

Ordinary General Meeting held on the 9th March 2020 at ARCH Hall, Cefn Llan Road, Pontardawe commencing at 6.45pm

Present:

Councillor A Nicholson (presiding), Ms S Northcott, Mrs L Purcell, A Richards, Mrs R Phillips, J Jones, G Davies, K Flynn, H Davies, W Thomas, Ms R Jones, and B McCarthy (Youth Representative)

Apologies:

Councillor R Thomas, Ms C Ford, D Williams, G Nicholson and V Hotten

11391: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:

None

Resolved to be noted.

11392: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 10th February 2020:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 10th February 2020 having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council.

11393: Consider Matters raised by Members of the Public:

None.

Resolved to be noted.

11394: Defibrillator Mapping Project:

Council was advised that a grant for £942 had been received from Councillor Richard's Community Benefit fund towards the exterior defibrillator at the Town Council Office. A grant of £2246.60 had been received from Councillor Phillips' Community Benefit fund for the proposed exterior unit at Western Garage, Swansea Road.

The Heartbeat Trust had been made aware of the funds receipt and would contact the Clerk with the next steps in due course.

Resolved to be noted.

11395: Cwmdu Glen and the Working with Nature Project:

Arborum had carried out the risk assessment on the trees adjacent to paths and properties in Cwmdu Glen. No Urgent work was recommended.

The work recommended was within the year. The majority of the trees indicated were Ash Trees that would be covered by the Ash Dieback Plan once Neath Port Talbot Council had employed the relevant personnel.

No trees on the boundary of properties required any action. Council would be kept up to date with the position re the Ash Dieback plan

Council was also advised that capital funding was available from the Welsh Assembly Government to restore, create or enhance natural assets. Funds were available to Town and Community Councils together with Community Groups.

Several Community Groups had already expressed an interest in creating projects within Ynysmeudwy and Trebanos however details were not yet available.

Resolved that a Development Committee will be arranged to co-ordinate and identify additional projects once details of the group's ideas were available.

11396: Police Matters:

Pontardawe Statistics:

January Crime total – 47 which was up from Decembers total of 22 Crimes

The next PACT meeting was to be held on the 23rd April 2020 at Pontardawe Art Centre commencing at 6.30pm

Trebanos Statistics

January crime total – 6 which was up from Decembers total of 3 Crimes

The next PACT meeting was to be held on the 23rd April 2020 at Trebanos Hall commencing at 6.30pm.

Resolved to be noted.

11397: Alltycham Bench:

Council stated that the Memorial plaque should state 'In Memory of Marion Comaskey, Community Champion together with Donald and Margaret Rose'

As the bench itself could also be inscribed, Council wished the bench to state bilingually 'Happy to Chat' with the Welsh translation first.

Resolved that the Clerk will arrange for the purchase of the bench with the relevant inscriptions.

11398: Pontardawe in Bloom:

The Clerk confirmed that agreement had been received from the County Borough to placing one beehive planter at 'The Cross' and one on the verge adjacent to Heol y Fflin in Trebanos.

In addition, there would be five barrier troughs at two locations ('The Cross' in Pontardawe and adjacent to The Colliers at Trebanos)

As in previous years, there would also be 70 Hanging Baskets and 10 Lamp Post displays, together with a planter outside St Peters Church.

All would be fully maintained and supplied by the City and County of Swansea.

Additional funds were available from the budget for Pontardawe in Bloom which could be allocated.

Resolved that the Clerk will arrange the order with the City and County of Swansea and will also arrange a Development Committee to discuss additional action to be taken.

11399: George V Park:

The Clerk had discussed the help that could be offered to the Bowls Club.

The following proposals were discussed:

- Assistance with a Risk Assessment and Fire Risk Assessment later in the year
- Help and financial assistance with the steel shutter service
- Paul's assistance with small maintenance issues
- The possibility of an anti-graffiti covering (cost, County Borough agreement, feasibility)

- Assistance with a request to the Tai Tarian Community Challenge for 2021
- Additional benches if the club's application to other grant sources was unsuccessful.

Resolved that the Clerk will liaise with the Bowls club to identify the costs associated with the issues raised.

