

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council  
(to consider the Council's Precept requirements for 2024/2025)  
held at the Sea Cadets Milford Haven Unit, Havens Head Business Park  
on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7:00 pm

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## PRESENT

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS)

Councillors: K. Abbott Mrs N. Beavis-Morrissey  
E. A. Davies DipSM FJOIFF Miss K. F. Gray  
N. Harteveld C. Jones  
C. A. Sharp D. R. Sinnett  
Miss T. Stevens  
G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B. (Hons)  
M. Woodward

Mrs B. J. Fitzgerald, Town Clerk

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The Deputy Mayor, Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS, opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

The Deputy Mayor explained the Mayor, Councillor Mrs C. Stevens, had given her apologies earlier in the day as she was unwell.

### 245. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor, Councillor Mrs C. Stevens (illness), and Councillors D. Abbott (ill health), L. J. Bridges (holiday), Miss V. Brown (work commitments), M. Jones (holiday), and Mrs Y. G. Southwell (Church meeting commitments).

### 246. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council's Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Milford Haven Town Band/Milford Haven Junior Town Band* – as he is the Honorary Vice President of the Band.

Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council's Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets* – as he is a former Volunteer of the organisation.

Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council's Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Mayor's Allowance budget* – as he is the current Deputy Mayor and likely to be Mayor for the 2024/2025 Mayoral year.

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Torch Theatre* – as he is employed by the Torch Theatre as Senior Manager (Business). Councillor Woodham stated that he would need to leave the room when that discussion took place.

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Milford Haven Town Band/Milford Haven Junior Town Band* – as he is the President of the Band.

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Milford Haven Maritime and Heritage Museum* – as his husband is the Chair of the Museum Board of Trustees.

Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets* – as his husband is the Chair of the Unit.

Councillor C. A. Sharp declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Torch Theatre* – as he is employed by the Torch Theatre.

Councillor C. A. Sharp declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Milford Haven Museum Trust* – as he is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Museum.

Councillor C. A. Sharp declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 - To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets* – as he is the Chair of the Milford Haven Unit.

Councillor D. R. Sinnett declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 - To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Torch Theatre* – as he is the Pembrokeshire County Council appointed Board Member.

Councillor N. Harteveld declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5 – To consider the Council’s Precept Requirements for 2024/2025 – *Application for Financial Assistance from the Megan’s Starr Foundation* - as she is a Trustee of the Foundation.

## 247. NEWS FROM THE MAYOR:

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor wished everyone present a Happy New Year.

## MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

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

No questions were raised.

### 249. TO CONSIDER THE COUNCIL'S PRECEPT REQUIREMENTS FOR 2024/2025:

The Deputy Mayor explained to all present that the meeting was the most important meeting of the year, setting the budget for the responsibility of such matters as the Cemetery. Previous equivalent meetings had been known to exceed two hours, resulting in suspension of the Council's Standing Orders.

The Deputy Mayor invited Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) to explain the importance of the meeting.

Councillor Woodham mentioned that the details of past budgets were in the documents received by Councillors, with the budget details going back as far as 2004/05.

Councillor Woodham spoke of the dire financial situation in Pembrokeshire and many other local authorities in Wales, with Pembrokeshire County Council potentially increasing Council Tax rates. He advised that Members faced challenging decisions while considering the evening's budget proposals.

Councillor Woodham suggested that Councillors might start by discussing what they wished to fund from April 2024. A fifty-year loan to fund extra land for the Cemetery had already been agreed by Council, with a loan repayment figure of £14,600.

Councillor Woodham proposed debate on 'long term' grant applications and new grant applications, with budgetary implications paramount.

A Member asked what the recommended reserves were for the Town Council. The Town Clerk, Mrs B. J. Fitzgerald, responded that there were no set reserves, but that Town Clerks work on a reserve of a year's precept.

Another Member asked if the cost for the roads (etc) at the new land of the Cemetery will come out of the Council's Reserve Fund. The Deputy Mayor replied that this will not initially be the case. The loan for the land has been secured for £500,000 and this should support a good start. This matter and pricing will be clarified once all the design specifications have been completed.

A further member expressed his belief that having a full year's precept in the Council's Reserve fund was excessive and difficult to justify in today's financial climate, with many struggling amidst cost pressures. He felt that Members should question what it is a 'reasonable' amount in to have in reserves, rather than just letting the fund build up.

The Town Clerk stated that Haverfordwest Town Council has £330,000 in their Reserve fund, and that their precept request for 2023/2024 was in excess of £300,000. The Deputy Mayor noted this information, stating that it obviously applies to another town, but that the Town Clerks across the county are running the finances in a similar way. He then stated that he was not suggesting keeping

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

the Reserve figure that high, but the last financial year had seen £66,000 of Reserve expenditure committed on such matters as the Cemetery wall.

