

TENBY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD
16TH JUNE 2020

DUE TO CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS, THIS MEETING WAS HELD REMOTELY
IN LINE WITH COVID-19 LEGISLATION

PRESENT: Cllr T Brown Mayor
Cllr Mrs C Brown
Cllr Mrs S Skyrme-Blackhall
Cllr L Blackhall
Cllr M Ronowitz
Cllr D Morgan
Cllr P Rapi
Cllr T Hallett
Cllr Mrs T Evans
Cllr H Whitehurst

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Davies Clerk
Mrs S Thompson Assistant to the Clerk
Cllr M Williams North Ward County Councillor

418. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

None received.

419. TO DISCLOSE ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS IN ITEMS OF BUSINESS LISTED BELOW

None declared.

420. TO SUSPEND STANDING ORDER 7 REQUIRING VOTING TO BE TAKEN BY A SHOW OF HANDS AT THIS AND ALL FUTURE REMOTE MEETINGS

Proposed by Cllr Mrs Evans seconded by Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall.

RESOLVED

That Standing Order 7 be suspended for this and all future remote meetings.

421. TO AGREE ITEMS OF CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMITTEE MINUTES OTHER THAN THOSE MARKED NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEING GIVEN TO MEMBERS OF THE PRESS PRESENT

Proposed by Cllr Hallett and seconded by Cllr Blackhall.

RESOLVED

That items of Correspondence and Committee Minutes other than those items marked Not for Publication be given to members of the Press present.

422. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 3RD MARCH 2020

Cllr Blackhall proposed the Minutes to be a true and accurate record of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Mrs Brown.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Tenby Town Council meeting held 3rd March 2020 be confirmed and signed as accurate.

423. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 17TH MARCH 2020

Cllr Blackhall proposed the Minutes to be a true and accurate record of the meeting, Cllr Rapi seconded.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Tenby Town Council meeting held 17th March 2020 be confirmed and signed as accurate.

424. TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND TO AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS:

- a. NP/20/0267/FUL – Conversion of 2nd floor and attic to self-contained residential unit, addition of dormer windows, rear balcony and French doors, creation of new separate access, reroofing and various internal and external alterations – 10 High Street, Tenby

Cllr Blackhall proposed approval as he feels it is consistent with developments in area and has no objection. Cllr Hallett added that it improves living accommodation to those who need it, makes better use of the building and seconded Cllr Blackhall.

RECOMMEND

Approval. Considered against all the relevant policies in the Local Development Plan, members feel the proposals will have no adverse effect on the character of the building or its position within the Conservation Area.

425. TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS FOR FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL AND MAY (INCLUDING SCHEDULED PAYMENTS, UNPRESENTED CHEQUES, RECEIPTS, ACCOUNT BALANCES, BUDGET MONITORING TO DATE AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS) AND CONSIDER ANY ISSUES ARISING

The Mayor suggested taking all four months accounts together. Cllr Blackhall had been through all and was content with what is there. He then went on to suggest that while having meetings in this way we should perhaps have a small finance committee to go

through accounts with the Clerk for them then to be presented to Councillors at the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Brown feels that the Clerk has quite enough on his plate and that all councillors should have read through the Agenda prior to the meeting and these accounts should be passed through now.

Cllr Blackhall agreed with Cllr Mrs Brown suggesting that if councillors had any concerns or queries on the accounts when they receive them in their Agenda pack perhaps they could ask the Clerk for clarity two days before meeting. Cllr Blackhall feels that councillors should acknowledge to the Clerk that they have read through these accounts. Cllr Hallett congratulated the Clerk on his hard work for completing the accounts on time. Cllr Mrs Brown proposed that the accounts for February through to May be passed and Cllr Blackhall seconded.

RESOLVED

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

The Clerk advised that there was a technical issue with the Chair's computer and asked that Cllr Mrs Brown take the meeting to make progress whilst they attempt to rectify this.

426. TO APPROVE THE END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS FOR 2019-2020

Cllr Hallett moved approval and thanked the Clerk once again. Cllr Rapi seconded the proposal. Cllr Blackhall asked if there were any comments that the Clerk would like to make. The Clerk told councillors that there was a larger surplus at end of year as projects that were in the pipeline were unable to be carried out due to the current Covid 19 situation. This money has now gone into reserves but these projects were now under way and these funds will be utilised in this financial year.

