

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Pontardawe Town Council held on Monday 8th October 2012, at Ynsymudwy Hall commencing at 6.45pm

8963. Present Councillor B Williams (presiding), D Harris, D B Thomas, Mrs E Puzey, V Hotten, H Pickrell, Mrs J Bowen, Mrs L Purcell, Ms S Northcott, A Nicholson, H Evans, M Thomas, Ms R Lewis, M James and G Davies.

Apologies: Councillors P Williams.

8964. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interest: Councillor Mrs L Purcell and Ms R Lewis declared an interest in any Planning discussions, Councillor Ms S Northcott, A Nicholson and Mrs J Bowen declared an interest in any discussions on the Pontardawe and District Youth Club, Councillor M James declared an interest in discussions on Car Park charging in Pontardawe, Councillor B Thomas, Mrs J Bowen and Ms R Lewis declared an interest in discussions on flower baskets at Trebanos Hall and Councillor Ms S Northcott declared an interest in discussions on the Gambling Act.

Resolved to be noted.

8965. Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting on the 10th September 2012:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on the 10th September 2012, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council with the following amendment.

Minute number 8952 should state null and void and not nil and void.

8966. Presentation Adrienne Howe re The Riverside and Arena Projects:

Adrienne provided the following information with regard to the riverside project and also handed to Council a number of leaflets and flyers explaining recent events.

- The Riverside project was funded for 3 years by the Big Lottery Fund and they were now in their final year. £50k per year was being provided from this source, with smaller project grants from other providers.
- Further funding could be available from the Big Lottery Fund if the project was altered. Additional funding was also being sought from other grant providers.
- The project had been nominated for two environmental awards in 2011 and had won one.
- Over 6000 people had benefited from the facility since its opening.
- It was unlikely that the project would become self financing as the objective was to draw down grant funding to create the majority of the income in order to limit the cost of hire for organisations utilising the facilities.

Adrienne thanked the Town Council for its grant for the purchase of tourist signs to direct members of the public to the facility from the main road.

Council suggested that they believed a cycle hire facility might be effective in this area.

With regard to the large Arena Project, Adrienne confirmed that this project was still ongoing however funding was currently an issue as over £1.2 million was required.

Council thanked Adrienne for attending the meeting.

Resolved to be noted.

8967. Trebanos Park: Council was advised that a review of the CCTV facility had been carried out and that it was confirmed that the two cameras facing the park had insufficient night vision to be effective. It was also confirmed that difficulties were being experienced taking copies of frames.

The Clerk stated that she had been in touch with a local firm who specialised in CCTVs and would be reviewing alternative cameras shortly. The CCTV system was also to be serviced to identify if a repair was required to allow frame copying.

Resolved that the Clerk will keep Council informed of developments.

8968. Mynydd y Betws Wind Farm Traffic and Community Benefit Fund:

Council was advised that a full apology had been received from the company following the delay in transport that led to the first tower section being delivered late and so disrupting school transport to Rhyd y Fro School. The company confirmed that this issue would not arise again. Council was also advised that 47% of the transport had been completed and that it was anticipated that all the components would be at the site by late November.

The Clerk advised Council that the committee to distribute the Community benefit fund was in the process of being created and asked for nominations for a Town Councillor to act as representative. She also asked for Councils agreement for her to act as one of the minute takers for the Community Benefit Fund meetings.

Council was advised that Meryl Hunt from the Canal Society had been put forward as one of the community representatives and had accepted.

Resolved that the Clerk is given leave to act as minute clerk for the Community Benefit Fund Committee and also that whoever is the current Mayor be the Town Councils representative on the Committee.

8969. Police Matters: Council was advised of the following information:

The date of the next Trebanos PACT meeting was 18th October 2012 at Trebanos hall commencing at 6.30pm.

The PACT priorities were anti-social behaviour at the Park of which there were no current issues and the resolution of the CCTV cameras.

The date of the next Pontardawe PACT meeting was also 18th October 2012 at 'The Cross' commencing at 6.30pm.

The PACT priorities were dangerous cycle riding in the town centre and vehicles driving in the wrong direction on Quarr Road. Both priorities were ongoing.

Other issues raised were an attempt by persons to enter a Councillor property illegally and illegal street sellers.

Council was also advised the mobile clothes collection vans were not acting illegally.

Resolved to be noted.

8970. Pontardawe and District Youth Club: Councillors Ms S Northcott, A Nicholson and Mrs J Bowen, expressed an interest.

Council was read a full report of the Pontardawe and Districts current financial position together with details of the Trustees plans to increase the participation of young people in the Youth Club and increase the income generated by re-letting the office.

Resolved that Pontardawe Town Council continue to provide assistance up to £10,000 per annum until the end of 2013/14 financial year.

8971. Parc Chwarae Teg: Council was advised that the new park was well attended by local young people and was an asset to the community. The funds from WREN were currently already in the Town Councils bank account and the funds from the Big Lottery fund were due shortly. At that time the cheque could be forwarded to Wicksteed to settle the account for the park equipment.

