Minutes of a Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council

held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Milford Haven

on Monday, 25th April, 2016 at 7:00 pm

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PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor S. G. Joseph)

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

Councillors: A. E. Byrne J. W. Cole

A. W. Eden R. D. Evans

E. R. Harries A. H. Miles

M. P. Rickard C. A. Sharp

D. R. Sinnett Mrs. Y. G. Southwell

Mrs. C. Stevens Mrs. C. T. Williams

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

TO RECEIVE MRS. L. HAMBIDGE, HEAD OF HOUSING COMMISSIONING AND MR. D. FITZSIMON, HEAD OF PLANNING, PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, TO DISCUSS JOINT PLANNING AND WORKING WITH THE COUNTY COUNCIL – THE ROLE OF LINK OFFICERS:

The Mayor, Councillor S. G. Joseph, thanked Members for their attendance and welcomed Mrs. L. Hambidge, Head of Housing Commissioning, and Mr. D. Fitzsimon, Head of Planning, Pembrokeshire County Council, to the Meeting.

Mrs. L. Hambidge thanked Members for the invitation to attend the Meeting. She said that the Pembrokeshire County Council wishes to build on improving working relationships between Pembrokeshire County Council and Town Councils. As it is the first Meeting, it will be more about Members asking questions and the Officers from the Pembrokeshire County Council responding to them.

Mrs. Hambidge said that the Officers are not there to discuss detailed operational issues, but are present in their capacity as senior officers of the local authority to work with Members regarding general strategic issues rather than detail.

The Officers hope that as a relationship is developed, they will be a resource to help Councillors decide on how they want to take Milford Haven as a town into the future. There are a lot of changes anticipated in Local Government and the Officers will assist in helping Members plan and take the town forward.

Mr. D. Fizsimon stated that both he and Mrs. Hambidge have particular skills in devising strategies and will assist Members in moving forward and helping to devise Milford Haven’s town action plan. They will guide Members but will not dominate the Meetings in any way.

Mr. Fitzsimon said that the Officers are a resource and it is very much up to Members as to how they are utilised. They are not present to discuss operational issues, but if there are particular concerns that Members would like them to feedback to the necessary Head of Service, they would do this.

Mr. Fitzsimon said that Mrs. Hambidge had written the following questions that Members need to be asking themselves: What are the key issues facing the Town Council moving forward? What priority do Councillors want to give to each of those issues that they have identified? How do Members want to shape Milford Haven Town Council for the future? What needs to be done to address all those issues?

The Mayor said that he believed that this Council could benefit from training initiatives, such as planning, that the Pembrokeshire County Council gives to County Councillors. He asked whether this training would be available to Milford Haven Town Councillors.

Mrs. Hambidge advised that the Pembrokeshire County Council would be very keen to involve both Town and Community Councillors in training to obtain skills for the future.

Mr. Fitzsimon said that Members of this Council could be provided with basic planning training.

A Member asked how can this Council change its structure if Members do not know the demands and the dictates of future Local Government reorganisation.

Mr. Fitzsimon said that doing nothing and waiting is not really an option. Change is coming and the only uncertainty is the extent of that change. There has to be a future plan for Milford Haven irrespective of whether the main Authority is Dyfed or Pembrokeshire County Council.

A Member stated that it appeared that some Community Councils may disappear and there may be an amalgamation of others. He did not believe that Milford Haven Town Council would cease to exist because it is one of the larger Community Councils, but other Community Councils might be encompassed into this Council and therefore the membership would vary considerably because other smaller Community Councils would expect an input and it would be difficult for this Council to plan ahead.

Mr. Fitzsimon said that the indications are that there should be fewer County, Town and Community Councils. If County Councils or Town Councils amalgamate it does not mean that any work carried out in the interim period is abortive work.

Mr. Fitzsimon concluded by saying that he and Mrs. Hambidge would help and guide Members.

The Mayor said that he wanted to reassure Members that if they could have chosen any two Officers they could not have done any better than Mrs. Hambidge and Mr. Fitzsimon. The Mayor thanked the Officers for their attendance and they left the Meeting at this point.

There was then a 5 minute recess.

PRAYERS:

Prayers were led by the Mayor’s Chaplain, Mrs. N. Joseph.

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The formal Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council then commenced.

354. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. Gray, Mrs. J. Hawkins and M. J. Norman.

355. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 29TH MARCH, 2016:

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of

the Milford Haven Town Council held on the

29th March, 2016, be accepted and that

they be signed by the Mayor as a true record.

356. INFORMATION FROM THE MAYOR:

(a) Mayor’s Engagements:

Members were informed of the Mayor’s Engagements since 14th April, 2016.

19th April - Opened the newly refurbished Lord Nelson Hotel in

Hamilton Terrace.

24th April - Anzac Day Service at Milford Haven. *(Attended by Deputy Mayor)*

25th April - Landing Craft Service and HMS Rosemary Service

at Milford Haven Cemetery.

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REPORTS ON COMMITTEES

357. TOWN REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION TEAM:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Regeneration and Environmental Action Team held on the 7th April, 2016, were moved by the Mayor, Councillor S. G. Joseph.

(a) Minute 322 (f) – Former Motorworld Building:

A Member referred to the activity on social media in relation to the Cabinet Meeting held earlier that day. He then read out the following extract from the Cabinet Minutes published that afternoon, which were the official record of that Meeting.

*Cabinet Minutes 219: “That the Director of Development be authorised to progress the demolition of buildings on the site of 70A to 80A Charles Street, Milford Haven, with funding from the Town Centre Loan Fund and that the costs be recovered when the property is passed to the named developer.*

*Reason for Decision: To address a long term town centre regeneration objective”.*

The Member expressed concern that there does not seem to be parity between the official Minutes and the comments made on social media.

According to the comments made on social media, it appeared that Councillor Keith Lewis had said at the Cabinet Meeting that the land would be sold to Pembrokeshire Housing, and would be totally residential and that there would be no other shops or units in that building.

Another Member said that these buildings are a site of strategic importance for the town in terms of maintaining the retail developments in Charles Street. He was concerned that the Agenda papers for the Cabinet Meeting reported that there had been a Meeting with representatives from Milford Haven Town Council. The papers stated that it was understood by the Pembrokeshire County Council that this Council was going to discuss this issue further, and there has been no feedback from the Town Council since that Meeting and requests for a position statement have, as yet, remained unanswered.

The Mayor apologised for not bringing this matter to Members’ attention. He said that he has spoken to a number of County Councillors about this matter and has had a great deal of involvement with that building over the years. He had not seen the webcast of this morning’s Meeting and was not able to attend the Meeting as he was carrying out his Mayoral duties.

Members considered it very important that this Council makes a very clear statement regarding the importance of that site in terms of mixed use development and maintaining a strong retail presence in the town.

RESOLVED THAT a letter, accompanied by any

relevant documentation, be written to the Leader

of the Cabinet stating:

(i) that 70A to 80A Charles Street is a site of strategic

importance not only to the Town Council but also

to the people of the town in terms of maintaining

the retail development in Charles Street;

(ii) this Council has asked Pembrokeshire County Council

[through its Town Regeneration Environmental Action

Team (TREAT)] whether an indoor market could be

incorporated into that site, and is open to further

discussions on this important development in the

heart of Charles Street;

(iii) the Town Council, therefore, seeks an urgent

clarification on whether 70A to 80A Charles Street

has been or will be sold to Pembrokeshire Housing;

(iv) the importance of this building to the future viability

of Charles Street is to be stressed.

RESOLVED THAT, subject to the above, the Minutes

of the Meeting of the Town Regeneration Environmental

Action Team held on the 7th April, 2016, be approved

and adopted.

358. PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Public Works and Planning Committee held on the

11th April, 2016, were moved by the Chairman, Councillor E. R. Harries.

(a) Minute 330 (b) – Removal of Green Waste:

A Member asked why the staff did not use compost bins to dispose of green waste at the Cemetery.

The Chairman, Councillor E. R. Harries, explained that this particular subject has been debated endlessly and other possibilities investigated. It is absolutely essential that this Council is seen to be disposing of waste material in a legal and appropriate way and the Committee, therefore, is recommending this course of action.

(b) Minute 331 (b) – Planning Application No. 15/1231/PA – Proposed Residential Development comprising 117, Houses, Flats and Bungalows at Thornton, Milford Haven:

A Member pointed out that this resolution states that ‘the following points are to be added to the Chairman’s observations’. He said that the Chairman’s points are not recorded in the Minutes. He asked the Chairman to draw Members’ attention to them.

