## **Ordinary General Meeting held on the 13th March 2023 with hybrid facilities. 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 Mrs L Purcell (presiding), D Brain, M Vincent, B Howells, G Davies, Mrs G Ffrancon, Ms E Thomas, M Davies, Olly Brandrick (Youth Representative) and Dylan Fitzgerald (Youth Representative)

## **Present via Zoom**

Councillor Mrs J Lord, A Richards, and J Nemeth

**Apologies:**

Councillor P Temblett, Mrs R Phillips, S Todd, H Davies and J Watkins

There was a one minutes silence held for the residents of Morriston who were killed or injured during the gas explosion earlier in the day.

## **12169: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests:**

None

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

## **12170: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 13th February 2023:**

## **Resolved** that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 13th February 2023 having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council.

## **12171: Matters raised by Members of the Public:**

None

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

## **12172: Defibrillator Mapping Project:**

The damaged unit would be forwarded to Zoll for refurbishment shortly. A loaned unit was still in situ at 4 Herbert Street, Pontardawe.

The exterior cabinet had also been fitted at Pontardawe Taxi’s and the information added to the National network (The Circuit)

Details of training would be provided for Councillors once arranged.

## **Resolved** to be noted.

## **12173: Police Matters:**

Pontardawe Statistics 37 crimes in January down from 39 crimes in December, (19 Violence, 3 Anti-social behaviour, 3 Criminal Damage and 3 other theft) Trebanos Statistics - 5 in January up from 2 total crimes in December (3 Anti-Social behaviour, 1 Vehicle crime and 1 Other).

A Cuppa with a Copper had been held in Trebanos in February 2023 with a PACT meeting scheduled for March

The local Police Service had advised the County Borough Member that as the previous two PACT meetings had been dominated by licencing issues, this was not an effective method of Community liaison. They would instead instigate a Cuppa with a Copper in Pontardawe

Council were disappointed that the PACT meetings had been discontinued and felt that Community concerns (regarding both Police, housing and Council matters) needed to be addressed and communicated. However, they felt feedback following the Cuppa with a Copper pilot to determine community need was the first step

**Resolved** to be noted

## **12174: Monthly update from the Neath Port Talbot Council Members:**

Councillor A Richards:

* A balanced budget protecting essential services, safeguarding hundreds of local jobs while increasing spending in education and social services was approved at a special meeting on March 2nd, 2023.
* Cabinet members had also approved a wide-ranging programme of improvements, repairs and maintenance to footpaths, roads, bridges and drainage in all parts of the county borough.
* The County Borough were also seeking applications for projects that could be delivered as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
* There had been cross party support for the necessary increase in Council tax which in part was due to the increase from the Fire Service levy and the commitment to bringing Celtic Leisure back under local authority control.

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12175: Monthly Update on English Medium Primary School Changes:**

No discussion

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

## **12176: Grant Applications:**

Thanks, had been received from both Llais and Menter Iaith for the grants provided. The St David’s day shop window competition had been well received and the winning window was at ‘A cut above’

The grant budget for 2022/23 had been utilised.

A new grants budget for 2023/24 would be available from the 1st April 2023 and Council once again decided not to consider grant requests from local and national charities until the March 2024 Ordinary Meeting to ensure that all local organisation had an opportunity to apply for grants initially.

## **Resolved** to be noted.

## **12177: Clerks update on Eco and Wellbeing Committee including Cwmdu:**

Short Term projects identified and action required

Electrical box project – The Heritage Grant had been awarded and details of the next steps including community consultation would be provided shortly.

The project in partnership with the Friends of George V Park to convert the derelict tennis courts to a MUGA was in progress. The expression of Interest form would be forwarded once project cost details had been received from Neath Port Talbot Council in April.

## **Resolved** to be noted.

## **12178: Hanging Baskets Summer 2023:**

The City and County of Swansea confirmed that the planter could be relocated from St Peters Church to Rhyd y Fro on a supply only basis. Watering would need to be arranged by the community.

The 68 Hanging Baskets for Pontardawe Town and the three-tier planter for Trebanos could also be supplied

Council decided not to provide lamp post displays for this Summer as there was a possibility that some of the lamp posts would be unavailable due to CCTV hardware, and that the funds could be better utilised elsewhere.

## **Resolved:** that the Clerk will arrange for the 68 Hanging Baskets in the Town Centre and the tier planter at Trebanos to be placed for the 2023 Summer season on a fully maintained basis and the planter previously located at St Peters church to be relocated to Rhyd y Fro on a supply only basis.

