Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council

held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Milford Haven

on Thursday, 12th September, 2019 at 6:00 pm

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PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor T. J. Davies)

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Miss K. F. Gray)

 Councillors: A. E. Byrne P. Coe

 E. A. Davies W. D. Elliott BA QTS

 E. R. Harries Mrs N. C. Joseph

 C. A. Sharp D. R. Sinnett

 Mrs Y. G. Southwell Mrs L. E. Turner

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

 The Town Clerk was also in attendance.

78. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. D. Gray, A. H. Miles, M. P. Rickard, and the Youth Representatives, Miss A. Coaker and Miss B. Roberts. Apologies for absence were not received from Councillor L. J. Bridges.

 79. INITIAL DISCUSSION ON THE REVIEW OF THIS COUNCIL’S STRUCTURE:

 The Mayor read out the following background information for the benefit of new Members.

 The Milford Haven Town Council has an Establishment Committee, Standing Orders Sub-Committee and a Public Events Sub-Committee. It has the following Groups – Town Regeneration Environmental Action Team, Traffic Working Group, Cemetery Maintenance and Land Acquisition Group, Pembrokeshire County Council Liaison Group, Social Media Group and Youth Working Group.

 The Town Council used to have two Sub-Committees – Finance and General Purposes Committee and Public Works and Planning Committee. These Committees met and their recommendations were referred to Full Council which was held on the last Monday of the month.

 It was agreed in order to streamline the meeting structure that, as from the municipal year June 2016, there would be two Full Council meetings instead of the two Standing Committees and one Full Council. The meetings would be held on the same meeting dates as the Public Works and Planning Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee.

 There would still be Chairs and Vice Chairs of Public Works and Planning Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee. There was a review of the new system after the trial period at the end of February 2017, where it was agreed to continue with the system.

 A Member stated that one of the valid criticisms of changing the current system is that there is not enough time to debate some of the issues.

 He gave the example that under the previous meeting structure the planning applications used to be thoroughly considered by the Public Works and Planning Committee and the applications for financial assistance by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Half of the Council would meet on a Monday for the Public Works and Planning Committee and the other half would meet on a Thursday for the Finance and General Purposes Committee with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor attending both Committees. The Minutes from those meetings would be considered by Full Council on the last Monday of the month.

 He considered that everybody should have the opportunity to have their say over whether the current system is working to the best way it can or whether there are changes that can be made.

 Reference was also made to the present structure which might deter new Councillors from speaking. A Member compared this to the previous system in which the Committee meetings took place in the Committee Room, which is a less formal setting. It also gave Councillors the opportunity to Chair a Committee.

 It was agreed that Members need to look at this issue in more detail in order to facilitate the best quality debate in this Authority.

 RESOLVED THAT:

 (i) discussion on this issue be referred to the Standing

 Orders Sub-Committee;

 (ii) the Clerk is to ask One Voice Wales whether there

 is a recommended structure for Councils;

 (iii) the Clerk is to contact Clerks from other

 Town Councils in Pembrokeshire to ask how

 their Councils are structured.

 All Members will be able to attend this meeting but only the Members of the Standing Orders Sub-Committee will be entitled to vote.

 A Member emphasised that this was not a message to exclude Councillors from attending the Standing Orders Sub-Committee as the recommendations made by this Sub-Committee would be debated at Full Council.

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