

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Pontardawe Town Council held on Monday 12th May 2014, at Ynysmeudwy Hall, Old Road, Pontardawe commencing at 6.45pm

9544. Present Councillors P Williams (presiding), D B Thomas, Mrs S Northcott, Mrs J Bowen, V Hotten, D Harris, Mrs E Puzey, G Davies, H Evans, B Williams, A Nicholson and M James
Youth Representatives – Harri Evans – Mason & Dylan Williams

Apologies: Councillor Mrs L Purcell, Ms R Lewis and H Pickrell.

9545. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary interests: Councillors Ms S Northcott, Mrs J Bowen, A Nicholson, G Davies and V Hotten declared an interest in the Pontardawe and District Youth Facility.

Resolved this be noted.

9546. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 14th April 2014:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 14th April 2014, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

9547. A representative of Karen Jones team at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council attended the meeting to provide details of the HWB Project (One Stop Shop) at Pontardawe:

Unfortunately Karen Jones was not able to attend the meeting and gave her apologies. Her representatives however provided detailed information on the current phase of the project.

Council was advised that the project was initially to run from the 8th April 2014 for a six month period. The Hwb was open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm and provided information on Council tax, Housing Benefit, rent, learning support services, unemployment, a limited blue badge scheme and voluntary services through a number of local authority and third sector organisations.

Currently NPT Homes, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, NPT Council for Voluntary Services, Calan DVS, Citizens advice, PANTRY and recently Job Centre plus were represented, Shelter Cymru were also due to provide advice at the Hwb.

Council queries were being dealt with by the library staff and could be accessed six days a week.

They were also soon to pilot a remote access service utilising video conferencing facilities which may allow additional services to be available in the future.

Footfall for the first three weeks was less than one hundred a week however this did take into account bank holiday weeks, however ideally over 100 per week would be needed going forward to give an indication of viability for the future.

The facility was currently being advertised, however, it would be further advertised through various other mediums to ensure that its availability was known.

Council was advised that a representative of the team would be happy to attend another Council meeting later in the project to give a further update. They would also be happy to speak to local groups.

Resolved that a member of the team will be invited to a future meeting to give an update on the success of the project.

9548. Matters raised by members of the public: None.

Resolved to be noted.

9549. Police Matters: The Clerk provided the following information:

Trebanos:

The next PACT meeting was to be held on the 26/6/14 at Trebanos Hall commencing at 6.30pm. The main PACT priority was complaints of off road biking in the area which would remain a PACT Priority.

Pontardawe:

The next PACT meeting was to be held on the 12/6/14 at The Cross Community Centre commencing at 6.30pm.

The main PACT priority was parking and speeding at Llanguick School which would remain a priority together with parking on Thomas Street.

Harri Evans-Mason had attended the youth PACT meeting but was unsure when the next meeting was to be held. Council was advised however that one of the youth PACT priorities which were parking around Cwmtawe School at 3.30 pm was to be escalated to a full PACT priority.

Council was also advised that Sergeant Andy Abraham was due to retire in July 2014, which Council felt was a great loss to the Pontardawe area, given his sterling work for and with the community during his time at Pontardawe.

Resolved that the Clerk will determine the date of the next Youth PACT meeting.

9550. Pontardawe & District Youth Facility: Councillors Ms S Northcott, V Hotten G Davies, A Nicholson 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 and therefore there was still £10,000 from the budget available. They were also advised that the Youth Club now had over 100 active members.

Resolved to be noted.

9551. Out of School activities brochure: The Clerk confirmed that a meeting of the partners was due to take place on the 15th May 2014 to set up a social media page to collect up to date information on local groups and to act as a forum for the completed brochure when available. The Clerk confirmed that the 2013/14 brochure was available in electronic format and had been placed on both the Cilybebyll Community Council and Pontardawe Town Council web sites.

Resolved Council will be kept up to date with developments.

9552. The Time for Change organisational Pledge: Council was advised that the action plan had been completed and submitted but unfortunately the 'Pledge' had not been received.

Resolved that the 'Pledge' will be signed once available.

9553. Vacant Seat – Trebanos Ward: Council was advised that it was likely that there would be a contested election within the Trebanos ward and that the provisional date for the election would be the 19th June 2014.

Neath Port Talbot Council had stated that the Notice of Election was due to be issued on the 14th May 2014 with all nominations with the Returning Officer at Neath Port Talbot Council by noon on the 22nd May 2014.

