Minutes of a Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council

held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Milford Haven

on Thursday, 12th July, 2018 at 7:00 pm

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PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor R. D. Gray)

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor T. J. Davies)

Councillors: A. E. Byrne P. Coe

Miss K. Gray E. R. Harries

A. H. Miles Mrs. T. Olin

C. A. Sharp R. Williams

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

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TO RECEIVE MR. B. COOKE, HEAD OF PROPERTY, PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE MILFORD HAVEN TOWN HALL IN RELATION TO ACCESS TO SERVICES:

The Mayor, Councillor R. D. Gray, welcomed Mr. B. Cooke, Head of Property, Pembrokeshire County Council, to the meeting.

Mr. Cooke said that he was at the meeting to talk about access to services.

He referred to the consultation exercise that has taken place recently in which the Pembrokeshire County Council is looking at what services are delivered in each of the main towns across the County and how they can be co-located to make them more efficient and create savings at the same time.

The proposal for Milford Haven was to move Housing Services and the Customer Service Centre from the Town Hall to the Library building at Cedar Court. There are works that need to be carried out to facilitate the move.

The Town Hall is one of the buildings that the Pembrokeshire County Council is looking at as part of its rationalisation programme. The Pembrokeshire County Council has looked at various options, such as reusing the building for services - which is still a possibility - or disposing of it.

Mr. Cooke stressed that the Milford Haven Town Council has a lease on the first floor so despite some people saying that the Pembrokeshire County Council is going to “kick the Town Council out” – the Pembrokeshire County Council is not. The Town Council’s position is secure.

Mr. Cooke was unsure of the date of the expiry of the Town Council’s lease and the Clerk said that it was 2021.

Mr. Cooke said that under legislation the Town Council has the right to renew its lease because it is a business tenancy. The Pembrokeshire County Council would have to have specific grounds for not renewing the lease, such as a serious breach in terms of the conditions of the lease or if they want it back for their own occupation.

Mr. Cooke said that the primary purpose of him talking to Councillors this evening was to discuss the potential opportunity in terms of the Town Hall building and whether the Town Council has the appetite for taking the building on. It could be classed as a community asset transfer of some description. At the moment it is proposed that HM Coroner and Port Health would remain in the building. If the Town Council took the building over they would be seeking a rent of some description from those two bodies. They do not pay rent to the Pembrokeshire County Council at present.

A Member asked what impact a community asset transfer would have on the recommendation – *“that the Town Hall can be disposed of and that the relocation costs be funded in the main through capital receipts from the sale of the Old Library and Town Hall buildings” -* made by Cabinet and asked Mr. Cooke if the former library building were sold would that be sufficient to cover the costs and still meet the recommendation. Mr. Cooke replied that selling the former library would not meet current capital receipt to cover the proposed works that are needed on the current library building. That said, in terms of transformation and access to services, the principle is that the revenue savings that will be generated in terms of disposal of buildings and looking at 12 months revenue savings will also be taken into account in the calculations.

Mr. Cooke said that community asset transfer is not necessary a £1 transfer, it is potentially full market value and that again is subject to discussion.

Mr. Cooke reiterated that the decision to relocate Housing and Customer Services has been taken by Cabinet following public consultation.

The Mayor referred to the consultation regarding Milford Haven and only 4 people expressed support for this decision.

A Member referred to the large increase to ratepayers if this Council had to pay the annual running costs for this building - in 2016/2017 they were £58,860.31.

Mr. Cooke replied that if the Town Council generated rental income it might not be necessary to put up the precept.

The Member responded that Councillors could not run a Town Council budget on “if”. Rental income could not be guaranteed.

Another Member questioned how much the Town Council’s rent would increase after the expiration of the lease. Mr. Cooke said that this would be based on current market value at that time.

A Member referred to the difficulty in parking in Cedar Court as opposed to outside the Town Hall building and the car park behind the building. Mr. Cooke said that this had been taken into account. There is a car park opposite the Paul Sartori shop and Tesco retail park is not purely for retail purposes.

Another Member questioned the amount of space available at the Library for other Council services, as there was no storage space for the sensory library which had to be stored at Patch HQ, depriving families with children who have physical or learning difficulties of much needed equipment that had been fund raised.

The Mayor said that when the Pembrokeshire County Council relocates Housing and Customer Services how could the Pembrokeshire County Council ensure the safety of the two Town Council members of staff. She said that this was a huge concern to her and something that the Pembrokeshire County Council would have to address.

A Member observed that it does not make sense to move from a property you own to a rental property. The money spent relocating services could be expended on improving the Town Hall.

Another Member asked whether the Pembrokeshire County Council was aware of the market value of the Town Hall. He referred to the costs of renovating this building, such as replacing the windows and updating the electrical system.

A further Member asked how much it would cost to make the library fit for purpose. Mr. Cooke replied that a figure has been looked at and that has been currently cost engineered. In other words it was too expensive. The figure that the architects came up with was £125,000. It should be less than half that. Services been challenged as to what their genuine requirements are and not their wish list.

Mr. Cooke was asked whether he would work with the Clerk and provide a complete and comprehensive paper clearly stating what the Pembrokeshire County Council’s proposals are regarding the Milford Haven Town Hall and the options available to the Town Council.

RESOLVED THAT Mr. Cooke, Head of Property,

Pembrokeshire County Council is to prepare a

complete and comprehensive paper clearly stating

what the Pembrokeshire County Council’s proposals

are regarding the Milford Haven Town Hall and

the options available to the Town Council.

