

Council was also advised that the police had been asked to investigate the issue surrounding the transformer in Trebanos.

Unfortunately they had no record of the 101 call made by Councillor Pickrell on the 11th November 2014. Western Power had also confirmed that they had not reported the damage to the police but had rectified the position immediately.

The PCSO's did confirm that due to the possibility of injury from transformers, they would be including them on their rounds to ensure that any damage is reported to Western Power promptly.

The Clerk confirmed that on the advice of the PCSOs, members of the public should request a crime number when reporting crimes through the 101 number. In the event of danger to life however the 999 number should be used.

Resolved that the Clerk will contact the Police to request an investigation at a higher level be made into instances where 101 notifications are not recorded.

9808. Pontardawe & District Youth Facility: Councillors V Hotten, A Nicholson, Ms S Northcott, G Davies 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.

The Clerk advised Council that 'Menter Iaith' needed additional time to organize the relocation but would be utilising the facility from March 2015.

Resolved to be noted.

9809. Groundwork's: The Clerk confirmed that there was no further information however Council would be advised once it was available

Resolved to be noted.

9810. Footpath Grant: The Clerk confirmed that the revised maintenance plan was in the process of being created.

Resolved that the Clerk will keep Council informed of developments.

9811. WREN Grant for Trebanos Park: The Clerk confirmed that the additional information required by WREN had been provided and that the contract was in the process of being created. Currently it was envisaged that construction of the Park would commence in April and be completed by June.

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

9812. Open Meeting: Council was advised that the Open Meeting was to be held on the 26th March 2015 at 7.00pm. The venue was to be Pontardawe Leisure Centre which was being provided by Celtic Leisure free of charge.

Currently the Panel consisted of Peter Black AM, Suzy Davies AM, Bethan Jenkins AM, Gwenda Thomas AM together with Councillors Mike James and Rebeca Phillips. It was agreed that due to Councillor Linet Purcell's current bereavement she should be approached at a later date.

Council was also keen that Councillor David Lewis (Alltwen) and Alex Thomas (Rhos) be also invited to sit on the panel as in previous years.

The Clerk did advise Council that she would request the Panel Members confirm that they were not intending to stand as candidates in the General Election as this might cause difficulties. She also confirmed that one hundred posters had been placed and that the meeting would also be advertised in the Community Mag.

Council was happy for the Clerk to arrange a Policy and Resources Committee prior to the 'Open Meeting' to review the questions for the Panel.

Councillor Huw Evans confirmed that he would be happy to provide Welsh translation should any member of the public wish to converse in Welsh on the night

Resolved that the Clerk will organise a Policy & Resources Committee to review questions submitted and will ensure that the Youth Representatives are also invited.

9813. One Voice Wales Meeting: Councillor Nicholson stated that he had not yet provided details of feedback on the 'One Voice Wales' Committees.

Resolved that Councillor Nicholson provide feedback on the 'One Voice Wales' meetings on behalf of Council.

9814. Pelican/Zebra crossing requests: Council was advised that Neath Port Talbot Council would not consider a Pelican Crossing on the Bypass road in Pontardawe as there were sufficient safeguards for pedestrians (underpass, school crossing patrol and 20mph advisor limit at the crossing point.) They had confirmed that funding was not the issue.

With regard to the request for a 'Zebra Crossing' at Swansea Road following the removal of the School Crossing warden, the Head teacher of Cwmtawe School was in consultation with Neath Port Talbot Council, however he had stated that the County Borough were reluctant to consider a crossing due to the proximity of the roundabout, the bus stop and residents parking.

Resolved that the County Borough Members will discuss the issues with the relevant departments at Neath Port Talbot Council.

9815. Consultation on the draft National Transport Plan: Councillor Nicholson confirmed that the document was vast and he was still in the process of reviewing it.

Resolved that Councillor Nicholson will advise Council Members of a proposed response, this could then be submitted on behalf of the Council, prior to the consultation deadline on the 11th March 2015.

9816. Planning (Meeting dated 2nd February 2015):

P2014/1050 Mrs Mariola Sidorenko, 16 Clos Treoda, Cardiff CF14 6DL.

Site Location: 239 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4BT.

Proposed Development: Vehicular Access.

Resolved: No Objection.

P2014/1046 Mr Dane Lacey, 34 Gelliderw, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4NB.

Site Location: Land to the rear of Gwrhyd Road, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, SA8 4SS.

Proposed Development: Retention and completion of stable block and hard standing plus means of enclosure and gate.

Resolved No Objection.

P2014/1181 Mr Benjamin Collins, 96 Parc Gilbertson, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, Swansea S8 4PU.

Site Location: 96 Parc Gilbertson, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, Swansea S8 4PU.

Proposed Development: Replacement of existing garage doors with window to facilitate the conversion of garage to living accommodation.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2014/1053 Mr David K Thomas, 25 Gelligron Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4LU.