The Clerk stated that any person wishing to make a nomination or who had any queries about the election should contact Rhys George at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to confirm both the procedure and the time scales.

Resolved to be noted.

9554. Civic Pride Certificates: Council was advised that the school and the boys had been contacted but did not wish to take this matter forward.

Resolved to be noted.

9555. Trebanos Park: The Clerk confirmed that the 'Boulder Project' from the Core funding grant was still in progress and was awaiting a new coating together with trees and landscaping. With regard to the proposed additional grant application to improve the facilities in the park, the Clerk was in the process of obtaining letters of support, quotes from park suppliers and supporting documents required by the grant providers. She did however confirm that the Trebanos Hall Committee were working tirelessly to support the initiative and to ensure community groups were 'on board'.

The Clerk confirmed that the local Primary School were also fully involved.

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

9556. Allotment Provision: Council was advised that a meeting with officers re the 'Cwmdu Management plan' would include a discussion on the walled garden and the possibility of allotment provision in the area. Councillor Purcell was also pursuing land owned by the local schools which may provide a suitable land provision for allotments.

Councillor James provided details of a proposed allotment site in the Cilybebyll, which as a neighbouring Council may provide a partnership opportunity.

Resolved that the Clerk contact the local County Borough Member for Alltwen to determine a partnership is viable and also will keep Council up to date of developments.

9557. Neath Port Talbot Community Review: Full Council discussed the proposals in detail, but were not happy to agree to a reduction in the number of Local Members in Trebanos or Rhyd y Fro as they felt that Trebanos required their full complement of Members due to their strong community identity, and Rhyd y Fro due to its geographic size which could lead to a large increase in its population in the future.

Council did however agree that the number of Councillors for Pontardawe should increase by three.

As Town and Community Councillors were unpaid, Council felt that increasing their number would have no detrimental effect on austerity measures.

Resolved that the Clerk will provide the above feedback to the consultation.

9558. Minor Authority Governor at Rhyd y Fro School: Council was advised that Councillor A Nicholson was happy to take up the position, and had already received confirmation of his appointment.

Resolved that Councillor A Nicholson be the Minor Authority Governor at Rhyd y Fro School.

9559. Planning: It was agreed to arrange a planning meeting to discuss the applications.

Resolved that a Planning Committee be scheduled for 6.00pm on the 19th May 2014.

9560. Provision of Festive Decorations for Pontardawe for the 2014 Christmas period (Development meeting held on the 28th April 2014):

The Town Council was advised by Neath Port Talbot Council in September 2013, that provision of Christmas Decorations for Pontardawe would be provided by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for 2013, however due to austerity measures they would not provide this service for future years. The Development meeting was to discuss these matters.

Prior to any discussion, the Clerk advised the Committee that a letter had been received from Neath Port Talbot Council requesting a meeting with representatives of Pontardawe Town Council and the Chamber of Trade, when Officers of the Principle authority could provide details of the past provision and its associated cost. It was therefore recommended that two Councillors and the Clerk attend the meeting to determine actions that could be taken.

The recommendation of the Committee was that the Clerk arrange a meeting with representatives of the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce and Officers of Neath Port Talbot Council.

Resolved that the recommendations be ratified.

9561. Improvements to the 'Open Meeting' production and format (Development meeting held on the 28th April 2014):

The Committee discussed the 2014 'Open Meeting' in detail. They determined that it provided a forum for members of the public to address issues, and also provided them with access to their elected representatives. The Committee also thanked Councillor Sue Northcott for her excellent Chairing of the meeting.

The Committee did however have the following observations:

The Chair needed to be situated at the centre of the panel.

The Venue although adequate in 2013 was of insufficient size for the 2014 meeting.

Cwmtawe School should be approached as an alternative larger venue.

It was agreed that Thursday was an appropriate day for the meeting due to AM's and MP's schedules.

The number of questions provided to the panel was larger than could be dealt with during the evening which led to some important questions having insufficient time for a meaningful debate.

It was suggested that approximately six questions would be sufficient.

It was also suggested that more questions could be provided from the floor on the evening of the meeting.

Members of the Publics questions should be reviewed to determine if they should be provided as panel questions or if they should be directed to a specific panel member who could reply individually.

If a Member of the Public's question was not to be discussed in the meeting but replied to individually in writing, then the proposer should be informed of this fact.

It was acknowledged that the Panel was very large however due to the structure of the AM's this was unavoidable if all the political parties were to be represented.