Resolved

That the End of Year Accounts for 2019-2020 be approved.

427. TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT ON END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2019-2020

The Clerk told councillors that the internal auditors had made reference to invoices not attached to the yellow payment slips. Those referenced are kept separately in their own files, for example Payroll. This issue has now been addressed as new systems have been put in place to duplicate these invoices in the Invoices for Payment files.

Resolved

That the Internal Auditor's comments, and the systems put in place to resolve the issues raised, be noted.

428. TO APPROVE THE ACCOUNT STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR SUBMISSION TO EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2019-2020

Cllr Hallett moved. All councillors were in agreement.

Resolved

That the Account Statements and Annual Governance Statement for submission to External Audit for End of Year Accounts 2019-2020 be approved.

429. TO CONSIDER CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AS LOCKDOWN EASES AND A 'NEW NORMAL' IS ESTABLISHED AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS – CLLR MRS EVANS

Cllr Mrs Evans has spoken to a lot locals recently and many people are genuinely scared as to what happens next. The Clerk and his assistant, together with Gary Tapley, Hannah Arentz and Emma Geertman have done an amazing job co-ordinating the volunteers for the Community Hub as have Cllrs Blackhall and Mrs. Skyrme-Blackhall on Tenby Together.

However, there are a lot of vulnerable people in community. As we move into next phase things will change and we need to look at how we continue to support vulnerable residents.

Cllr. Mrs. Evans felt that there will be an influx of visitors to the area once the five mile travel restriction is lifted and the tourism sector reopened which frightened her and a lot of local residents.

She felt safety of our community should be at the forefront of our minds even though it was acknowledged that local business needs those visitors. She felt we should be considering signage on the streets encouraging to follow social distancing rules and utilising the traffic signs on entry points to town to reassure local community that we too are worried about how to balance what happens next. We need to make sure that we are thinking of our locals and what we can do to help and any ideas would be welcome, she added.

Cllr Hallett said as we enter any new phase we have to move forward while also keeping an eye on the vulnerable people within our community. He also congratulated Cllr Evans on her volunteer work conducted remotely.

Cllr Ronowitz offered his help and suggested a get together.

Cllr Mrs Brown agrees but does not agree that this be run from the office, the Clerk has enough on his plate, if something is set up it needs to be outside of the office and co-ordinated by a small committee.

Cllr Ronowitz suggested meeting in garden somewhere or remotely to take this forward. Cllr Mrs Evans said she was happy to take on board and move forward. The Clerk is more than happy to carry forward with the hub and Tenby Together but any new ideas would be welcome and could be fed in.

Cllr Mrs Evans felt, as councillors, we could do more.

Cllr Blackhall said it is fantastic what the volunteers have done and also what businesses have done, particularly the vulnerable folk assisted by the team. He too thanked Cllr Mrs Evans for her support.

Cllr Mrs Evans agrees all should be congratulated. Cllr. Mrs. Skyrme-Blackhall seconded what all have said. Cllr. Mrs. Evans was working very hard keeping in touch and she was happy to support all through all mediums.

The Mayor returned to the meeting and took the Chair.

430. TO CONSIDER THE POSITION OF TENBY MARKET TRADERS AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS – CLLR H WHITEHURST

Cllr Whitehurst's understanding is that many traders have been unable to receive COVID-19 grants as their business rates are rolled into rent. He realises it is a county council issue and the situation had now evolved. He had originally hoped we could write to PCC for clarification on behalf of Market Traders who were unable to operate at capacity at this time.

Cllr Mrs Brown agreed saying that it is not just Tenby Market Traders who unable to tap into the grants, there are people in the town, many who are self-employed unable to get help due to different eligibility criteria.

She feared a lot of these business going under unless financial support could be secured.

Cllr. Blackhall agreed. Particularly affected were those people who lease premises that who do not directly pay rates and fall between the rules. They need our support.

Cllr Rapi believes that County Councillor Cllr Williams has been involved with this issue and asked that he make a statement.

Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall has two issues that she would like to cover, firstly the market. She has spoken to a market trader who she has been in close contact with since Easter. They pay rent that includes business rates so have not been eligible for support and we need to look at ways that this guidance can be changed.

However, as Cllr Mrs Brown said, all local traders need to be supported; not just market traders but all independents. We do not know where some will be financially this autumn and how people are going to come out of this.

Secondly, she has had contact with Tenby harbour and, in particular the passenger boats with no business premises. They too are currently ineligible we need to ensure that all small businesses gain support, this is not just a problem across Pembrokeshire but the

whole of Wales. We need to write to the First Minister and the Cabinet members responsible for tourism and business support at the Senedd, our Pembrokeshire MSs, our local MP, and the Leader and Chief Executive of the County Council. Cllr. Mrs. Skyrme-Blackhall said she knows it's a difficult time and she is sure that the omission is not deliberate but a review of the guidance is needed to ensure all our vital businesses receive support.

Invited to speak, Cllr Williams told councillors that part of this issue was due to separation of business rates included in rental charges which the Valuation Office was trying to sort out.

However, he feared that not all will be aided.

There has been a copious amount of correspondence to finance minister, Ken Skates. The regulations may have been set down but they are being constantly amended and TTC should write to Ken Skates asking him to look again at the situation.

PCC paid out about £50 million in aid, the whole amount of which Cllr. Williams feared the county would not get back.

There had been a great deal of correspondence with Mr Ken Skates and he believed that this matter could be resolved if TTC write quickly. For those with a harbour store a grant of £10,000 was available and it was also possible to get payment from HMRC of £7,500. They would be eligible for the next payment in August but must supply 2 years accounts.

Cllr. Ronowitz said that those getting support are those that have paid taxes over the years. There was plenty of support for all but lots who have not had anything have been because they haven't declared over the years. He felt it was a fair process if you have paid your taxes.

Cllr Blackhall noted Cllr. Ronowitz's comment but there are some people who have quite genuinely fallen 'between the cracks.' He agreed with Cllr Williams we must target Mr. Skates. Not all people operating from the harbour have premises on the harbour, we should try and support them and others that fall between gaps.

The Clerk said that he was aware that PCC has now waived the rent for last 3 months to Market Traders which may be a small comfort.

Cllr. Blackhall said that we must thank PCC who have been fabulously supportive, but they need to be supportive towards Harbour community also.

Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall proposed a letter be written to Mr. Ken Skates on the issue, copying the letter in to the Cabinet member responsible for tourism at the Senedd, our Pembrokeshire MSs, our local MP, our county councillors and the Leader and Chief Executive of the County Council. Cllr. Blackhall seconded.

Resolved

That TTC write to Mr. Ken Skates on the issue, copying the letter in to the Cabinet member responsible for tourism at the Senedd, our Pembrokeshire MSs, our local MP, our county councillors and the Leader and Chief Executive of the County Council

431. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S POSITION ON THE STAGING OF IRONMAN 2020 AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS – CLLR RAPI

As Ironman has now been cancelled Cllr Rapi wished to propose that the £5000 contribution earmarked to be made to the event this year be put back into the community where it is needed most at the moment due to Covid-19. He would object if Ironman requested this money. Seconded by Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall.

Resolved

That, as the event has been cancelled, TTC do not make their proposed contribution of £5000 towards Ironman Wales Pembrokeshire this year. This money is to be retained for use in the community to help offset the effects of Covid-19 locally.

432. TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH THE TOWN COUNCIL CAN SUPPORT THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY AS LOCKDOWN EASES AND A 'NEW NORMAL' IS ESTABLISHED AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS – CLLR BLACKHALL

Cllr Blackhall referred to the information within the Agenda. The suggestion is that we need to look at those who need support to operate once businesses are allowed to re-open within the guidelines given. It was suggested that a small group be formed to include councillors, business owners and members of PCC to look at issues they may face. Secondly support for Tenby Charities as outlined in information sent through.

The Clerk asked if we needed to set up another committee when we have the Regeneration Team in place. Although it has been on hiatus, the structure and secretariat was already in place to move forward.

Cllr Blackhall said he was happy to go with Clerk's suggestion as it makes sense, administering was already in place and it can be moved forward quickly.