The Chairman then read out the following:

(i) The development appears to lack amenities such as a shop, Post Office and play areas. It is distant from infant and junior schools and has no public transport. It should also be noted that the existing infant and junior schools are oversubscribed. This development will generate a large adult population and the absence of a polling station in the Steynton area is significant.

(ii) A wooden boundary fence is easily scaled and breached. There is need for a more substantial boundary to safeguard the secondary school premises.

(iii) Measures need to be in place to ensure that vehicular access on to the Thornton Road is substantial and is not permitted through the Westhill Estate.

(iv) The application contends that easy access is available from the site to the

secondary school. It does not appear to demonstrate that.

(v) The application contends that the site is in easy access of the town centre. In point of fact it could be contended that the site is remote from the town centre.

(c) Planning Application No. 15/1330/PA – Siting of Single Mobile Classroom at the Meads Infant and Nursery School, Priory Road, Milford Haven:

RESOLVED THAT the following observation

be added to the recommendations made

by the Public Works and Planning Committee:

(iii) The Milford Haven Town Council considers

that traffic and parking issues in this area

need to be alleviated and asks the

Pembrokeshire County Council for a

sustainable plan to address these concerns.

(d) Minute 333 - Closure of Pointfields Path, Hakin, Milford Haven:

A Member asked whether the recommendation made by the Public Works and Planning Committee could be strengthened in order to show that this Council is committed to trying to get this issue moved forward. He proposed calling upon

all interested parties to get round the table again, facilitated by the Mayor, if necessary, and develop a plan to move this issue forward.

The Chairman, Councillor E. R. Harries, advised that he had asked for this particular issue to be put on the Agenda, as he gets approached virtually daily by people who have used that footpath for many years and there appears to be absolutely no progress whatsoever in trying to resolve this very difficult problem. He suggested, and the Member agreed, that, initially, it would be more appropriate to get as much background information about this issue.

(e) Bus Shelter at Market Square:

A Member said that there is a CCTV camera situated near to the bus shelter and questioned why it has not been utilised to catch the vandals.

The Member referred to the inclement weather conditions on the Market Square, and said that removing this bus shelter would have a detrimental effect on

people of the town.

RESOLVED THAT, subject to the above, the

Minutes of the Meeting of the Public Works

and Planning Committee held on the

11th April, 2016, be approved and adopted.

359. STANDING ORDERS SUB-COMMITTEE:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on the 14th April, 2016, were moved by the Mayor, Councillor S. G. Joseph.

(a) Minute 338 (i) Standing Order 1h – “Photographing, recording, broadcasting or

transmitting the proceedings of a Meeting by any means is not permitted

without the Council’s prior written consent”.

A Member made an amendment that Resolution (iii) – which states that “Meetings may be filmed/and or audio recorded in accordance with the Council’s protocol for filming and audio recording at public Meetings. Copies of the Protocol will be displayed in the Meeting room” – should not be implemented.

It was pointed out that according to this Council’s Standing Orders it is not

possible to move an amendment that negates the original resolution.

It was proposed and seconded that a vote should be taken on Resolution (iii) as recommended by the Standing Orders Sub-Committee.

10 voted in favour of Resolution (iii) with 5 against.

RESOLVED THAT:

(i) Standing Order 1h reads “Meetings may be

filmed and/or audio recorded in accordance

with the Council’s protocol for filming and

audio recording at public Council Meetings.

Copies of the Protocol will be displayed in the

Meeting room”;

(ii) the draft proposals be adopted with the

exception of the date shown in the Protocol

which should be April 2016 and not April 2015.

(b) Minute 338 (e) – Meeting Structure:

A Member asked whether there would still be a Standing Orders Sub-Committee if it was agreed to hold two Full Councils a month.

Another Member replied that the intention was that all Committees that the Council currently has, such as TREAT, Standing Orders and Social Media should remain. The decision to have two Full Councils a month is to speed up the decision process.

A Member said that this had been tried before and it only lasted 3 or 4 Meetings.

Another Member said that in his opinion this is a retrograde step. There is no

evidence whatsoever to suggest that the present procedure is lacking in any way. A neighbouring Council adopted the suggested procedure and has found it was not successful and has reverted back to the procedure that this

Council is currently following.

