

MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING HELD 12TH NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor Dai Morgan Mayor
Councillor Laurence Blackhall
Councillor Sam Skyrme-Blackhall
Councillor Tom Sloan
Councillor James Phillips
Councillor Laura Crockford
Councillor Duncan Whitehurst
Councillor Emma Lewis (Zoom)

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

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116. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Hallett (dispensation), Evans, Criddle and Dale. The Clerk told members that Cllr Dale does not wish his Agenda item to be carried forward to the next meeting in light of PCC's reduction of the Second Home council tax.

117. TO DISCLOSE ANY PERSONAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS LISTED BELOW

Cllr Whitehurst – any item to do with De Valence Pavilion is classed as personal not prejudicial.

118. 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

No members of the public present.

119. 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.

120. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 8TH OCTOBER 2024

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Tenby Town Council held 8th October 2024 be meeting be amended to reflect a typing error in the spelling of Henry Tufnell MP then confirmed and signed as accurate.

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

Page 58 Item 105 – Greenhill: Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall had attended a meeting with Cllr Harvey and Steven Richards-Downes of PCC to address issues surrounding the leaking roof. The Mayor had also had a separate conversation with a member of the ICT Dept regarding the leaking roof.

Page 58 Item 106 – Armed Forces Covenant: Cllr Phillips suggested fulfilling this role in line with May VE Day 80 commemorations. This will allow more time to put things in place, as it would have been tough to get it arranged before 11th November this year. The Clerk advised members that there have been a number of suggested events for the celebration of VE Day and suggested a working party be set up to encompass all.

Page 62 Item 108 – OFWAT: Cllr Whitehurst told members that he had invited an OFWAT representative to come to our next meeting or to respond via email. He was hopeful we would get answers. Our MP was also following up in London.

Water quality spikes could be problematic going forward for Blue Flag status as we had a couple of borderline bad tests. A meeting was planned for January and water quality results will be judged. He was slightly concerned but hopefully this would not be a problem as we have had worse results and still retained the Blue Flags.

122. TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS FOR OCTOBER (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 noted that expected income from lettings is considerably lower as we have not concluded lease negotiations or derived an income from the front of building.

We had also incurred additional expenditure via our support to the De Valence CIC as an interim arrangement. This arrangement is due to expire in December. This will be something that will impact on our budget planning for next year as at the moment we are earning less and spending more.

Cllr Phillips proposed acceptance of the accounts and Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall seconded.

RESOLVED

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

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

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall told members that the Poppy Trail had been very well received. She expressed thanks to the Mayor and Mayoress and Cllr Sloan. The new Poppy mascot was very successful.

She also expressed her thanks to Town Crier, Erin, in her Guides capacity for reading her poem within the service. There were over 40 representatives from Sea Cadets, Army Cadets, Guides and Brownies present along with other members of public. It was a lovely morning. Rev Brett did a lovely talk about meaning of the poppy.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall felt we were so lucky to have Erin as Town Crier she is doing a phenomenal job. For someone so young, she is so professional and a credit to the town council.

She had also attended the Smart Towns consultation meeting with fellow councillors and representatives of the Chamber of Trade.

The three National Park Authorities in Wales recently held a two-day seminar in Tenby which she had attended as a County Council appointee to PCNPA.

She thanked the Mayor and Cllrs Blackhall, Sloan and Whitehurst for attending the reception hosted by the town council at the De Valence.

Representatives attended the seminar from all over the country and there had been good feedback about our town.

She also added note of thanks to Mr. Tim Caddy for getting the War Memorial Garden ready for the Remembrance Service.

Cllr Blackhall had also attended the Smart Towns consultation meeting with other councillors. He said it was worrying that the consultants had a data set showing how much coverage we had which did not relate to our actual experience. All their assumptions were a surprise! he said. What it comes back to is, if some of these things are to be achieved, there is a need for greater infrastructure, he added. He had also been notified that the existing Tenby Wi-Fi will be upgraded on 19th November.

SEPCHN are noting that Tenby Doctors Surgery are moving to a paperless system, and an electronic ordering of prescriptions. There is an app available and details as to how to get up and running are at the surgery.

People will be able to access notes of recent consultations, book appointments etc via the app, said Cllr. Blackhall.

He recognised that this could be a challenge for a number of people and suggested we get details in the office to be able to offer support to those wanting to download the app.

The Mayor commented that Remembrance Sunday is always a special occasion and a sombre moment. It was good to see so many youth organisations present.

Chairman of the British Legion, Shane Roberts, is putting in so much work in raising awareness and he should be congratulated.

Although not appointed as a council representative, the Mayor had been honoured to be made Vice Chair of the Sea Cadet unit. Whilst not an official council position he will keep council informed of their activities.

There are issues that may need addressing in the longer term and he invited councillors to come to the unit to see what is going on to be better informed as to the good work being done there for the youth of the town.

Cllr Blackhall commented that, when the Roll of Honour was being read in church on Remembrance Sunday, he realised that the number of people from Tenby who lost their lives in the First World War equated to about 4% of population of the town

This is a staggering figure, he said. When you see all the young people stood at the War Memorial on Sunday, the fact that the majority would be gone is worth reflecting on.

When you consider this, and those that lost their lives in the Second World War and other conflicts, attending Remembrance Day is one of the most important things we do in the year, he said

The Saturday sees the focus on young people then you have the Remembrance service at church and wreath laying at the war memorial on the Sunday. This is often followed by a smaller service if the 11th of November does not fall on the Sunday, he continued.

What we don't always see is the additional logistical work marking this important time of year creates for our staff, he said. I would like to give my thanks to them and to the Mayor, Mayoress, Town Crier, Mace Bearers and those councillors able to be in attendance for one of the three events.

