Minutes of a Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council

held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Milford Haven

on Thursday, 7th September, 2017 at 7:00 pm

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PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor C. A. Sharp)

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor R. D. Gray)

Councillors: T. Davies W. D. Elliott BA QTS

Miss K. Gray E. R. Harries

B. T. Jenkins A. H. Miles

Mrs. T. Olin M. P. Rickard

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

Mrs. L. E. Turner Mrs. C. T. Williams

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

Youth

Representatives: Miss A. Coaker Miss B. Roberts

County Councillor S. G. Joseph was present for part of the meeting.

TO RECEIVE MS. J. ASHLEY-JONES, SENIOR DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND LINK OFFICER WITH THE MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL:

The Mayor, Councillor C. A. Sharp, welcomed Ms. J. Ashley-Jones, Senior Development Officer, Pembrokeshire County Council, and this Council’s Link Officer, to the meeting.

Ms. Ashley-Jones thanked the Mayor for inviting her to the meeting. She said that her role with the Pembrokeshire County Council was in marketing, communications and business development. As part of that role Ms. Ashley-Jones volunteered to be the Link Officer with Milford Haven.

Ms. Ashley-Jones proceeded to give some personal background information, touching upon her Commonwealth Games appearance as a Judo competitor representing Wales. Ms. Ashley-Jones spoke of her passion for Milford Haven and fervent belief that her position as Link Officer could help to build a strong relationship between the Milford Haven Town and Pembrokeshire County Councils.

The Link Officer initiative commenced in 2016 as part of the “Pembrokeshire County Council is Changing” Agenda. A majority of Councils across the county have signed up to the initiative, which is still being piloted. Following the Agenda, there was increased recognition of the mutual benefits that could accrue from a more collaborative approach to planning and the delivery of a number of services at a local level.

Ms. Ashley-Jones advised that she had volunteered to fill the vacancy left by Ms. L. Hambidge, who retired towards the end of last year. Ms. Ashley-Jones advised that Mr. D. Fitzsimon, as one of the two original Link Officers for Milford Haven, is extremely busy at this present time but that he very much retains his enthusiasm and commitment for the Link Officer role.

Ms. Ashley-Jones called upon Members to consider a series of key questions relating to the main issues facing Milford Haven and this Council: what do Members feel to be the most important issues? How do Members want to shape the Council for the future? What needs to be done to address these issues, and how can the Milford Haven Town Council and Pembrokeshire County Council work together as a stable and forward-thinking unit?

Ms. Ashley-Jones stressed that the Link Officers are present in relation to their general strategic role. The Link Officers are a resource to help with thinking, to provide constructive challenges, to share their experiences and knowledge and to provide advice and guidance when required.

All Town Councils are being encouraged on a voluntary basis to align with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The sustainable development principles – long-term collaboration, involvement, integration, and prevention – should provide the framework for the joint working agenda between the Pembrokeshire County Council and Town (and City) Councils. The Link Officers can not only assist with the development of a Draft Charter Plan but also a Town Action Plan.

Ms. Ashley-Jones touched upon the issues impacting people such as appropriate housing and health concerns, and she spoke of the challenges that await our community and the changing future for Milford Haven and Pembrokeshire.

Ms. Ashley-Jones urged Members to use her as a resource, and anticipated the building of a strong and positive relationship.

Ms. Ashley-Jones concluded her presentation.

The Mayor then opened the floor for Members to ask questions.

A Member asked whether the Link Officer scheme is now permanent. Ms. Ashley-Jones replied that the initiative has been extended for another year, and that she believed it would continue after that year.

The Mayor updated Members on the meeting of the Pembrokeshire County Council Liaison Group which had been held earlier that evening.

The Mayor said that the next meeting of the Group would be held on Monday, 30th October when The Rath would be discussed. An Agenda would be prepared nearer the date and the Mayor asked Members to contact the Clerk if they had any issues they wished to raise. The Mayor hoped that Ms. Ashley-Jones would be present at that meeting.

The Mayor thanked Ms. Ashley-Jones for her attendance at this evening’s meeting and she left the meeting.

County Councillor S. G. Joseph also left the meeting.

