

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Pontardawe Town Council held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015, at ARCH Hall, Cefn Llan Road, Pontardawe commencing at 6.45pm**

**10038. Present** Councillors D B Thomas (presiding), Mrs J Bowen, V Hotten, Mrs L Purcell, G Davies, Ms C Ford, P Williams, A Nicholson, D Harris, Mrs E Puzey, M James and Mrs R Phillips  
Youth Representatives – Harri Evans-Mason

**Apologies:** Councillor B Williams, Ms S Northcott and Thomas Hutchins.

**10039. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary interests:** Councillors Mrs J Bowen, A Nicholson, G Davies and V Hotten declared an interest in the Pontardawe and District Youth Facility, as they are Trustees. Mrs L Purcell declared an interest in all discussions on the Police as she is to be a Police Commissioner candidate.

**Resolved** this be noted.

**10040. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015:**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

**10041. Presentation by the Operational Response Manager for the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority:** Council was advised that the authority was the largest by geography in England and Wales and operated 57 Fire Stations.

Pontardawe Fire Station had already undergone significant changes with a reduction in fire fighters from 28 to 14 without any impact on service delivery. The Pontardawe depot was also the main service responders for the specialist Level 3 rope rescue team.

Currently the station had 1 Watch Manager, 3 Crew Managers and 10 Fire Fighters all working a self roster shift pattern. The Shifts were from 10 am to 10pm with stand down at the Station (this ensured on site fire fighters both on and off shift).

Statistics showed that there had been reductions in call outs across the board and this they believed was due to the preventative work being carried out with partners such as the schools, social services, ambulance service and local unitary authorities.

Their 'make every connections count' initiative ensured that Fire Fighters were trained to identify social issues that may lead to future problems in order to advise assisting authorities of potential problems.

The Fire Service did however require the Communities help to identify events that may be suitable for Fire Service input.

Council was also concerned over the lack of a small fire fighting appliance in the area due to issues already experienced in the area with narrow roads and lack of accessibility to some properties.

Simon requested that if there were areas already identified as problematic, then please to advise him as these could be flagged as requiring small engines on their network.

Council then thanked Simon for his attendance and for the valuable information provided.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**10042. Dementia Friendly Communities Co-Coordinator:** Marcia Vale addressed Council in order to raise awareness of Dementia in the Community and to obtain support for an initiative to improve the support for those with Dementia in the Community and their families. It is her wish that Pontardawe becomes a 'resilient Community' by educating people to be patient and to provide support for families affected by dementia. The businesses in Pontardawe were already fully engaged in the process and Marcia wished the Town Council to support an engagement morning that was to take place in the Art Centre in early 2016 to find out what additional support the people of Pontardawe needed in this area. Council was happy to support the event by identifying groups to attend the session while also attending themselves.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**10043. Matters raised by members of the public:** Dr Jones addressed Council with regard to Cwmdu Glen.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**10044. Police Matters:** Councillor Purcell expressed an interest. Council was advised that the next Trebanos PACT meeting was to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December at Trebanos Hall, commencing at 6.30pm. There were no new PACT priorities and the statistics for September as illustrated by the UK Crime statistic web site showed a total of 8 crimes reported. The Pontardawe PACT meeting was to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December at Pontardawe Art Centre, commencing at 6.30pm. There were no new PACT priorities and the statistics for September as illustrated by the UK Crime statistics web site showed a total of 48 Crimes reported. Council was also provided with details of the outcomes from the special PACT meeting held in October which included young people, the Town Councillors and members of the Chamber of Commerce where both the Police and the members of the Chamber of Commerce felt that CCTV Cameras would be of benefit in that area. Councillor Mike James commented that monitored CCTV for Pontardawe had been reviewed some time ago and had been discounted due to costs (estimate at over £100,000) however there were already a significant number of CCTV cameras in both Herbert Street and High Street as this was now a requirement for Planning for new businesses. It was also easy for the Police to access the camera feeds if authorization was provided. It was determined that the problem was that Neath Port Talbot Council did not enforce the maintenance of these cameras and therefore many were not updated or were actually broken.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will contact the County Borough in order to request that business owners fulfil their planning obligations in respect of CCTV Cameras. The Police and Crime budget plans for 2016 -21 were noted.