The Member also expressed concern at the anticipated changes in local Government in Wales and how they would impact on the Milford Haven Town Council. He said that in the event of a massive reorganisation taking place, and something like Dyfed is revived, there will not be anything to fill the gap between that new authority and the Town and Community Councils as there was in the reorganisation of 1974 and he believed that a much greater responsibility will be placed on authorities such as this Town Council. He did not think it appropriate to readjust the situation and then find out that there is a set up that is totally inadequate to deal with extra responsibilities. He hoped that this would not be set up, even for a trial period.

Another Member questioned how can there be Chairs of the Public Works and Planning and the Finance and General Purposes Committees when there are no longer Public Works and Planning and Finance and General Purposes Committees.

A Member pointed out that the Standing Orders Sub-Committee acknowledged that there needs to be decisions and work undertaken outside of the Standing Committees. The Chair of the Public Works and Planning Committee looks at planning applications and the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is also involved in making decisions and involved in activity outside of the Committee Meetings.

A Member made an amendment that “all Councillors be encouraged to attend all Town Council Meetings and civic events” should be added as number (v) of the list of resolutions.

It was proposed that a vote be taken on resolutions (i) to (v). However, some Members supported the amendment which would be number (v) but not resolutions numbered (i) to (iv).

It was proposed and seconded that a vote be taken on resolutions (i) to

(iv) separately and number (v) should be taken as a standalone recommendation.

10 voted for resolutions (i) to (v) with 5 against.

Councillors A. E. Byrne and E. R. Harries wished to have their names recorded as having voted against this resolution.

A vote was taken on the recommendation (v) which was carried.

RESOLVED THAT the following recommendation

be added to the resolutions made by the

Standing Orders Sub-Committee.

(v) all Councillors be encouraged to attend all

Town Council Meetings and civic events.

RESOLVED THAT, subject to the above, the

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Orders

Sub-Committee held on the 14th April, 2016,

be approved and adopted.

360. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on the 14th April, 2016, were moved by the Immediate Past Chairman, Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open), LL.B (Hons) as the Chair, Councillor Mrs. Y. G. Southwell was not present at that Meeting and the Vice-Chair, Councillor R. Gray, who chaired the Meeting is not present at this evening’s Meeting.

(a) Minute 343 – Minutes of the Meeting of the Public Events Sub-Committee held on 11th April, 2016 – Minute 325 (a) Arrangements for the Celebration Picnic for the Queen’s 90th Birthday:

The Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Public Events Sub-Committee, Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS, said that he had spoken to the Clerk earlier that day and she has been waiting for information regarding marshals and road closures for the event for some time. He said that he believed that the Council has to be prepared for a backup plan and asked for plenary powers for the Public Events Sub-Committee to discuss this as there was not a scheduled Meeting of the Full Council until after the event.

RESOLVED THAT the Public Events Sub-Committee

is given plenary powers to move this forward and,

if needed, to put a backup plan into operation.

(b) Minute 345 – Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report:

A Member said he thought it was a very important point to note that the Independent Remuneration Panel has made the recommendation that Councils can make a payment of £100 to its Members to allow as many people as possible to become Town Councillors as not everybody can afford to absorb the costs associated with being a Councillor.

The Member explained that the allowance is made annually to a serving Councillor and will be paid shortly after the Annual General Meeting. The allowance is subject to tax and the Councillor needs to deal with that on an individual basis. The allowance is pro rata to any Councillors who join following a co-option or an election and also any Councillor who resigns or retires and they would be expected to return a proportion of that allowance.

The Member said that Council policy has to be that all Councillors are entitled to the allowance, or all Councillors are not entitled to it. Therefore, based on the recommendation that all Councillors are entitled to the allowance, the onus is on individual Councillors who wish not to take the allowance to notify the Clerk.

A vote be taken on *Determination 46 (i) – the Finance and General Purposes Committee recommends that a payment of £100 be made to each Member of the Council.*

8 voted for the recommendation with 5 against.

Councillor Mrs. C. T. Williams abstained from voting on the principle that she believes that Councillors should be expected not to receive the allowance.

Councillor A. E. Byrne wished it recorded that he had voted this resolution.

