

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Pontardawe Town Council held on the 9th October 2017 at ARCH Hall, Cefn Llan Road, Pontardawe commencing at 6.45pm.

10602. Present: Councillor A Nicholson (presiding), Mrs L Purcell, V Hotten, J Jones, Ms R Jones, W Thomas, Ms S Northcott, G Nicholson, K Flynn, R Smith and A Richards

Apologies: Councillor Mrs R Phillips, Ms C Ford, G C Davies, C.L Morgan, H Evans and Jamie Edwards (Youth Representative).

10603. Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary interests: None.

Resolved to be noted.

10604. Minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on the 11th September 2017:

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on the 11th September, having been read and confirmed as a true record, be accepted by Council.

10605. Matters raised by Members of the Public: None.

Resolved to be noted.

10606. Alteration to the Meeting Order: Council agreed to discuss some Urgent Road Safety Matters at the beginning of the meeting and some at the end given the seriousness of the concerns.

Resolved to be agreed.

10607. Road Safety Matters – Relocation of English Medium Primary School's to Ffordd Parc Ynysderw: Council was advised that Neath Port Talbot Council had submitted a grant application to the Welsh Assembly Government for funding to create a school on Ffordd Parc Ynysderw for children aged from 3 years to 16 years. This would involve the closure of the current Cwmtawe Community School together with Llangiwig, Rhyd-y-fro, Alltwen and Godrergraig Primary Schools.

Council was initially very concerned that the funding proposal had been submitted without advising the Town Council and with very little prior notice given to the head teachers of the affected schools or the County Borough Council Members.

Council was advised that the County Borough Members had now been informed of the proposals.

The Following information was made available:

- A bid had been submitted to the Welsh Assembly for funding but there was no guarantee that the funding would be agreed.
- The closure of the current Cwmtawe Community School for relocation was not definite.
- The location of amalgamated Primary Schools was not definite and could be altered.
- Should the bid be successful then there would be extensive consultation with the local community, the schools, parents and Local Council to identify issues with location, parking, traffic congestion, transport etc.

At present there was very little information available however it was extremely important that the local community get involved with the Consultations if the bid was successful.

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

10608. Cwmdu:

Neil from the 'Working with Nature' project would be attending the November Town Council meeting to update Council on the work being carried out.

Resolved to be noted.

10609. Police Matters:

Council was advised of the following:

Pontardawe PACT was to take place at the Art Centre on the 12th October 2017 at 6.30pm. The PACT Priorities remained Anti-social behaviour on Herbert Street, vehicles contravening the One-Way System at Dynevor Terrace and Church Street and Parking on Pavements.

Regarding the issue of young people riding dangerously on cycles in the area, there were several initiatives in progress:

- A group had been formed to look at suitable off-road venues for young people to cycle in the area.
- Older teenagers who were repeat offenders were being issued with Fixed Penalty notices by the Police
- A weekend operation had also been carried out by the police which included a ban on cycles on Herbert Street together with young people being taken home to parents by the Police and given advise on road safety matters.

Trebanos PACT was to take place at Trebanos Hall on the 12th October 2017 at 6.30pm.

Speeding on Swansea Road was still causing issues however Council was advised that the area did meet the 'Go Safe' criteria for enforcement and therefore would receive a minimum of five visits per month for the next six months. The Police will also be enforcing in the area.

One issue that was raised was that it would be helpful if there was one mobile telephone number that could be contacted for the PCSOs in the area. It would also be helpful if their mobile phones would support photographs so that photographic evidence could be texted to the PCSOs.

In the meantime, however, photographs could be emailed to the PCSOs.

Resolved that Council be kept up to date with developments. Also, that the Clerk will contact the local Police to request one telephone number for PCSO contact.

10610. Defibrillators: A decision on NHS Funding for the Defibrillators was still outstanding. Both Ynysmeudwy Stores and Rhyd y Fro Post Office were being kept up to date with developments.

Resolved to be noted.

10611. Town Council Web Site: Unfortunately as Councillor Morgan was not at the meeting due to work commitments, the update on the web site would be deferred to the November meeting.

Resolved the web site update will be included in the November meeting agenda.

10612. Shh Campaign: Council was very impressed with the draft poster produced by Councillor John Jones. It was however agreed that the late evening establishments would need to be approached to request their fully support and to ensure they were willing to work in partnership with the Town Council on the initiative.