**10045. Pontardawe & District Youth Facility:** Councillors V Hotten, G Davies and Mrs J Bowen expressed an interest.

Council was advised that unfortunately Menter Iaith were unable to remain at 'the Stables' as a condition of their funding was that they relocate to the new Welsh Language Hub in Pontardawe. The cost of sustaining the building without these funds was not possible. The Trustees had therefore decided to close the facility from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 due to lack of funds.

Council was asked if they would continue to support the facility financially until closure if that was necessary.

**Resolved** that the Town Council will financially support the closure of the Youth Facility up to the level of the support budget already agreed for 2015/16.

**10046. Pelican/Zebra crossing requests:** The Clerk confirmed that as yet no official response to the request had been received.

Councillor Phillips requested that when any response was received, Council keep in mind the risks currently being faced by the School Children crossing Swansea Road.

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

**10047. Christmas 2015:** The Clerk confirmed that the Tree had been purchased and was to be transported to Vale in Clydach free of charge on the 23rd November 2015. The Town Council had arranged for it to be collected and transported to the Art Centre on the 24<sup>th</sup> November. The street lights had been erected by Neath Port Talbot Council and the tree lights would be checked and placed on the tree once the tree was in situ.

Council was also advised that part of the Mynydd y Betws grant received by Celtic Leisure was available for permanent lights on two of the trees adjacent to the Herbert Street Car Park. Councillor Purcell was to lead the Christmas Carol singing at the Tree on the evening of the procession.

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

**10048. Internet Banking:** Council was advised that the transfer to Unity Bank was complete and the Lloyds Accounts had been closed. As Councillor Phillips was an authorizer and would be on maternity leave in December we did however require another authoriser.

**Resolved** that Councillor Purcell will be an authoriser for the Unity Bank account.

**10049. Highway Seat Placement:** The Clerk advised Council that the Residents Association at Cefn Llan had received some very positive responses. Notices had also been put through the doors of the Houses immediately adjacent to the proposed seat sites asking them to advise the Town Council of any objections prior to the end of November.

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

**10050. Planning meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015:**

**P2015/0624**

Applicants name: Mr Daniel McCallum, Awel Aman Tawe, 76-78 Heol Gwilym, Cwmllynfell, SA9 2GN

Site Location: Mynydd y Gwrhyd, North of Pontardawe.

Proposed Development: Engineering works including ditches and mounds together with installation of kissing and equestrian gate and construction of culvert.

**Resolved** No Objections.

**P2015/0778**

Applicants name: Mr Jonathan Hale, 2 Milland Road Industrial Estate, Neath SA11 1NJ.

Site Location: Waun Sterw, Pontardawe, SA84PG

Proposed Development: Construction of 18 houses and two one bedroom flats and associated works (Revised site layout, house type, drainage scheme, sections)

**Resolved** Objected as despite the changes there are still not plans to improve the capacity of the sewerage system in the area which is already exceeding its capacity

**P2015/0738**

Applicants name: Mr Michael Conniff, 30 Ynysmeudwy Road, Pontardawe, Swansea SA84QD

Site Location: Land between 30 and 22 Ynysmeudwy Road, Pontardawe SA8 4QD

Proposed Development: Two detached dwellings (Outline with all matters reserved)

**Resolved** Objections due to difficult access, insufficient parking and land instability,

**P2015/0929**

Applicants name: FCC Environment, Judkins House, Tuttle Hill, Nuneaton CV10 OUH

Site Location: Pwlffawatkin Landfill site, Rhyd y Fro, Pontardawe, SA8 4RX.

Proposed Development: Variation of condition 20 and 22c attached to planning permission P2002/1016 to allow extended working hours of 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday and 8am to 4pm on Sundays until October 2015.

**Resolved** No Objection.

Planning discussed in the meeting:

**P2015/0924**

Applicants Name: Mr & Mrs Alex and Cath Nute and Kerry, Ynys Wen Farm, Garth Road, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4ST.

Site Location: Ynys Wen Farm, Garth Road, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4ST.

Proposed Development: Alterations to the roof including pitch height to match into existing ridgelines plus rear dormer extension.

**Resolved** No Objection provided there is neighbourhood notification.

**10051. Policy and Resources Committee held on the 19th October 2015:**

The Committee discussed the next steps required at Cwmdy Glen.

The Clerk produced two copies of the legal agreement between the Town Council and Neath Port Talbot Council under section 16 of the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949.

