

MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING HELD 8TH OCTOBER 2024

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor Dai Morgan	Mayor
	Councillor Charles Dale	
	Councillor Sam Skyrme-Blackhall	(Zoom)
	Councillor Laurence Blackhall	(Zoom)
	Councillor James Phillips	
	Councillor Emma Lewis	(Zoom)
	Councillor Michelle Evans	
	Councillor Laura Crockford	
	Councillor Duncan Whitehurst	(Zoom)

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

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96. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Hallett (dispensation) and Cllr. Sloan (illness).

97. TO DISCLOSE ANY PERSONAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS LISTED BELOW

Cllr Whitehurst declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in matters relating to the De Valence CIC.

98. PUBLIC PARTICIATION: 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

No members of the public present

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

Proposed Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall, seconded by Cllr Phillips.

RESOLVED

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

100. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 3RD SEPTEMBER 2024

Proposed Cllr Phillips, seconded Cllr. Dale and

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Tenby Town Council meeting held 3rd September 2024 be confirmed and signed as accurate.

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

Cllr Phillips asked if there was any update on the situation between Ofwat and Welsh Water. The Mayor pointed out that Cllr. Whitehurst would be addressing this in an agenda item later in the meeting.

102. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 3RD OCTOBER 2024

RESOLVED

That the public minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held 3rd October 2024 be received.

The Clerk referred members to a recommendation from the committee that full council might like to consider a grant request from Tenby Surf Life-Saving Club to assist with training provision for some 40 junior members.

Details of the request had been forwarded to members in advance and were displayed on screen.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall felt that the council should support this local charitable organisation. They work very hard to support water-based events in the town like the Boxing Day Swim and Ironman.

Cllr Blackhall agreed. They are based on the South Beach and are members of the Tenby Sports Forum. They do a great deal in training young people in saving lives at sea.

Cllr. Dale asked if we had the funds to support the organisation. The Clerk confirmed that there were sufficient funds in the Enhancing Tenby Fund budget.

Cllr Evans also supported the organisation, feeling that the training given by the Club would feed into providing our future summer beach lifeguards.

The Mayor comment that, in addition to those mentioned, the Club supported all shoreline-based water events in the town, including the TenFoot swim.

He was happy to propose their request for grant funding be agreed. Cllr. Dale seconded.

RESOLVED

That under Section 19a of the Local Government (Misc Provs) Act 1976 a grant of £2704.60 be made to Tenby Surf-Lifesaving Club to assist with their training sessions for junior members.

103. **TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS FOR SEPTEMBER (INCLUDING SCHEDULED PAYMENTS, UNPRESENTED CHEQUES, RECEIPTS, ACCOUNT BALANCES, BUDGET MONITORING TO DATE AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS) AND CONSIDER ANY ISSUES ARISING (ON THE TABLE)**

Cllr. Blackhall asked if the Clerk had any areas of concern.

He replied that he was anxious that unforeseen costs and delays were increasing the budgetary demands in relation the redevelopment of the café space. Various matters in relation to the leases needed resolving as soon as possible.

Cllr Blackhall thanked the Clerk for keeping the members apprised and stressed the importance of getting this redevelopment finalised.

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

RESOLVED

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

104. **TO CONSIDER ANY GRANT REQUESTS AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS:**

- a. **Tenby Observer – Community Kindness Awards 2024 – award sponsorship**

The Mayor recalled that we had wanted to sponsor the Community Volunteer award last year but had been too late in responding. He felt the event had been a great success last year and we should consider supporting it this year.

Cllr. Phillips proposed that we sponsor the Community Volunteer Award and Cllr. Crockford seconded.

RESOLVED

That Tenby Town Council sponsor the Community Volunteer award category in the Tenby Observer Community Kindness Awards for 2024.

105. **TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

SEPCHN

Cllr Whitehurst said that the next SEPCHN meeting would take place on 22nd October. Cllr Blackhall confirmed that Cllr. Tessa Hodgson, PCC Cabinet member for Social Care and Safeguarding would be in attendance.