There followed a short recess during which Councillors E. R. Harries, A. H. Miles and D. R. Sinnett joined the meeting.

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PRAYERS:

Prayers were led by the Mayor’s Chaplain, Father Harri Williams.

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

103. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. E. Byrne and R. D. Evans. Apologies for absence were not received from Councillor J. Thrower.

104. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 31ST JULY, 2017:

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of

the Milford Haven Town Council held on the

31st July, 2017, be accepted and that they

be signed by the Mayor as a true record.

105. INFORMATION FROM THE MAYOR:

(a) Mayor’s Engagements

Members were informed of the Mayor’s Engagements since the 31st July, 2017:

2nd August - Autism Meeting

5th August - Wings Over Carew

10th August - Sunflower Competition

12th August - Golf Open Day *(also attended by the Deputy Mayor)*

13th August - Cruise Ship Prinsendam

16th August - Pembrokeshire County Show

16th August - Army Cadet Base Inspection

18th August - RawFfest Llandudno Torch Youth Theatre

19th August - RawFfest Llandudno Torch Youth Theatre

20th August - RawFfest Llandudno Torch Youth Theatre

23rd August - Voluntary Service Coffee Morning

23rd August - Youth Council Bake Off

23rd August - Children’s Unicorn Rides

27th August - Lawns of Jazz

30th August - Autism Training

4th September - Litter Pick at the Mount Estate

(b) ‘Great Council Bake Off’

The Mayor thanked the Youth Representatives for arranging the ‘Great Council Bake Off’ which had been very successful. He also thanked Councillors Mrs. L. E. Turner and Mrs. C. T. Williams for making such lovely cakes and all Councillors who had attended the event.

(c) Litter Pick at Mount Estate

The Mayor thanked the Councillors who had attended the litter picking event at the Mount Estate.

(d) Fishermen’s Tribute Service

The Mayor advised that the annual Fishermen’s Tribute Service will take place at 11:00 am on Saturday, 23rd September.

106. MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL MEETING STRUCTURE:

The Mayor gave Members background information on the Town Council meeting structure.

A Member said that he considered that the current meeting structure does not do justice to the needs of this Council or the members of the community. He considered that the previous committee structure operated prior to the new system was far better in as much as it provided a more comprehensive procedure and gave greater justice to the needs of the community.

Furthermore, he felt that by introducing the present system, Members are deprived of the opportunity to gain experience as chairpersons of various sub-committees and, in consequence, Councillors who aspire to becoming Mayor have no experience within this Council of preparing themselves for the procedures and duties of that office. He proposed that this Council reverts to the structure that was operated previously – namely the reintroduction of the Committee system.

A lengthy discussion then followed.

Another Member agreed with the proposer and said that she considered that the original system was a useful structure if a Councillor wished to be Mayor. She appreciated that there was a delay in ratifying decisions but the Mayor could be granted plenary powers in extraordinary circumstances. The Member added that if this present system is maintained she had difficulty in attending Thursday meetings and it would be more convenient to hold Full Council meetings only on Mondays.

The Mayor replied that every Member has a day that they would prefer and Mondays are not always convenient for him. He also noted that some Mondays fall on Bank Holidays.

Another Member said that his issue was the time delay that the previous structure caused. Under the new system there is at least one Full Council every month, other than August, when decisions can be made. Under the previous structure, topics were referred to and discussed at Committee level and then referred to Full Council for ratification.

Under the previous system each Committee (the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Public Works and Planning Committee) only had 50% of Members as other than the Mayor and Deputy Mayor there was no other representation on both Committees. What then happened was that a Councillor who may have an interest regarding a specific matter on one of the Committees that he/she did not sit on would start a debate at Full Council and there would be discussion all over again. In addition, the Committees did not have the power to make any decisions.

The Member continued by saying that he believed that the role of Mayor is nothing like Chairing a Committee of the Council. He has held both offices and both are very different. He said that surely the real issue is about having the right person in the role. This Council still has Committees and he would encourage there to be a mix of Councillors chairing the Committees. It should not be the same Councillors chairing the Committees in the groups coming forward.