11400: Christmas 2020:

The Clerk confirmed that various information was available for review.

Resolved that a Development Committee will be arranged.

11401: Personnel Matters – NALC Recommendations:

There was comprehensive guidance on the National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions for Clerks in England and Wales for review.

The Clerk suggested that an independent review would be the most effective. This could be arranged by One Voice Wales at a cost of £180.00

Resolved and independent review of the Clerks Salary will be made by One Voice Wales.

11402: 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.

Resolved to be noted.

11403: Parking on the A474 Junction with Alltycham Drive:

The Clerk had received a telephone call from a Neath Port Talbot Council Officer. He had explained that the action to formalise the traffic bays at James Street merely added white lines to an area that was already used as a parking bay and had been used in this manner for many years.

In order to introduce additional calming measures in an area there needed to be robust and specific data available on issues experienced.

At present the only data available from the Police was on Personal injury during collision. This data showed no issue over a five-year period up to 2018 (this was also the last data available)

In the absence of this data, there would need to be significant photographic evidence of collisions over a prescribed period.

The County Borough cannot accept 'hear say' on possible 'near misses' as evidence of an issue.

The matter will be referred back to the County Borough Councillors Highways review in 2020.

Resolved that the member of the public who raised concerns be advised of the position and that the Town Council will be unable to take any further action on this matter.

11404: Planning:

Meeting held on the 17th February 2020

P2020/0032

Applicants name: Mr Damian Williams, 159 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA84BS.

Site Location: 159 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA84BS.

Proposed Development: Two Storey rear extension, single storey rear extension plus garage near rear boundary. (Please note amended description)

Resolved

No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2020/0099

Applicants name: Mr Anthony Elliott, 186 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, SA8 4BU

Site Location: 186 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, SA8 4BU

Proposed Development: Single Storey rear extension.

Resolved

No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2020/0071

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

Site Location: 98 Herbert Street, Pontardawe, SA8 4ED.

Proposed Development: External Alterations including provision of new windows and door to front elevation together with new windows to side elevation and formation of new front access ramp

Resolved

No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

P2019/5708

Councillor Charlotte Ford declared an interest as family members live close to the proposed development.

Applicants Name: Mr Paul Markey, Ty To Maen Farm, Newton Road, Rumney, Cardiff, CF3 2EJ.

Site Location: Land to the North of Old Foundry Road, Pontardawe, SA8 4ET.

Proposed Development: Construction of 36 affordable residential units, highway access, parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

Resolved

- The companies on the Alloy Industrial Estate are extremely important to the economy of Pontardawe. The Town Council would not agree to any action or plans that would limit or create difficulties for large vehicle access, employee parking or the ability of any of the companies on the Industrial Estate to carry out their business successfully.
- The Town Council would object to any additional restrictions placed on companies currently on the estate due to a decision to place residential housing in this area. That would include restricting noise levels, vehicular access or restricting on street parking such as double yellow lines etc.
- The Town Council supports additional social housing in the Pontardawe area but feels that there are more appropriate sites for a development of this nature. The Alloy Industrial Estate should be supporting industry and employment in that area, rather than residents and residential housing.
- Although the plans are comprehensive, they have numerous discrepancies, especially around the number of car parking spaces on the site and the availability of visitor parking.

On some of the documents the number of houses is stated as 36 and on others 37. The number of car parking spaces are stated at 48 and 51.

- The data used to justify that social housing requires fewer parking spaces is out of date (2007) and does not consider insufficient local public transport which would discourage residents without private vehicles.
- The plans also do not consider multi-generational families, which are becoming the norm. These would usually have more vehicles than average.
- NPTCBC Local Development Plan indicates that there should be 78 car parking spaces for a development of this size
- NPTCBC Local Development Plan states that there should be one visitor space for every 5 units for visitor parking. In this case due to the current level of parking on the street together with the number of large vehicles that travel on the Alloy Industrial Estate, on street parking should not be considered at all. (Visitor parking should be incorporated onsite by the removal of the requisite number of dwellings from the plan to create the space)
- Council is also concerned about the actions to be carried out to raise the towpath. They are concerned that the groundworks proposed to protect the development (and the wider industrial estate) from a possible canal breach are insufficient, especially as this was the area where there was a previous breach.
- Have the Canal and River trust been fully involved in the decisions on the most effective way to protect the development from a canal breach either during construction or in the future?
- There are no plans to include car charging points, despite the proposed change to the law on non-electric vehicles
- The proposals to protect potential residents from contaminated soil seems insufficient.
- The County Borough would need to have robust and continual monitoring to ensure that contaminated soil was disposed of appropriately and that any planning restrictions were rigorously adhered to.
- The metal testing sites seem insufficient and in the wrong places.