Cllr Mrs Brown felt that it would not be moving forward unless councillors get their heads together and get cracking on it.

While there were great ideas coming forward there was already so much work done by our council office without staff having to take on anything else. The suggestion for Regeneration may work but councillors had to get actively involved not just hand over to office staff to sort out

The Clerk and his assistant had been working very hard over last 12 weeks under the circumstances, we need to step up as councillors and get these things going.

Having the office and staff for support was good and we should utilise it but just forming groups was not a good idea when the actual work is often left to just the Clerk and his assistant.

Cllr Blackhall feels there are a number of people who stand ready to offer support to local business and plan to deal with difficult balances. There were willing folk to do that ready to go tomorrow and this work will not impinge on hours of office staff.

Cllr Mrs Brown said that while local charitable groups needed support the town council could not just hand £20,000 to charities to give to other charities.

Cllr. Blackhall said there was a need to recognise the town's fantastic charity organisations who each year raise money to keep other organisations going throughout the town. He felt TTC have capacity to identify a resource that we can put to support those who will not have their usual funding.

There were a number of activities supported by the local Lions, Rotary and Round Table organisations and Tenby Choir which the council could legitimately support under the terms of the Wellbeing Act. All he was requesting was that TTC be in a position to support local charities who have been affected by Covid-19.

Establishing a fund was he felt a sensible gesture and within the rules.

Cllr Ronowitz agreed, using the Tenby Round Table annual Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner as an example. Without being able to hold their Summer Spectaculars this year, Round Table will not be able to raise funds to finance it. With TTC support they could be helped to protect this event.

Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall supported Cllr Blackhall but appreciated where Cllr Mrs Brown is coming from.

The Clerk asked if Cllr Blackhall was suggesting setting up a Charitable Trust within the Council for this purpose. If so, he would have to research the requisite legislation and give members a timescale for establishing it.

Cllr. Blackhall felt that we did not need to set up a Trust as the council already had policies and procedures in place to grant aid charities. However, he feared that the current budget was underfunded to cope with the potential demand from charities that had had their fundraising activities curtailed this year.

As such, his suggestion was that we earmark £20,000 from our un-earmarked reserves to put towards our existing Grants budget which will then be managed and administered by the council under the existing LGA 1972 and Wellbeing Act legislation.

We would effectively be using the underspend from last year to mitigate against the effects of Covid-19 on local charities and he put it forward as a proposition. He also moved that the Regeneration Team be reconvened at the earliest opportunity within coronavirus guidelines. Cllr Ronowitz seconded.

Resolved

That the Tenby Regeneration Team be reconvened to look at ways to support the local business community as lockdown eases.

Further that TTC vires £20,000 from un-earmarked reserves into our Grants budget to support local organisations and charities whose fundraising activities may have been curtailed by Covid-19 this year.

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

a. Report of the Clerk

The Clerk referred to his Report as TTC has been running on delegated authority for a while. Council staff were still dealing with usual day to day duties as well as supporting the response to Covid-19. Works planned for the Paragon was ongoing. The second phase started today and should be complete in a few weeks. The new Website had been worked on and new Town Council website is now live. There is still of a bit of work in progress as photos of councillors needed. He hopes that councillors will be happy with the new site. Cllr Blackhall wished to thank the Clerk and assistant for all their hard work over the last three months in difficult circumstances and specifically the Clerk for work on the new website which is looking really good, a big thanks from all councillors. The Clerk then thanked Cllr Ronowitz for his help in the initial stages of website planning.

b. Timing of AGM

The Clerk reminded councillors that Covid-19 regulations allowing remote meetings had also said that council did not have to hold an AGM where the new chair (Mayor) is elected in May as normal. The regulations allowed for this to be held any time of year at the discretion of the Proper Officer. As Proper Officer, the Clerk had asked for guidance from members as to when they felt the AGM should be held but there was no definitive consensus.

Some councils have decided to carry on with their AGM's while others are holding off. The Clerk feels it is fairly straight forward to hold the AGM on line but once done TTC could not go back and have traditional Mayor Making celebration later in the year as the new Chair would already be in post.