## **12179: By Election costs:**

A comprehensive breakdown on the Byelection costs for the Pontardawe Ward had been received however Council felt that three polling stations with associated costs in a ward of only 3830 electors was excessive, especially as postal votes were available. They also felt that as the Clerk had no political bias, and no conflict of interest, her services could be utilised

## **Resolved:** that Neath Port Talbot be asked for the following additional statistics for the pervious byelection.

* Number of postal votes and the number as a percentage of all votes cast
* Footfall at all three polling stations
* The Town Council also supported utilising the Clerks services during a byelection

## **12180: Prepaid Business Mastercard:**

The Clerk explained that the Equals + was one of the most cost-effective replacement cards that would accept Town and Community Councils. She was in the process of providing the necessary security information to the company

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

## **12181: Training and Local Government Toolkit:**

Council was provided with the training policy prior to the meeting. This has been slightly altered to ensure it was workable.

The Clerk also explained the benefits of the Local Government Toolkit for both the Clerk and Councillors.

## **Resolved:** that the revised Training Policy will be agreed and that the toolkit will be placed on the Members area of the website for Councillor review

## **12182: Planning:**

## Planning Committee held on the 20th February 2023

The following application falls under the Cilybebyll Community Council area however Pontardawe Town Council confirmed with the Neath Port Talbot planning case officer that they could provide observations due to the impact of the development within Pontardawe Town

## **P2023/0101**

Applicant’s name and Address: McDonalds Restaurants Ltd, St Andrews Castle, 33 St Andrews Street, South Bury St Edmunds IP33 3PH

Site Location: Tesco Car Park, Gwyn’s pl Alltwen, Pontardawe SA8 2AZ

Proposed Development: Erection of a freestanding drive-thru/restaurant, car parking, landscaping and associate works including Customer Order Displays (COD) and play frame

## **Resolved** Council Objects for the following reasons

* Despite the Pandemic and unlike many Town Centres, Pontardawe is continuing to thrive, due to past regeneration projects and continual partnerships between the unitary authority, Town Council, Arts Centre, third sector, Chamber of Commerce, the community and has a resilient high street with mixed use retailers– Both the Welsh Government and Neath Port Talbot Council are trying to promote and encourage sustainability within Town Centres– A drive through and out of town restaurant is in direct opposition to this goal.
* The location at ‘Gwyn’s drift’ will not compliment the local economy as there would be a potential loss of footfall and possibly jobs in the Town Centre due to impact of the restaurant, which would be close, but not within the Town Centre, where there are already a number of food vendors. The restaurants and take-aways within the Town Centre encourage people into the Town Centre itself, where the footfall then support the small independent retailers and also local venues such as the Arts and Heritage Centre -A large restaurant and drive through outside the Town Centre will discourage footfall within the Town
* We believe that Tesco Pontardawe was denied Planning for the creation of a Café in Gwyn’s drift during previous applications due to the impact on the Town Centre economy. The creation of a large dive through and restaurant in this area would have a similar impact on the local economy – There has been no economic impact assessment carried out to identify the effects on the local economy.
* Drive-through restaurants are part of a culture we are trying to move away from. Urban development that prioritises cars is inconsistent with both the Welsh and UK government goals to improve wellbeing, food systems and public health. We should Instead, look at wider pavements, segregated bicycle paths and widespread public transport – where we can reduce our reliance on cars and fast food –This represents the healthy urban future that experts suggest we should try to create.
* The outlet is scheduled for 24/7 opening which will create late night noise and light pollution for residences in Alltwen and lower Pontardawe.
* A 24/7 restaurant and drive through will create a hub for anti-social behaviour and vehicular crime, which the local neighbourhood Police service are ill-equipped to handle
* A fast food restaurant and drive through at the site encourages excessive litter at the restaurant location, and the roads leading from the dive-through due to waste being thrown from car windows.
* As the restaurant site is also adjacent to the Tawe and there is a strong likelihood of plastic and other litter finding its way into the river which will damage local wildlife and the local ecosystem.
* Fast food outlets also encourage seagulls and rats due to excessive litter issues
* Cilybebyll/ Alltwen is defined as a small local centre and not a Town. Developments should therefore comply with those suitable for a small local centre.
* The proposed development is also within 400m of more than one school and on the designated safe school walking route from Alltwen. If the new English medium school is agreed this will increase the number of schools within unacceptably close proximity to the restaurant – There is significant evidence of the effect of Childhood obesity on society and other Councils attempts to limit the effects. (Evidence to be provided i.e. Wrexham Council local planning guidance)
* No Health Impact assessment has been carried out to determine the effect of a fast food restaurant and drive through on the young people of Pontardawe. Also, a restaurant purporting to support waking and cycling via Active travel should not include a drive through
* The proposed development will reduce the number of parking spaces in the Tesco Car Park substantially
* There is already significant congestion in that area which is likely to increase at the site. This will impact on the traffic flow on the A4067 not only into Pontardawe, but on the main trunk road to Ystalyfera and beyond
* The additional congestion on the A4067 could have a knock-on effect in Trebanos as motorists try to find alternative routes
* Increased pollution due to waiting cars and additional traffic due to Supply lorries in a narrow valley which contrary to the Welsh Governments proposed Clean Air act
* Pontardawe Place/Community plan wishes to encourage visitors to Pontardawe from outside the area by publicising its ‘Market Town’ feel (Small independent shops, village festivals, History and Heritage etc) a drive- through in this location is too close to the Town Centre and will create a very unattractive entrance to the Town
* For those who wish to visit a drive through McDonalds restaurant, there is already a McDonalds drive through restaurant approximately 6 miles from the proposed site in Morriston
* The counter argument that there would be jobs created does not outweigh the negatives as the jobs are low calibre with only 30 full time positions, and the balance as part time. Even if those part time jobs would provide employment for young people, this would likely be negated by job losses in other establishments within the Town Centre and surrounding area due to additional competition and loss of footfall - There has been no impact assessment carried out to determine the effect on local businesses
* Business rates might benefit central government but would not improve either the funding or the growth of the local economy