Application to change the register of Common Land – CL25A Entry 155 Application No: NPT0064

Resolved

No Comment.

Reviewed in the Ordinary General Meeting

P2020/0199

Applicants name: Mrs Hayley Hagley, 15 Waun Penlan, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe

Site Location: 15 Waun Penlan, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe

Proposed Development: Single Storey side extension.

Resolved

No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

11405: Finance Committee held on the 24th February 2020 – Financial regulations and Risk Assessment:

This Committee to discuss the Financial Regulations

The Committee were provided with details of the current Financial Regulations which were updated and agreed by Council in line with One Voice Wales recommendations on the 14th October 2019.

There were no further recommended updates

The Committee recommended no changes to the Financial Regulations.

This Committee to review the Financial Risk Assessment:

The Committee reviewed the current Risk Assessment and was content with its content. The Clerk did however suggest that the risk assessment include a section to cover risk associated with Contracting out work, which would include the creation of a Contractors Policy.

The Committee recommended the adoption of a Contractors Policy to specify the actions already being carried out to monitor the work of Contractors.

Resolved

That the Committees recommendations will be ratified.

11406: Finance Committee held on the 24th February 2020 – Grant Applications for 2020/21:

The grant requests were reviewed in full and the following were allocated:

- Marie Curie - £50.00
- Age Cymru - £50.00
- Wales Air Ambulance - £50.00
- Bobath - £50.00
- CISS - £50.00
- URDD - £100.00
- Dementia Friendly- £500.00
- St Peters Flower Festival - £100.00 (Councillors A Nicholson and G Nicholson declared an interest)
- Rugby Club - £1500.00 (£500 each towards the Fireworks Display, Pontardawe Proms and Carnival and Parade)
- Heritage Centre - £3500.00 (Councillor Jones declared an interest – The funds were allocated £500 for the Heritage Centre itself and £3000.00 to support the Pontardawe Summer and Winter Festivals)
- Townswomen's guild - £300.00
- Swansea Pipes and Whistles - £100.00
- Pontardawe Twinning association - £500.00
- Pontardawe British Legion £400.00
- Heart of the Valley Show - £600.00
- Miners' Strike Historical Project at the Art Centre - £144.00 (Plenary Powers awarded given the short timescale)
- Pontardawe Sports and Recreation Ground - £800.00

The Total of the Grants awarded are £8794 from a budget of £13000. The balance will be awarded later in the year.

The grants are awarded for the benefit of all or some of the residents within the Pontardawe Town Council area.

The Committee recommended that the above grants for 2020/21 totalling £8794.00 be awarded.

In the Ordinary General Meeting the following Applications were reviewed:

- Royal Air Force Cadets 1358 Squadron - £500.00

Unfortunately the application request from the Mission Church was not awarded as although Council was impressed with the project and the assistance it provided to isolated people, the project was based in Morrision and there was no indication that the project benefitted individuals in the Pontardawe Town Council area.

Resolved That a total of £9294 in grants be awarded for 2020/21 from the budget of £13000.

11407: Development Committee held on the 24th February 2020:

This Committee to discuss the Local Development Plan 2011-2020 Review Report

The Committee were provided with the Report prior to the meeting and reviewed it in full.