Resolved to be noted.

8972. Open Meeting to include the local Assembly Members, Member of Parliament, and County Borough Councillors: The Clerk confirmed that she was still awaiting a response from Peter Hains office but that Gwenda Thomas had confirmed that she would be happy to attend. Council however stated that the other party Assembly Members should also be invited to ensure that there was good representation from the various parties.

Resolved that an invitation is forwarded to the other South West Wales Assembly Members, Bethan Jenkins, Peter Black and Suzy Davies.

8973. Allotments: The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to Neath Port Talbot Council with regard to areas they might be willing to lease to the Town Council for Allotments. A list had been produced and the areas would now need to be reviewed to determine if any were suitable.

Resolved that the Clerk will keep Council up to date with developments.

8974. Trebanos Hall Flower Baskets: Councillors Mrs J Bowen, Ms R Lewis and D B Thomas declared an interest.

Council was advised that the original request for hanging baskets had been reviewed and it was now agreed that freestanding baskets would be more appropriate. Council was further advised that Councillor Lewis would be looking into this matter.

Resolved to be noted.

8975. Members Lapel Badges: The Clerk confirmed that the majority of the suppliers of these badges required a minimum order number of 100 and that those that would accept a lesser order had a vastly higher price.

Resolved that the Clerk will continue to look for a more cost effective means of producing a small number of lapel badges but would also produce calling cards for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

8976. Car Park Charging in Pontardawe: Councillor M James declared an interest.

Council was advised that the proposals were due to be discussed by cabinet members at Neath Port Talbot Council in November with a final decision by the Highways and Environment Cabinet to take place after this. Implementation would be in April 2013.

Councillor Purcell did however confirm that there were more than 2500 signatures on the petition against implementation.

Resolved that the Town Council reiterate their objection to the introduction of car park charges in Pontardawe.

8977. Planning: Councillor Purcell and Lewis expressed an interest however it was agreed that a planning meeting should be scheduled.

Resolved that a Planning meeting be scheduled for Monday 15th October 2012 at 6.00pm.

8978. Finance committee meeting held on the 17th September 2012:

The committee discussed the consultation document for changes to the method of payment used by Town and Community Councils. The consultation recommended the use of a Legislative Reform Order to change legislation (Local Government Act 1972 & 1992). The recommendation was to remove the requirement for cheques to be signed by two members of the council. This would allow the use of more modern forms of electronic fund transfer. It further stated that individual Councils would be free to continue to use cheques signed by two councillors but could if it wished alter its payment methods.

The Committee requested that Council ratifies the recommendations contained within the consultation paper, but for the present continue to utilise dual signatures on cheques for payments by Pontardawe Town Council.

The Committee also discussed the draft remuneration report (Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011) and produced the following recommendations:

The committee accepted that remuneration and expenses could be claimed if Councillors wished but recommended the following alterations:

- Payments for consumables etc should be receipted and for a maximum of £50 per annum, per councillor.
- Travel costs for attending approved duties outside the area of the council should be the actual costs of travel by public transport or a flat rate of 25p per mile.
- Subsistence expenses for attending approved duties outside the area of the Council should be an allowance per day for meals including breakfast where not provided in the overnight allowance, of the actual receipted amount, with a maximum of £15 per day. This would not be paid if meals were provided at the venue.
- The committee accepted the current recommendation for overnight stays in London of £150, Cardiff £120 and £95 for other venues. They also accepted the recommendation of a payment of £25 for a stay overnight with friends/family.
- The committee did not agree to the payment of attendance allowance for attending duties outside of the Council's area, but did agree to a financial loss allowance provided proof of loss was provided. The levels of £30.05 for a period not exceeding 4 hours, £60.11 for a period exceeding 4 hours but not exceeding 24 hours were agreed.
- The committee agreed to the Mayors allowance.
- The committee also agreed that the powers should be permissive powers and should be formally agreed by individual Town and Community Councils, but that once agreed they would need to be applied to all its Members. (An individual Member would however be able to forgo part or the entire requirement by giving written notice to the proper officer of the Council.)

The Committee recommended that Council ratify the above recommendations.

Council reviewed the information provided by the Neath and Port Talbot Credit Union and agreed that support of the venture was a very positive step. The committee was however advised that although individual members were covered by the Financial Service Compensation Scheme, Town Council funds were not covered and therefore the current banking arrangements with a leading high street bank provided a better level of security for the majority of Council funds as there was a decreased likelihood of default.

It was however suggested that if the practicalities allowed it might be a good idea to deposit the 'Mayors Allowance' and the remaining figure budgeted for Grants following the initial grant payments each year, with the Credit Union to show practical support while minimizing risk.

The Committee also agreed that a grant to support the advertisement of the deposit point at Pontardawe Library could be considered however the Credit Union would need to apply in writing, providing accounts in the usual manner. The Committee recommended that the Clerk look into the practicalities of depositing the Mayors allowance and the balance of grants budget for this year with the Credit Union and also that the credit union is asked to formally apply for a grant in writing.