She confirmed that the agreement had been reviewed by the Town Council's solicitor and that in his opinion the agreement did not add additional financial or other obligations over and above those already held by the Town Council as the land owner.

The Mayor, Councillor D B Thomas and Councillor Bob Williams signed the two copies of the agreement on behalf of Council. Both signatures were witnessed by the Clerk, Mrs D Phillips in accordance with the Council's mandate agreed in the Ordinary Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

As confirmation had been received that the Town Council's land had been registered by the Land Registry, it was deemed prudent to survey the new boundary fences.

The Committee recommended that an independent survey is carried out at Cwmdy Glen to review the placement of new boundary fences.

**Resolved** that the Committees recommendations be ratified.

**10052. Personnel Meeting:** The Committee reviewed the current staff contracts and were advised that there had been no recommended changes to employment contracts since the previous review.

With regard to the current salary scales it was determined that the Cleaners in Charge and Grounds man had received incremental rises in previous years.

The Cleaners in Charge had received rises in order to bring their wages closer to the 'Living Wage' and the Grounds man in order to bring his salary into line with scales for comparable employment in the Neath Port Talbot area.

All employees were now remunerated in line with the Standard Joint Council Local Government Salary scales. The Cleaners in Charge at SCP 8 and the Grounds man at SCP 15.

The Clerk was remunerated in line with the Standard Joint Council level 24 and it was the wish of the committee that this be increased to SCP 25 due to the experience she now held in the post and in order to bring her salary more in line with Officers with similar responsibility in the County Borough.

The Committee then discussed the proposed government welfare changes which could impact on future salary rises, as a mandatory increase to the 'Living Wage' was likely with associated increases to other staff in order to maintain salary levels for qualified staff. The Committee therefore wished Council to keep this in mind when discussing future budget provisions.

The Committee recommends that the Clerk's salary be increased from the Standard Joint Council level 24 to level 25. It further recommends that employee salary increases be based on those recommended by the Standard Joint Council.

**Resolved** that the Committees recommendations be ratified.

**10053. Finance Meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015: This committee to discuss the budget and precept for 2016/17 prior to full Council discussion:**

The Committee reviewed the budget (Appendix 1) which would be reviewed by full Council at the next meeting. The Clerk reiterated that for the half year to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015, the Town Council was under budget. When the proposed expenditure for the second half of the year was reviewed it was anticipated that the Town Council would remain under budget (but to a lesser degree) at the year end.

The projected expenditure for the second part of the year included the additional costs for the Christmas lights for Pontardawe for the 2015 Christmas season and also capital expenditure on

both ARCH and Ynysmeudwy Hall. An additional cost was also included for specialist tree work to be carried out at Ynysmeudwy Park.

The Clerk did explain that the projected costs did not include Solicitors and Surveyors costs for Cwmdu Glen but that it was not anticipated that the costs would take the expenditure over budget.

The projected costs also included the £8000 which was ring fenced for the Youth Facility however, the Trustees believed that the facility would need to be closed in the New Year. The Youth Club itself was likely to be accommodated by the new 'Dragon Arts' facility in Pontardawe.

It was likely that the Youth Facility would require some funds from the £8000 budget to finalise the closure, however the balance of funds would be reallocated to the Halls budget in order to address the Trebanos Hall heating system.

The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council reserves both general and specific were currently healthy and that no additional funds needed to be raised to support liquidity.

With regard to the proposed precept for 2016/17, the figures were set out in Appendix 2. As inflation was likely to be low at between 0% and 1%, no weighting was added as any shortfall could be supported by the reserve.

The proposed minimum wage increase to £7.20 had already been factored into the Town Council expenditure as the Cleaners in charge were already receiving the enhanced payment. The anticipated Local Government salary increase of 1% could also be supported by the reserve.

The grant budget had been increased to £15000 in anticipation of funds required by local groups following austerity measures to support devolution of services via partnership working.

It was decided therefore that no increase to the precept was required for 2016/17.

Council was provided with the full figures prior to the meeting and discussed the reasoning in full at the Ordinary meeting. Given the prospect of low inflation, the Town Council's pre-emptive actions on salaries, the closure of the Youth Facility which would subsequently add to reserves and the healthy Reserves currently held they were happy not to raise the Precept for 2016/17.

