

MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD 10TH MAY 2024

PRESENT: Cllr Dai Morgan Mayor
Cllr Charles Dale
Cllr Laurence Blackhall
Cllr Sam Skyrme-Blackhall
Cllr Duncan Whitehurst
Cllr James Phillips
Cllr Tom Sloan
Cllr Emma Lewis
Cllr Michelle Evans
Cllr Joe Criddle

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Davies Clerk to the Council/Financial Officer
Mrs S Thompson Deputy Clerk

Mayor thanked all for coming. This was a change from our traditional event, a new concept of Mayor Making on a smaller scale.

1. TO SIGN THE REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE

All present signed the Register of Attendance.

2. REV JOHN MORGAN OPENED THE MEETING WITH PRAYERS

Rev John Morgan was invited to open the evening's meeting with a prayer.

3. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk had received apologies from Councillors Crockford and Hallett.

4. TO ELECT THE MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

The Mayor asked each councillor in turn if they wished to stand for the Election of Mayor for the ensuing year and all declined.

Cllr Morgan continued that he had made it no secret at the start of last year's term that he had felt being Mayor would be a 'one year gig.' However, his experiences over the last 12 months had brought about a change of heart and he would be delighted to be able to continue in the role.

The people you meet and the people you see, I am not ready to give up yet, he said. It has all been brilliant and I have been honoured to be a part of it.

I am really looking forward to the next 12 months to be able to build on what has been achieved over the last year.

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall proposed Cllr Dai Morgan as Mayor for 2024-2025 saying “I would like to speak about this giant of a man with a big heart whom I affectionately call ‘David’.

I first met Dai in 2018 in this very room at Mayor Making. He was a guest but I would call it fate.

Not long after that Dai applied for a co-option vacancy here on town council. There were about 5 posts to fill and many applicants but there was something even then that said to me “Yep, he’s a good ‘un!” A team player.

In the time that followed, Dai has taken it all in his stride. At the beginning of the pandemic, he showed his dedication by supporting myself and others in delivering for the needs of our own community.

When it came to the council election in 2022, Dai put everything into standing again.

He was busy with his then day job and supporting his family while also having to look for somewhere else to live as the family had been informed that they were losing their home!

However, he kept on the campaign trail, which gives a sense of his dedication to serve the people of the town; it was a crazy time but he kept smiling!

I was so thrilled when he agreed to be Mayor last year. As I told him at the time it would be a lot of hard work but with Mel, Erin and Miles with him, I knew he would enjoy the role and be successful.

A year goes by so quickly, you cannot fit everything into one when you start out. Now established you know your direction and what you want to do.

I know already you will have many memories, but just to highlight one in particular, was the Christmas Light Switch On and the charity market.

It was a success on every level, bringing our community together to work together for the benefit of the town – which is how it should be.

Finally, my advice would be enjoy, engage and be happy making our town and council stronger together.

Dai, my dear friend, I have great honour in proposing you as Mayor of Tenby 2024-2025.

Cllr Duncan Whitehurst seconded.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Dai Morgan be elected Mayor for the ensuing year.

5. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Clerk congratulated Mayor on his appointment as Mayor of Tenby before asking him to perform the Declaration of Acceptance of Office followed by the Swearing of the Oath.

The Mayor thanked all for their support of over the last 12 months and for their confidence in him continuing in the role for the next 12 months.

6. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2024-2025

The Mayor proposed Cllr Dale, saying that over the past 12 months Cllr Dale has done a sterling job in his eyes. He is straight and to the point and an excellent sounding board for advice.

Cllr Sloan seconded.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Charles Dale be elected Deputy Mayor for the year 2024-2025.

7. APPOINTMENT OF SERGEANT AT MACE

Cllr James Phillips proposed Mrs Denise Cousins as Sergeant at Mace.

Cllr Emma seconded.

RESOLVED

That Mrs Denise Cousins be appointed as Sergeant at Mace.

8. APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN FOR THE YEAR 2024-2025

The Mayor appointed Rev Adrian Davies as his Chaplain for the coming year 2024-2025.