TESSA

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall explained that she had been made chair of TESSA at a recent meeting and plans were progressing well for this year's Boxing Day swim. The theme this year was Superheroes to mark the 200th anniversary of the RNLI. Proceeds from the swim would be going to the Tenby branch of the RNLI.

TESSA already had some new volunteers and would be looking to recruit more in the New Year.

GREENHILL

As a school governor Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall had attended the school at the request of the Head of ICT and Business Studies. While one of the newer sections of the school the ICT department was experiencing problems with a leaking roof which was not good for all the electronic equipment nor for staff and student well-being. She had arranged to meet PCC's Director of Education on site next week to look at the issue.

POPPY TRAIL

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall explained that she had started the Remembrance Poppy Trail four years ago while Mayor and was delighted that Vicar in Charge at St Mary's, Rev Steven Brett, was happy for this to continue. She looked forward to another successful event.

MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

It had been a quieter month for the Mayor.

He had supported Tenby Art Event's new RNLI themed Art Competition. Local schools and the girl guides had visited the art space and had received important information regarding safety at sea while also enjoying creating some excellent artwork on the theme of the RNLI. He was grateful to the Tenby RNLI for the loan of a child size full crew kit which those involved had enjoyed trying on and drawing.

106. TO CONSIDER TENBY TOWN COUNCIL SIGNING THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS – CLLR. PHILLIPS

Cllr Phillips explained that one in 20 people in Pembrokeshire is an Armed Forces veteran. This is the seventh highest concentration out of all the counties in the UK. It is estimated that there are about 250 veterans in Tenby, with about 500 associated residents across the Armed Forces community (family etc).

He gave members a slideshow presentation prepared for him by Hayley Edwards, the Armed Forces Covenant Officer who is based in Carmarthen but covers the three counties which made up Dyfed.

The Armed Forces Community (AFC) is a 'community of interest', who share common experiences and have specific needs, as a result of their unique service life.

There are many barriers to our armed forces community in accessing the help and support they need, and so striving to remove the barriers to make the playing field more level is important as an inclusive and supportive organisation.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a statement of the moral obligation which exists between the nation, the government, and the armed forces which is founded on the unique principles that those who serve, or have served, and their families should be treated fairly. Its core principles are enshrined in law, in the Armed Forces Act 2021. It applies to the whole of the UK.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated fairly and should not face disadvantages when seeking to access public or private goods and services in the UK.

There are three principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- - Recognition of Service
- - It is desirable to remove disadvantage
- - Special provision for those who have sacrificed the most. E.g. injured and bereaved

All 22 County Councils in Wales have signed the Covenant but No Town and Community Council in Pembrokeshire has signed.

Tenby would be the first which would be fitting given our longstanding association with the UK Armed Forces and our Allies over many decades.

We already tick many of the boxes required, and Cllr. Phillips would be happy to be the town council liaison on the Covenant. If members agreed he would liaise with Ms Edwards to arrange the official signing of the Covenant.

While Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall was happy to second the proposal she asked if housing was a particular issue for Veterans.

Cllr. Phillips said there were three main focus areas, health, housing and education and training. Housing was certainly an issue.

Cllr. Dale wondered if signing the Covenant would mean that Veterans would be given preferential treatment over local people in relation to housing need.

It was about fairness, not preferential treatment, said Cllr. Phillips. While there were obvious exceptional circumstances, e.g where a Veteran had sustained life-changing

injuries it would mean that in a scenario where a Tenby person seeking to return home after service, they would be considered under the local connections policy rather than go to the back of the queue.

Cllr. Blackhall said that he too supported the proposal and wondered if SEPCHN could be involved to look at community mental health in relation to Veterans. It was also good to recognise that Tenby Art Events was already working with the VC Gallery in supporting Veterans.

He agreed with signing the Covenant and suggested that we reviewed it annually to see what else we could do,

The Mayor felt it was a brilliant proposal given Tenby's historic links with the military.

While he was happy to support the proposal, Cllr. Dale felt Veteran support should really be dealt with at a Governmental level. Is it right that we have to take up the slack, he asked?

