

MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING HELD 10TH DECEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor Dai Morgan Mayor
Councillor Charles Dale
Councillor Laurence Blackhall
Councillor Sam Skyrme-Blackhall
Councillor Tom Sloan
Councillor James Phillips
Councillor Michelle Evans
Councillor Joe Criddle
Councillor Emma Lewis

In attendance: Mr Andrew Davies Clerk to the Council/Financial Officer
Sharon Thompson

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134. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hallett (dispensation) and Crockford.

The Clerk had received a letter from Cllr Whitehurst resigning immediately due to ill health.

The Mayor said it was a sad time. Cllr. Whitehurst had always been a productive councillor, putting others first and showing great selflessness in the role. He will be sorely missed by all and is sincerely thanked for all his hard work.

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall was shocked and saddened by this news. Cllr Whitehurst has been an extremely proactive councillor and has made a huge contribution to our town, in particular with his work with Dwr Cymru, she said. She proposed that we investigate how he is, in some way, allowed to continue to be involved with our Dwr Cymru consultations.

The Clerk said Cllr Whitehurst had indicated that he was happy to continue with this, at least until the council was able to find a replacement.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall felt that he was irreplaceable. He has taken us further forward than anyone can understand, she said.

Cllr. Blackhall agreed. He had attended some of the meetings with Dwr Cymru and 'learned only a fraction of what Cllr. Whitehurst had forgotten, such was his knowledge based on meticulous research. He has carried out an outstanding piece of work and I know he will continue, if possible, he said.

What is less known is his work with SEPCHN, Cllr. Blackhall continued. The group struggled for a number of years after COVID. After his election to council he re-established connections with the Health Board and did a lot of leg work to revitalise this important forum. I hope he will continue in this.

Cllr. Whitehurst has always shown understanding, intelligence, a deep-seated knowledge and friendship. Tenby has lost one of its finest councillors, he added.

Cllr. Phillips added Cllr. Whitehurst has also been an effective representative of the town council on the De Valence CIC. His liaison work has been crucial and will be hard to replace, he said.

Our doors are always open to him and I thank him for everything, both personally and professionally, said the Mayor. It is a sad day.

135. TO DISCLOSE ANY PERSONAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS LISTED BELOW

Cllr Criddle declared his interest in item 10a as a member of Tenby Round Table.

136. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASK QUESTIONS AND MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED DURING TONIGHTS MEETING AND WHICH IS OPEN FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS ARE EXCLUDED

Cllrs Randell Izaiah Thomas-Turner and Dani Thomas-Turner, of Haverfordwest Town Council, would like to address the Council on the Anti-Racist Action Plan recently adopted by Pembrokeshire County and Haverfordwest Town Councils.

Both thanked the council for allowing them to make this presentation.

Cllr Randell Izaiah Thomas-Turner explained that the Anti Racism Action plan was passed by PCC on May 8th this year.

Wales are planning to be first country in the world to be anti-racist by 2030. He had been working with Prof Uzo Iwobi, of Race Council Cymru to come up with 9 key points on the Action Plan which had been promoted at the County Council by Cllr. Thomas Tudor.

The task now was now to implement the plan.

This was broken down into 3 phases. The first phase was to visit all the town councils to ask if they would consider adopting the Action Plan. Haverfordwest had been the first and Pembroke Dock had also recently agreed. Tonight, they were making this presentation the Tenby and visits to other towns were planned for the New Year.

Once the town councils had been visited Cllr Randell Izaiah Thomas-Turner said the intent was to visit all 63 community councils.

Sadly, there was racism here in Pembrokeshire, said Cllr Randell Izaiah Thomas-Turner. He himself had been bullied while at school in Tenby. However, it was not just about the colour of a person's skin but also culture, diversity, and ethnicity, including our traveller community.

As part of the presentation Cllr Randell Izaiah Thomas-Turner handed members the motion agreed by Haverfordwest Town Council.

This had seven key points that HTC felt were achievable and they had set aside £1200 per annum for public engagement.

However, you have the freedom to decide which points you feel are achievable and how to finance it, he said.

Cllr Randell Izaiah Thomas-Turner further explained that PCC had set up a committee to deliver the Action Plan and he had been appointed as a non-voting member to advise as to what is going on.

As such he was also looking for a representative from each town to liaise with him.

Once we have got this off the ground, we will be looking for communication, he said. Education is better than demonstration. We need to establish the best way forward and how we do this; how to engage with our communities.

Children learn from early age, explained Cllr Dani Thomas-Turner. No-one is born racist; children follow the lead of adults. Our hope is that in the future children will be able to go home and challenge what adults say and tell them that it is not acceptable.