All Council Members were invited to the special planning committee.

The Special Planning Committee of the Pontardawe Town Council was provided with Plenary Powers and voted against the development due to the above concerns

Planning Applications reviewed in the Ordinary meeting (Councillors were provided with all the relevant documentation prior to the meeting)

**P2023/0142**

Applicants name: Mr & Mrs Kyle Thomas, 5 Gwyrddgoed, Pontardawe SA8 4NH

Site Location: 5 Gwyrddgoed, Pontardawe SA8 4NH

Proposed Development: Proposed single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension

**Resolved:** No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

**P2023/0102**

Applicants name: Mrs & Mrs Eynon-Moule, 8 Morgan Street, Trebanos SA8 4DW

Site location: 8 Morgan Street, Trebanos SA8 4DW

Proposed Development: Proposed single storey side/rear extension, the works for which would include the demolition of an existing single storey rear extension, plus the creation of a stepped retaining structure constructed from sleepers

**Resolved:** No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

**P2023/0019**

Applicants name: Mr Gwyn Griffiths, The bungalow, Baran Road, Pontardawe

Site Location: The bungalow, Baran Road, Pontardawe

Proposed Development: Section 73 application to remove condition 3 (restricting occupancy of dwelling) of Application number 2/2/94/0237/03 granted consent on the 22/9/1994

**Resolved:** No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

**P2023/0030**

Applicants name: Mr Thomas Jones, 45 Swansea Road, Pontardawe SA8 4AL

Site location: 45 Swansea Road, Pontardawe SA8 4AL

Proposed Development: Retrospective application for the construction of raised platforms and steps including retaining works, means of enclosure and associated landscaping to the front an side of the property

**Resolved:** No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

Neath Port Talbot Council’s Replacement Local Development plan (2021-36) Consultation draft.

Councillors were provided with the information prior to the meeting and were advised that individual responses were permissible

**Resolved:** to be noted

## **12183: Energy Supply Special Committee held on the 6th March 2023**

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| A special Committee was held to discuss the renewal of the Gas and Electricity contracts for the Halls. Due to the tight timescales and the need to remain within contract, all Councillors were invited to the special meeting.  Originally Council had requested that only the most cost-effective contract be considered however, Councillors had recently requested that Green contracts as well as Brown Contracts should be considered in order to support renewable energy.  The Clerk contacted Utility Aid who were recommended by One Voice Wales and who specialised in brokered deals for local authorities and the third sector.  Details of Brown and Green contracts from various suppliers together with renewal quotes from the current suppliers were made available to Councillors prior to the meeting.  The Current Electricity supplier (SSE) were already green suppliers and as the quote was competitive, the Committee agreed to continue with a Fixed contract from that supplier but for a one-year period only due to current volatility.  The green supply option for gas was substantially more expensive than the Brown supply options and as the costs of Gas itself had risen substantially, it was agreed to accept a Brown supplier  As the current supplier Yorkshire Gas was providing a competitive quote it was agreed to retain the current gas suppliers but once again for a one-year period only.  The Committee did agree that the way forward was to discuss green energy provision with Awel Aman Tawe as previously recommended  The Committee agreed for SSE to remain the Electricity Supplier and Yorkshire Gas to remain the Gas supplier under one-year contracts. |
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## **Resolved:** to be noted.

## **12184: Christmas Lights contract for 2023:**

The Town Council has for the previous three years held a contract for Christmas Lights with Lite, the company subcontract the installation of their rental lights in this area to ‘Centregreat’. The standard of both the lights and the installation had been high.