Cllr Phillips pointed out that the UK seemed to operate on a model where many essential services were delivered by charitable organisations, e.g. the RNLI, Air Ambulance and RSPCA.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall moved the motion be put, adding that it would be good to try and tie in the signing of the Covenant with Remembrance Day.

Cllr. Phillips said that a senior military officer usually attended to sign the Covenant on behalf of the Armed Forces but he would do his best to try and arrange this.

RESOLVED

That Tenby Town Council sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

107. TO CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF AN 'ASK THE CLERK' ITEM DURING MEETINGS WHERE MEMBERS CAN RAISE MINOR MATTERS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL – CLLR. DALE

Cllr Dale explained that some newer members, himself included, got confused over 'reports on outside bodies' and brought up matters that members of the public had raised with them outside of meetings at this point in the agenda.

He now realised that this was not the place to raise these matters and felt a slot on the agenda where members could 'inform' the Clerk of these issues.

The Clerk would have all the concerns and queries in one go, rather than several calls from members a week, he suggested. They're not the type of thing that would require an agenda item and long discussions and by having them recorded in the minutes the public would see that we are taking notice of their concerns.

Cllr. Phillips felt this was a good idea. If the matter is serious enough it could go on the next agenda, he suggested.

However, Cllr. Lewis felt that many minor concerns and queries could, as they are now, be dealt with by the Clerk as they arise and he could report back as part of Clerk's items.

Cllr. Whitehurst felt there was merit in the public seeing that their concerns were being addressed while Cllr. Phillips felt it was an issue of visibility and transparency.

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall commented that the Clerk regularly liaised with her in her County Council capacity if the concerns related to PCC issues. The public could also go directly to her.

I see a danger of 'minor items' drifting into items that require decisions, a form of Any Other Business which is not permitted, commented the Mayor.

Cllr Phillips wondered if members could present a 'ward' report of issues brought to them. Cllr. Evans agreed that members of the public often raised minor issues with her 'out on the street'.

If someone asked you about something tomorrow, would you, or they, be happy that it could be a month before it was brought up in a meeting and you got a response. asked the Mayor?

The Clerk added that he may not even be in a position to give a response then as he may have to go and research the matter and report back in another month. The office could be contacted by phone, email or via a personal visit where members could ask questions and get a reply sooner.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall reminded members that council meetings were public and sometimes things could be mentioned that were confidential or not all the facts were correct.

We have to be careful what we discuss in public, she stressed.

The Mayor added that he had the authority to allow very urgent matters to go on the agenda at the meeting for discussion. The Clerk could also put items onto the agenda.

Cllr Blackhall pointed out that members could add items to the next agenda at the end of this meeting, or any time before the date of sending the agenda out.

The Clerk could report back on main themes raised by members in the intervening period at the next meeting, he suggested.

There is a danger that we would end debating a long list of ad hoc things that are better dealt with by being an agenda item, he added.

108. TO GIVE AN UPDATE ON OFWAT/WELSH WATER AND A BREAKDOWN OF THIS YEAR'S WATER QUALITY TESTING RESULTS FROM NATURAL RESOURCES WALES – CLLR. WHITEHURST

Cllr. Whitehurst updated members on the position regarding the replacement of the rising main.

He had written to Huw Irranka-Davies at the Senedd asking for clarity as to the disagreement between OFWAT and Welsh Water over funding the scheme.

He explained that OFWAT had refused special project funding, feeling that Welsh Water should undertake the work as part of their routine maintenance budget. Welsh Water wished to use some of their routine maintenance budget and additional Special Projects funding from their PR24 business plan.

The main pipe needs replacing, not repair, said Cllr. Whitehurst. It needs a newer, bigger pipe, which is not routine maintenance, it is a 'special project'.

If Welsh Water could use their routine maintenance budget they would have done it by now, he added.

Cllr. Whitehurst said he had written again to Mr Irranka-Davies and was awaiting a reply.

He said that there had been a couple of spikes in water quality readings on North and South beach but we had done well overall and there should be no impact on the Blue Flags.

These tests were only two a month however, and he was interested in looking into a Citizens Science grant to enable more tests to be carried out.

