

**CARMARTHEN TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON 31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM**

The meeting was held in the Council Chamber, St Peter's Civic Hall and in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, enabling meetings of local authorities held from 1 May 2021 to be held by means of remote attendance.

The Mayor, Cllr. Wyn Thomas presided over the meeting.

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Heledd ap Gwynfor (Video), Dai Evans (Video), Peter Hughes Griffiths, Gareth John, Angharad Jones Leefe (Video), Andy King (Video), Alun Lenny (Video), Arwel Lloyd (Video), Ioan Matthews, Miriam Moules (Video), Emlyn Schiavone, Russell Sparks, Jeff Thomas, Wyn Thomas, Barry Williams, Luned Voyle.

Emma Smith –Town Clerk  
Wendy Dickson – Deputy Town Clerk  
Tudur Jones - Translator (Video)

### **300. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

### **301. Declarations of Interest**

- i. Cllr. Russell Sparks to Item 310 as a member of Carmarthenshire County Council's Planning Committee.
- ii. Cllr. Arwel Lloyd to Item 317 (ii) due to his association with Menter Gorllewin Sir Gâr.
- iii. Cllr. Miriam Moules to Item 322 (iv) due to a close relationship with a Staff Member.

### **302. Questions from Members**

None

### **303. Questions from the Public**

None

### **304. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 13th of December 2023.**

It was proposed by Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone, seconded by Cllr. Jeff Thomas and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 be accepted as a true record.

**305. To confirm and sign the minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 9th January 2024.**

It was proposed by Cllr. Barry Williams, seconded by Cllr. Peter Hughes Griffiths and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 be accepted as a true record.

**306. Minutes arising from the General Purposes Committee**

- i. Page 80: Item 282 - Tree and hedge planting at Johnstown Park

Members **RESOLVED** that the recommendation noted above should be approved as noted in the General Purposes Committee minutes for the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2024.

**307. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2024.**

With an amendment to item 291 whereby the “two absentions” are amended to “against”, it was proposed by Cllr. Wyn Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Gareth John and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 be accepted as a true record.

**308. Minutes arising from the Finance Committee.**

- i. Page 84: Item 292 – Purchase of Replacement Deputy Mayor’s chain.

Members **RESOLVED** that the recommendation noted above should be approved as noted in the Finance Committee minutes for the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2024.

**309. To set Council’s budget and precept for 2024/25**

Cllr. Jeff Thomas outlined some of the economic factors that have affected the Town Council in recent years leading to the current financial situation and the need to consider an increase in the precept. Cllr. Jeff Thomas reminded members that some of the assets that the Town Council is responsible for are old and in some cases historic and can therefore present additional maintenance and repair costs. In addition, the Town Council manages the town cemetery and eight separate parks across the town which again come with a cost and responsibility. Cllr Jeff Thomas noted that the precept has been raised only four times over a period of fifteen years and with increasing costs, it has become a challenge to maintain the services currently offered.

Cllr Peter Hughes-Griffiths noted his opposition to the Finance Committee's recommendation to raise the precept to £924,161 asking members to consider reducing the amount. At the members' request the Clerk noted that a potential total of £92,000 of savings had been identified across a number of areas, reducing the overall shortfall to £70,620 which would equate to an increase of £1.22/month for

Band D properties over a period of 10 months. It was also noted that this reduction to the Finance Committee's recommendation will mean that the council will have to consider an increase like this again next year instead of correcting the situation in one year. With the cuts presented this year, there will be fewer options to cut back next year.

Members agreed that further consideration would be needed when discussing future budgetary requirements to protect services and to continue to be an ambitious Town Council. The members indicated their thanks for the preparation work done by the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk, and for distributing the papers to support the discussion.

Following much discussion, the Members **AGREED** to the increase in the precept setting it at £874,221 for 2024/25 which is £150.58 per year for Band D properties.

## **Town Clerk's Report**

### **310. Planning**

- i. **PL/07113** – Addition of Floodlighting to Four Tennis Courts – Queen Elizabeth High School, Llansteffan Road, Johnstown, Carmarthen, SA31 3NL – **NO OBJECTION**
- ii. **PL/07011** – Replace 2no. fascia and logo with new grey fascia and 290mm white logo height. Replace 1no. fascia and logo with new grey fascia and 150mm white logo height. Replace 1no. Statutory signage with new. Decorations works to kettle. To be painted black. Paint building number grey – 11 Guildhall Square, Carmarthen, SA31 1QB – **NO OBJECTION**

### **311. Highways Matters**

None

### **312. Licensing Matters.**

None

### **313. Nominate a Town Council Representative: Ysgol Y Dderwen**

It was proposed by Cllr. Peter Hughes Griffiths, seconded by Cllr. Gareth John and **AGREED** by all that Cllr. Ioan Matthews should continue to represent the council as a governor at Ysgol Y Dderwen.