**Resolved** the Precept will be £163700 for 2016/17

**10054. Finance Meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015: This Committee to review the balance of the grant budget for 2015/16:**

The Committee did not review requests from national charities that had already been awarded grants for this financial year. These requests would be reviewed with the 2016/17 allocation.

The Town Council reviewed three additional grant requests:

1. Llangollen International Music Festival - £100.00
2. Glantawe Lions – 2015 Tree of Light Appeal - £100.00
3. Cilybebyll Allotment Society – The Clerk confirmed that the allotments were open to residents of Pontardawe Town Council - £500.00

The Committee requests that the Town Council ratifies its recommendations.

**Resolved** that the Committees recommendations be ratified.

**10055. Clerks Training:** The Clerk advised Council that she had undergone two training sessions with One Voice Wales. These were on Module 19 ‘Devolution of Services’ and Module 6 ‘Finance’

**Resolved** to be noted.

**10056. Accounts Schedule 316:**

**Resolved** to accept the schedule 316 totaling £9639 in accordance with Standing Orders.

**10057. Local Service Revision:** Council was advised that the X50 service from Swansea to Ystradgulais Cross had been altered from the 2<sup>nd</sup> November. In the Swansea to Ystradgunlais direction the evening journeys between 18.40 and 22.25 would now stop at City Centre (Christina Street).

**Resolved** to be noted.

**10058. OOSA:** Harri Evans-Mason suggested that the OOSA be improved by the purchase of a web address to improve accessibility and by improvements to the attached social media pages. He further suggested that once this was completed a leaflet rather than booklet could be produced to direct people to the site which would provide a much cheaper but more effective online resource.

The Clerk also confirms that some of the partners might be interested in continuing the partnership on the OOSA development for 2015/16.



**Resolved** that the development of the OOSA will be in accordance with the revised plan and that the original Partners are contacted to determine if they wish to be involved.

**10059. Letter from Neath Port Talbot re litter:** The letter stated that an enforcement officer had reviewed the area where the bucket of cigarette butts had been witnessed however it had been removed and therefore no action could be taken.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**10060. Draft Public Service Ombudsman Wales Bill – Consultation:** The Consultation had been reviewed prior to the meeting however it required further discussion.

**Resolved** to be reviewed at a Policy and Resources Committee.

**10061. Email received from the ‘Post Office’:** The Post Office confirmed that the pedestrian walk ways would be painted on the fore court at Trebanos Service Station during November 2015.

**Resolved** to be noted.

**10062. Minor Authority Governor required for Rhyd y Fro School:** Council was advised that Councillor Bob William had been appointed at Chair of Governors for Rhyd y Fro School however a Minor Authority Governor was required.

**Resolved** that Councillor Vince Hotten represent Pontardawe Town Council as the Minor Authority Governor for Pontardawe Town Council.

**10063. Proposed Changes to the remuneration of Community and Town Councils:** The Consultation had been reviewed prior to the meeting however it required further discussion.

**Resolved** to be reviewed at a Policy and Resources Committee (plenary powers awarded).

**10064. SLCC Membership:** Council was advised that the SLCC Membership for this year was £187.

**Resolved** that the Town Council will cover the subscription for the 2015/16 year.

**10065. Rural Development Plan Leader funded ‘Working for Nature’ Project:** The Clerk provided details of the plan together with a request for part funding.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will request specific costs for specific time allocated to the Pontardawe Town Council area.

**10066. 'Open Meeting' 2016:** A request had been made for details of any Open Meetings to be held during 2016. It was identified that given the changes currently in progress an 'Open Meeting' should be held in 2016 however the timing would need to be sensitive to the Welsh Assembly elections.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will check with the Assembly Members to determine if they would be permitted to attend a meeting of this nature in February 2016. If not it was suggested that the meeting be arranged for after the Assembly Elections.

**10067. Urgent Road Safety Matters:**

- There were significant issues with 'Farm Food' lorries trying to access the Ffordd Parc Ynysderw via Ynysderw Road and then reversing on to the roundabout.
- Parking was an issue at Alltywerin. Council was however aware that double yellow lines would not be placed on the road by the County Borough and that the Police would not take action against parking on the pavements in the area.

**Resolved** that the Clerk will contact 'Farm Foods' to request they advise the drivers of the correct route to the store. The issue at Alltywerin will be noted as no action can be taken.

**10068. Date and time of next meeting:** The date of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at Trebanos Hall commencing at 6.45pm.

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