## **Ordinary General Meeting held on the 20th June 2022 by hybrid means. The physical meeting was held at the Gallery, 2nd Floor, Pontardawe Arts Centre, Herbert Street, Pontardawe, with support via virtual platform Zoom, in line with Welsh Government requirements, commencing at 6.45 pm**

## **Present at Pontardawe Arts Centre:**

Councillor Ms L Purcell (presiding), Ms J Lord, P Temblett, B Howells, S Todd, Ms G Ffrancon, M Vincent, D Brain, J Watkins, M Davies and Ms I Williams (Youth representative)

## **Present at via Zoom**

Councillor J Nemeth and H Davies (left the meeting at 8.20 pm due to technical difficulties)

**Apologies:**

Councillor Mrs R Phillips, Ms E Thomas, G Davies and A Richards

## **11996: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:**

Councillor S Todd declared an interest in two Grant Applications. He left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision on the grants to the Pontardawe Conservation group as he was the applicant.

## **Resolved** to be noted**.**

## **11997: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting and Annual General Meeting held on the 16th May 2022:**

## **Resolved** that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting and Ordinary General Meeting held on the 16th May 2022 having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council with the following amendment:

Councillor G Davies had requested in the Annual General Meeting that the Mayor/Deputy Mayor post be rotated

## **11998: Matters raised by Members of the Public:**

Representatives of the Friends of Pontardawe Arts Centre attended the meeting. They explained that the group had been in existence since 2017 and had at its inception approximately 350 Members. The aim of the groups was to assist the Management in obtaining grant funding, raising the profile of the Arts Centre and organising social events.

The Friends would be very pleased for Council Members to become involved in the group.

The Mayor thanked the representatives for attending the meeting and asked that Council be made aware of future events

## **Resolved** to be noted**.**

## **11999: Defibrillator Mapping Project:**

A list of the units currently operational had been requested from the NHS Trust and would be emailed to Councillors once received. The Heartbeat Trust UK had also been asked for details of the signs placed and required for new units, however, a response was awaited.

The Clerk confirmed that there were three units in the Rhyd y Fro area, at the Travellers Wells, sales room and Post Office. The NHS Trust partner had confirmed that Rhyd y Fro had sufficient coverage.

The Clerk confirmed that the licence to allow the exterior box at the Art Centre had been received and would need to be signed by two Council Members. She also explained that due to the Pandemic, there had been only limited publicity on the location of new defibrillator units

The NHS Trust had also suggested that they conduct an awareness session to focus on defibrillation and CPR for new Councillors

## **Resolved** that two Councillors will sign the licence for the Arts Centres exterior unit, publicity will be arranged to advise Members of the Public of the location of the new units and an awareness session will be arranged for the new Councillors on defibrillators and CPR

## **12000: Eco and Wellbeing Committee including Cwmdu:**

The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Neath Port Talbot Council to obtain details of a dedicated contact dealing with the Neath Port Talbot owned land at Cwmdu, for the Cwmdu Conservation group. She had been advised that a reorganisation was in progress, but a contact would be advised shortly.

The Clerk had been advised that the group would ensure there was liaison with Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity team and also other specialist Members at Neath Port Talbot Council to ensure that any work carried out would be in accordance with Heath and Safety, biodiversity and other considerations.

Council was advised that a risk assessment had been carried out at Cwmdu by the ARB Team, to determine the health of the trees on the boundaries of properties in order to ensure their health, and a timed management plan was now available. The Clerk was currently obtaining quotes for any urgent work to be carried out. All contractor approached were qualified and insured to carry out the work and the lowest quote would be accepted.

There was a discussion on the Summer Hanging basket scheme which comprised of Hanging baskets, a planter and lamp post displays in Pontardawe and a tier planter at Trebanos. Council Members were interested in ways to expand the scheme to Ynysmeudwy and Rhyd y Fro.

There was also a discussion on natural planting schemes on public ground such as wildflowers, however this would need to be initiated by the Unitary Authority.

Council Members were particularly concerned about the poor visual impact of the Gwachel Roundabout. The current planting scheme was uninspiring and the plants seemed unhealthy. Council felt that there was an opportunity to make that area a focal point with historical artefacts or a more pleasing planting scheme which would create a more pleasing gateway to Pontardawe.