Advertisement was discussed and it was determined that the number of posters and their locations were adequate however the poster itself could be more commercial to 'catch the public's imagination' and could include some details of the questions to be posed.

It was agreed that the 'Open Meeting' should be renamed 'Local Question Time'

The recommendation of the Committee was that Council takes into account the above issues should they wish to stage a meeting in 2015.

Resolved that the recommendations be ratified.

9562. Community Review 2013/14 (Review of Community Boundary and Electoral arrangements) (P&R Committee held on the 28th April 2014):

The document was reviewed in full however the committee felt that due to the effect on different wards within the Town Council they felt the matter should be discussed in full Council.

The Committee's recommendation was that the matter be discussed in the Ordinary meeting due to be held on the 12th May 2014.

Resolved that the recommendations be ratified.

9563. Draft Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Regulations 2014) (P&R Committee held on the 28th April 2014):

The Committee reviewed the consultation in full and reviewed the various questions posed. The committee agreed with the majority of the proposals but suggested the following:

Q4 – Do you agree the minimum notice and consultation arrangements in the Regulations, when taken together with the statutory guidance are appropriate?

The committee believed that all reference to '6 weeks' should be amended to '30 working days' to prevent difficulties with bank holidays, Christmas holidays etc.

Although the list of consultees did specify 'Any local authority whose area includes any part of, or shares a boundary with any park of the playing field' and the section 1 specifies that 'a local authority is a County or County Borough a Community or Town Council' the committee would like it specified that Town and Community Councils should be considered consultees.

Q5 – Do you agree the requirements for communicating an authority’s final decision area appropriate?

The Committee once again recommended that the ‘12 week’ period be amended to ‘60 working days’ for the above reason.

The Committees recommendation was that the above response is provided to the consultation.

Resolved that the recommendations be ratified.

9564. Committee required to review the Financial Risk Assessment for 2014: It was agreed that the issue should be deferred until the June Ordinary meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

9565. Tree Report –Trebanos Park: The Clerk confirmed that a recognised Tree Surgery company had undertaken a review of the Leyland Cyprus and Goat Willow adjacent to Trebanos Rugby ground, and had designated their condition as ‘poor’. Two recommendations were provided for to either fell the trees in their entirety or to perform maintenance to improve their condition.

It was also suggested that the Rugby Club be approached to determine if they would be in a position to assist financially with any maintenance or replacement scheme, however this should not delay the action to be taken to the trees.

Resolved that the Clerk will obtain at least three quotes from insured firms for both the removal of the trees and for action that could be taken to improve the condition of the trees prior to the next meeting.

9566. Accounts Schedule 299, Bank reconciliation and Actual/Budget Report both for the year to the 31st March 2014:

Resolved to accept the schedule totaling £16483.31, the Bank Reconciliation for the year to the 31/3/14 and the Report of Actual Expenditure/ Budget also for the 2013/14 year.

9567. Summer Playschemes: A Letter was received from the ‘Children’s and Young People’s Partnership’ requesting use of Parc Chwarae Teg and ARCH Hall, together with Trebanos Park and Hall for the Summer Playscheme which was to run from the 4th to the 29th August 2014.

Resolved that use of the Halls and Parks will be granted.

9568. Email received from Malcolm Bubb re Presentation: The Clerk advised Council that Malcolm Bubb had been unhappy with Council’s reception and the time allocated to his presentation at the April meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

9569. Cwmtawe School Letter: Council was advised that the Cwmtawe School spring newsletter had been provided by the recently appointed Head Teacher, Mr C L Hitchings, and that it included a photograph and article on the Town Councils Youth Representatives.

Resolved to be noted.

9570. Committee Enquiry: Making Laws in the Fourth Assembly: Council had no comment.

Resolved to be noted.

9571. Information Commissioners Office - Informing the Public Workshops: Council was advised of the sessions to take place in this area shortly and requested any Member wishing to attend to contact the Clerk. Councillor Nicholson did however state that he had a very effective DVD on the subject of Freedom of Information/ Data Protection which he would make available to Council.

Resolved that the DVD Freedom of Information/ Data Protection be made available to Council Members.

9572. Urgent Road Safety Matters: It was brought to Council's attention that there was a great deal of 'double parking' adjacent to the Ivy Bush Public House in Pontardawe due to fast food establishments in the area.

Resolved that the Clerk will inform the PCSO's.

9573. Date and time of next meeting: The date of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be Monday 9th June 2014 at ARCH Hall commencing at 6.45pm.

Signed **Dated**