Site Location: 27a Waun Gron, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4LW.

Proposed Development: Removal of condition 10 of Planning Permission P1997/1115 to allow for the conversion of the integral garage to living accommodation plus removal of garage door and insertion of window and roof lights.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

Discussed in the meeting:

P2014/0962 Mr Kumar, 120 Fairways, Sandfields, Port Talbot, SA12 7HR.

Site Location: 18 High Street, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4HU.

Proposed Development: Replacement shop front, single story rear extension, with raised platform, and two external stairs, a dormer and two roof lights in the rear roof slope, an area of extended hard standing for car parking, plus change of use of the first floor and roof space into three 1 bedroom flats.

Resolved No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2014/0973 Pennant Homes, 220 High Street, 3rd Floor, Swansea SA1 1NW.

Site Location: Former Coleg Cwmtawe, Alltycham Drive, Pontardawe SA8 4JT.

Proposed Development: 37 No. residential dwellings and associated access.

Resolved Council is concerned over the impact on the current drainage and sewers in the area. They are also concerned over the increased vehicular traffic close to a primary school and the impact on mature trees and wild life in the area.

The Clerk also advised Council of the Abergelli Power proposed gas-fired power plant at Abergelli Farm in Felindre.

The Clerk provided Council with details of the response to the 'Planning Committees, delegation and joint planning boards' by One Voice Wales.

Pontardawe Town Council had nothing further to add to the responses.

Resolved to be noted.

9817. Finance Committee Meeting held on the 19th January 2015 – Financial Risk Assessment.

The Committee reviewed the Financial Risk Assessment in Full and made the following recommendations:

- Under 'Halls' – Legal challenge to management committee -the potential consequence should be amended to 5 with the likelihood amended to 2 giving a classification of 10 'Medium risk'.
- Under 'Halls' – Telephone box charges should be removed as the Halls no longer have public telephone facilities.
- Under Councillors Allowances – Over/underpayment to Members – the potential consequence should be amended to 4 with a likelihood amended to 1, giving a classification of 4 'Low Risk'.

With regard to 'Action Points' – The following were agreed:

- Insurance to cover 'management committee decisions' should be considered when the Council's insurance provision is reviewed in June 2015.
- Unfortunately the DVD's on the subject of 'Freedom of Information' had not been returned to the Clerk. It was therefore suggested that a viewing of the DVD should be included in one of the Ordinary Meetings to ensure that it was seen by Members.

The Committee recommended that Council agreed the changes to the 'Financial Risk Assessment' and also agreed to the action points.

The Committee reviewed the draft Financial Regulations as provided by 'One Voice Wales'. As there were significant changes to the previous regulations due to the removal of the restriction on electronic banking, it was agreed that additional time was required to review the changes and to obtain additional information on both the new financial regulations and the implementation of electronic banking. The review was therefore deferred to a later date.

Resolved that the Committees recommendations will be ratified.

9818. Finance Committee Meeting held on the 2nd February 2015 – Draft Financial Regulations and alternative Banking provisions:

The committee reviewed the new Financial Regulations in full. The Financial Regulations now included significant reference to electronic banking facilities and it was therefore felt that the time was right for Pontardawe Town Council to switch to electronic payment methods in

addition to cheques, as this would support both the new financial regulations together with the cost and time savings associated with electronic banking.

The Clerk provided details of Unity Trust Bank which offered specific accounts tailored to Town and Community Council needs.

The bank offered:

- A tailored Current and Deposit account.
- Instant access to funds
- Free banking with no standard day to day transaction charges
- Free use of governance friendly internet banking with a choice of single dual or triple authority.
- A range of access levels for internet banking.
- The ability to pay in at high street banks or local post offices.
- Management of petty cash and expenses with a prepaid card.
- Dedicated UK based customer service team.

With regard to the issue of security the Internal Auditor had provided guidance on the safe usage of Electronic Banking such as dual signatories, Insurance cover, checking and control procedures, malware and online protection software.

The Committee then reviewed the draft Financial Regulations and tailored them to the needs of Pontardawe Town Council. (Appendix 1)

The Committee recommended that the Town Council switch banking to the Unity Bank tailored accounts in order to utilise the electronic banking services, they further recommend that the Financial Regulations under Appendix 1 are adopted.

Resolved that the Committees recommendations will be ratified.

9819. Personnel Committee held on the 19th January 2015 – Review of pay scales for current employees:

The Committee was provided with details of the agreed 2014-16 National Salary Award from the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

The Committee was advised that Cleaners in Charge were currently paid £6.92 per hour (SCP 8) – The recommendation from the SJC was that the hourly rate should increase to £7.209 per hour.

The groundsmans was currently paid £8.42 per hour (SCP 15) – The recommendation from the SJC was that the hourly rate should increase to £8.613 per hour.

