CARMARTHEN TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON 13TH MAY 2016

The Mayor, Cllr Barry Williams, presided pro tem over the Annual Meeting of Carmarthen Town Council held in the Guildhall, Carmarthen, on Friday, 13th May 2016, at 6.30 pm. The Mayor and Council were preceded into the Chamber by the Sword Bearer, Mr Andrew Mattick, and Mace Bearers, Mr Andrew King and Mr Brian Phillips, accompanied by the Town Crier, Mr Adrian Perret.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Reverend Tom Defis, Dr Richard Edwards,

 Dr Dewi Evans, Dr Baba Gana, Peter Hughes Griffiths, Anthony Jenkins, Alun Lenny, Arwel Lloyd,

Kenneth Lloyd, Dr Ioan Matthews, Douglas Rose,

Emlyn Schiavone, Alan Speake, Wyn Thomas and

Barry Williams

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Dorothy Bere, Philip Grice and Angharad Jones Leefe.

2. OPENING EXHORTATION

The proceedings opened with an exhortation by the retiring Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Canon Leigh Richardson. The retiring Mayor thanked the Reverend Richardson for his support during the year.

3. RETIRING MAYOR'S ADDRESS

 The Retiring Mayor, Cllr Barry Williams, recalled a busy but very enjoyable year, supported by his wife, the Mayoress, Mrs Barbara Williams, and with the thoughtful patience and assistance of his son at several functions. Cllr Williams thanked his Chaplain, the Reverend Cannon Leigh Richardson, for his contribution to a variety of civic ceremonies throughout the year.

Having attended over one hundred engagements, in addition to Council meetings and activities, Cllr Williams thanked the Deputy Mayor and Sheriff for attending functions during his absence, all Members for their support and diligence, and Mrs Eleri James, Council’s Administrative Officer, for ensuring the smooth running of the civic year.

During the year, Mr Selwyn Thomas had retired as Town Clerk; Cllr Williams thanked Mr Thomas for all his advice and assistance, and wished him a happy and healthy retirement. Cllr Williams also welcomed the new Town Clerk, Mr Alun Harries, who joined Council in September 2015, with vast experience of leadership and administration which benefits Council.

Cllr Williams referred to Carmarthen’s good fortune in having a Mayor’s Charity Appeals Committee, to raise funds on behalf of the Mayor for local good causes. Cllr Williams wished the committee’s Chairperson and past Mayor, Mrs June Williams, a speedy recovery, and thanked every member of the committee for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Cllr Williams recalled, with sadness, the passing of Mr John Mattick who had served the Council and town as Mace Bearer and Sword Bearer for fifty-nine years, and was an Honorary Freeman of the Town. Cllr Williams extended Council’s sympathy to the Mattick family during this time.

As Mayor of Carmarthen, Cllr Williams had been privileged to accept the office of Admiral of the Port, working alongside the Riverside Association, River Festival Committee, and Carmarthen Bar Navigation Committee. Much had been learned about the work of the numerous partners who contribute to river safety, and development of the river and estuary. The 2015 River Festival had once again been a tremendous success. With the River Towy potentially Carmarthen’s biggest asset, Cllr Williams emphasised the need for local authorities and organisations to continue to work together to develop the river and the estuary.

Cllr Williams thanked the volunteer Town Guides, and Carmarthen Tourist Information Centre at Tŷ’r Castell, for promoting the town and its history with guided tours for visitors.

The number of voluntary organisations in Carmarthen had especially impressed Cllr Williams, and the unsung heroes who work quietly in the background, supporting and raising money for worthwhile charities.

The Welsh Guards’ visit had been a highlight. A successful charity concert in St Peter’s Church had been followed by a march through the town in full ceremonial dress on Tuesday, 29th September, in beautiful sunshine, cheered by large crowds. As Mayor of Carmarthen, and personally having a military background, Cllr Williams had been privileged and humbled to inspect the Guards, with the then Lord Lieutenant of Dyfed, the Hon. Robin Lewis.

In November the Christmas lights switch-on had attracted thousands of people. Cllr Williams was pleased that the Town Council had extended the impressive Christmas lighting into Mansel Street and Water Street, and other streets will benefit from new lights in 2016. Cllr Williams judged that the community can be proud of how Carmarthen lights up for Christmas, and paid tribute to the Town Council’s small team of outside workers who each year work hard, often in atrocious weather, to ensure that the town looks its best during the festive season. Equally successful was the annual Reindeer Parade, a unique event in this part of Wales.