A vote was then taken on *Determination 47 (i) – the Chairs of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Public Works and Planning Committee are to receive an additional payment of £100 for their extra responsibilities.*

6 voted for the recommendation with 4 against.

RESOLVED THAT, subject to the above, the Minutes

of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes

Committee held on the 14th April, 2016, be

approved and adopted.

361. EGNEDOL – DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (DNS) PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION:

Members gave consideration to documentation from the Project Manager, Egnedol Limited regarding the proposed Egnedol developments at Blackbridge and Waterston.

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open), LL.B (Hons) said that as the local Member he wanted to encourage everyone to look at this pre-application consultation and take up the opportunity to pass comments by Friday, 20th May.

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open), LL.B (Hons) said that he was reserving comment as this pre-application consultation may come before him as a County Councillor and he wanted to be able to speak freely without predetermination.

A Member said that he had in the past read a number of environmental assessment documents, and in his opinion this document merely gives details of a variety of processes and does not cover environmental assessments.

RESOLVED THAT the document be received.

The Mayor, Councillor S. G. Joseph, and Councillors D. R. Sinnett and G. Woodham MBA (Open), LL.B (Hons) took no part in the discussion or voting on this issue.

362. REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR C. A. SHARP REGARDING THE MILFORD HAVEN TWINNING ASSOCIATION:

Members discussed a Report made by Councillor C. A. Sharp, the Council’s representative on the Milford Haven Twinning Association.

Councillor Sharp said that he had produced this report as there had been some questions asked regarding how the grant paid to the Milford Haven Twinning Association is expended.

In his Report Councillor Sharp gave a brief summary of Twinning and an estimated breakdown of costs for entertaining Twinning delegates from Uman in June.

Councillor Sharp said that he would give a breakdown of the costs after the visit.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor Sharp’s report be

received.

A Member commended Councillor Sharp for the production of this report. The Member said that he believed it would be extremely helpful if those who represent this Council on Outside Bodies could write similar reports because it is an excellent way of keeping the Council informed and assists in other decisions, such as the Precept. He recommended that all Councillors who represent this Council on outside bodies take this as a way forward.

363. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE WATERFRONT GALLERY,

MILFORD HAVEN:

An application for funding a specialist exhibition and a full one-day workshop in ceramic modelling at Milford Haven School was received from the Waterfront Gallery, Milford Haven.

A Member proposed that no donation be given. This proposal was not seconded.

RESOLVED THAT:

(i) a donation of £400 be made for the Workshop

fee, subject to funding not being provided

from other sources;

(ii) this sum is to be taken from the General

Donations budget.

*This donation is to be made in accordance with the Milford Haven Town Council’s powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.*

Councillor J. W. Cole wished it recorded that he had voted against this decision.

364. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES:

(a) Two Representatives to be appointed on the Advisory Committee of the Hakin and Hubberston Community Centre:

RESOLVED THAT Councillors A. E. Byrne and R. Gray

be appointed as this Council’s representatives on the

Advisory Committee of the Hakin and the Hubberston

Community Centre.

365. ELECTION OF MAYOR 2016 - 2017:

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open), LL.B (Hons) proposed and Councillor M. P. Rickard M. J. Norman seconded that Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS be elected as Mayor of Milford Haven for the year 2016 - 2017.

366. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2016 -2017:

Councillors C. A. Sharp and Mrs. C. Stevens submitted their names for consideration as Deputy Mayor/Mayor Elect for the year 2016-2017.

RESOLVED THAT:

(i) as in previous years, the voting for the election of the

Deputy Mayor/Mayor Elect for the year 2016-2017 will

be by secret ballot and with a clear majority;

(ii) the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes

Committee, Councillor Mrs. Y. G. Southwell and the

Chairman of the Public Works and Planning Committee,

Councillor E. R. Harries, be appointed as scrutineers.

The secret ballot took place which resulted in Councillor C. A. Sharp receiving 8 votes, and Mrs. C. Stevens 7 votes.

RESOLVED THAT:

(iii) Councillor C. A. Sharp be elected as Deputy Mayor/Mayor

Elect for the year 2016-2017.

Councillor Mrs. C. Stevens agreed to propose and Councillor R. D. Evans to second Councillor C. A. Sharp as Deputy Mayor/Mayor Elect at the Annual General Meeting to be held on 16th May, 2016.

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