Minutes of a Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council

held electronically via the Zoom software

on Monday 26th April, 2021 at 6:15 pm

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PRESENT

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

Councillors: E. A. Davies DipSM FJOIFF E. R. Harries

A. H. Miles B. Phillips

D. R. Sinnett Mrs C. Stevens

R. Williams

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

Milford Haven Port Authority:

Steve Edwards Andy Jones

Mrs B. J. Fitzgerald, Town Clerk

Ms F Galliford, Secretary

Mr Jack Riley (Western Telegraph) observing

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PORT OF MILFORD HAVEN QUARTERLY UPDATE

An update was given on the last 12 months at the Milford Haven Port Authority.

MHPA is a Trust port, there are no shareholders; their purpose is to build the Haven’s prosperity, not just financially but to benefit the wellbeing of the community. As an organisation safety, collaboration, sustainability and excellence are important to the organisation. Milford Haven Town Council are an important stakeholder for MHPA, the authority appreciates giving the Town Council updates and are keen to keep these regular; they also update Pembroke Dock Town Council.

One in four people in Pembrokeshire is over 65. There are economic and deprivation issues in Pembrokeshire; a need to create opportunities for jobs; the Port Authority try to do their bit with collaboration of others. There are approximately 4000 jobs across Pembrokeshire related to the waterways, a great deal through Valero. Globally we are all faced with the issue of climate change; at some point in the future there is a need to be less reliant on the hydro carbons, not just from an energy prospective but an economic prospective.

As a Port MHPA need to work in collaboration with others; they are not a big organisation but feel it necessary to do their part. They are a Port Authority, here to serve the vessels that come in an out and do that to the highest standards. Also providing port services at Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock and the Pembroke Dock Marine Project which is trying to create modern port facilities so that advantage can be taken in the future changes in energy.

The Hospitality and Tourism sector is important for the economy of Pembrokeshire; that is recognised. The leisure use of the waterway, moving away from the larger vessels and more generally how MHPA can help promote Pembrokeshire. Finally there is an investment portfolio, some of the investments are at Haven’s Head Retail Park, Cedar Court, the solar park at Liddeston. These are important parts of the business of the Port. There is a need of other businesses that are more stable where MHPA can receive long term income, growth capital so that Milford Haven Port Authority will be a long term business that will be around for generations to come, it should be handed on in at least as good, if not better condition than when inherited.

Andy Jones handed over to Steve Edwards.

Steve explained that the Port Authority are delighted the Ty Hotel, 100 bedroom hotel will be opening in April 2022 and the Celtic Manor will be the group that will be operating that hotel and will work with the Port Authority to promote Milford Haven and Pembrokeshire. All the work is on schedule.

Quay Stores work is on hold, they are securing the fabric of the heritage building and will be re-visiting the Quay Stores in the future. Focused now on an all round, family based leisure facility undercover. The waterfront will be a mixed use area for the community and tourism, working to develop the appropriate option to match the heritage and sense of place.

Today outdoor hospitality can now re-start and the Port Authority have been working hard with the restaurants and business for that to happen.

Building on the four themes that Andy was talking about and hospitality and tourism is clearly a keen theme. MHPA are custodians of the trust port at the moment in time and are looking to play our role in the energy transition both for Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire and Great Britain. There are opportunities on the doorstep, the Milford Haven Energy Project, hydrogen offers a zero carbon gas opportunity for communities and business and off the celtic sea the opportunity of floating off shore wind. It is important that this is done collaboratively, maximise local value and hope to be at the fore front of the energy transition. To ensure port infrastructure and collaborations that is fit for the 21st and 22nd century. Supported by the Welsh and UK Governments and with European funding, it is an opportunity to get the port ready as we move forward.

Irish Ferries will now be operating a service from Dover to Calais. The ferry can travel from Ireland to France with Pembroke Dock as a bridge as of June 2021.

The Freeports is not going forward at present. There are ongoing talks with Welsh Government who understand how we maximise the benefit of the Port to the local economy.

The CCat project – the Port is one of 6 partners and have had a successful second year and this has been a great initiative with schools, community groups and councils along the Haven Waterway.

Questions: Response to the two questions received.

In terms of fishing we don’t generally allow fishing on the marina site however it is safe to fish along the side near the Foam dining area, safety is paramount.