Cllr Blackhall recognises the situation but at the same time noted that we as town council/borough, were able hold ceremonies during the 2nd World War and sees no reason why we cannot proceed. Having proved what we can achieve remotely, let's get on with it and show that TTC are ready to put up with anything thrown at us and that we are able to work.

He proposed the AGM be held remotely two weeks from today (30th June). Cllr Ronowitz seconded.

Cllr Rapi felt this is a delicate matter. He wished to know the Mayor Elect's view on taking over as Mayor now as there was nothing to attend as Mayor under current circumstances. He asked if she really wanted to take up the position now or would she rather wait a year and have a full year as Mayor. The Mayoral Schedule at this time of year is usually very hectic and there will not be these opportunities.

He felt that Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall may be missing out as he remembers it being such an exciting time when he undertook the role. There will be no Ironman or the many usual occasions attended by the Mayor. Come next year there may be another vote with perhaps a different outcome and she will have had a short year with little happening.

Cllr Rapi said he was in no doubt that Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall will make an excellent Mayor and will go along with what the Mayor Elect would like to do but he questioned if this was the right time.

Cllr Mrs Brown agreed with Cllr Rapi. She said that this would put aside the celebration that would normally be available for the incoming Mayor. The town at some point in the future, maybe October or November, may enjoy a ceremony to show TTC and the town is fully back on track celebrating a new Mayor and coming through the virus with flags flying.

This could be such a huge celebration later in the year and, having been Mayor twice, she wouldn't have missed those celebration.

Mayor Making entitles the outgoing Mayor an opportunity to thank those who have supported him over his term. Both incoming and outgoing Mayors are celebrated at a meeting of friends, family and other Civic heads. An online AGM would just be another meeting of the council.

Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall wished to thank Cllr Rapi and Cllr Mrs Brown saying she understood what was being said. She said to Cllr Rapi with regards to having been Mayor, she understands as she had been Mayoress to Cllr Blackhall. Although not an expert, she understands the protocols and will give it a damn good go.

She feels that TTC needs to move forward because of what's happened with current crisis and feels there is a lot to do for the town, a lot to do to support local businesses and local people. COVID-19 could be around for a long time and we could be having the same conversation in 12 months' time.

With regards to the ceremony, she feels this is not the time for hand bags and glad rags, it's time for rolling up sleeves and getting on with it.

She thanked the Mayor for all his support and she now wanted to get on with it.

It was proposed that TTC hold the AGM remotely in two weeks' time.

Cllr Morgan supported saying it shows that TTC is willing to move on for the town.

Cllr Rapi thanked Cllr Mrs Skyrme-Blackhall for her answer saying he has no doubt that she will do an excellent job. Cllr Hallett thanked the Mayor for all the hard work he has done.

434. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved that the AGM will take place remotely on Tuesday, 30th June 2020 at 7.30pm.

435. TO PROPOSE ANY ITEM FOR THE NEXT

None proposed.

436. 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”

437. TO CONFIRM THE PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 3RD MARCH 2020

Cllr Blackhall proposed seconded by Cllr Hallett.

Resolved

That the Private and Confidential Minutes to be a true and accurate record of the meeting,

438. TO CONFIRM THE PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 17TH MARCH 2020

Cllr Blackhall proposed, seconded by Cllr Hallett.

Resolved

That the Private and Confidential Minutes to be a true and accurate record of the meeting,

439. Cllr Hallett referred to the recent passing of former town councillor Mrs Trish Putwain, apologising for not mentioning it in public session.

The Clerk reminded councillors that the funeral cortege will leave Bridge Street at 1.45pm on Thursday, 18th June, and process through the town to Tenby New Cemetery. Should councillors wish to pay their respects, as there was no service to attend due to Covid-19 restrictions, they could gather along the route of the cortege.

Cllr Blackhall added a tribute saying that Mrs Putwain always brought intelligence and humour to our discussions in council. He said we didn't always agree but debate was always conducted with great humour, great humility and good friendship. The town is lesser for her passing.

The Chair then brought the meeting to a close. The Clerk apologised for the initial glitch at the start of the meeting and encouraged councillors to try and sign in earlier for the AGM for any technical issues to be resolved before the scheduled start.

Mayor

Town Clerk

Date