## (a) Cemetery Expenditure

- Staff costs (encompassing Wages, NI, Tax and Pension Contributions; Superannuation Contributions for past employees of the Cemetery; Temporary Labour/Sub Contractor; Health and Safety (to include minor items of equipment and signage); and Staff Uniform and PPE) were considered and agreed.
- Plant and Machinery costs (encompassing Tools/Equipment, Materials and Ancillary Hire; Repairs; Service and Repair to Utility Vehicles; and Contract Hire fuel for new HPX Gator Utility Vehicle) were considered and agreed.
- Fuel costs (encompassing Mowers/Machinery) were considered and agreed.
- House/Cemetery costs (encompassing Rates (including Water Rates); Electricity; Gas (Central Heating); Cemetery Land (Purchase and Loan); Disposal of Green Waste; and Purchase of Topsoil and Returfing of Graves and Turfing of New Graves)) were considered and agreed.
- Administration costs (encompassing Printing and Stationery; Telephone; Insurance; and Travelling Expenses) were considered and agreed.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the 2024/2025 budget for the Cemetery be approved and adopted.

## (b) Civic Expenditure

### Christmas Festivities – Christmas Lights (LGA 1972, s.144)

A Member asked if the budget of £20,000 was value for money and if the Council was content to keep that cost for the light display at the Town Hall and the Memorial Gardens.

Another Member asked whether the Christmas Lights now come under the Council's assets. Members agreed that an asset register would be useful.

Members were informed that the Town Council's electrician has been asked for a breakdown of what is owned by the Town Council.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS, explained that the cost for the Christmas Lights has been increased for 2024/2025 to £20,000 (from £17,000) as additional lights will need to be replaced. The Town Council also continues to rent some lights on a 3-year contract.

A Member expressed concern that the lights on the Town Hall had not been working for a period after Christmas. The Town Clerk was aware of this issue and advised that she had been liaising with the Town Council's electrician.

Another Member asked if the Town Council was charged for the lights on the Town Hall as they were illuminated all day. The Town Clerk responded that the Town Council is charged for the lights situated in the Memorial Gardens

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

and Charles Street. It is unclear of the situation with the Town Hall as these lights come under a separate meter.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Town Council's electrician, Mr B. Jones, is to be invited to a future meeting of the Public Events Sub-Committee, where the Christmas Lights will be discussed in full detail.

A further Member asked what the £20,000 figure covered. It was explained that this figure will cover the cost of the Christmas event, the three Christmas trees in Milford Haven, and the electrician's costs for erecting the lights/electricity costs. The Member then asked if the Town Council could generate income at the Christmas event.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the matter of potential income generation at the Town Council's Christmas event will also be discussed at a future meeting of the Public Events Sub-Committee.

Subject to the above, it was **RESOLVED THAT** the £20,000 budget for Christmas Lights 2024/2025 be moved and adopted, with the extra £3,000 taken as a one-off extra cost.

## Civic Expenditure – Mayor's Allowance, Deputy Mayor's Allowance, Councillor Allowance

**RESOLVED THAT:** the budget for the Mayor's Allowance, Deputy Mayor's Allowance, and Councillor Allowance, for 2024/2025 was considered and agreed.

A Member noted that there was no representative from Pembrokeshire County Council at last year's Remembrance Service.

**RESOLVED THAT:** this matter be raised at the next meeting of the Public Events Sub-Committee.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Civic Expenditure budget for 2024/2025 be approved and adopted.

## (c) **General Office Expenditure**

### Town Council Website

The Town Council will be required to have to have new email addresses as instructed by Audit Wales requirements. A Member mentioned that there is a company that will assist with the cost.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Member will speak with the Town Clerk to ascertain further information regarding this matter.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the General Office budget for 2024/2025 be approved and adopted.

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

## Provision of Public Conveniences on The Rath (Public Health Act 1935, s.87)

A Member mentioned that there had been a problem with the public conveniences on The Rath during the opening of the paddling pool in the summer. The toilets were flooded and there was excrement on the floor. It was felt that there was a lack of support in rectifying this problem.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Clerk is to liaise with Mr M. Owen, Streetcare Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council, regarding this matter.

## Floral Displays in the Town

**RESOLVED THAT:** Mr N. McCarthy, Maintenance, Pembrokeshire County Council, be invited to a future meeting of the Public Events Sub-Committee to discuss whether floral displays in the town are value for money.

## Rath Paddling Pool

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- a. the Rath Paddling Pool budget of £2,500 be maintained for 2024/2025;
- b. two Councillors are to be trained in water safety.

## Town Council Venue

A discussion ensued on the importance of a new home for the Town Council.

A couple of Councillors suggested that the budget of £5,000 be increased to £10,000. This proposal was voted on by Councillors and rejected.

Another Councillor expressed his strong belief that the Town Council should return to meeting in the Town Hall Chamber.

**RESOLVED THAT:** this matter be discussed at the next meeting of the Estates Group.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Town Council Venue budget of £5000 for 2024/2025 (for rental of venue) be approved and adopted.