Resolved that a Development Committee will be arranged to discuss the next steps.

10613. Question Time Evening: The evening arrangements were ongoing and the question list would be forwarded to the Panel shortly.

Resolved to be noted.

10614. Christmas 2017: Council was advised that the Christmas Tree had been ordered and would be delivered free of charge to Vale in Clydach on the 20th November 2017. It would then be transported to the Art Centre shortly after.

Neath Port Talbot Council had provided a contract for signature to allow the Town Council to organise the placement of Christmas Lights with a Private contractor. There were several insurance and other conditions that also needed to be satisfied to allow the placement of the Christmas lights.

A meeting was currently being arranged between the Town Council, Art Centre and Chamber of Commerce to discuss the Parade and Santa's Grotto.

Resolved that the Clerk be given authority to sign the Christmas Lights contract with Neath Port Talbot Council and that she be given the authority to alter insurance and other provisions to allow the Christmas Lights to be erected by 'Commercial Christmas'

10615. Planning: None

Resolved to be noted.

10616. Policy and Resources Committee held on the 18th September 2017 (Plenary Powers Awarded)

1. Recommendations on the Electoral Reform Review document: Plenary Powers Awarded:

The document was split into many sections as follows:

Building the Franchise:

Votes for 16 and 17-year olds, EU citizens residing in Wales after Brexit, Legal residents in Wales irrespective of nationality or citizenship, all nationality eligible to vote be allowed to stand for election. The committee felt that all proposals should be accepted.

Improving Registration

Government bodies and specifically trained persons should be allowed to help persons to register. Young persons could be automatically registered when National Insurance number is issued. Block registration should be allowed in certain instances e.g. University Students could be registered by the Universities.

A single electronic register for Wales would be acceptable. However, an individual voting system for each authority would be unacceptable, and would cause confusion.

Constitutional changes to the voting system should have a 66 per cent of voters that turn out.

Statutory 5-year term of office instead of 4-year term of office would be acceptable. However, the government should be able to go to the country any time within that term of office.

Voting Process

The committee felt that there was a need to reform the voting system to encourage greater participation in elections in Wales. This would entail expanding where, when and how people should be able to vote.

Electronic voting and counting would be helpful. Voting on more than one day, except Saturday and Sunday as staffing would cost more, would help.

Standing for Election

It is not necessary to print a candidate's home address on election literature but a personal statement for the web site would be useful.

Assembly Members should not stand for their Local Council as this would be a conflict of interest. Party affiliation should be disclosed.

The term 'Senior Staff' in question 36 and 37 was unclear.

Returning Officers

Statutory chief executive role should include the post of returning officer regarding remuneration this should be left with Welsh Remuneration Panel.

Assembly election fees should not be calculated on an agreed formula, based on the size of the electorate.

Resolved

The committee resolved to pass the recommendations to the Assembly Government.

2. Recommendations on the Welsh Government Revised School Organisation Code: Plenary Powers Awarded.

There is currently no presumption in favour or against the closure of any type of school. The current code recognises that the prime purpose of schools is the provision of education and the case for

closure should be robust and in the best interest of education provision in the area. However, it is recognised that in rural areas a school may be one of only a few services still left in the community, functioning as a focal point for community activities. Closure could therefore have implications for the future sustainability of the whole community, far beyond the issue of provision of education.

A more robust set of changes to the code are put forward for consultation:

- Consider whether a rural school to be closed is one that needs to be considered part of the 'Rural School List' where special provisions apply.
- Identify obvious reasons for formulating the proposal and consider these reasons as part of the decision-making process on whether to consult on closure proposals.
- Identify any reasonable alternatives to closure which might also address the reasons for the proposal and provide evidence to show that there has been careful consideration to all other viable options including federation, with clear assessment of merits and viability before proposer proceeds to consult on closure, this includes likely education benefits, impact on community and effect on travelling arrangements.
- Set out in proposal paper the alternatives that have been identified with reasons for decision.
- No firm decisions will be made to proceed to consultation until preliminary requirements have been carried out.

Revision points:

Consultation document must be issued during term time;

Consultees must receive hard copy of document or emailed link to web site. Hard copy should be available on request;

Proposers who are requested to manage excessive surplus school places should look at all avenues and not just consider school closure.

Resolved

The committee resolved to agree with the above changes and the additional revisions to original document after three years of operation of the School Organisation Code.