The three-year contract ended following the 2022 Winter season, however it was prudent to negotiate a further three-year contract with the same suppliers without tender.

The reasons were as follows:

* ‘Lite’ worked well with their subcontractors ‘Centregreat’
* Neath Port Talbot Council would only allow Electrical contractors on their recognised list to install decorations on their lamp posts and attach to the electricity supply from their lampposts – Centregreat was an approved installer for Neath Port Talbot Council
* Competitors had either stated in the past they were unable to supply lights in the Pontardawe area or had been found to be unreliable during previous contracts
* The partnership over the previous three years had been very successful

The Clerk confirmed that under Financial regulations, procedures for contracts need not apply if:

11.1 (a) iv for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;

The reason to suspend standing order under 11.1 c was that the current provider had proved to be a very successful partnership with Pontardawe Town Council, with no issues experienced over the previous contract

## **Resolved:** that the Clerk will contact ‘Lite’ to prepare a further Christmas Lights rental contract for three years, to be reviewed and agreed by Council.

## **12185:CCTV for Pontardawe:**

The Clerk provided Council with an alternative service level agreement for a CCTV system in Pontardawe in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council. The original arrangement had deemed to be too expensive however an alternative plan had been created which would be far more affordable but would still supply monitoring through Herbert Street and recording of cameras on the roads surrounding the Town Centre. There was also the possibility that grant funding would be available for the system that would reduce the Town Council’s financial input further.

Council were also advised that the Neighbourhood policing team felt that a CCTV system for Pontardawe should be prioritised to ensure that the current safety within the community could be maintained, especially with the proposed large-scale projects currently proposed in the area.

## **Resolved** that Council will agree in principle to the alternative Service level agreement for a CCTV System in Pontardawe

## **12186:Health and Safety Statement:**

Council was provided with the current Health and Safety statement for review

## **Resolved** that the current Health and Safety statement will be agreed.

## **12187: Neath Port Talbot Council charter agreement:**

Pontardawe Town Council was not currently part of the Charter Agreement

**Resolved** to retain the status quo

## **12188 Account Schedule 401 and Bank Reconciliation:**

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

## **Resolved** that Account Schedule 401 totalling £37808.61 together with bank reconciliation will be accepted by Council in line with Standing Orders.

## **12189 Financial Risk Assessment, Statement of Internal Control and Financial Regulations:**

The Financial risk assessment, statement of internal control and Financial regulation were made available to Councillors prior to the meeting

## **Resolved** that the Financial risk assessment, statement of internal control and Financial Regulations will be agreed.

## **12190: Crossing Patrol Personnel for Swansea Road:**

Council was asked to confirm that they wished to support the Crossing Patrol Officer for Swansea Road for 2023/24

**Resolved** that the Town Council will support the Crossing Patrol Officers position for Swansea road for 2023/24 and that the Mayor will sign the Service Level Agreement on Council’s behalf

## **12191: Email re dog fouling:**

The Councillor requesting the discussion was not at the meeting

**Resolved** to be added to the agenda for the April Ordinary meeting

## **12192: One Voice Membership :**

The One Voice Wales subscription had been requested for 2023/24

**Resolved** that the subscription will be continued for 2023/24 at a cost of £1292

## **12193: Independent remuneration panel for Wales 2023/24 Annual Report :**

The report had been made available to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Councillors were advised that all were entitled to £156 for the year which was now considered and expense under ITEPA Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 (this had been confirmed with the Town Council Accountant)

The amount would be paid to Councillors by the Clerk in the first week of June 2023 unless Councillors stated in writing that they wished to decline the payment.

Council had also made a policy decision that consumables could be reclaimed in full on production of receipts. It was agreed that one annual payment would be made at the end of the fiscal year

Council was advised that Pontardawe was a level 3 Council and currently the Mayor was paid a Senior role payment of £500 and a Civic role payment of £450 (total £950). The Deputy Mayor received a Civic Payment of £300

No other optional payments were authorised.

**Resolved** that the above payments will be provided for 2023/24

## **12194: Section 137 expenditure limit for 2023/24:**

Council was advised that the section 137 expenditure limit for 2023/24 was £9.93

**Resolved** to be noted

## **12195: Open Consultations:**

Councillors were provided with all the relevant information on the consultations prior to the meeting

Draft rules for local government principle Council elections using single transferable vote

**Resolved** that Councillors will complete the consultation response individually.

## **12196 Urgent Road Safety Matters and responses:**

None

## **Resolved** to be noted

## **12197: Next Meeting:**

The next Ordinary Meeting will take place on the 17th April 2023 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 ……………………………………………………………………..