

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council  
held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall  
on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7:00 pm

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## PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Miss K. F. Gray)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs C. Stevens)

Councillors:	D. Abbott	M. T. Allen
	Mrs N. Beavis-Morrissey	Miss V. Brown
	E. A. Davies DipSM FJOIFF	T. J. Davies
	W. D. Elliott BA QTS	M. Jones
	B. Phillips	D. R. Sinnett
	G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons)	

Ms F. K. Galliford, Town Council Secretary

A member of the public was also present at the Meeting.

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### TO RECEIVE MR. M. CAVANAGH; HEAD OF CULTURAL, LEISURE, TOURISM AND REGISTRATION SERVICES; PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – REGARDING MILFORD HAVEN LIBRARY

The Mayor, Miss K. F. Gray, welcomed Mr. Cavanagh to the Meeting.

Before Mr. Cavanagh commenced his presentation, Councillor D. R. Sinnett declared a Personal Interest through his role as the Pembrokeshire County Council Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, which encompasses libraries.

Mr. Cavanagh thanked everyone present for attending. He asked whether the Councillors had read a letter circulated in advance of the Meeting, relating to Pembrokeshire County Council plans for the Milford Haven Library as a result of financial pressures.

Mr. Cavanagh apprised Members with the positive news that, following a recent Pembrokeshire County Council Meeting, the Milford Haven Library opening hours would not be reducing from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

This situation would however be reviewed next year, and Mr. Cavanagh was mindful that the Town Council be given time to assess its level of support and budget accordingly.

Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS joined the Meeting at this point.

Mr. Cavanagh spoke passionately about the many benefits of libraries to their communities. He spoke of how years of austerity, and the Covid-19 pandemic, had severely impacted upon libraries.

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Mr. Cavanagh gave information as to the situation with other libraries in the county. Eight Town/Community Councils presently support their local libraries: whether financially or through volunteering initiatives. Mr. Cavanagh is presently in negotiations with two other Town Councils regarding their support for their local libraries, and he indicated that he is pleased with the level of their support.

A Member asked whether Milford Haven Library had considered moving from Cedar Court (owned by the Port of Milford Haven) to other premises. Mr. Cavanagh answered in the affirmative, but explained that Pembrokeshire County Council had met with much resistance when attempting to move to another venue, so negotiated a new lease with the Port of Milford Haven.

Another Member enquired as to the future of the mobile library. Mr Cavanagh spoke most emphatically about the importance of the mobile library, which visits rural areas in the county and calls upon some of the county's most vulnerable citizens.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs C. Stevens, and Councillor D. Abbott joined the Meeting.

Mr. Cavanagh was asked whether a community library would be an option. Mr. Cavanagh answered that this was more appropriate for smaller towns, not bigger towns such as Milford Haven.

A further Member asked Mr. Cavanagh about the possibility of further developments, such as staffing issues. Mr. Cavanagh noted this question, raising possible financial implications.

Mr. Cavanagh indicated that he would return to a Town Council Meeting later in the year for an update.

Members agreed that the matter of Milford Haven Library should be further considered at a future Town Council Meeting.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Cavanagh for attending the Meeting. Mr. Cavanagh then left the Meeting.

Councillors M. T. Allen, E. A. Davies DipSM FJOIFF, T. J. Davies, M. Jones, G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) and a member of the public joined the Meeting.

## 283. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. Abbott (work commitments), C. A. Sharp (work commitments), Mrs Y. G. Southwell (Church Meeting commitments), R. Williams, M. Woodward (unwell) and the Town Clerk, Mrs B. J. Fitzgerald (on holiday).

### Councillor R. Williams

A Member noted that Councillor Williams had been absent from Meetings for a long period. The Town Council Secretary advised that she and the Town Clerk had

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recently spoken to Councillor Williams, stating that Councillor Williams was well and that he would shortly be returning to Council Meetings.

## PROTOCOL FOR FILMING AND AUDIO RECORDING AT PUBLIC COUNCIL MEETINGS:

The Mayor apprised Members of the protocol regarding filming and audio recording at Council Meetings.

The Mayor then advised that the evening's Meeting was being recorded to assist the Town Council Secretary with producing the minutes for the Meeting.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- (i) the protocol regarding filming and audio recording at public Council Meetings be received;
- (ii) the evening's Full Council Meeting be recorded to assist the Town Council Secretary with the production of minutes.

## 284. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor T. J. Davies declared a personal and prejudicial interest in all matters relating to Milford Haven Cemetery as he is employed by a local Funeral Director. Councillor Davies has received dispensation from the Monitoring Officer to speak but not vote on this issue at Meetings.

Councillor M. T. Allen declared a personal and prejudicial interest in all matters relating to the Pembrokeshire Lido Project as he is the Chair/Trustee of the Project.

## 285. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been submitted by members of the public.

## 286. NEWS FROM THE MAYOR

### Mayoral Engagements

The Mayor enthused about recent events she had attended, including an engagement at South Hook LNG (with Councillor E. A. Davies) and the Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets' Royal Naval Parade (Councillors Miss V. Brown and E. A. Davies were also present).

### Access Fobs

The Mayor asked for Members to return their fobs enabling their access to the Town Hall to the office staff by no later than Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

### Selection of Deputy Mayor 2023/2024

The Mayor reminded Members that the closing date for applications was Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

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## Code of Conduct

The Mayor referenced the fractious nature of the Meeting of the Full Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023. She emphasised the Council's Code of Conduct, with which all Members are required to comply, and stated that unprofessional/disrespectful behaviour would not be tolerated at future Meetings.

### 287. QUESTIONS WITHOUT DEBATE PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER NO. 6.

No Questions had been received.