The Clerk was currently paid a salary of £21067 per annum (SCP 24) – The recommendation from the SJC was that this salary should be increased to £21530 per annum.

All increases should be implemented from the 1st January 2015.

The Committee recommended that the increases be agreed by full Council.

Resolved that the Committees recommendations be ratified.

9820. Ad Hoc meeting to discuss the 2015 Christmas Lighting provision (26th January 2015):

The following was discussed:

- Christmas tree: The total cost was approximately £1200 (this assumed that Vale would be willing to transport the tree without charge) – The suggestion was that sponsorship be considered together with funds provided by the Town Council. (Large companies, Builders, Large retailers)
 - Permanent Lights for the trees at Herbert Street – It was suggested that a capital grant may supply the funds for permanent lights of this nature- The suggestion was ‘Awards for All’ from the Big Lottery fund. (WREN and Mynydd y Betws had recently provided grants for the Town Council and it was likely that this would preclude further funding this year)- Neath Port Talbot Council would also need to agree to the light fixtures.
 - Permanent lights could not be placed on the cross due to immature trees. It was therefore agreed that the temporary lights already purchased may be used for the Christmas of 2015.
 - It was also suggested that Cwmtawe School arts department be asked to take part in making stars and other lighted decorations for the Cross for the Christmas period. We could request materials such as bamboo donated by local builder’s merchants.
 - The Chamber of Commerce was likely to fund the parade and would like fireworks for 2015. This would need to be funded from their funds including any grant awarded by the Town Council for town festivals. The stage needed to be placed away from the Christmas tree in 2015 as the view of the tree was obscured.
 - It was suggested that meetings for the ‘Winterfest’ held by the Chamber of Commerce be attended by a representative of the Town Council.
 - The NPT Homes community fund should be reviewed to determine if the criteria would be met for supply of Christmas lights.

- The Clerk should review the cost of Christmas decorations (lighted battery operated balls etc) to determine if cost savings could be made by purchase in the sales.
- Councillor sponsorship events.
- Summerfest fund raising events for Christmas.
- Neath Port Talbot Council should be approached to determine if the cross road festoons and other illuminated decorations would be held for a further year or if we would need to find a permanent location for them.

Other suggestions to be reviewed are Reindeer, projected images, Illuminated poster and lasers.

It was recommended that the Clerk obtain information on the above and convene a further meeting to discuss ways forward.

Resolved that the Clerk will collate the information required then convene a meeting of the Committee to discuss the way forward. The Clerk will also contact the County Borough to request that they re consider the removal of funding for Christmas Lights for local communities.

9821. Accounts Schedule 308:

The Clerk advised Council that the Account Schedule no longer showed actual employee names to comply with data protection legislation.

Resolved to accept the schedule 308 totaling £13695.64 in line with Standing Orders together with the Bank Reconciliation.

9822. Consultation on the powers of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales: It was suggested that this be reviewed in a Policy & Resources Committee.

Resolved that a Policy and Resources Committee be arranged for the 6.00pm on the 16th February 2015.

9823. Public Transport local service revisions: Council was made aware of the latest changes.

Resolved to be noted.

9824. The Cross Community Centre: Council was advised by the local County Borough Member that a commercial operator was in consultation with Neath Port Talbot Council, to take over the lease of the building. The operator would continue to operate the building partly as a community centre. Council was sorry to hear that the County Borough would no longer be responsible for the centre but felt that the alternative was acceptable.

Resolved to be noted.

9825. Email received from the 'Woodland Trust': The Woodland Trust had awarded the Town Council 105 trees which would be available to create a screen at Trebanos Park adjacent to the boulder and also on the perimeter of the rugby field to replace the trees recently removed due to their unsafe nature.

Resolved to be noted.

9826. High Sheriff's Award 2015: Council suggested that the Town Council's Youth Representatives be put forward under 'category two'.

Resolved that the Pontardawe Town Council Youth Representatives will be put forwards for the High Sheriff's award.

9827. Email received from ARCH Hall Committee: The Clerk confirmed that authority had been given to ARCH Hall Committee to apply for the Hall to be painted through the NPT Homes Community Challenge for 2015. Due to the tight time scales the authority was provided under emergency provisions with the agreement of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk.

Resolved that the emergency decision be agreed by full Council.

9828. Urgent Road Safety Matters:

- Council was advised of that large vehicles were still attempting to reach the Lidl and Farm Food stores via Ynysderw Road.
- Parking was still an issue at Llangiwig School however it was stated that the police would in future be issuing parking violations in the area to deter illegal parking.

Resolved that Councillor Mike James and Rebeca Phillips will request the County Borough designate Ynysderw Road 'No Entry' from the Roundabout, with access instead from adjacent to Cwmtawe School.

9829. Date and time of next meeting: The date of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be Monday 9th March 2015 at Ynysmeudwy Hall commencing at 6.45pm.

Signed **Dated**