## **Ordinary General Meeting held on the 14th July 2025. The meeting was held at the Gallery, Pontardawe Arts Centre, Herbert Street, Pontardawe with Hybrid facilities by virtual platform Zoom, and commenced at 6.45pm**

## **Present:**

Councillor Mrs J Lord (presiding), B Howells, G Davies, D Brain, S Todd and T Jones

## **Present online by Zoom:**

Councillor J Nemeth, Mrs G Ffrancon, Mrs R Phillips, and Ms E Harper (Youth Councillor)

## **Apologies:**

Councillor A Richards, H Davies, M Vincent, J Watkins, and Mrs L Purcell

## **12873: Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests**

Councillor Mrs J Lord –Friends of George V Park, Councillor S Todd – Pontardawe Conservation volunteers

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

## **12874: Signing of the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 9th June 2025**

## **Resolved** that the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on the 9th June 2025 , having been read and confirmed as a true record be accepted by Council

## **12875: Matters raised by Members of the Public:**

None

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

## **12876: Police Matters:**

No crime figures were available for May 2025

## **Resolved** to be noted

## **12877: Monthly update from the Neath Port Talbot Council Members:**

Councillor H Davies and A Richards were not present at the meeting however, Councillor Richards had provided an update to previous information requests, which was read by the Clerk.

Councillor A Richards

* CCTV camera at the canal/Herbert Street: I can confirm that this camera is now operational.
* Parking meter at Bypass Car Park: The damaged machine is scheduled to be removed by the end of next week.

Councillor Mrs R Phillips

* A warm welcome to our newly Co-Opted Trebanos Councillor – Tudur Jones
* Several issues with parking on pavements at Swansea Road had been received
* Neath Port Talbot Council Environmental Health Officers were also working with residents, to address overgrown gardens, which were causing issues with rodents
* Several Consultations were in progress, regarding the of introduction of parking restrictions adjacent to the Garage on Swansea Road, and at Heol y Llwynau
* The Neath Port Talbot Council ‘Let’s Talk’ survey was now in progress
* Significant issues with smashed glass at Trebanos Park – The Clerk explained that glass was removed by the Park Officer daily, however, during the hot weather individuals were accessing the park each night, which caused this issue, as the Park could not be secured

**Resolved** that both the Clerk and Councillor Phillips will approach the local Neighbourhood Police regarding the issue.

## **12878: Grant Applications:**

Councillor Mrs J Lord (George V Park) and S Todd (Pontardawe Conservation volunteers) expressed interests. Both left the meeting, and took no part in the discussions, on the respective grant applications. Councillor D Brain (Deputy Mayor) Chaired the meeting during the Mayors absence.

* Pontardawe Conservation volunteers – Grant awarded towards the replacement of the Heritage board on the Swansea Canal - **£500 awarded**
* Swansea Valley Cardiac Support group – Grant request to assist with the Community fun day to mark the 80th anniversary on VJ day in conjunction with Pontardawe Rugby Club and the Royal British Legion - **£600 awarded**
* Community Clothes swap – Grant to support future events - **£274.44 awarded**

Council did discuss grant for events at Pontardawe. Usually, these grants enabled events to be free for the general public, while also raising funds for various Charities.

It was however suggested that for annual events, the organisers could suggest a small admission fee, look into sponsorship (several large companies occupied the Alloy industrial estate) or retaining some of the funds raised towards future events.

Letters of thanks were also received from St Peters Church flower festival committee, Brighter Futures (Cariad), Swansea Valley Sabres and the Repair Cafe

**Resolved** that the following grants will be awarded. £500 to the Pontardawe Conservation volunteers, £600 to the Swansea Valley Cardiac support group and £274.44 to the Community Clothes swap.

## **12879: Clerks update on Eco and Wellbeing Committee including Cwmdu:**

Short Term projects identified and action required:

* MUGA at George V Park – A request had been made from Neath Port Talbot Council for Pontardawe Town Council to accept responsibility for the lease of the refurbished area of the park, which would include upkeep of the capital elements of the refurbished area, but not ongoing maintenance, such as grass cutting etc.
* Street Art Trail – The Website had now been updated with the information relating to the projects. QR code plaques could now be fitted
* A risk assessment had been carried out on trees adjacent to the new path at Cwmdu by a qualified arborist. Actions on any trees deemed unsafe would be carried out in accordance with the risk guidance.
* The Management plan for trees adjacent to the Waun Gron Property boundaries had been carried out by a qualified arborist, with action also to be carried out in accordance with the risk guidance.