### 288. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

The Mayor read out the following amendment that had been circulated to Councillors via email prior to the Meeting.

MINUTE 276 – TO RECEIVE REPORTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE: PROJECT WORKING GROUP HELD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 be amended from "Councillor T. J. Davies advised Councillor Allen that, in the absence of proper notification from the Monitoring Officer, it would be best if he left the room for the confidential matter to be discussed" to read "Councillor T. J. Davies suggested to Councillor Allen that in the absence of the proper notification from the Monitoring Officer as notified by the Clerk and Mayor perhaps he could take the decision to leave the Meeting so the Meeting could move on."

Councillor Allen advised that he had been in touch with Pembrokeshire County Council following the Meeting regarding his dispensation, and he had been told that it was not usual practice for the Town Council to be contacted with a letter stating this information.

**RESOLVED THAT:** subject to the above, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 be received and that they be signed by the Mayor as a true record, with one Member voting against this decision.

### 289. TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS 2023 (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Members considered a document put together by the Clerk detailing Town Council events until December 2023.

**RESOLVED THAT:** this information be received.

### 290. DRAFT CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – APRIL TO DECEMBER 2023

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Calendar of Meetings – April to December 2023 - be received and adopted.

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## 291. MILFORD HAVEN CEMETERY

### (i) Cemetery Costs 2023/2024

Members digested a Report composed by the Town Clerk relating to Cemetery costs for 2023/2024.

**“There are no planned costs for any work on cemetery buildings as yet for the financial year 2023/2024”**

A Member noted that there was presently work taking place on the Cemetery Chapel. He asked whether funding for this work had been taken from the Council’s Reserves.

Another Member responded, stating that £13700 had been taken from the Council’s Reserves for this work.

**“At the Cemetery Maintenance and Land Acquisition Meeting in February 2023 the Cemetery Supervisor advised that there are approximately 200 graves left at the Cemetery. It is urgent that the remaining land is excavated to establish how many coffins can be buried in each grave (a maximum of 3 coffins is permissible if correct depth of grave is available). The cost of the excavation work is approximately £8000. It was recommended that this cost is taken out of Reserves to have this work carried out in this financial year.”**

A Member felt that this matter needed clarifying. The Member stated that the Council could buy a digger for £8000. The Member also expressed concern at the mention of the graves being deep enough to contain three coffins, referencing possible health and safety issues and a potentially unstable ground.

The Member then stated that the cost was the same for people purchasing graves regardless of grave depth.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- (i) a Meeting of the Cemetery Maintenance and Land Acquisition Group be held imminently to discuss and clarify all outstanding matters;
- (ii) this Meeting is to be held at a suitable time to enable Councillor T. J. Davies and the Cemetery Supervisor, Mr. P. Johnson, to attend.

### (ii) Cemetery Reports – January and February 2023

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Cemetery Reports for the months of January and February 2023 be received.

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## 292. DISCUSSION RE LAND BEHIND THE MEADS

Members observed an entire CAT (Community Asset Transfer) application from a Pembrokeshire organisation relating to the land behind the Milford Haven "Meads" Leisure Centre. Feedback was politely requested from the Council, and the correspondence also expressed interest in a partnership with the Council.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the organisation be invited to a future Full Council Meeting to address Members and provide full clarity as to the organisation's ideas and intentions.

A Point of Order was raised by a Member regarding the member of the public present at the Meeting. The Member indicated that the member of the public had wished to ask the Council a question under Agenda Item 3, "Question and Answer Session with Members of the Public".

The Mayor advised that any questions from the public should be emailed to the Town Clerk in advance of the Meeting so that the topic can be researched and the most comprehensive answer given.

The member of the public, who had also spoken to another Councillor earlier in the evening, was agreeable to the Mayor's advice. The member of the public then left the Meeting.

## 293. ENVIRONMENT ACT 2016 PART 1 – SECTION 6 – THE BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS DUTY

Members considered a Report put together by the Town Clerk, extensively highlighting the Town Council's biodiversity considerations.

**RESOLVED THAT:** this Report be received and submitted to One Voice Wales by the Town Council Secretary as requested.

## 294. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT LDP SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE CONSULTATION: 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY – 26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023

Members noted correspondence from Mr. B. Smith, Development Plans Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council, relating to Pembrokeshire County Council's consultation on draft Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) between 22<sup>nd</sup> February and 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**RESOLVED THAT:** Councillors may respond on an individual basis if they wish to do so.

One Member abstained from voting on this issue.

### **CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS**

## 295. VOTE TO MOVE INTO PRIVATE SESSION

The Councillors voted to go into private session.

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**RESOLVED THAT:** the press and public be excluded from the Meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to legal privilege and disclosure of personal details.

## 296. STORAGE REPORT

The Mayor, Councillor Miss K. F. Gray, reminded Members that the Town Council would be entirely vacating the Town Hall at the end of March 2023. As a result, the matter of storing the many artefacts at the Town Hall was becoming most urgent.

Following a lengthy discussion, carefully covering all costs listed on the Report, with the importance of the preservation of historical documents taken into account, it was **RESOLVED THAT:**

- (i) Councillor D. R. Sinnett is to liaise with Pembrokeshire Archives for advice regarding the preservation of historical documents;
- (ii) Councillor T. J. Davies is to look at obtaining a copy of the list of items presently located in the Town Hall from the building's landlord, Mr. B. Evens;
- (iii) Councillor T. J. Davies is also to liaise with a local storage company once further information as to the items is obtained;
- (iv) upon the conclusion of these resolutions, this matter immediately be deferred to the jurisdiction of the Town Clerk, Mrs B. J. Fitzgerald, upon her return from holiday on the week commencing Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023.