## **Resolved** that the Clerk will provide the Pontardawe Conservation Volunteers with a dedicated contact at Neath Port Talbot Council, once received. Council Members would provide the Clerk with possible locations for planters at Rhyd y Fro and Ynysmeudwy. The Clerk will also make enquiries with Neath Port Talbot Council about the possibility of a refurbishment of the Gwachel Roundabout.

## **12001: Police Matters:**

The Clerk had been advised by the local Police Force that PACT meetings could be reinstated in conjunction with the Police and Councillors however there would need to be an apatite for the reinstatement within the local communities. In other areas street surgeries had been more successful with the community.

Council was advised by a local Councillor that a virtual PACT meeting had been held in Pontardawe recently although there had been little publicity within the wider community and the Town Council was not aware of the meeting.

The Community Alcohol Partnership had been reinstated two Town Councillors who were also County Borough Members had been invited to the meeting however they were not in attendance at the Town Council meeting and therefore an update on the meeting and actions to be carried out were not available

A full discussion was carried out when Councillors decided that the reinstatement of the PACT meetings would be preferable to community surgeries as there were protocols for reporting and action following PACT meetings that were not carried out following community surgeries. By monthly meeting and hybrid facilities were also suggested

Pontardawe statistics –April 20 down from March 34 (Violence 8, ASB 2 and Criminal Damage 4)

Trebanos statistics –April 2 down from March 3 (ASB 1 and Criminal Damage 1)

There were current issues with speeding vehicles in Pontardawe late at night. There were also continual issues for parents when parking around the temporary Godrergraig Primary school at Parc Ynysderw

**Resolved** that the Clerk will obtain an update on the actions agreed at the Community Action Partnership and will advise the local Police Service of both the issues with speeding cars and the Councils wish to reinstate PACT meetings at Trebanos and Pontardawe although with better publicity via social media and community posters.

## **12002: Grant applications and letters of thanks:**

It was agreed to review Grant Applications under Reports.

## **Resolved** to that applications will be reviewed, together with the minutes of the Finance Committee.

## **12003: Office and Facilities:**

The Office move had been carried out with the lease at 4 Herbert Street ending on the 31st May 2022.

The Clerk was in the process of reviewing new working practices, hybrid facilities etc to make improvements and to address any small issues that had arisen.

## **Resolved** to be noted.

## **12004: Christmas 2022:**

The Clerk advised Council that the original partners (Town Council, Arts Centre and Chamber of Commerce) were now available to organise the Christmas celebration on the first Friday in December

The Town Council contract for Christmas lights was still in operation but would need to be reviewed prior to the Christmas of 2023. The fireworks display had also been booked.

The Christmas tree was usually purchased from Kidderminster and transported by VALE in Clydach free of charge, however Council felt that enquires should be made with local suppliers in order to support the local economy.

There was also substantial support for a planted Christmas tree at ‘the Cross’ as this would be cost effective, an ecologically sound decision and would improve the air quality in that area. It was also likely that following refurbishment at the Arts Centre, the current location of the tree holder would not be available. It was agreed however that the possibility of a real tree should be considered for the Christmas of 2023

There was also a discussion on the provision of a virtual Parade and light switch on to run in conjunction with the physical celebration.

## **Resolved:** that Councillors Brain and Temblett will provide contacts for the local supply of Christmas trees for review. The Clerk will discuss the possibility of lighting a Christmas tree at ‘the Cross’ with the current Christmas lights suppliers. Councillor Nemeth and Youth Councillor Issy Williams will liaise to determine the feasibility of an additional virtual Christmas celebration.

## **12005: Crossing Patrol Officer:**

Council was advised that a candidate had verbally accepted the position. Further details together with a start date would be provided in due course.