Another Member said that Councillors need more experience, less in relation to chairing a Committee, but perhaps into the in-depth workings of that particular Committee. She considered that whatever proposal is decided on at this evening’s meeting, it might be worth seeking advice regarding training in financial and planning aspects of the Sub-Committees so that Members are on the same level in terms of understanding the needs of those Committees, which will eventually come to Full Council whichever structure is decided. The Member said that she supported Full Council meetings being held on Mondays and not Thursdays.

Another Member stated that this Council is much faster, much more streamlined and much more efficient under the new structure.

A further Member said that he liked having the Standing Committees in place because sometimes smaller groups can lead to greater involvement of Members who may not feel comfortable or able to speak as often as they would like within a large group meeting.

He believed the Committee structure gave Members the opportunity to explore issues in more depth and detail. Although topics may be re-explored at Full Council, this is not necessarily a negative, as if it is a good decision it should be dealt with quite quickly as opposed to being contradicted and voted against. If any Member was concerned about any issue under the old Sub-Committee structure, they could attend and speak at any meeting they wished to – they did not have to wait for it to come to Full Council. If Members decided to revert to the Finance and General Purposes and Public Works and Planning Committees, the Member felt it important that the Terms of Reference for these Committees should be reviewed.

This Member also thought it useful to Chair a Sub-Committee because the rules are very similar to the rules in the Council Chamber. He found it incredibly useful to Chair a Sub-Committee before becoming Mayor, and felt it an important part of Councillor development.

The Chairman of the Public Works and Planning Committee said that he was very torn. Having previously chaired the Public Works and Planning Committee he had observed that under the old structure discussions concerning the planning applications were in depth. Under the new structure the comments he receives are very few and far between so generally it is his decision regarding planning applications. He agreed with the comments regarding how the new system streamlines the Council. He then suggested that the Council could revert to the old system for a short period of time so new Members could see how the old system operated.

The proposer was asked whether he would amend his original proposal to include a 6 month return to the Standing Committees.

The proposer agreed and it was proposed and seconded that in order to facilitate the new Members who are not conversant with the procedure to seek a trial period of the reintroduction of the Committee system for a period of 6 months.

A vote was taken and 5 Members were in favour of the proposition with 10 Members against.

Councillor E. R. Harries wished it to be recorded that he voted for this proposition.

It was then proposed and seconded that this Council keeps on a permanent basis the present structure of 2 Full Council meetings a month (with the exception of August when there is recess and December when there is only 1 meeting). The proposer said that he is agreeable if anyone wishes to make an amendment this evening in relation to the nights of the week that the meetings are held on.

Another Member stated that in order to keep the situation less complicated he strongly recommended that a vote be taken on the proposal and the nights on which the meetings are held can be decided by a second proposition and not an amendment.

A vote was taken on the proposition and it was agreed by 10 votes to 5 that the Council keeps on a permanent basis the structure of 2 Full Council meetings a month (with the exception of August when there is recess and December when there is only 1 Full Council meeting).

Councillor E. R. Harries wished it to be recorded that he voted against this proposition.

The Clerk asked whether discussion on the days of the week to hold the meetings could be deferred to the next meeting when she would have a calendar available which could be distributed to Members.

A Member said that whilst he could see the logic behind that, Councillors were led to believe that they could make a proposal on the days that the Full Council meetings could be held.

Another Member pointed out that this Council was committed to dates until the end of the municipal year. He suggested that Members submitted their preferences to the Clerk and the issue be debated at a later date in the not too distant future.

The following was proposed and seconded:

(i) as from 1st January, 2018 all Full Council meetings are to be held

on Mondays;

(ii) the Mayor and Clerk are to amend the calendar for this municipal

year and present the new dates to a future Full Council meeting;

(iii) training elements are to be explored on issues relating to the Standing

Committee structures.

A vote was taken and it was agreed by 12 votes to 1 with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED THAT:

(i) the Council is to hold, on a permanent basis, 2 Full

Council meetings a month (with the exception of

August when it is recess and December when there

is only one Full Council);

(ii) as from 1st January, 2018, all Full Council meetings

are to be held on Mondays;

(iii) the Mayor and Clerk are to amend the calendar for

this municipal year to reflect the changes and

present the new dates to a future Full Council

meeting;

(iv) training elements are to be explored on issues

relating to the Standing Committee structures.