9. APPOINTMENT OF MAYORESS

The Mayor was once again delighted to appoint Melanie Lewis as his Mayoress.

10. TO APPOINT MAYOR'S CADETS FOR 2024-2025

The Mayor presented a Scroll to AC Aiden Guymer adding that Tenby Sea Cadets support us and the community greatly. He wished that, in his youth, he had had these opportunities. He then presented CWO Jack Mason, RAF Haverfordwest with a scroll.

The Mayor thanked the last year's Police and Sea Cadets and welcomed the new.

11. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE MAYOR

Councillor Blackhall thanked the Mayor suggesting he was only a third of his way through his term of office!

When Cllr Morgan first looked to join council, a number of people had come in to talk to us with a view of being co-opted, Cllr. Blackhall continued. Cllr Mike Evans had missed Cllr Morgans's turn but asked how he had got on? He's the one was my reply.

From the outset it has been a pleasure working with you. I have always been impressed by your commitment to doing things well, changing and moving forward.

Last year he said he wanted to improve engagement with young people. These were not just words, Cllr. Morgan followed up with actions. In his first year, change was had with a number of new councillors. Cllr. Morgan has welcomed and encouraged them. He has encouraged new activities, and those restarting after covid.

It has been a very busy year and is getting busier.

A highlight last year was the visit of the Belgians to commemorate them being based in Tenby during the Second World War, not only from how well it was done but how you, as First Citizen, did Tenby proud.

You also provide positive leadership of council. You make sure all get a chance to speak and you genuinely listen. You've made a fantastic start; had a fantastic year and I look forward to what is to come following your reappointment.

Cllr Michelle Evans seconded.

12. **RESPONSE BY THE RETIRING MAYOR**

Twelve months ago, I stood in this building and outlined where I think we needed to focus for the next 12 months, said Cllr. Morgan. We needed more community engagement and to connect with the youth of the town.

I also said to achieve this I would bring a 'can do will do' attitude.

This is where I say what my focus will be this term. Well, no surprises nothing will change!!

Just a few examples of why. This year, as a council, and the help of Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall, in her county councillor role, we did the impossible by getting PCC to change their minds.

We were hit with a stark realisation that the town's only 2 free toilets were to be closed and that we would lose the library for one day a week unless we paid for them all.

We managed to put a compelling case forward and not only did all 3 stay open, PCC did a complete U-turn on the North Beach toilets and agreed to find the funding for them themselves.

With the help of our community engagement officer, Anne Draper, there are more free events going on in town than ever!! We have continued to support local charity organisations like Round Table and gone one step further with Tenby and District Lions and worked on one of the biggest successful Christmas Light Switch On seen for many years.

Thanks to the success of the Christmas Market, they donated over £700 to the Mayoral Charity, The Old Chapel. This will be my charity again this year.

Tenby Chamber of Trade has just re-started and we hope for a positive relationship together which could benefit the businesses of the town.

As you can see, this last year I have re-introduced the Mayor's Cadets role. With the connection of council and cadet units, it not only offers the opportunity to support and highlight what the units do, but much more importantly it is an experience for the cadets.

The cadets have joined me on several civic events including an international Belgians Veteran Remembrance Event, Mayor's Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and the RNLI 200th Birthday Service, to mention but a few.

Within these duties, as part of the Mayoral Party, they have met with Royal Family Representatives, British and Belgian civic and military dignitaries and many other local dignitaries.

With all this in mind I would like to thank Police Cadet Bradley and Leading Cadet Finley of Tenby Sea Cadets for your support and present you with a small thank you gift.

As Mayor, I was delighted to build on our connection with Ysgol Greenhill School. One of my main objectives was to work with the students and encourage them to speak up as they have a voice that needs to be heard in the town.

We have met with Mr Haynes and the School Senedd several times and discussed concerns and ideas for the present and future. All this is driven by the students.

We are also in talks with various departments about exciting new projects which involve the whole community.