## **Resolved** to be noted.

## **12006: Planning:**

Meeting held on the 6th June 2022

## **P2022/0353**

Applicant’s name and Address: Mr Jason Pedric, 8 West Crossways, Pontardawe SA8 4NE

Site Location: 8 West Crossways, Pontardawe SA8 4NE

Proposed Development: Retention and completion of side extension to create covered walk

## **Resolved** No Objection

## **P2022/0426**

Applicant’s name and Address: Mr David Walsh, 247 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Swansea SA8 4BY

Site Location: 247 Swansea Road, Trebanos, Swansea SA8 4BY

Proposed Development: Proposed single storey front extension and single storey side porch extension

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

Applications reviewed in the meeting

## **P2022/0467**

Applicant’s name and Address: Mr Kevin Miller, 31 Thomas Street, Pontardawe SA8 4HD

Site Location: Mr Kevin Miller, 31 Thomas Street, Pontardawe SA8 4HD

Proposed Development: Proposed single storey rear extension the works for which include the demolition of an existing rear conservatory

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

There was also a discussion on the Town Team and the plans that were currently being discussed. It was agreed that it was important that all Members of the Community should be consulted and that Members of the Town Team should be invited to Council to give details of the current plans

It was also agreed that Council should look at what projects could be developed within the framework to utilise grant funding that became available with tight timescales

## **Resolved** that a representative of the Town Team be invited to provide an update for Council.

## **12007: Finance Committee held on the 6th June 2022:**

## **The Committee discussed the current Town Council Investment Policy**

The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council held a current account and savings account with Unity bank. The Current Account was used for all expenditure with funds transferred between the current and savings account to maximise interest while retaining suitable liquidity for usual expenditure. The funds within Unity were kept within the limits of the Financial Services Compensation scheme

The Town Council also held a Nationwide Savings account for longer term savings. The level of funds was held within the Financial Services Compensation scheme limits.

£5000 was also held within the Neath Port Talbot Credit Union Scheme. Funds had been initially deposited in order to support the scheme which could be accessed by local people via a counter service at Pontardawe.

The Clerk advised the committee that the counter service had ceased at Pontardawe with Neath being the closest access point for funds. As the funds were not used for everyday expenditure, the Credit Union were now designating the account as ‘dormant’

## **The Committee discussed the current investment policy and was happy to retain funds within Unity and the Nationwide. They did however feel that additional information was required on the Credit Union account. (i.e. access to residents within the Pontardawe Town Council area, charges for the retention of dormant accounts, interest to be received etc)**

## **The Committee discussed the Grant Applications submitted.**

The Committee was advised that there was a budget of £13,000 available for 2022/23.

Groups were able to request both capital and revenue grants and the application process was flexible to encourage groups to apply. There were no limits on the amount of each application and the committee could agree to award in full, reject, award in part, request additional information or award with restrictions.

Awards could be provided for national or local charities, community groups located in the Pontardawe Town Council area and for groups who might be based outside the area but who had members from the Pontardawe Town Council area.

The Committee could also request additional documentation and formal evidence of completion. Grants were awarded for specific purposes and therefore agreement would be required from Council if organisations wished to utilise the funds in a different manner at a later date.

All grants were awarded pending agreement of full Council and were reviewed either by full Council during each Ordinary Meeting or via a Finance Committee.

All grants were awarded on a ‘First Come, First Served’ basis

The Grant Application from the Cwmdu Conservation group (re Cwmdu) was withdrawn prior to the meeting and would be resubmitted at a later date

The Grant Application from the Cwmdu Conservation group (re Rhyd y Fro Summer Family Fete) will be discussed at the Ordinary General Meeting.

The following Grants were awarded in full:

Pontardawe Chamber of Trade and Commerce (Town Centre recovery Aid including flags and Town Centre Maps) – Grant awarded £414.32

Pontardawe Senior Citizens Welfare Association (Revenue Grant) – Grant awarded £500.00

The following Grants received but the Committee required additional information:

Pontardawe Heritage and Visitor Centre - £3500 towards the construction of 4 pop up start up units, monthly exhibitions and administration and organisation surrounding the Pontardawe Music festival – The Committee requested additional details on the split of the grant. They were also concerned that additional start-ups may compete with both the monthly market and current craft businesses in Pontardawe

Pontardawe and Alltwen Bowling Club - £1500 towards grounds maintenance – The Committee requested additional information on the equipment held and needed, together with the longer-term plan for maintaining the grounds.

Grants are awarded to support some or all of the inhabitants of the Pontardawe Town Council area.