Mr. Cooke asked if there were any other property matters of concern.

Mr. Cooke was asked about the former Motorworld site. Mr. Cooke said that the Pembrokeshire County Council has been told that the scaffolding will be erected shortly.

Mr. Cooke was then asked about the disposal of Hakin Infant and Junior Schools and Hubberston School. Mr. Cooke said that they would be disposed of as housing sites.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Cooke for attending the meeting and he left the meeting.

PRAYERS:

Prayers were led by the Mayor’s Chaplain, Rev. A. Bookless.

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

55. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W. D. Elliott BA QTS, M. P. Rickard, D. R. Sinnett, Mrs. Y. G. Southwell, Mrs. L. E. Turner, Mrs. C. T. Williams, and the Youth Representatives Miss A. Coaker and Miss B. Roberts.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

57. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 25TH JUNE, 2018:

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the

Milford Haven Town Council held on the 25th June,

2018, be accepted and that they be signed by

the Mayor as a true record.

58. INFORMATION FROM THE MAYOR:

Members were informed of the Mayor’s Engagements since 26th June, 2018:

* 28th June - St. Francis Primary School 50th Birthday Celebrations
* 30th June - Milford Haven Town Band concert
* 1st July - Milford Haven Gymnastics Club show
* 4th July - Invitation to Dedication of Standard at Army Cadet Detachment *(attended by the Deputy Mayor)*
* 5th July - Pembrokeshire Business Awards
* 7th July - Milford Haven Carnival
* 7th July - Fishguard and Goodwick Mayor Making *(attended by the Deputy Mayor)*
* 8th July - Green Acres Animal Rescue 10th Birthday Open Day
* 8th July - Sea Sunday Service at St. Katharine and St. Peter’s Church *(attended by the Deputy Mayor)*
* 8th July - Sea Sunday Service alongside Martello Tower, Front Street, Pembroke Dock *(attended by the Deputy Mayor)*
* 11th July - Visit of MS Prinsendam to Milford Haven
* 12th July - Milford Haven School World Record Attempt (AM)
* 12th July - Milford Haven School Race for Life (PM)

The Mayor, Councillor R. D. Gray, read out a letter from the Secretary of the Waterloo Club. The Mayor advised that the Waterloo Club had very generously donated £250 towards the Rath Paddling Pool.

Councillor E. R. Harries said that he was unaware that this was being discussed this evening. He declared a personal interest as he is the President of the Waterloo Club.

The Mayor referred to the cruise ship that visited the day before. She said that she was present for some time and saw people who returned to the ship after visiting the town. They were very complimentary about the Milford Museum, Councillor Mrs. L. E. Turner for her welcome on the tourist bus, and the warm welcome they had received from people they met in the town.

59. PUBLIC EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Public Events Sub-Committee held on 25th June, 2018, were moved by the Chairman, Councillor R. D. Gray.

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of

the Public Events Sub-Committee, held on

25th June, 2018, be approved and adopted.

60. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT NAMING:

The Mayor reminded Members that this had been deferred from the last Full Council meeting when it had been agreed to ask the Milford Haven School Council and the Milford Haven Museum for suggestions as to the naming of this development.

The Milford Haven School Council had suggested Plas Puffin, Stryd Shearwater and Plas Peregrine.

Councillor C. A. Sharp, as Chair of Milford Haven Museum, said that he had made enquiries and received various suggestions, but nothing that would be appropriate.

A Member supported the names suggested by the Milford Haven School Council, but indicated that Plas might not be suitable because of the layout of the development, and Drive, Avenue or Street might be more appropriate.

RESOLVED THAT the Milford Haven Town Council

supports the following bird names for the housing

development on the Thornton Road – Puffin,

Shearwater and Peregrine, but considers that

that Plas might not be suitable because of the

layout of the development.

61. NO RIGHT TURN, PRIORY STREET TO HAMILTON TERRACE, MILFORD HAVEN:

Members considered an email from Mr. D. Thomas, Head of Highways and Construction, Pembrokeshire County Council, in which he said that the Trunk Road Agent wishes to make the traffic order “no right turn, Priory Street to Hamilton Terrace” which was introduced as an experimental order in 2016 into a permanent order. He asked if Members had any views on this proposal.

RESOLVED THAT the information be

received.

62. LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES – REVIEW OF THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE COUNTY OF PEMBROKESHIRE:

Members discussed documentation from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales regarding a Review of the Electoral Arrangements of the County of Pembrokeshire.

A Member explained that they are trying to balance the same number of electors in all of the Wards across Pembrokeshire.

Another Member expressed concern at the draft proposals to transfer a small area (with 36 electors) to the north of Waterloo Road from the Hakin Ward into the Hubberston Ward and to transfer the area of Glebelands (with 205 electors) from the Hubberston Ward into the Hakin Ward. He considered that these proposals may confuse the electorate. Furthermore, the redundant school buildings at Hakin and Hubberston will eventually be sold for housing, leading to a disproportionate number of electorate in Hakin and Hubberston.

RESOLVED THAT a letter be sent to the

Chief Executive of the Local Democracy

and Boundary Commission for Wales informing

him that the Milford Haven Town Council

is opposed to the proposed two boundary

changes between the Milford: Hakin and

Milford: Hubberston electoral wards.

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