People learn through engagement, she added.

Cllr. Phillips asked if there were plans to go into schools with this message. Cllr Dani Thomas-Turner said that plans to do so were ready to be implemented once all seven towns were on board.

Our Community Engagement Officer would be excited with this project as she has already staged a number of events that highlight other cultures and ethnicities commented Cllr. Blackhall.

Members agreed that there was no requirement for the Policy and Finance Committee to consider this motion first and that it be tabled on the agenda for the next Full Council meeting in January.

137. TO AGREE ITEMS OF CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMITTEE MINUTES, EXCEPT THOSE MARKED PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL, BE GIVEN TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS PRESENT

Proposed by Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall and seconded by Cllr Sloan.

RESOLVED

That items of correspondence and committee minutes, except those marked private and confidential, be given to the members of the press present.

138. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 12TH NOVEMBER 2024

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Tenby Town Council held 12th November 2024 be confirmed and signed as accurate.

139. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Page 69 Item 124 – Castle Hill: The Clerk has spoken to Mr Owen who has explained there is a lot of annual leave at the moment but agreed to meet councillors together with Mr McCarthy on 18th February to discuss a way forward.

140. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL POLICY AND FINANCE MEETING HELD 26TH NOVEMBER 2024

Proposed by Cllr Dale and seconded Cllr Lewis.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Tenby Town Council Policy and Finance meeting held 26th November 2024 be received

141. TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS FOR NOVEMBER (INCLUDING SCHEDULED PAYMENTS, UNPRESENTED CHEQUES, RECEIPTS, ACCOUNT BALANCES, BUDGET MONITORING TO DATE AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS) AND CONSIDER ANY ISSUES

The Mayor proposed acceptance of the accounts and Cllr. Phillips seconded.

RESOLVED

That the accounts for November (including scheduled payments, unpresented cheques, receipts, account balances, budget monitoring to date and bank reconciliations) be approved.

142. TO SET TENBY TOWN COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR 2025/26 AND, IF POSSIBLE, TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT ON THE PRECEPT

The budget had been prepared in consultation at the Policy and Finance committee, explained the Clerk. A budget had been set at £419,438.91 but this would not be the total charge to the tax payer as this would be reduced by income received and use of reserves.

At the moment, we cannot establish what the precept requirement – the charge to council tax payers – will be as we don't have this year's council tax base.

The estimate in the papers is based on last year's Council Tax base of 3529, when the Second Homes Surcharge was set at 200%. The reduction in the surcharge to 150% will likely result in a reduction in our council tax base.

However, PCC are not able to supply us with that base yet as Full Council have still to determine the level of empty property surcharge at their meeting on Thursday.

The base will determine how much more we may have to utilise from reserves to reduce the impact on local charge payers.

He advised that Council agree the budget in principle and look at the final precept requirement at their January meeting.

Cllr. Blackhall said he expected us to be in this situation. Although we are proposing a budget that has gone through detailed discussion at Policy and Finance, the reality is that, when council tax base comes through, it is going to be quite a bit lower than last year.

What the Clerk suggests, to wait until January to agree the precept requirement, is sensible, he said. If our council tax base has fallen by more than 300, we will need to look at the figures again and either reduce our budget or commit more funds from reserves to keep the impact on the people of Tenby to a minimum.

The Clerk presented the Policy and Finance committee with a number of options. And we leant towards the one that gave smallest increase but we may have to go further.

We want to continue to support our activities, our community engagements, the Augustus Place Community Centre and the De Valence, but we must also realise that difficult times mean difficult discussions and possibly some projects not proceeding.

We will have to revisit in the New Year to get the figures right.

All have had a chance to look at the proposals said the Mayor. They were debated at some length at Policy and Finance. It is the best it can be; it is not going to get any better.

We're already talking about using money from reserves to keep any increase to the lowest possible and may have to utilise more, said Cllr. Blackhall. We are fortunate that TTC have managed their monies to be in a position to be able to do this, and have not artificially lowered things. If PCC managed its finances and increased reserves in the same way over last 25 years, perhaps they would not be in the situation they are today.

We have always prepared our budgets in line with Welsh Audit Office recommendations and financial regulations to protect staff and any breaks in income to allow us to continue our service to the public and invest in projects.

This time last year it enabled us to put our hands up and say to PCC we will fund toilets, and library opening hours because good financial management meant we could do that without too great an impact on the people of the town. Our congratulations should go to the Clerk and previous councils over the years for that foresight.