## **The Committee requested that Council ratify the above recommendations**

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

## **12008: Grant Applications:**

Councillor S Todd declared an interest and left the meeting for the duration of the discussions

Pontardawe Conservation Volunteers – Grant requested £200.00 (Purchase materials for footpath improvements at Cwmdu)

Pontardawe Conservation Volunteers – Grant requested £300.00 (Rhyd y Fro Green Summer Family Fete)

**Resolved** that the grants to the Pontardawe Conservation Volunteers totalling £500.00 will be awarded.

## **12009: Clerks Report on Council insurance provision for 2022/23:**

Council was advised that brokers had reviewed the insurance provision for 2022/23. RSA were to provide the municipal cover with additional policies from separate companies for Directors and Officers cover for the Community Hall management Committees and cyber insurance cover to mitigate usual exclusions from municipal policies.

The insurance cost for 2022/23 was £9025.07

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12010: Report on One Voice Wales area committee held in June 2022:**

Councillor E Thomas attended on behalf of Council and had forwarded the following report to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

The report was as follows:

* Law about including members of the public in council meetings. We must now ensure we have hybrid facilities so they can join us online if they desire.
  + Also, any public attending must have the opportunity to ask questions – must be included in agenda.
* New Councillors Guide – will come out as electronic copy and sent to all councillors in Wales soon.
* There was a brief discussion about the Liaison Committee, and whether the new Plaid/Independent County council intend to keep it up. OVW will contact the county to discuss.
* Every council will have two free places on training courses (as well as the 8 that already exist). Strong encouragement to have the Code of Conduct training. Paul made the point that if you are found to be in breach of the code, the first thing they will check is whether you have had the training – will be a mark against you if you have not.

The “Self-Evaluation Toolkit” has now been finalised. There is no cost for this, and it is highly recommended.

The Clerk confirmed that both an agenda point for Members of the Public and Hybrid facilities were available.

The new Councillor Guide and details of training would be made available shortly and the ‘self-evaluation’ toolkit would form part of future meetings

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12011: Model Local Resolution protocol for agreement:**

Council was provided with the Model Local Resolution protocol prior to the meeting.

**Resolved** to be agreed and adopted.

## **12012: Account Schedule 393 together with Bank Reconciliation:**

All documents were made available to Councillor prior to the meeting.

## **Resolved** that Account Schedule 393 totalling £23700.45 together with bank reconciliation will be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders.

## **12013: Request for monthly update on decisions and discussions at Neath Port Talbot Council:**

A request was received for a monthly agenda point for our local County Borough Councillors to provide an update on discussions and decisions affecting the Pontardawe Town Council area. A separate agenda point should be included for updates on the new Pontardawe English Medium Primary school and associated issues

**Resolved** to be agreed and adopted.

## **12014: Email re Active Travel:**

The Clerk provided details of an email requesting the Town Council look at grants to improve the cycle and walking networks in Pontardawe. The Active Travel fund and safer routes in the community were no longer available however it was agreed that the current routes should be reviewed by the Eco and Wellbeing Committee and prospective projects identified which could utilise grant funding at short notice

**Resolved** to be agreed

## **12015: Email re unprovoked dog attack:**

Council was made aware of a dog attack earlier in the year within the Town Centre. Unfortunately, action could not be taken as there was insufficient CCTV evidence.

The Clerk confirmed that the CCTV Project in conjunction with Neath Port Talbot Council was ongoing and that unfortunately the start date had been delayed. She had confirmed that County Borough Engineers had recently been requested to begin the project.

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

## **12016: Letter of Thanks received from the Welsh Government:**

A letter of thanks had been received to the Clerk and Council for taking part in the Pilot to develop the new toolkit for Town and Community Councils

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12017: Coal Tip safety white paper:**

Details of the white paper were made available to Council Members prior to the meeting

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12018: Welsh Government Consultation: Healthy food environment and proposal to end the sale of energy drinks to under 16 years:**

Details of the consultations were made available to Council Members prior to the meeting

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12019: Urgent Road Safety Matters:**

* Late night vehicles speeding within the Town Centre
* Excessive pot holes on roads throughout Pontardawe
* Council was advised however that a permanent Traffic Warden was to be employed within Pontardawe by Neath Port Talbot Council to address the dangerous parking issues

## **Resolved** to be noted.

## **12020: Next Meeting:**

The next Ordinary Meeting will take place on the 11th July 2022 with hybrid facilities. The physical meeting to take place at the Gallery, 2nd Floor, Pontardawe Arts Centre, Herbert Street, Pontardawe with support from the Virtual platform Zoom.

Signed ………………………………………………………………………

Dated ……………………………………………………………………..