The following comments were made:

- It was disappointing to see that very few of the objectives had been achieved however, this was due to the change in the economic environment since the creation of the plan rather than any other factors
- The Western Valley Strategy received a great deal of input from Pontardawe and the local community at inception however there was very little feedback provided at the time and the plan does not seem to have taken their views onboard
- Planning and development should begin at a local level and follow a bottom up, rather than top down approach. The Town Council is soon to create a strategic 'Place Plan' in order to identify the overall direction required by the community and hopes that the County Borough would like to work together to achieve the communities plan.
- The Committee felt that the original Local Development Plan was now ineffective as the economic position had changed so radically since its creation (for example, Austerity and Brexit) - They felt that the direction being followed was unlikely to be successful in this new economic environment and action should be taken now to alter the plan. They felt that there needed to be more flexibility to change direction in plans of this nature.

Resolved That the recommendations will be ratified.

11408: Gwrhyd Quarry Resident Representative:

The Clerk had requested applications for the resident representative unfortunately there were no applicants. Councillor Ms R Jones, volunteered.

Resolved Councillor Ms R Jones will be the Resident representative of the Gwrhyd Liaison Committee.

11409: Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions:

The Clerk provided details of the additional Discretions and advised Council that neighbouring Councils had provided a template which they had all agreed.

Resolved That the Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions will be agreed.

11410: British Telecom Fax Line:

The Clerk confirmed that this line had not been used for over three years.

Resolved That the fax line at the office be removed.

11411: Pwllfawatin Liaison Committee:

Councillor Purcell had attended the meeting and confirmed that the issue of odour had been discussed.

There had been significant issues in October, November and December 2019 in both Rhyd y Fro and GCG.

A Site inspection had been carried out and the capping work had been brought forward and two new gas wells were created to address the issues.

Following the work, the issue with odour had been greatly reduced.

Resolved to be noted.

11412: County Borough Council/ Town Council liaison Committee:

Councillor Hotten who was the Town Council representative was not at the Ordinary General Meeting

Resolved to be deferred until the April Ordinary Meeting.

11413: Account Schedule and Bank Reconciliation:

Resolved that Account Schedule 366 totalling £11670.85 together with Bank Reconciliation should be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders.

11414: IRP Annual Report 2020:

The Town Council was advised of the recommendations from the report:

- Town Councillors could receive £150.00 to cover expenses, but could opt out if they wished
- A limited number of Councillors could receive remuneration as they had special responsibilities.
- Travel cost reimbursements were available for attending approved events
- Reimbursements were available for overnight stays if attending approved events
- Financial loss compensation was available
- Reimbursements for the costs of dependent children and adults was available
- Mayors and Deputy Mayors were entitled to remuneration
- County Borough Members in receipt of band 1 or 2 Salaries were not entitled to payment from Town Council's other than travel costs and cost of care.

Resolved that the level of funding for both the Mayor and now the Deputy Mayor be decided at the Annual General Meeting.

11415: Air Quality Report:

An air quality report that had been reviewed by Council following a recent Planning application seemed to indicate an ongoing problem in the Pontardawe Area.

Resolved that the report will be forwarded to the County Borough Members for investigation

11416: Email received re 'The Green':

The Clerk received correspondence from a resident who requested the Town Council review the ongoing maintenance of part of the road from number 1 'The Green' in Trebanos to the end of the Park. Unfortunately, the Town Council has no records of ownership for this piece of road and therefore an investigation was required to identify ownership initially.

Resolved that the Clerk will identify the ownership of the piece of roadway in question.

11417: Local Service Revision:

Council was made aware of proposed changes to local bus services in Pontardawe. One of the changes would result in difficulties for those requiring public transport for work in Neath.

Resolved that the Clerk will forward details of the proposed changes to the County Borough Members.

11418: One Voice Wales Membership 2020/21:

Council was advised that the cost of Membership was £1108.00

Resolved that the subscription to One Voice Wales will be paid for the 2020/21 year.

11419: Thanks to the Translator:

Council thanked the Simultaneous Translator for her assistance during the Bilingual Meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

11420: Urgent Road Safety Matters:

Council was advised that the markings on the disabled bays in the centre of Pontardawe were not now visible.

Resolved that the County Borough Members will request they are repainted.

11421: Next Meeting:

The next meeting of Council will take place on the 6th April 2020 at Trebanos Hall.

Signed Dated