124. TO CONSIDER THE CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE OF CASTLE HILL IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS – CLLR. CROCKFORD

Cllr Crockford showed a picture slideshow of the condition of Castle Hill, adding that she was infuriated to compare them to pictures from the 1970s which showed how well kept it was then.

Since then, it has been subjected to decades of neglect and left to fall into ruin, she said.

There is ivy on the Castle Walls; areas have now reverted to nature with brambles everywhere. Lamp posts look unsafe, the bases of the cannons, replaced only a few

years ago, are rotting away. When mowed the waste is scattered. Bins have been taken away to such an extent that people are bringing their rubbish into the RNL station to dispose of it, she said. If action is not taken now things will be irreversible; the lichen on Prince Albert will get to point where the damage to this historic monument will be beyond repair.

Tenby is one of the most photographed towns in the country. The poor condition of Castle Hill is now visible from the Norton. I believe it's almost at crisis point and the longer it is left the more expensive it will be to be fixed, she stressed.

Cllr Blackhall agreed with the sentiment that the Hill had been neglected for years.

When TTC operated the gardens under contract to PCC we had six staff and could dedicate time to Castle Hill. Now PCC have just two staff covering an area from Amroth to Manorbier, he said.

There has been a decline in the area, with the tight local government finance contributing to this long-term neglect, he continued. However, I also feel that CADW, should shoulder some responsibility. We have raised the town walls and the condition of Prince Albert in the past but they seem to be disinterested in Tenby and forcing PCC to meet their obligations.

There is a need for action over Castle Hill but will be an incredibly expensive job. And may even require a heritage lottery grant application.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall said that, unfortunately PCC did not have the finances. Perhaps we needed to look at different ways of getting work done though volunteer offers of help and suggestions.

There are huge concerns about the walls and Mr Marc Owen, who now has responsibility for Castle Hill under the Harbour remit, does have a plan which he hopes to implement in the Spring, she explained.

However, two years ago the Clerk and I met with an officer from the authority just to look at the Prince Albert statue. Estimated costs then just to get the monument cleaned were in the region of £10,000 due to health and safety issues.

There isn't any money at PCC. It's all going to be reliant on volunteers and grant funding but I agree the need to do something.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall suggested that a working group be set up to evaluate the task.

The Clerk pointed out that there were areas of Castle Hill that were SSSI, and had to have little or no maintenance. PCC contractors had also raised safety issues over grass cutting due to the topography of the site. There were also areas where 're-wilding' was being carried out to meet Welsh Government's biodiversity policies.

He suggested Mr Owen, and Mr Neil McCarthy, PCC's Environmental Services Operational Manager should also have an input into the working group.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall felt the town is looking tired overall. Areas that were previously power washed by Time for Tenby last year are now once again green.

Sadly, PCC has no resources, no funding, agreed Cllr. Blackhall. The issues are not just on Castle Hill and they will have even less money as the council decided to reduce the Second Homes surcharge. Council tax will have to go up just to stand still.

There is a need for a group of people to work with that area and if there are areas of SSSI then there needs to be a sign explaining this, he continued. I support a working group, outside of council and the normal circles, to take on an area to get the ball working.

Cllr. Phillips felt we should write to PCC and CADW to express our concern.

He also wondered if some of the work could be undertaken as a project for those undertaking community service projects.

He further suggested that local businesses could be approached for sponsorship. There are a number not in the town that benefit from being associated with Tenby that may help, he suggested.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall agreed, pointing out that, on a recent visit to Devon she had noticed several areas that were sponsored by individuals and businesses.

She agreed with the Clerk that Mr Owen and Mr McCarthy input was required and also felt we should invite CADW to send a representative. We need them to come and listen, she said. Cllr Hallett has advised many times over the years of the damage caused to our historic buildings by plant roots.

Many people enjoy gardening, they too could come on board to 'adopt' areas to look after.

Cllr. Phillips wondered if the Prince of Wales could assist if we wrote to him and explained the neglect of his ancestor's statue. The Prince Albert monument should be shining, he stressed.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall proposed TTC set up a working group and initially invite people to bring ideas on how to improve Castle Hill. She felt Mr Owen and Mr McCarthy should also be invited to attend along with all those with an interest in Castle Hill like the RNLI, Tenby Museum and the Civic Society.

The aim is to create a plan going forward to try and arrest the decline and to improve Castle Hill over next few years.

Cllr Crockford seconded.

RESOLVED

That TTC set up a working group with the aim of creating a plan to try and arrest the decline and to improve Castle Hill over next few years.

Further that Mr Owen and Mr McCarthy, from PCC, and a representative from CADW should also be invited to attend along with all those with an interest in Castle Hill like the RNLI, Tenby Museum and the Civic Society.

125. TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF THE SECOND HOMES SURCHARGE ON OUR TOWN AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS – CLLR. DALE

This agenda item has been removed at the request of Cllr Dale.

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

The Clerk told councillors that, in the budget setting process, full council needs to sign it off at the December meeting.

A Policy and Finance meeting was required to look at the draft budget first but we had been experiencing some quorum issues with daytime Policy and Finance meetings of late.

Cllr. Blackhall felt that, as discussions were likely to be detailed, it would be more prudent to have an evening meeting of the committee. It was agreed to call it for 26th November.

Cllr Randell Izaiah Thomas-Turner, of Haverfordwest Town Council, would like to come to the next meeting and outline the Anti Racist Action Plan recently adopted by PCC in the hope that TTC will also adopt it.

The Christmas meal will be on 17th December. Numbers attending and a £10 deposit as soon possible please.

127. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Planning committee – Tuesday 10th December at 7 pm

Full council -Tuesday 10th December 2024 at 7.30 pm

128. TO PROPOSE ANY ITEM FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

None proposed.

129. 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”