

COEDFFRANC COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council Meeting held on 6th January 2016 at Carnegie Hall.

Attendance: Cllrs APH Davies, DK Davies, HR Richards, P Bebell, H Bebell, A Wingrave, JS Jones, M Harvey, P Davies, J Thomas, I Whitehead Ross, K Whitehead Ross, P Fellows.

361: To meet with Aled Evans Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning regarding the possible closure of Skewen Library.

Mr Aled Evans, Mr Wayne John and Mr Mark Fisher were in attendance. Mr Evans informed the Members that NPTCBC are looking for proposals regarding future library services. Mr Evans reported that there had been good news regarding the budget settlement from the Welsh Government, which provided a bit more scope within NPTCBC's budget. Mr Evans reported that the Education Budget was being cut by 10% in its non-delegated functions. It was reported the NPTCBC are encouraging the library service to look into digital provision where possible and appropriate. The Members then asked questions. It was asked if the financial settlement was favourable would the service need to be cut. Mr Evans informed the Members that would be a political decision. It was noted that Skewen Library is in a Communities First area, and that should play a part in the decision making process when NPTCBC are considering if Skewen Library should be closed. Ian Whitehead Ross informed Mr Evans that grants would be available for Pontardawe Library because it fell into a rural area, and asked if NPTCBC would look into obtaining grants. Mr Evans said that he would look into obtaining grants. It was queried if the current library building would be given over Freehold to the Community Council if they did decide to take over the library service in its current building. Mr Evans reported that NPTCBC had not looked favourably on this type of transaction, and that NPTCBC would want to Lease the building to whom ever took the service over. It was queried what percentage of the paid staff NPTCBC would be prepared to pay. Mr Evans reported that NPTCBC only have a legal obligation to pay 50% of the salary for one member of staff. Cllr A Wingrave queried if NPTCBC would pay the full costs for the 2 members of staff to remain in post. Mr Evans could not answer this query. Cllr DK Davies reported that if the Mobile Library Service was closed down, the shortfall in the budget would only be in the region of £17,000, and if grants could be obtained for the library service in Pontardawe, this shortfall could be covered. Cllr A Wingrave reported that there were four possible options for the Community Council to consider if the closure were to be announced, which are: Move the Library to Carnegie Hall, Lease the current Library Building, pay a contribution of the costs to NPTCBC to continue to provide the library service themselves, or for the Community Council to take no action if the costs are too prohibitive. Mr Evans could not provide any information regarding what level of contribution the Community Council would have to pay for NPTCBC to keep the library service in Skewen. Mark Fisher reported that Volunteers are only good for as long as they want to be there, and if they don't want to turn up they don't. Mark reported that whilst enthusiasm with volunteers is high to start, it inevitably always fades away. Mark stated that the best option would be to have two paid members of staff to run the service in the way it is supposed to be run.

The Clerk informed Mr Evans and reminded the Members that the Community Councils staff budget would be rising by approximately £30,000 per annum due to the changes in legislation coming into force this year. The Clerk reported that the Community Council's staff budget does not have the capacity to pay for the two librarian staff currently employed by NPTCBC.

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The Clerk informed Mr Evans that it would not be possible for the Community Council to put any proposal forward until they are fully aware of what contribution NPTCBC are prepared to pay for the Liberian's salaries, and that NPTCBC would need to provide specifics regarding costs on any Lease Agreement before a budget could be formalised. It was noted that Coedffranc Community Council's Finance Committee will meet on the 13th January 2016 to make their recommendations to full Council, and that Full Council will meet on the 20th January 2016 to approve the budget and set the precept.

362: Apologies: Cllrs J Davies, B Richards, HC Clarke, R Didcote.

363: To receive Declarations of Interest.

Cllr P Fellows declared an interest in item 366 and did not take part in the discussions. Cllrs I Whitehead Ross and K Whitehead Ross declared an interest in item 361.

Additionally, it was noted that no Member that had declared an interest in the last meeting took any part in the approval of the minutes for that meeting.

364: To approve and sign the Minutes of Previous meetings: -

a) Council Meeting held on 16th December 2016

Approved as a true and accurate record.