Resolved that Council ratify the Finance Committees recommendations and also that a separate Finance Committee is scheduled for 6.30pm on Monday the 15th October 2012 to discuss the budget for 2013/14 and also the remainder of the grant budget.

8979. Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Draft Report 2013/14: Council was advised that a letter had been received from Chris Margetts, Group Manager requesting permission to address Council at the next meeting.

Resolved that the Clerk will invite the Group Manager to the November meeting.

8980. Neath Port Talbot review of gambling policy: Councillor Ms S Northcott declared an interest. Councillor Nicholson provided Council with details of his review of the policy. These were as follows:

- Point 6.2 recognised Town and Community Councils as interested parties. While this was admirable, this should be extended to all licences.
- Point 13.1 related to casinos but stated that the 'no casino' resolution came into effect on the 31st January 2013. However that date had not yet been reached so clarification was required.
- Point 18.2 stated 7 days but did not clarify if these were working days or calendar days.

Resolved that the Clerk will provide Neath Port Talbot with the above feedback.

8981. Welsh Government consultation – Draft Statutory Guidance on Local Authorities Power to Promote Wellbeing: Council had no comments.

Resolved to be noted.

8982. One Voice Wales: Councillor Nicholson attended and stated that there were several issues with the organisation of the meeting.

- Minutes being received very close to the date of the meeting, giving insufficient time for members to review the points or make arrangements to attend.
- Little structure to meetings causing duplication of discussions.
- Ineffective control during meetings leading to a failure to discuss important issues or move forward in a structured manner.

Resolved that the Clerk will contact other Clerks in the area to identify if the issues are being experienced elsewhere and then contact One Voice Wales to provide feedback and so encourage positive improvement.

8983. Accounts Schedule 281 totalling £136267.81 together with the half yearly budget report.

Resolved to be agreed under financial regulations.

8984. Email re Gwenallt Memorial: Council was advised that an email had been received requesting details of where and when the 'Gwenallt' plaque together with the other plaques that had been positioned on the Ornamental Fountain outside the Art Centre would be repositioned.

The Clerk confirmed that she has spoken to Neath Port Talbot Council and have been advised that following discussions with the Civic Society, it had been agreed that the plaques would be positioned at the 'the cross' in Pontardawe.

Council was further advised that Neath Port Talbot Council were actively looking for grants to complete stage three of the Pontardawe regeneration and that should these funds become available, then the sun dial at the bottom of Herbert Street would also be re- located to 'the cross'.

Councillor James gave some information with regard to additional funds that were to be obtained by the County Borough to improve the canal path but confirmed that this would not include the path between Herbert Street and the Castle car park. The Clerk confirmed that she had been unable to ascertain the ownership of the footpath from Herbert Street to the Castle car park.

Resolved that the Clerk will write the County Borough and request that the sun dial not be placed at 'the cross' in addition to the plaques from the Ornamental fountain and also that the Clerk will obtain quotes to improve the footpath from Herbert street to the Castle car park despite the lack of ownership information.

8985. Proposal to promote out of school activities: Councillor Hotten proposed a number of measures to improve promotion of out of school activities in the Pontardawe area. These included a pamphlet produced in conjunction with the school together with a 'Fair' at the school. Councillor Hotten would liaise with the Clerk to provide more details.

Resolved that the Clerk will look into the production of a pamphlet and the setting up of a fair.

8986. Email re review of employee wages: A request was received to review the wages of the grounds man.

Resolved that a Personnel meeting will be arranged for Tuesday 16th October 2012 at 6.00pm.

8987. Amendment to Minute number 8926: Minute number 8926 incorrectly stated in the body of the text 'Trebanos School'. This should have been 'Rhyd y Fro School'.

Resolved to be noted.

8988. Email received from a member of the public re litter, car parking and the swimming pool at Pontardawe: An email was received complaining about litter, the swimming pool and car parking in Pontardawe. The issues were discussed in details by Council and photographs circulated.

Resolved that the Mayor will discuss the issues directly with the complainant and that the Clerk will write to each Public House and eating establishment in Pontardawe requesting that they address cigarette ends and litter deposited on pavements outside their establishments.

8989. Locals Services Board Annual Seminar: a representative of Council would need to attend on the 23rd October 2012.

Resolved that Councillor M James will attend on behalf of Council.

8990. Changes to South Wales Transport timetables: Council was advised of the changes that would affect the Pontardawe area.

Resolved to be noted.

8991. Urgent Road Safety Matters: Councillor Mrs J Bowen expressed concern over the step to the crossing at Trebanos, however Councillor Lewis confirmed that this issue had been looked into by Neath Port Talbot Council and no action could be taken unless the crossing was moved.

Resolved to be noted.

8992. Date of the next meeting: The date of the next meeting is due to be held at 6.45pm on the 12th November 2012 at ARCH Hall.

Signed

Dated.....