Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council

held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Milford Haven

on Monday, 19th September, 2016 at 6:30 pm

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PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS)

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor C. A. Sharp)

Councillors: J. W. Cole R. D. Evans

E. R. Harries M. P. Rickard

G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons)

93. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. E. Byrne, A. W. Eden, R. Gray, S. G. Joseph, D. R. Sinnett, Mrs. Y. G. Southwell and Mrs. C. T. Williams. Apologies for absence were not received from Councillors A. H. Miles, Mrs. J. Hawkins, M. J. Norman and Mrs. C. Stevens.

94. TO RECEIVE MR. LYN CADWALLADER BA (HONS), PGDipHsg, DBA, PGDipLOPS, MCIH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ONE VOICE WALES:

The Mayor welcomed Mr. L. Cadwallader, Chief Executive, One Voice Wales, to the meeting.

Mr. Cadwallader thanked Members for the invitation to the meeting. He spoke about his links with Pembrokeshire. He advised that before taking up his post as Chief Executive of One Voice Wales he had 19 years’ experience of local government and the housing sector.

Mr. Cadwallader explained that one of his duties is to raise the profile of Community and Town Councils.

One Voice Wales was established in 2004 and is the national representative organisation for Community and Town Councils throughout Wales. The vision subscribed by One Voice Wales is: “Working with local councils in Wales to shape places communities want to live in”. One Voice Wales aims to support Community and Town Councils in achieving this vision and has adopted the following Mission Statement to guide its work:

“To represent the interests of Community and Town Councils; raise awareness and understanding of this primary tier of government; and work collaboratively with our partners to ensure the sector contributes fully to the goal of developing dynamic and sustainable communities in Wales”.

Mr. Cadwallader said that more than 560 of the 735 Community and Town Councils in Wales are members of One Voice Wales. This has grown over the last 4 or 5 years when it was just over 500. Only 5% of Councils in Pembrokeshire are members of One Voice Wales.

One Voice Wales services have expanded to meet the needs of its members.

Member councils are able to contact One Voice Wales, via their Development Officer, to receive legal advice on all matters relevant to their council. Increasingly, answers to these queries can be given by One Voice Wales’ staff but, when this is not possible, a Service Level Agreement is in place with the National Association of Local Councils to provide legal advice.

In addition to legal advice, One Voice Wales deals with a wide variety of other queries across the entire scope of a council’s business, e.g. financial, human resource/

organisational, planning, standing orders, etc. Over 95% of queries raised are dealt within 24 hours; 4% of queries are dealt within 1 to 3 days and 1% within a fortnight.

One Voice Wales provides training courses and seminars at subsidised rates and supported by a bursary scheme for the smaller councils. The modules on offer are continually being expanded as One Voice Wales responds to the needs of its members.

The Chief Executive and other staff meet with partners on a regular basis with a view to maintaining strong and mutually beneficial relationships. Key partners for One Voice Wales include the Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), National Association of Local Council (England), Society of Local Council Clerks, Wales Council for Voluntary Associations (WCVA), Planning Aid Wales (PAW), the Independent Remuneration Panel and the Centre for Regeneration Excellence (CREW).

One Voice Wales represents community and town councils on the Partnership Council for Wales, sitting alongside the Welsh Government, unitary authorities, national park authorities and the police and fire authorities.

One Voice Wales has a Chief Executive, a part-time Deputy Chief Executive Officer, two full time Administrative Officers, and three part-time Development Officers.

One Voice Wales is governed directly by its member councils. The membership decides key policy and constitutional matters at the organisation’s Annual General Meeting. There are 16 Area Committees established on a geographical basis and each member council can nominate two representatives to sit on the appropriate Area Committee. The Area Committees are a key means by which the officers of One Voice Wales liaise with the membership at a local level. Quarterly meetings are held which provide an opportunity for specific topics to be addressed by guest speakers, common issues to be discussed and for feedback/comments on national developments.

There is a Larger Local Councils Committee which meets quarterly. A larger Council is defined as one which represents 3,000 plus households. This meeting is supported by all One Voice Wales officers.

One Voice Wales has its own website with a members’ area as an information resource.

Mr. Cadwallader said that Community and Town Councillors are committed to their communities and are an under-valued Wales-wide resource. Through One Voice Wales, closer connections need to be made with Welsh Government departments.

In the future there will be an increased expectation on Community and Town Councils’ resources by Unitary Authorities, and current arrangements for partnership working between both tiers of local government need to be further enhanced and reflected in joint Charter arrangements that establish a firm foundation for effective working.

In the future Community and Town Councils will be expected to take on more responsibilities and this implies a greater need for enhanced relationships with the Unitary Authorities. The Well Being of Further Generations Act will mean increased and different duties for Unitary Authorities and Community and Town Councils which will likely create need for policy and strategy to be informed by local knowledge and evidence-based policy making.

There are 8,000 Councillors making a difference in their community providing £36.5 million of voluntary contribution each year to Welsh society.

£45 million is invested in communities every year in Wales by Community and Town Councils. The number of people represented by Community and Town Councils in Wales has been steadily increasing, with over 2.1 million people already benefiting from their work.

Mr. Cadwallader concluded his presentation. He then answered questions posed by Members.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Cadwallader for attending this evening’s meeting. Mr. Cadwallader was asked whether he would attend future Council meetings to keep Members informed of developments. Mr. Cadwallader said he would be pleased to do this.

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