365: Matters arising from the minutes. (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

The Clerk reported that the Section 106 money for Llandarcy has been received. Additionally the Clerk reported that through negotiations between the Clerk, Cllr H Bebell and St Modwen, £12,000 has been secured for play equipment in Crymlyn Burrows Park. The money has been provided by the Contractors working on the University Site.

The Clerk reported that NPTCVS will be attending the Council Meeting on 2nd March 2016 instead of 6th January 2016 due to Aled Evans attendance.

366: To receive and approve the accounts schedule for payments and to select two account numbers for a full explanation at the next meeting.

Accounts were received in the sum of £3,025.60. Account No's 491 and 492 were selected at random for an explanation by the clerk at the next meeting. Copies of the accounts were circulated and the Clerk responded to member's queries.

367: To receive an explanation from the Clerk concerning Account No's: 457 and 458.

The Clerk provided explanations, which were accepted by the Council.

368: Planning Applications:

P2015/1122 – 2 No. Single electricity poles (Overhead Lines (Exemption) England and Wales) Regulations 2009. Land at Jersey Marine. (Applicant – Western Power Distribution, EHV Projects, Ffynnon Menter, Phoenix Way, Llansamlet, SA7 9HW).

No observations.

Late Application: P2014/0958 – Installation of vehicular security barrier. Visteon Automotive Systems, Fabian Way, Swansea. (Applicant – Mr Roy Thomas, Bay Studios, Fabian Way, Swansea).

No observations.

Cllrs I Whitehead Ross and K Whitehead Ross left the meeting at this point.

369: To receive a report from any Member concerning meetings at which he or she represented the Council.

None.

370: To discuss/decide if the Community Council should continue to Lease Caewathan Playing Fields as they have not been used for sports fixtures for several years, and there is a review break in the Lease in April 2016.

The Clerk reported on the lack of use of Caewathan Playing Fields for sports fixtures. The Clerk reported that there are also 3 trees which need to be felled on the site at the Community Council's expense. The Members discussed the issue.

It was suggested that the pitch could be used for sports training. It was also suggested that the Clerk should contact NPTCBC to find out if they would be prepared to hand over the Freehold Title for the land to the Community Council.

Resolved: That the Clerk should contact NPTCBC to find out if they would be prepared to hand over the Freehold Title for the land to the Community Council. That the Council should contact the local football teams to find out if they would be interested in using Caewathan for training sessions.

Cllr HR Richards left the meeting at this point.

371: To receive a letter from Skewen Cricket Club regarding a request to create a second cricket field.

The Members discussed the issue. It was suggested that the Clerk should contact the NPT Football Association to find out if any local teams would like to use the football pitch before any decisions are taken. It was also suggested that the Council should contact the Sports Council for Wales to see if they are aware of any teams that might be interested in using the pitch. It was suggested that the Clerk should contact the Cricket Club to ask what if any cost implications would be expected of the Community Council.

Resolved: That the Clerk should contact the Cricket Club to ask what if any cost implications would be expected of the Community Council. That the Council should contact the NPT Football Association and the Sports Council for Wales to see if they are aware of any teams interested in using the pitch. It was agreed that the Members would look at the information again once the additional information requested had been received.

372: To receive information from the Welsh Government regarding a Road Safety Review across trunk road in Wales.

The information was noted by the Members.

373: To receive/respond if appropriate, to a Consultation Document from NPTCBC regarding the "Proposed changes to the way that Social Services delivers day opportunities for Adults".

The information was noted by the Members.

374: To discuss/decide if the Community Council should purchase a new tractor.

The Clerk reported on the issues currently being experienced with the old tractor and suggested that the Council should consider purchasing a new tractor.

The Members discussed the issue.

Resolved: That permission is granted, and that the Clerk should provide quotes at a future meeting.

375: Correspondence.

a) The Clerk informed Members that NPTCBC Mayoral Ball will be held on Friday 4th March 2016 if anyone was interested in purchasing tickets.

The information was noted by the Members.

Emergency item

a) To resolve to exclude the public for the following item pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and Paragraph 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Resolved: That the press and public are excluded.

b) To receive a request for a staff loan

Resolved: That permission is granted.

**Cllr H Bebell
Chair**