The Clerk felt that one budget head that could be considered was the cost of floral displays. Since the budget had been prepared, he had received the costings for next year's planting from Mr McCarthy which presented different scenarios e.g. dispensing with the flower towers could save over £3000.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall said that she had been having conversations with Mr McCarthy about the potential savings they had to make. We could be in a situation where we must caretake the displays as well as pay for the flowers, she said. This could be down to watering or even planting ourselves.

I have long had an opinion about the flower towers and I think they have had their day, she added.

We need to be looking at perennials, not plants that are taken out and thrown away every year, she said. We need to look at sustainable plants that are better for the environment.

Cllr. Blackhall agreed that providing annual bedding plans was a lot of money for a short space of time. He also entirely endorsed Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall's view of towers.

Look at the Paragon Gardens and The Croft and how they have been developed through the planting of perennials and pollinator plants, he said. Through the hard work and support of volunteers they look spectacular and these are plants that will still be there next year.

He suggested that we inform Mr McCarthy that we would not require the flower towers this year. However, he felt we should not reduce the amount in the budget and, while we should keep War Memorial as a formal laid out gardens, use the funds instead to continue to support volunteers to extend perennial planting schemes.

We need to take a lead, agreed Cllr. Dale. We have already converted 2 garden areas to perennials pollinators. The South Parade towers look tired very easily. Our responsibility is to look after the future. It is not right spending money on flowers that are thrown away when people are struggling. Wild flowers can look gorgeous.

Cllr. Lewis agreed. We are in the National Park and natural beauty means long term sustainability, she said. Formal gardens are going out of fashion. When we left areas for wilding or introduced wild flowers, we put signage up explaining the reasons why. To my knowledge we have received no complaints. People are far more environmentally aware these days.

While it is a matter of opinion, it is a different kind of beautiful, agreed Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall.

Cllr. Blackhall proposed that we inform Mr. McCarthy that the floral towers would not be required this year. The Mayor seconded.

RESOLVED

That we inform Mr. McCarthy that the floral towers would not be required this year.

The Mayor proposed we accept the budget as proposed and revisit in January to determine the precept requirement, Cllr Phillips seconded.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations laid out in the Clerk's report be accepted.

The Mayor proposed moving to item 13 as our Community Engagement Officer was present.

143. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS FOR GRANT FUNDING AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS:

Cllr Criddle took no part in discussions

a. Tenby Round Table – Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner

The Clerk gave a brief history explaining that, historically, Round Table had not asked for a donation and had paid for the event themselves based on fund raising activities during the year.

Covid then changed the picture and we funded the full cost of the dinner as Round Table had been unable to hold any fundraising activities.

Last year Tenby Round Table were able to fund raise and TTC contributed £3000 towards the total.

The dinner is only open to those within the electoral boundary of Tenby and any contribution TTC made helps frees up Round Table funds to be distributed elsewhere to organisations who may not be able to obtain grant funding through other sources.

Cllr Phillips proposed we make a contribution at the same level as last year. Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall seconded but asked that Tenby Town Council are recognised as helping fund the dinner.

Cllr. Dale was in favour of making a contribution but wondered if it should be ratio based.

Last year we gave £3,000 because they were only able to hold one Summer Spectacular. This year they have managed to hold two. I suppose it is a case of either we give monies to charity or Round Table does.

RESOLVED

That under Section 137 of the LGA 1972 TTC donate £3000 to Tenby Round Table to assist them with the finances of the annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner.

144. TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr. Sloan informed members of the success of the recent Tenby Arts RNLI competition which had attracted very positive responses from the local schools.

At first, connections with the schools was painful, he admitted. Now we are in a position where they answer every email and want to be involved with everything. All are nagging for more; whatever we are doing, they are game for.

Results of the competition had been released on social media and the Mayor and he had visited Hafan-y-Mor to present certificates to winning entrants. Other school visits were being planned.

The idea was to now build the success into other things in the town and he had already had a chat with our Community Engagement Officer to use the channels established with the schools to involve the town's youth in other initiatives.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall had attended and performed at the Festive Saturday Event. There was a magical atmosphere, and huge thanks are due to all who helped. Let's make it bigger and better next year, she said.

Cllr Blackhall said that the next meeting of SEPCHN would be on 23rd January.

Tenby Sea Swimming Association's annual Boxing Day Swim would start at 11am. Lots of local businesses getting behind the event with sponsorship, for which TSSA was very grateful.

The Mayor said that for the first time in a couple of years a specially designed Christmas card from the Mayor will be going out to organisations and those we have worked with over the year.