**Resolved**

* King George V Park – Council needed more accurate details of the extent and costs associate with the lease of the new play area at George V Park
* Councillors would be asked for feedback on the proposed QR Code plaques prior to any decisions being made
* Recommended maintenance on the trees at Cwmdu to be carried out in accordance with the risk and management plans

**12880: Significant closures - Pontardawe Swimming Pool, the Cross Community Centre and Gelligron House:**

No further information was available

## **Resolved** that the County Borough Member will make enquiries with Officers regarding the proposed new Pontardawe Swimming pool

**12881: Place Plans:**

No further information was available

## **Resolved** to be noted.

## **12882: Remembrance:**

A further meeting with Neath Port Talbot Council was required to discuss funding. This meeting should take place prior to discussion with the Royal British Legion on event planning.

## **Resolved** that the Neath Port Talbot Council will be requested to arrange a meeting with the Town Clerk together with all County Borough Members for Pontardawe and Trebanos

## **12883: Blue Plaque scheme:**

Further details were required in order to complete the relevant application forms for Blue Plaques

**Resolved** that the Clerk will liaise with the Councillor Tudur Jones to arrange the completion of the applications

## **12884 :Dog Waste bin at Rhyd y Fro:**

As part of Councillor Richards response prior to the meeting, he had stated that he would contact Officers to determine a way forward

**Resolved** to be noted

## **12885: Pontardawe Town Council Emergency Planning:**

The Clerk confirmed that the following had been carried out:

* Publicity for Utility priority lists
* Town Council Emergency WhatsApp group set up

Further actions would be carried out by the Clerk in August, with discussions on Finance, contingency etc to be discussed at the September Ordinary meeting.

**Resolved** to be noted

**12886: Planning:**

**P2025/0425:**

Applicant: Mr Serkan Sahin, Dynevor Arms, Dynevor Terrace, Pontardawe, SA8 4HX

Site location: Dynevor Arms, Dynevor Terrace, Pontardawe, SA8 4HX

Proposed Development: Section 73 application to remove condition 3 (scheme for the provision of affordable housing) and remove open space developer contribution of planning permission P2021/0902 dated 27/4/2023 for eight one bedroom self-contained flats, part demolition of single storey rear extension, installation of window openings on rear and side elevation

# **Resolved** – Objection to the proposals as Council’s original agreement, to a project that would change a commercial establishment to a residential establishment within the Town Centre, was purely to provide more affordable housing in the area.

**P2025/0453:**

Applicant: Mr Damian Evans, Jubilee club, 98 Herbert Street, Pontardawe SA8 4ED

Site location: Jubilee club, 98 Herbert Street, Pontardawe SA8 4ED

Proposed Development: Provision of a new door (front access to building)

# **Resolved** – No objection provided there is neighbourhood notification

## **12887: Conclusion of Audit to the 31st March 2024:**

Wales Audit had introduced a three year cycle for full audits. For the 2023/24 fiscal year Pontardawe Town Council underwent a full audit rather than the usual basic audit, with audit results to be provided by the 31st September 2024. Due to issues at Wales Audit however there had been delays providing Audit conclusion reports.

A conclusion notice had been received from Wales Audit on the 10th June 2025 sating the following:

I certify that I have completed the audit of the Annual Return for the year ended 31March 2024 of Pontardawe Town Council. My audit has been conducted on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales and in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) and guidance issued by the Auditor General for Wales.

Audit opinion: Qualified

Except for the matters reported below in my Basis for Qualification, on the basis of my audit, in my opinion no matters have come to my attention to give cause for concern that, in any material respect, the information reported in this Annual Return

Basis of Qualification - Accounting Statement

I am unable to reconcile the Accounting Statement to supporting records provided by the Council:

 Line 3 Other income. The Council’s cashbook records other income totalling £11,416 (excluding VAT receipts). The Council has not provided sufficient information to explain the difference between amounts received in the year as recorded in the cashbook and income recognised in the Accounting Statement of £6,219.

 Line 4 Staff costs and line 6 Other expenditure. The Council’s cashbook records total expenditure (net of VAT) of £264,739. The Council has not provided sufficient information to explain the difference between amounts paid in the year as recorded in the cashbook and expenditure recognised in the Accounting Statement of £225,877.

I am unable to reconcile the Clerk’s salary to the contract of employment. The Council has not provided evidence of an increase to the approved salary range.

Other matters and recommendations

I draw the Council’s attention to the following matters and recommendations which do not affect my audit opinion but should be addressed by the Council.

Information required for audit

Each year we send the Council a notice of audit. This sets out the information required for the audit and provides a timetable for submission of documents.

We recommend that that the Council reviews the 2025 audit notice to ensure all relevant information is provided for audit.

There are no further matters I wish to draw to the Council’s attention.

The Clerk provided the following response:

All requested information had been forwarded to Wales Audit in accordance with provided guidelines, however, Wales Audit had also stated the following

‘Please do not send the auditor any information that you are not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. If the auditor has to review unsolicited information, repeat a request for information, receives an incomplete bank reconciliation or explanation of variances or receives original documents that must be returned, we incur additional costs for which we will charge additional fees’

The Town Council’s accountants had stated that the Trial Balance would have reconciled the cash book to the end of year accounts provided by them, however, these supporting documents had not been requested

A salary review report carried out by One Voice Wales in 2020 would have reconciled the Clerks contract of Employment to the salary paid however this had also not been requested.