Councillor E. R. Harries left the meeting at this point.

107. MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING ORDERS SUB-COMMITTEE:

Members discussed the membership of the Standing Orders Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED THAT the membership of the Standing

Orders Sub-Committee be as follows:

The Mayor

The Deputy Mayor

The Chairs of the Public Works and Planning Committee

and Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Vice-Chairs of the Public Works and Planning Committee

and Finance and General Purposes Committee

Councillor Mrs. C. T. Williams left the meeting at this point.

108. MEMBERSHIP OF CIVIC GIFTS SUB-COMMITTEE:

The Clerk explained that the Council purchases gifts for the Mayor to present to Civic dignitaries.

The gifts presently available are Town Plaques (which are usually presented to the Captains of visiting vessels on the vessel’s first visit to the town), wine glasses showing the town crest (only a limited supply of these remain), boxed pens showing the town crest and copies of the book “Vision of Greatness”.

As the stock of gifts is decreasing Members are asked whether they wish to consider purchasing alternative gifts as it will be necessary to allocate funds to the Civic Gifts Budget in next year’s precept to purchase new gifts.

RESOLVED THAT discussion on appropriate

Civic Gifts is to be referred to the Public

Events Sub-Committee.

109. EGNEDOL WALES LIMITED:

(a) Letter from the Planning Inspectorate re Application by Egnedol Wales Limited at land at Blackbridge and Waterston, near Milford Haven

Members discussed a letter from the Planning Inspectorate in which the Major Case Work and Chart Case Officer advised that this application has been suspended for 6 months from 30th March, 2017 in order for the applicant to carry out further work in relation to impacts on protected species; that work has now been carried out and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

Any comments concerning this application must relate solely to ecology; any comments relating to other topics will not be accepted or seen by the Inspector.

The Chairman of the Public Works and Planning Committee, Councillor M. P. Rickard, urged Members to read the documentation and take note that there has been a revised edition with regard to the ecological report which contravenes the original report.

RESOLVED THAT the letter be received.

(b) Letter from a member of the Waterston Speed Watch Committee

Members discussed a letter from a member of the Waterston Speed Watch Committee in which she expressed her concerns that if the proposed Biomass Plant was completed there would be a substantial increase in traffic travelling through the heart of the village.

RESOLVED THAT the letter be received and

the writer’s concerns be forwarded to the

appropriate organisations.

110. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT LAND SOUTH OF VALERO, EAST OF RHOSCROWTHER

REFINERY ROAD, HUNDLETON, PEMBROKE – DEVELOPMENT OF 5 WIND TURBINES (59m TO HUB HEIGHT; 100m TO BLADE TIP HEIGHT) TOGETHER WITH ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT OF SUBSTATION, CONTROL BUILDING, ACCESSES AND TRACKS, HARD STANDING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS:

A letter was received from the Development Management Section, Pembrokeshire County Council, in which the writer advised that following a High Court challenge to the Inspector’s decision on this appeal, the court has ordered the appeal to be re- determined.

A different Inspector will now be appointed to determine this appeal which will be decided on the basis of a public inquiry.

RESOLVED THAT Members are to respond

individually to the appeal if they wish to do

so.

111. REPORT BY MISS B. ROBERTS, MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE:

Councillor D. R. Sinnett declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter as he is occasionally employed by Hywel Dda Health Board as a Mental Health Nurse. He took no part in the debate.

Councillor M. P. Rickard declared a personal interest in this matter as his wife is employed by Hywel Dda.

Miss B. Roberts, Milford Haven Town Council Youth Representative, reported on a recent meeting between Pembrokeshire Youth Assembly and the staff from Hywel Dda

who explained that Clinical Services and Mental Health Services are going to be changed in the Reform.

Hywel Dda has prepared a questionnaire on the reorganisation of Clinical Services which Miss B. Roberts urged all Members to complete as it can have a massive impact on everyone in the community.

The Mayor thanked Miss Roberts for her well written report and presentation.

A Member endorsed the completion of the questionnaire because the more people who complete the questionnaire the stronger the public voice is.