3. Recommendations on the Welsh Revenue Authority Powers. Plenary Powers Awarded:

This consultation document entitled 'Welsh Revenue Authority access to criminal powers to tackle devolved tax crime sets out the Welsh Government's need to have the option of criminal powers in addition to the already held civil powers to tackle devolved tax offences effectively.

Resolved

After discussion, the committee felt that the proposal should be supported.

4. Recommendations on the Private Member's Autism Wales Bill. Plenary Powers Awarded:

The committee discussed the above consultation document and felt that there was always a need to keep provisions up to date in all areas of health and wellbeing and anything that could be done should be done. An Autism strategy is one of the ways forward and should therefore be supported.

Resolved

After discussion the committee felt that a letter of support should be sent.

10617. Actual/Budget Report Apr-Jul 2017: Council was provided with the report prior to the meeting.

Resolved that the report will be agreed.

10618. Report on the Ministerial Task Force for the Valleys:

Councillor A Richards was a member of the Task Force and provided an overview:

- This was for organising Task/Finish projects for Neath Port Talbot
- No new investment for projects but Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council would look to redirect funds for effective projects
- This needed to be Phase 1 of a longer-term plan to bring projects to their fruition
- It was agreed that projects needed to be sustainable and fit for purpose and that quantifiable evidence would be needed to monitor success.
- The areas of interest were identified as Digital connectivity, Job creation, transport links, Tourism and Cultural Heritage.

Council discussed various ideas which could be fed into the Task Force by Councillor Richards.

Resolved to be noted.

10619. One Voice Wales meeting held on the 20th September 2017: Councillor Ford was unable to attend the meeting so the report was deferred

Resolved to be noted.

10620. Pontardawe Town Council Brochure: Council decided that the brochure should be 16 pages of 130g sm silk 210 x 148 mm in size plus Art work. Eight pages of English with a Welsh Translation.

The most cost-effective quote was from Stephens and George print group.

Resolved that Stephens and George Print group will be asked to produce 5000 copies of the brochure with content being agreed by a Development Committee.

10621. Precept 2018/19: A Finance Committee was required to decide on the Precept for 2018/19.

Resolved that the Clerk will schedule a Finance Committee.

10622. Account Schedule 337:

Resolved that Account Schedule 337 totalling £22159.92 and the Bank Reconciliation be accepted in accordance with Standing Orders.

10623. Email received from Mr A Thomas re support for the Mount Elim Redevelopment: Council was provided with details of the plans prior to the meeting.

Resolved that the Council will agree in principle with the project and will provide a letter of support to be forwarded to grant providers.

10624. Letter received from Dr D R Lloyd AM: Council was read a letter from Dr D R Lloyd AM congratulating the Council on its 'Best Youth Engagement Award' award from One Voice Wales.

Resolved to be noted with thanks.

10625. Letter received from the Art Class at Ynysmeudwy Hall: Council was made aware of one Art Class's dismay at the window film that had been placed on one bank of window at the hall to replace the Curtains that had been removed following the fire risk assessment.

Resolved that the Clerk write to the Art Class to explain that although they sympathise, the film is a cost-effective method of reducing glare and excess heat and therefore must remain.

10626. Email re Glanrhyd: Council was advised that there were no registered footpaths around the Riverside Centre and Glanrhyd Estate.

Resolved to be noted.

10627. Memorial Bench at Park Chwarae Teg: The crowdfunding page had produced sufficient funds for the family to purchase a bench. This had been purchased from Street master in Ystradgunlais and would be available in approximately three weeks.

Resolved that Pontardawe Town Council will support the cost of the plinth for the new bench.

10628. Urgent Road Safety Matters - Other:

- £5k Road Race – This would not now go ahead on the original date as Neath Port Talbot Council had not received the correct insurance certificates. Also, the result of an investigation into an issue at an earlier race would need to be resolved prior to any agreements being made.
- A solution was required for the very slippery pavements in Pontardawe which were causing several falls – Councillor Purcell stated that the County Borough were unable to replace the slabs with scored slabs due to cost but were looking at a new spray product that should prevent the build-up of algae. (The Town Council does wish however to confirm that this product is environmentally friendly prior to use.)

Resolved that the Clerk will contact the appropriate authorities.

10629. Time and Date of Next Meeting: The next Ordinary meeting is due to be held at Trebanos Hall on the 13th November 2017.

Signed Dated