In terms of Welsh Language we want to reflect the needs of the local community. We look at the proportion of Welsh speakers in the north of the county and the south of the county. Our signage does have some Welsh, not full Welsh translation on every sign but we try to ensure an appropriate amount of Welsh language.

Cllr Eddie Davies queried whether the Mackerel Stage is now closed to people fishing. Steve offered to send a diagram where fishing was allowed.

Cllr Davies raised the bilingual signage issue and commented that he thought it was more of a tourist attraction, visitors coming into a Welsh port will see only English signage. Steve responded that they are aware of the value of the Welsh culture and that the hotel is the Ty hotel. The hope is that the balance of Welsh signage is right but if necessary they can do more.

Cllr Rhys Sinnett thanked Andy Jones and Steve for the talk and explaining all the work being carried out in Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock. He queried if they could tell anything about the Gelliswick area and also the mine depot site. The Gelliswick side of town is under-developed with potential assets there that the Port have access to.

Andy Jones – the Blackbridge site is in the ownership of Egnedol, purchased from the Welsh Government. From the Port’s perspective it is an important site, they have an interest in the site but don’t know what is planned there.

With regard to the Gelliswick site, we are a relatively small organisation so we only have so many resources and are trying to do a few things really well rather than spreading around. We have no plans for Gelliswick; we have the hotel, Milford Waterfront and manage the Pembroke Dock project, currently over £70 million in projects. We have to focus on the project in hand and deliver those. However if you have ideas come and talk to us but we have to be realistic on what we can do at any one time.

Cllr Woodham raised his concerns over the Blackbridge site, he sits on the Waterston Community Liaison Group with Dragon LNG. Steve Whitehouse of Egnedol and gave an update planning strategy for the site is progressing and while include a larger agricultural element of the facility which will consist of salmon farms and could produce 100 jobs. Egnedol are currently raising funds and hope to submit planning permissions in the next three months. The facility will be supported by sustainable power including water treatment plants to clean the waste. Cllr Woodham queried if the Port knew.

Andy Jones confirmed that this was not new news and has been the situation for some time and was not aware of any planning applications ready to be submitted.

The Deputy Mayor thanked both gentlemen for their update and time.

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108. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor, Councillor T. J. Davies, and Councillors P. Coe, W. D. Elliott BA QTS, R. D. Gray, M. P. Rickard, C. A. Sharp, Mrs Y. G. Southwell, and Mrs L. E. Turner

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Deputy Mayor declared an interest in Item 9, Election of Mayor.

110. TO RECEIVE SUCH COMMUNICATIONS AS THE MAYOR MAY DESIRE TO LAY BEFORE THE COUNCIL

The Mayor had not raised any matters.

111. QUESTIONS WITHOUT DEBATE PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER NO. 6.

No items were raised.

112. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 29TH MARCH 2021

**RESOLVED THAT** the minutes be received.

113. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT, RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:

PLANNING, POLICY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on 8th April 2021

**RESOLVED THAT** the recommendations and resolutions be received. Cllr Miles abstained.

FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE held on 12th April 2021

**RESOLVED THAT** the recommendations and resolutions be received.

114. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was explained that the previous Internal Auditor had resigned and another had been sought. Mr Ian Eynon had accepted the role of Auditor.

**RESOLVED THAT**Mr. Ian Eynon is appointed as Internal Auditor.

115. DRAFT CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/2022

**RESOLVED THAT** The meeting dates for 2021/2022 are accepted.

116. ELECTION OF MAYOR 2021/2022

The Deputy Mayor declared an interest and passed the Chair to Councillor Williams in his role as Chair of Planning, Policy and Community Committee for this one item.

**RESOLVED THAT** Councillor Kathy Gray be elected as Mayor for 2021/2022.

117. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2021/2022

Councillor E. A. Davies and Councillor Mrs C. Stevens had submitted their names for consideration of becoming Deputy Mayor 2021/2022

The public and press were excluded from the meeting whilst the voting took place.

All apart from the Tellers were taken into a waiting room for the virtual meeting to count the votes. The votes will not be in the public domain.

**RESOLVED THAT** Councillor Mrs Carol Stevens be elected

as Deputy Mayor 2021/2022.

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