Welsh Water were concentrating on making sure that everything was working as it should while we await replies from Welsh Government and OFWAT.

The Mayor felt that Welsh Water were only putting the spotlight on Tenby because of the work done by Cllr. Whitehurst and thanked him.

Cllr. Blackhall felt the council had 'called out' OFWAT and Welsh Water's 'it's not us' responses.

Mr. Irranka-Davies now had to answer some very detailed questions, he added. Once we have those we should request another meeting with both OFWAT and Welsh Water to discuss the way forward.

Cllr. Whitehurst added that Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall had arranged a meeting between him, Cllr Joshua Beynon (PCC Cabinet member for Corporate Finance and Efficiencies) and local MP Henry Tufnell recently.

It was hard to establish who OFWAT were answerable to, Cllr. Whitehurst continued. It is both the Senedd and the UK Parliament.

Mr. Turnell was given a full briefing on the situation and he had agreed to help fight our corner, Cllr Whitehurst said.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall added that Mr Tufnell had been very impressed by the considerable detail provided by Cllr. Whitehurst.

Cllr. Phillips suggested that our MS Sam Kurtz should also be contacted, and Cllr. Whitehurst agreed to do this.

Cllr. Whitehurst also noted that OFWAT had fined Welsh Water that day over failures in service delivery.

£24 million sounds a lot, said Cllr Whitehurst. The fines can either go to the Treasury or take the form of a refund to customers.

In this case it will be a refund, but that only equates to £8 per customer over the year. This doesn't help repairs being made.

Instead OFWAT should be making Welsh Water spend the money to fix what they should be fixing, he said.

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

a. Senedd Cymru's Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector

The Clerk explained that the Welsh Government Local Government and Housing Committee were undertaking an inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the town and community council sector.

This was the fourth or fifth review undertaken by Welsh Government he could recall during his time as Clerk.

He had attended a One Voice Wales consultation last week to determine OVW's response to the inquiry but Mr. Lyn Cadwallader, CEO of OVW had also urged town and community councils to individually respond to the inquiry.

Closing date for responses was 18th October.

Cllr. Blackhall felt it was 'Groundhog Day' as he recalled at least two similar consultations during his time on the council.

I hope this is not another case of us spending time contributing, WG looking at the responses and then deciding to do nothing, he said.

It can be difficult for small councils with small budgets, but we have done a great deal of work within our community in recent years. WG should be sharing best practice, not navel gazing.

However, I am happy to work with the Clerk to look at our previous responses to similar consultations and submit something, he added.

Cllr. Phillips agreed we should send a response.

It was

RESOLVED

That Cllr. Blackhall and the Clerk be delegated to formulate and send a response to the consultation on behalf of Tenby Town Council.

b. Remembrance Sunday

The Clerk pointed out that Remembrance Day (10th November) would take place before the next meeting.

He had met with the Vicar in Charge of St Mary's Rev. Steven Brett and the chair of the Tenby branch, Royal British Legion, Mr Shane Roberts, to discuss the church and war memorial services that morning.

As Parade Marshall, Mr. Roberts was a little concerned at the time the church service concluded as it was quite a rush to get to the war memorial by 11 am.

Rev Brett said that he would start the church service at 9.50 am, rather than 10 am, and he would reduce its length to allow more time. He had also asked that the National Anthems be sung following the Laying of Wreaths rather than at the Church as he felt this was a more apt way to conclude the town's Civic Act of Remembrance.

The Mayor suggested that members meet at the De Valence at 9.30 am to process to the church.

The Clerk believed that the Legion were also planning a small service at the War Memorial at 11 am on 11th November but there were no details yet. He would let members know when this had been confirmed.

110. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Planning committee – Tuesday 12th November at 7 pm

Full council -Tuesday 12th November 2024 at 7.30 pm

111. TO PROPOSE ANY ITEM FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

To consider the condition and maintenance of Castle Hill in response to public expressions of concern – Cllr. Crockford

To consider the impact of the Second Homes surcharge on our town – Cllr. Dale

112. 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”

Proposed The Mayor, seconded Cllr. Phillips