One Councillor abstained from voting on this item.

## (d) Cemetery Fees

**RESOLVED THAT:** this item be discussed in further detail at the next meeting of the Cemetery Fees Sub-Committee.

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

## GRANT APPLICATIONS

(e) Milford Haven Heritage & Maritime Museum (LGA 1972, s137)

Councillor Sharp explained the works of the Museum and its financial commitments. School children visit the museum free of charge, and the Milford Haven Port Authority assist with some grants.

The Museum has enrolled a total of seven Trustees. A five-year plan is to be put in place to explore funding opportunities.

Councillor Miss Gray congratulated the Museum on its recent award.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Milford Haven Heritage & Maritime Museum donation is to be £10,000 for the financial year 2024/2025.

Councillor C. A. Sharp abstained from voting on this item.

(f) Milford Haven Round Table (LGA 1972, s. 145)

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- a. £2,500 be donated to the Milford Haven Round Table for the Milford Haven Carnival for the financial year 2024/2025;
- b. £2,500 be donated to the Milford Haven Round Table for the fireworks display for the financial year 2024/2025;
- c. a photo opportunity with the Mayor is to be arranged with the Round Table with the expectation that the Town Council is acknowledged as financial donors.

(g) Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets (LGA 1972, s.137)

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- a. £5,000 be released to the Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets for the financial year 2024/2025 upon the proven purchase of the minibus;
- b. acknowledgement that the minibus has been supported by Milford Haven Town Council is to be displayed on the minibus;
- c. the matter of the minibus that was previously funded by the Town Council be referred to a future meeting of the Public Events Sub-Committee for further discussion.

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

- (h) Milford Haven Town Band / Milford Haven Junior Town Band (LGA 1972, s.145)

**RESOLVED THAT:** a joint donation of £5,000 be awarded to the Milford Haven Town Band / Milford Haven Junior Town Band for the financial year 2024/2025.

- (i) Torch Theatre Company Limited (LGA 1972, s.145)

Councillors C. A. Sharp, D. R. Sinnett, and G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) reiterated their personal and prejudicial interests and left the room during discussion of this item.

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Torch Theatre Company Limited is to receive a donation of £5,000 for the financial year 2024/2025.

Councillors Sharp, Sinnett, and Woodham returned to the meeting upon conclusion of the discussion.

- (j) Suspension of Standing Order

As it was 9:00 pm, it was **RESOLVED THAT** Standing Order 1u – “Meetings shall not exceed a period of 2 hours” – be suspended to continue with the meeting.

There was also a five-minute comfort break at this juncture.

Councillors E. A. Davies DipSM FJOIFF and M. Woodward left the meeting at this point.

- (k) Milford Youth Matters

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- a. regrettably, no donation can be awarded at this time due to insufficient evidence;
- b. however, a donation of up to £5,000 may be possible if all required information is supplied;
- c. a meeting is to be arranged with Milford Youth Matters to discuss further.

- (l) Milford Haven Business Circle

**RESOLVED THAT:** regret, no donation, as insufficient supporting financial evidence received.

- (m) Megan's Starr Foundation

Councillor Hartevelde reiterated her personal and prejudicial interest and left the room during discussion of this item.



# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

## RESOLVED THAT:

- a. regrettably, no donation can be awarded at this time as not all supporting information has been received;
- b. however, a donation of up to £5,000 may be considered once this information has been received;
- c. this donation would be taken out of the Council's Reserves;
- d. this application will be further discussed at a future meeting of the Full Council.

Councillor Hartevelde returned to the meeting upon conclusion of this discussion.

(n) The Conqueroars – Atlantic Rowing Team 2025

**RESOLVED THAT:** a donation of £1500.00 be given to The Conqueroars for the financial year 2024/2025 to be used to purchase an ISO Ocean Liferaft.

(o) Review of Grant Allocation System

**RESOLVED THAT:** a Grant Review Sub-Committee be formed at the next meeting of the Full Council on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

(p) Precept

The Precept rose by 8.25 percent. Councillor D. R. Sinnett proposed that the percentage fall to 5% with the rest of the money being taken from Reserves. This proposal was voted on and not accepted, and the precept of £199,815 was carried.

**RESOLVED THAT:** a Precept requirement in the sum of £199,815 be served on the Pembrokeshire County Council in respect of the financial year 2024/2025. The figure is equivalent to a charge of £35.57 per annum per Band "D" household, and increase of £2.71 per annum.

Councillors C. Jones and D. R. Sinnett voted against the rise.

250. TO RECEIVE REPORTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE:  
CEMETERY FEES SUB-COMMITTEE held on 21<sup>ST</sup> November 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cemetery Fees Sub-Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 were moved by the Chair of the Cemetery Maintenance and Land Acquisition Group, Councillor C. A. Sharp, who chaired the meeting.

# MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

**RESOLVED THAT:** the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cemetery Fees Sub-Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 be moved and adopted.

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