It was believed by the Clerk that these supplementary documents would be requested by Wales Audit, as the instructions had stated not to provide additional information at the outset, however, no request for additional information had been made by Wales Audit

The Clerk has contacted Wales Audit to request clarification on the production of supplementary information during full audits, but confirmed that the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2025 had already been submitted prior to the above response from Wales Audit, in line with the statutory requirements.

# **Resolved** – Council will accept the conclusion of Audit for the year ended 31st March 2024 and arrange for the required notices to be placed

## **12888: Christmas 2025:**

Council was happy to support the Winterfest on Friday the 28th November 2025. The Clerk will discuss the arrangements and report back to Council in September

**Resolved** to be noted

## **12889 : Environment Wales Act - Section 6 Biodiversity Duty report :**

A draft report was produced by the Clerk for review and discussion

**Resolved** that Members will review during August, for further discussion in the September Meeting.

## **12890 : One Voice Wales Area Committee :**

The Mayor attended the meeting and provided the following information to Councillors prior to the meeting:

* A presentation was given by Llais. It gave an outline of how Llais serves our community. Social care is now included in Llais’ responsibilities. They also hold regular meetings with health centres and can be seen as a critical friend. They make visits to hospitals, GPs and Social care providers and also act as advocates if people require support for example with making or reporting complaints, including to the health ombudsman.
* An important meeting was scheduled for September 3rd (documents provided) to discuss the new constitution and elect the new executive committee. Councils should choose a representative to attend this remote meeting.
* Two places were available for councillors on the six core training modules: all are free.
* A development of good practice guide was to be issued to Clerks.
* The One Voice Wales website was accessible to all Councillors and Clerks. It was recommended that Councils use it for information etc.
* The auditor’s report was being checked however if anything was sent from a council to the auditors, Clerks were advised to take photographs prior to submission
* Clerks need to be aware of how AI was being used (information on the website)
* There were various cost of living crisis projects. More information was available on the website together with details of available grants
* Rachel Carter’s (Local Places for Nature Officer) contract had been extended and there were various biodiversity grants available. The contact in Neath Port Talbot Council was Ceri Rogers.
* Dates of next meetings: September 24th, December 10th  2025, March 4th, June 10th 2026
* The Mayor requested that the new swimming pool for Pontardawe be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

**Resolved** that the Mayor will represent Council at the One Voice Wales meeting to be held on the 3rd September 2025

**12891: Account Schedule 427, together with Bank Reconciliation and Budget/Actual report for Quarter 1:**

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

## **Resolved** that Account Schedule 427 totalling £17455.37 together with Bank Reconciliation, and the Budget/Actual Report for Quarter 1 will be agreed in line with Standing Orders.

## **12892: One Voice Wales Constitution and Governance framework meeting:**

Details were provided to Councillors of the draft documents prior to the meeting; however, Members had no comment. The Mayor had already confirmed that she would attend the One Voice Wales meeting on the 3rd September on behalf of Council

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12893: Pontardawe Conservation volunteers :**

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

Pontardawe Town Council agreed to materials and tools being supplied to the Pontardawe Conservation volunteers directly by the Clerk, for work being carried out on Town Council land (OGM 14th October 2024 minute reference 12630) however unfortunately some tools and materials had been stolen

**Resolved** that replacement items will be purchased by the Clerk

## **12894: Neath Port Talbot Council Standards Committee :**

The Neath Port Talbot Council Standards Committee Annual Report for 2024/25 was made available to Councillors prior to the meeting

**Resolved** to be noted

## **12895: Correspondence from Trebanos Hall Users :**

A letter of thanks was received from the users of Trebanos Community Hall for Councillor Ffrancon’s contribution to the S4C programme ‘Croeso I’r Eisteddfod’, which showed Trebanos in a very warm and enthusiastic light.

They further wished to thank Councillor Howells for providing the hall with decorative poppies and daffodils for both Remembrance and the Eisteddfod

**Resolved** to be noted

## **12896: Consultations:**

None

**Resolved** to be noted.

## **12897: Urgent Road Safety Matters and responses:**

* Severe issues with parking at Graig Road in Trebanos adjacent to YGG Trebannws was an ongoing issue. The County Borough Member did confirm that a plan was in the process of being created to try to address matters

## **Resolved** the County Borough Member for Trebanos will update Council with actions to be taken to try to address the issues at Graig Road

## **12898: Next Meeting:**

The next Ordinary Meeting would be held on the 8th September 2025 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 ……………………………………………………………………..