### **314. One Voice Wales Awards**

The Clerk outlined the categories in the 2024 One Voice Wales awards and proposed potential nominations from Carmarthen Town Council. On the proposal of Cllr. Peter Hughes Griffiths, seconded by Cllr. Gareth John and with all Members in

agreement, it was **DECIDED** that the Clerk would submit entries for the suggested nominations.

### **315. Carmarthenshire County Council Budget Consultation**

Members discussed the budget consultation acknowledging the difficult decisions that have had to be made by Carmarthenshire County Council. No specific comments would be sent in relation to the consultation at this time, but members noted that they would respond to the offer of an asset transfer at the time of application.

### **316. Councillor vacancy – co-option of a member**

One application was received for the vacant seat and after some consideration, it was **RESOLVED** that Mr Aled Williams should be co-opted to Council. The Clerk would contact Mr. Williams to invite him to the next meeting of council.

### **317. Correspondence**

- i. Mr D Mathias – The Clerk shared correspondence received regarding the condition of the War Memorial in Guildhall Square. The Clerk advised members that she had advised Mr Mathias that Carmarthen Town Council are not responsible for the maintenance of the Monument and to suggest that he contact Carmarthenshire County Council. Members **NOTED** the email.
- ii. Menter Gorllewin Sir Gâr - Members considered a request for support from Menter Gorllewin Sir Gâr for their free parking application to Carmarthenshire County Council relating to the Gŵyl Canol Dre event. Members **RESOLVED** that the application should be supported.

### **318. The Mayor's Report.**

Since the last meeting, the Mayor Cllr. Wyn Thomas provided a report of attendance at the following engagements:

#### **List of Mayor's Engagements up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024**

<u>December</u>	
15	Foodbank at Christ Church – Open new storeroom Myrddin Unit – Christmas Concert
18	Carmarthen Stroke Club – Christmas Party
<u>January</u>	
15	Carmarthenshire Enterprise Hub – Official launch of the Hub Bandi Appeal – Annual General Meeting
26	Town Sports Awards Presentation Evening

**319. Reports from Councillors as Council Representatives on outside bodies.**

- (i) Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone had attended the Town Council Sports Awards evening noting how important it was to recognise the fantastic achievements of young people in sport. Cllr. Schiavone also thanked staff for the work to hold the event.
- (ii) Cllr. Barry Williams noted attendance at the Town Council Sports Awards which had been an enjoyable evening.
- (iii) Cllr. Peter Hughes Griffiths noted that he had attended a One Voice Wales meeting where the current cost of living crisis and grant applications had been discussed.
- (iv) Cllr. Heledd ap Gwynfor had attended the Town Council Sports Awards and wished to thank Mrs Eleri James Administrative Officer for her hard work in arranging an enjoyable evening.
- (v) Cllr. Alun Lenny shared a poster promoting the St David's Day Parade to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2024.

**320. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on 23 January 2024.**

It was proposed by Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone seconded by Cllr. Peter Hughes Griffiths and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2024 be accepted as a true copy.

**321. Exclusion of Public and Press – S.1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**

It was proposed by Cllr. Russell Sparks and seconded by Cllr. Miriam Moules that due to the confidential items on the agenda (e.g., Local Agreement 1986, Tea Shop Review and Staffing Matters) the press and public would be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960).

**322. Minutes arising from the Management Committee meeting.**

- i. Page 85: Item 295 – Policies for review
- ii. Page 86: Item 297 – Local Agreement 1986

Members **RESOLVED** that the two recommendations noted above should be approved as noted in the Management Committee minutes for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2024.

- iii. Page 86: Item 298 - Tea Shop Review

Members considered options and agreed to establish a working group to establish areas of change to further develop the potential of the Tea Rooms and to improve on the services currently offered.

After much discussion, it was **AGREED** that the working group would include the Town Clerk alongside Cllrs. Miriam Moules, Russell Sparks, Gareth John, Jeff Thomas, and Cllr. Peter Hughes Griffiths.

*Cllr. Miriam Moules left the meeting at this point.*

iv. Page 86: Item 299 - Staffing Matters

Members **RESOLVED** that the recommendations noted in relation to the above should be approved as noted in the Management Committee minutes for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2024.

**The meeting closed at 8:51 pm.**