112. CONSULTATIONS:

Members gave consideration to the following consultations:

(a) Autism (Wales) Bill

RESOLVED THAT:

(i) Mr. Paul Davies AM be commended on this

initiative and advised that this Council

wholeheartedly supports the principles behind

this;

(ii) Mr. Davies AM is to be advised that there is

no reference to autism friendly communities

in his proposal. There have been developments

with the local police force to make Milford Haven

an autism friendly community.

(b) Active Travel Consultation

The Pembrokeshire County Council is beginning a final consultation on its draft Active Travel Integrated Network Map (INM). This is a 15 year plan for introducing and improving walking and cycling routes within the 10 active travel settlements in Pembrokeshire designated by the Welsh Government.

(c) Proposal to make changes to Council Tax arrangements for long-term empty properties in Pembrokeshire

The Pembrokeshire County Council is consulting on the removal of the current ongoing 50% Council Tax discount on long-term empty properties.

(d) Have Your Say on Draft Well-being Plan Priorities

The Pembrokeshire Public Service Board is undertaking a consultation on draft Well-being Plan Priorities.

(e) Welsh Government White Paper Consultation – “Services Fit for the Future”

Documentation was received from the Chief Officer of the Local Community Health Council regarding the Welsh Government White Paper Consultation that proposes changes for health and social care.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

(i) the consultations as outlined above be received;

(ii) Members are to complete them on an individual basis,

if they wish to do so.

113. AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2017:

(a) Report from the Clerk

The Clerk presented a report in which she gave background information on the audit process and advised that in 2017/18 the Wales Audit Office will focus on the effectiveness of internal audit and how Councils manage their reserves and balances.

(b) Auditor General for Wales’ Audit Certificate and report

An Auditor General for Wales’ Audit certificate and report was received completing the audit of this Council’s Return for the year ended 31st March, 2017.

(c) Letter from Auditor General for Wales

The letter from the Auditor General for Wales stated that the Auditor General issued Milford Haven Town Council an unqualified audit report.

The Council’s attention was drawn to Accounting Statement, Box 13 – Total borrowings, was left unanswered for 2015/16 and 2016/17 on the Annual Return. These boxes should both read nil.

RESOLVED THAT the information be received.

114. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

RESOLVED THAT the following decisions be

made in relation to the applications for financial

assistance:-

(i) Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire - £250

Councillor Mrs. T. Olin declared a personal interest in this issue as PATCH is mentioned in the application and she is the Manager of PATCH. PATCH has mutual clients but receives no benefits.

Councillor D. R. Sinnett declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this issue as he is the Pembrokeshire County Council’s representative on the Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire Management Board.

*This donation is to be made in accordance with the Milford Haven Town Council’s*

*powers under Section 142 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.*

(ii) Pill Social Centre - £600

The Mayor, Councillor C. A. Sharp, declared a personal interest in this issue as he is an unpaid Trustee of the Pill Social Centre. He took no part in the discussion or the voting and handed over the Chair for this item only to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R. D. Gray.

Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS declared a personal interest in this issue as he is a volunteer at the Pill Social Centre.

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) declared a personal interest as a volunteer and Voluntary Treasurer of the Pill Social Centre (the latter role since 1st September, 2017).

The Deputy Mayor explained that the figure in the column “Have you previously received a grant/donation from the Milford Haven Town Council? was incorrect and should have read £500 in 2016-2017.

*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.*

(iii) St. Katharine and St. Peter’s Church - £500

The Mayor, Councillor C. A. Sharp, declared a personal interest as Father Harri Williams is his Mayor’s Chaplain.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R. D. Gray, declared a personal interest in relation to the request for a grant for the restoration of the Holy Bible as she is a Christian and this Book is of importance to her.

Councillor Mrs. Y. G. Southwell declared a personal interest as she is a member of this Church and Chair of the Friends of St. Katharine and St. Peter’s Church.

Councillor Mrs. L. E. Turner declared a personal interest as she is a member of the Friends of St. Katharine and St. Peter’s Church.

Although Councillor Mrs. C. T. Williams had left the meeting earlier the evening, she had left notification of a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter as her husband is the Vicar of Milford Haven and the applicant.

*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.*

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