I cannot stand here now this year and say 'I'm' going for it with a 'can do and will do' attitude and 'I' can do anything. But I can say 'We' as a council, have a 'can do and will do' attitude and can achieve anything with our free thinking and hardworking, positive approach.

So that is why this year will be the same as last year but in overdrive.

Before we wrap this evening up there are a few thanks I need to make...

First to my fellow councillors around the table, for all your hard work; for the many hours that people don't see and, of course, for your support.

Thanks also to:

Andrew and Sharon. Without you, we as a council, could not do what we do. Also, a personal thank you for your advice and support.

Councillor Dale who's straight talking and advice as a Deputy is invaluable.

Denise Cousins for being a great bodyguard and always making me feel at ease when nervous.

My daughter Erin for standing in as Mace Bearer at times during the year.

My Lady Mayoress, Mel, for putting up with me when I'm stressed, tired and grumpy. You are my strength, and make this role much easier.

My final thanks form a very special part of this evening, said Cllr. Morgan.

After 25 years of service, Rev John Morgan, our Sergeant at Arms has decided to hang up the mace for the last time and retire. Twenty-five years is a massive commitment and you have undoubtedly carried out the role with dedication, professionalism, dignity and with a smile.

No matter where we were or what we were doing, it always felt that you were in control of the situation and always knew what was happening and where we were supposed to be. You always had the knack of getting us through a crowd, it was like a parting of the sea. Before I present you with a parting gift I believe some former Mayors you have served alongside would like to speak.

Cllr Blackhall remembered that 8 years ago John served as his Sergeant at Arms and his reassurance at all events.

Whatever event John always knew what would happen, and his calm reassurance was great, said Cllr. Blackhall. Is it true that although retiring, you are joining samba doc? he asked.

Lots of Mayors were helped equally as much by John over 25 years and I have many memories of standing alongside him, Cllr. Blackhall continued. One, however, was not with you as Sergeant at Arms, as I very honoured to accompany John to St David's cathedral for his ordination, and as Mayor I proudly took the chains to the ordination.

Sometime later, an occasion arose when, at an event we were attending as the Mayoral Party, a prayer was needed. Luckily, under his Mace Bearer's jabot, John had his clerical collar!

Thank you, John, you will always be Sergeant at Arms for me, concluded Cllr. Blackhall

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall said John was someone who everyone knows, but he was also someone who had taught her and was also part of her church family.

I became Mayor in 2020, which was a different time to where we are now, she said. My Mayor Making was done on line.

In my first year, the Christmas light switch on was at a time when we were not supposed to be doing anything, so we did it as a Live feed so could it be seen on social media. In my second term HM The Queen died which turned everything up to a different level.

However, through it all, John was there for all of us, assisting us in walking though things not done before. This is an end of an era.

The Mayor said that throughout his time as Sergeant at Arms, John has waived his 'attendance fee' asking that it go to charities supported by the Mayor and the council.

This year, we would like your 'fee' to go to a charity of your choosing and I will match that donation, he said.

Enjoy your well-deserved retirement John and, on behalf of myself and all the mayors before me; the town council and Tenby town, may I thank you for your service. I'm honoured to have worked with you.

Rev Morgan replied that it was former councillor Caroline Thomas who asked him to step in one Boxing Day, when the then Mace Bearer, also John Morgan, was taken ill.

When John sadly passed away Caroline asked me if I would be prepared to take on the role full time, said Rev. Morgan. I have thoroughly enjoyed serving the town.

In 25 years, I served 13 mayors. It was always a great pleasure, and I always looked forward to performing my duty. I have many happy and funny memories.

No two Mayors are ever the same. All are unique and serve town to the best of their ability. I have been privileged to be a part of it.

13. ADJOURNMENT OF STATUTORY BUSINESS

Proposed by Cllr Emma Lewis that all statutory business be adjourned, seconded by Cllr Joe Criddle. The proposition was carried.

RESOLVED

That all statutory business be adjourned until the next Meeting of Council which would be held at the De Valence Pavilion on Tuesday, 14th May 2024 at 7.30pm.

14. PRAYERS

Rev John Morgan closed the meeting with a prayer.