The Festive Saturday was a brilliant day. He had been shocked and surprised by the amount of people who supported the event and big thanks were due to all the volunteers. Three charities were to benefit from the Lions organised Charity Market, with the amount to be announced soon.

145. SMART TOWNS CONSULTATION -TO HEAR FEEDBACK FROM THE CONSULTATION MEETINGS. FURTHER TO WRITE TO PCC CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE TO STRESS TENBY TOWN COUNCIL'S ENTHUSIASM FOR THE PROJECT. IN ADDITION, TO WRITE TO TENBY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO INVITE REPRESENTATIVES TO MEET WITH TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NEW YEAR TO

DISCUSS HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO PROGRESS THIS - CLLR BLACKHALL

Cllr. Blackhall had attended with several others. There had been two events and the second one showed that the consultants had genuinely listened to what was said the first time around.

Unless you get the big infrastructure in place to make it happen the ideas will be very difficult to implement, however, he stressed. This project has the biggest potential but also requires the biggest need for infrastructure.

This project will enable a supply of data for businesses, event organisers and others to really enhance the visitor experience.

Sadly, the town is starting from a low base due to deficiencies in infrastructure but the laying of super-fast broadband will certainly improve this.

The visitor data will be useful to help us plan. At the moment we don't really know how many people visit the town in the summer. The Police say 60,000 and Dwr Cymru say 40,000 so it would be good to have the numbers.

With improved data for those coming in we may even find that both figures may be easily surpassed. It will also enable us to see the changing numbers over the course of the year.

A Smart Town network can also be utilised for traffic control measures or information when car parks are full; smart meters on flower baskets can say when they need watering or on bins to say when they need emptying.

There is a very strong case for taking this forward as project, he continued. I propose we write to the PCC Cabinet Member responsible for this project to make the case that this has tremendous potential to benefit Tenby and the whole of Pembrokeshire and TTC will do everything we can to help make it happen.

I further propose that we establish a meeting with the Chamber of Trade in the New Year to look at working with them on driving this forward.

PCC are funding this with levelling up monies. The more we say, the more we can make a difference in achieving that funding for Tenby.

Cllr. Blackhall was seconded by the Mayor.

RESOLVED

That TTC write to PCC Cabinet Member responsible to stress Tenby Town Council's enthusiasm for the project. In addition, to write to Tenby Chamber of Trade to invite representatives to meet with town council representatives in the New Year to discuss how we can work together to progress this

146. REFLECTIONS ON THE LAST YEAR - COUNCILLORS AND STAFF WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON THE PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY OF THE COUNCIL OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS. THIS WILL BE SUPPORTED BY A BRIEF PRESENTATION AND PAPER (TO FOLLOW) – CLLR BLACKHALL

Cllr. Blackhall and the Community Engagement Office ran through a slide presentation, accompanied by a written report, on everything TTC had been involved in, or facilitated over the last 12 months.

Cllr Dale thanked the pair for the report. TTC has really good stuff happening and this needs to be spread in the public media, he said.

We also need to reach out to people who may not have access to normal forms of social media, he added, suggesting that it may be worth TTC looking at providing plaques to show what we were supporting around the town.

Cllr. Phillip added his thanks. There is a lot TTC are involved with that a lot of the town does not know about, he said. We need to publicise it, get the information out there to counter negative remarks about the council.

He also agreed with Cllr. Dale that there is a particular demographic that were not being captured. We need to reach all, he emphasised.

The Community Engagement Officer said that she did publish a weekly blog on Facebook, perhaps people could be encouraged to share.

It was also suggested that the new link Tenby Arts Matters had established with Ysgol Greenhill School could be utilised to find a volunteer to get information of things the youth of the town would be interested in spread more widely

Members felt that other social media could be utilised too with Cllr. Sloan saying that sometimes a more simplified message had a bigger reach than lots of information to read through.

It was felt that sometimes an impactful picture showing what we have done, and what is available to the public on the right platforms could generate a greater response.

It was agreed to look at ways to maximise how attention is brought to the activities TTC undertakes, supports and facilitates for the town.

147. TO CONSIDER ANY FINANCIAL OFFICER/CLERK'S ITEMS AND TO AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS:

The Clerk reminded members that the Christmas dinner will be held on 17th December at The Billycan. Deposits and choices by tomorrow, if possible, please.

148. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Planning committee – Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7 pm

Full council -Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7.30 pm

149. TO PROPOSE ANY ITEM FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Brynhir update from PCC – Cllr Blackhall

VE Day – Cllr Phillips

150. TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS UNDER THE “PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT OF 1960”