At this point Cllr Williams thanked all the staff of the Town Council for arranging and participating in such events, and for their support and dedication in all areas of Town Council work, ranging from the Cemetery, to the Civic Hall, to the numerous parks and play areas.

In March, thanks to the drive of Carmarthenshire County Council Chairman and Town Councillor Peter Hughes-Griffiths, Carmarthen enjoyed its first week-long St David’s celebration. Traditionally the Town Council had arranged the St David’s day events. In 2016 this was transformed into a week of events that started with a memorable parade of over a thousand people through the town. Cllr Williams remarked that the partnership of several organisations pulling together had resulted in a successful week, and hoped that this celebration of our patron saint would long continue in Carmarthen.

In April Cllr Williams had been honoured to attend the inauguration of Professor Medwin Hughes, Vice-Chancellor of University of Wales Trinity Saint David, as High Sheriff of Dyfed. Cllr Williams thanked Professor Hughes for his support and wished him well for the remainder of the year.

On the 21st April Cllr Williams had lit a beacon at Carmarthen Castle to help celebrate Her Majesty the Queen’s 90th Birthday. Cllr Williams thanked Carmarthenshire County Council for permitting use of their facilities for this special occasion.

On the 2nd May the annual Mayor’s Fun Run through the streets of Carmarthen had been well supported by participants, sponsors and onlookers. Four local charities will benefit. Cllr Williams thanked the sponsors and volunteers, especially Mr Noelwyn Daniel, who prepares this event virtually single-handedly. Mr Daniel’s work on this and other events beyond Carmarthen ensures that thousands of young people and adults can participate in healthy sporting activities.

Always striving to improve community facilities, the Town Council has recently secured £12,000 for play equipment in Penllwyn Park. Cllr Williams thanked members of the local community who had participated in the consultation, ensuring that the Council provides what people have asked for as far as is possible.

Cllr Williams reminded the meeting that Carmarthen is rightly proud of its town park, velodrome and tea room. This town asset hosts an array of events and activities throughout much of the year, thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of Council’s Parks and Activities Officer, Mr Huw Thomas. The Town Council’s exciting plans to develop the velodrome as a modern venue for national and international cycling have secured the backing of Carmarthenshire County Council, Sport Wales and Welsh Cycling. Cllr Williams thanked Carmarthenshire County Council and the cycling organisations for their support, and hoped that such team working would ensure the best possible facility for cyclists of all abilities, with consequent economic benefit to the town and district.

In April Cllr Williams had been delighted to participate in the Citizenship Ceremony held at the Register Office, when overseas citizens had sworn an oath of loyalty to the Crown and become British citizens, enjoying the same rights and responsibilities as every other British subject.

Cllr Williams concluded by stating that it had been an honour and privilege to serve as Mayor of the oldest town in Wales, and by wishing Cllr Wyn Thomas well as Mayor of Carmarthen in 2016/17.

4. PRESENTATIONS

Cllr Barry Williams presented Certificates of Appreciation to:

Mrs Jean Miriam Long, MBE, of Picton Place – for her lifetime voluntary work on behalf of Christ Church and cancer research. The award recognised Mrs Long’s devotion to Christ Church, and the raising of funds to repair and maintain the fabric of the church. After the death of her husband, Mr Ernest Long, Mrs Long continued his dedicated church work, serving as Church Warden, Parochial Church Council Secretary and Treasurer, and running the Women’s Guild from its inception. A governor of the Model Church in Wales School, and member of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales and the St David’s Diocesan Conference, for many people Mrs Jean Long is synonymous with Christ Church. The Certificate of Appreciation also recognised Mrs Long’s raising of hundreds of thousands of pounds toward cancer research and treatment. Mrs Long thanked the Mayor.

Mr Ian Williams of Talog – for his devotion to Glangwili Hospital and involvement with numerous facets of Carmarthen life. Since ill health cut short his career at Ysgol Bro Myrddin, Mr Williams devotes his life to voluntary work. Active on behalf of Blaenycoed Chapel, Carmarthen Vintage Club, and the Friends of Carmarthenshire Museum, Mr Williams was for twenty-three years Clerk to his Community Council. For several decades, Mr Williams has given daily time to several aspects of Glangwili Hospital: the Royal Voluntary Service, Cardiac Rehabilitation Unit, League of Friends, Osteoporosis Club and Radio Glangwili. His collection and re-cycling of bottle tops has funded a motorised wheelchair for patients. For seventeen years Mr Williams has collected requests for Radio Glangwili, served as presenter, committee member and treasurer, prepared radio programmes, and trained new recruits in microphone technique, cuing music and interviewing. His work experience programme has brought recognition to Radio Glangwili for excellence in that field. Mr Williams thanked the Mayor.

5. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR 2016/2017

On the motion of Cllr Peter Hughes Griffiths, seconded by Cllr Dr Ioan Matthews, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr Wyn Thomas be elected Town Mayor for Carmarthen for the year 2016/2017*.*

In making his proposal, which he did both as a Town Councillor and as a good friend, Cllr Peter Hughes Griffiths referred to Cllr Wyn Thomas’s birth and early years in Newcastle Emlyn, his long association with Llanpumsaint, and his father’s work on the Pencader to Newcastle Emlyn railway, until Beeching cut the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth line. After attending Llanpumsaint Primary School and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Carmarthen, Cllr Thomas worked for ten years with the renowned firm of John Francis, getting to know every farmer within fifty miles of Carmarthen. This background stood Cllr Thomas in good stead when he decided to set up Siop y Pentan with his two late partners, Will Lloyd and Eurig Wyn, in 1972.

It was as ‘Wyn Siop y Pentan’ that Cllr Thomas became well known to everyone, after establishing his Welsh books and records shop in town. In this, Cllr Thomas was a pioneer of his era - an era when ‘Welsh shops’ began to open for the first time in our towns. Cllr Thomas moved Siop y Pentan from Water Street to the market in 1974, to the re-built market in 1980/81, and to the new market in 2009, when he transferred Siop y Pentan to new owners.

It could truly be said that Cllr Thomas has spent a lifetime in Carmarthen, and has taken an interest in every significant aspect of the town. Cllr Thomas has therefore been invaluable to the Town Council for his knowledge, steadfastness, enthusiasm and determination to uphold and improve the town. All would unite in the view that no-one could be more suitable to take on the office of Mayor of Carmarthen than Wyn Thomas – ‘Wyn Siop y Pentan’. Cllr Hughes Griffiths extended to Cllr Thomas, and Sylvia at his side, good wishes, in the certain knowledge that he would fulfil this honourable office in a thorough and enthusiastic manner.

Cllr Dr Ioan Matthews recalled Cllr Wyn Thomas’s contribution to public life in both Llanpumsaint and Carmarthen. Never a self-promoter, Cllr Thomas’s candidature in the 2016 election elicited strong public support. He is held with respect in so many circles, and his numerous connections testify to his decades of service as a leading businessman, and one of the cornerstones of the community.

Cllr Wyn Thomas then made and subscribed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of Justice of the Peace, Mrs Bethan Harris.

 The retiring Mayor, Cllr Barry Williams, invested Cllr Wyn Thomas with the chain and insignia of the office of Town Mayor.

 **The Mayor, Cllr Wyn Thomas, presiding.**

 The Mayor, Cllr Wyn Thomas, then made and subscribed the Oath of Admiralty, whilst holding the Silver Oar, being the badge of office.

Cllr Wyn Thomas thanked all Members for their faith in him, and declared that it was both an honour and a pleasure to be elected Mayor of Carmarthen. Cllr Thomas promised to be fair in representing the people of the town, and looked forward to working with everyone throughout the year ahead.

Cllr Thomas congratulated Cllr Barry Williams on his hard work and important achievements during his year of office and proceeded to invest the retiring Mayor with the Mayor's jewel and a silver oar.

 Cllr Wyn Thomas appointed Reverend Beti-Wyn James BD, Minister of Capel y Priordy, as Mayor's Chaplain.

The Mayor then appointed Mrs Sylvia Perkins as Mayoress, and Mrs Barbara Williams invested Mrs Perkins with the chain of office. The Mayoress presented flowers to Mrs Williams. The Mayor thanked Mrs Barbara Williams for her support of the retiring Mayor throughout the year.

6. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2016/2017

 On the motion of Cllr Reverend Tom Defis, seconded by Cllr Arwel Lloyd, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr Alun Lenny be appointed Deputy Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

 Cllrs Reverend Tom Defis and Arwel Lloyd recalled the achievements of Cllr Alun Lenny as a Carmarthenshire County Councillor from 2011, and as an industrious, effective and able Carmarthen Town Councillor since 2008. Town Council deliberations had benefitted from Cllr Lenny’s expertise and knowledge in several fields, and his long and distinguished career as a newspaper, radio and television journalist and broadcaster, dealing with issues of local, national and international significance. Cllr Lenny has proved to be an effective campaigner on behalf of both the county and the town, and he is at present part of an initiative to ensure the future of this building, the Guildhall, after its imminent closure as a court. Pursuit of truth is the mission of a good journalist. This may help explain why Cllr Alun Lenny is such an effective councillor and campaigner, patient and determined in exploring all options to secure the best outcome for the town.

 The Deputy Mayor then made and subscribed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of Justice of the Peace, Mrs Bethan Harris. Cllr Alun Lenny thanked Council and looked forward to serving the community in the year ahead.

 The Mayor invested Cllr Alun Lenny with the chain and badge of office.

7. APPOINTMENT OF TOWN SHERIFF FOR 2016/2017

 On the motion of Cllr Alan Speake, seconded by Cllr Alun Lenny, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr Emlyn Schiavone be appointed Town Sheriff for the ensuing municipal year.

 The Town Sheriff then made and subscribed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of Justice of the Peace, Mrs Bethan Harris.

 The Mayor invested Cllr Emlyn Schiavone with the chain and badge of office. Cllr Schiavone thanked Council for the honour.

In the unavoidable absence of Cllr Dorothy Bere, the Mayor thanked the Past Sheriff for her work on behalf of Council and resolved to present the Sheriff's Jewel to Cllr Bere at the next meeting of Council.

8. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING MAYOR

 On the motion of Cllr Peter Hughes Griffiths, seconded by Cllr Anthony Jenkins, it was **RESOLVED** that the best thanks of this Council be accorded to the retiring Mayor, Cllr Barry Williams, for his achievements as Mayor during the year 2015/2016.

Cllrs Peter Hughes Griffiths and Anthony Jenkins referred to the manner in which Cllr Barry Williams had conducted himself during the mayoral year, which had passed with dignity and with an awareness of the significance and civic responsibilities which attach to the office of Mayor of this historic and ancient borough. Cllr Barry Williams had brought to the role of Mayor a distinguished career as health practitioner and academic, and the Town Council had regularly benefitted from Cllr Williams’s reports on matters relating to Glangwili Hospital and to the Health Service in general. Cllr Williams had shown a deep interest in the affairs of Carmarthen and all its people. He had assiduously attended meetings of organisations charitable and otherwise, opened coffee mornings and thoroughly immersed himself in the rich kaleidoscope of life which makes Carmarthen so distinctive.

Cllr Williams had been effective, approachable and highly respected as Mayor of this Borough, bringing distinction to the office and credit to himself. Ably supported by his wife, Barbara, who was also thanked for all her work as Mayoress, Cllr Barry Williams could look back on a successful year and a job well done.

Cllr Anthony Jenkins referred to a particular challenge which had arisen during 2015/16, namely the decision of the Courts Service to close this fine civic building, the Guildhall, as a place where justice had been dispensed for centuries and where events of historic importance had occurred. Cllr Barry Williams had risen to that challenge and been an enthusiastic supporter of innovative ideas, promoted in particular by the High Sheriff of Dyfed, for the future of this building.

Another challenge had been the decision of Council’s highly respected Town Clerk, Mr Selwyn Thomas, to retire after many years of service. Cllr Williams had taken up that challenge and supervised the appointment of Mr Thomas’s successor – an individual with the requisite quality, experience and talent – Mr Alun Harries.

In conclusion, Cllr Barry Williams was thanked, on behalf of Council and all the townspeople, for maintaining the standards of the mayoralty and for an outstanding year as Mayor of Carmarthen.

9. MAYOR'S SUNDAY

 The Mayor announced his intention to hold a Civic Service at Capel y Priordy on Sunday, 15th May 2016, at 10.00 pm.

10. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

 It was **RESOLVED** that the meeting stand adjourned until Wednesday, 25th May 2016, at 7.30 pm.

11. CLOSING PRAYER

 The Reverend Beti-Wyn James, the Mayor's Chaplain, closed the proceedings with prayer.

**The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.**