

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BRECON TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE GUILDHALL, BRECON ON MONDAY 23 MARCH 2020 AT 7.00 P.M.

671/19 PRESENT

Councillor A Mathias (Mayor in the Chair)
Councillor M Dorrance
Councillor J Powell
Councillor D Meredith
Councillor R Thomas
Councillor M Matthews
Councillor C Walsh
Councillor E Trailor
Councillor I Williams
Councillor S Morgans
Councillor T Davies
Councillor L Rijnenberg

In Attendance: Fiona Williams (Town Clerk)
Rhys Ridge-Evans (Administrative Officer)

672/19 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Ham, Perry and Weale.

673/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

674/19 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had previously circulated a list of her engagements by email for Members which were received and noted.

SECTION A

675/19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24 February 2020 (Pages 167 to 171) (copies of which had been previously circulated)

IT WAS RESOLVED

THAT the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 24 February 2020 be taken as read, approved as a true record,

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and signed.

676/19 PLANNING, GUILDHALL AND STAFFING COMMITTEE – 2 MARCH 2020

The Minutes of the Planning, Guildhall and Staffing Committee held on 2 March 2020 (pages 174 – 176) (copies of which had been previously circulated)

IT WAS RESOLVED

THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Guildhall and Staffing Committee held on 2 March 2020 be taken as read, approved as a true record, and signed.

677/19 FINANCE AND COMMISSIONING OF CONTRACTS COMMITTEE – 2 MARCH 2020

The Minutes of the Finance and Commissioning of Contracts Committee held on 2 March 2020 (Pages 178 – 180) (copies of which had been previously circulated)

IT WAS RESOLVED

THAT the Minutes of the Finance and Commissioning of Contracts Committee held on 2 March 2020 be taken as read, approved as a true record, and signed.

678/19 CORONAVIRUS

The following items all relate the Coronavirus Pandemic.

679/19 PANDEMIC CONTINGENCY PLAN POLICY

Submitted **C(A)** a Pandemic Contingency Plan Policy relating to the Coronavirus. Members discussed this in detail and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the Pandemic Contingency Plan Policy be approved and adopted.

680/19 DELEGATION OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Mayor explained this agenda item for the benefit of Members and requested that decisions of this Council be delegated to the Town Clerk in

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conjunction with the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor and/or relevant Committee Chair during any period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of the COVID-19 virus, and such delegation is to enable this Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents. Members discussed this and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the decisions of this Council be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

681/19 FORMAL APPOINTMENT OF PANDEMIC CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Mayor explained that the Pandemic Crisis Team set up by the Planning, Guildhall and Staffing Committee had met and it consisted of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning, Guildhall and Staffing Committee. It was suggested to keep the management team as it is.

RESOLVED

THAT the Pandemic Crisis Management team consists of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning, Guildhall and Staffing Committee.

682/19 CANCELLATION OR POSTPONING OF EVENTS

The Mayor explained that the following events were scheduled and would either need to be cancelled or postponed, AGM reception, VE Day events and the Gurkha Parade as noted on the agenda and suggested that this agenda item needs to be expanded further given the present situation to consider cancellation of all events planned by Brecon Town Council up to Brecon With Bells On. Members discussed this item and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT all Brecon Town Council events prior to Brecon With Bells On would be cancelled and this decision would be revisited as soon as it is safe to do so.

683/19 DEALING WITH REQUESTS FOR ASSITANCE FROM BRECON TOWN COUNCIL BY WELSH GOVERNMENT AND/OR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL AND SUPPORTING EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS IN THIS REGARD

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The Town Clerk notified members of the ongoing volunteer recruitment arrangements that have been put in place by the County Councillors for Brecon and suggested that if Brecon Town Council is approached to formally assist that we link in with this initiative that is already in place. Members offered assistance and discussed this in detail and it was

RESOLVED

THAT Brecon Town Council should be will assist the Welsh Government and Powys County Council in the ways that it is called upon to do so and will make resources available as appropriate.

684/19 CANCELLATION OF ALL MEETINGS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE AGM

Members discussed this item in detail and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT all future meetings should be cancelled pending Government advice that normal business can be resumed, with the exception of the AGM, which will go ahead if possible.

685/19 FINANCIAL ADVICE – FSCS PROTECTION

The Town Clerk notified Members that she had been researching the position with regard to financial protection for Town Councils in the event of the collapse of the high street banks and had received some advice from One Voice Wales which was to spread monies over more than one bank account but needed further clarification and research. The Town Clerk explained that her research had revealed that the FSCS covers small local authorities up to a €500,000 limit and Brecon Town Council is borderline on those limits depending on dates of exchange rates etc. The Town Clerk informed Members that further research is required in this regard but it may be necessary to consider moving monies to offer as much protection as possible in this respect.

THIS information was taken as received and noted.

686/19 REQUEST FROM COUNCILLORS DORRANCE, RIJNENBERG AND MEREDITH

The Town Clerk informed Members that request had been received from Councillors Dorrance, Rijnenberg and Meredith that resources from the Welfare Trust are made available during this pandemic and to request that

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the Town Council looks into establishing a hardship fund to help people who face financial difficulty. The Town Clerk informed Members that the terms of the Welfare Trust must be adhered to and the trust provides that there are five Members currently. The Town Clerk recommended that the Town Council appoints replacement trustees now to agree who could be replaced should any of the Trustees become unavailable due to the ongoing pandemic and therefore prevent the trust operating. With regard to the hardship fund, the Town Clerk notified Members that care is needed in this regard and research is required in respect of powers to be able to fund this and that she would carry out some research and await guidance in this respect.

RESOLVED

THAT Councillors Dorrance, Morgans and Walsh be replacement Trustees for the Brecknock Welfare Trust if this becomes necessary and that the Town Clerk looks into possibilities surrounding a hardship fund.

687/19 FORMAL CLOSURE OF VISIT BRECON OFFICE

The Town Clerk informed Members that arrangements have been made for the two members of staff at Visit Brecon to work from home and they can access emails etc and a mobile phone has been provided to allow enquiries by phone to be dealt with. After consideration it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the Visit Brecon office should be formally closed and that the PR messages in this regard should reflect Visit Wales messaging.

688/19 FORMAL CLOSURE OF THE GUILDHALL

The Town Clerk advised that whilst some members of staff can work from home out of the Guildhall, some cannot and a discussion took place about whether the Guildhall should continue to remain open. After discussion it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the Guildhall should be closed, with staff working from home where possible.

689/19 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

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It was discussed whether payment of salaries will continue during the restricted period of business and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the payment of salaries to staff will continue as usual.

690/19 PAYMENT OF MONIES FOR SERVICES THAT MAY NOT BE DELIVERED

The Town Clerk enquired with Members about their views regarding payment for services that may not necessarily be delivered during the pandemic period. After discussion it was

RESOLVED

THAT payment for services will continue.

691/19 PROVISION OF SERVICES – PUBLIC TOILETS

Members considered the risks of keeping the public toilets open at Lion Yard and the Promenade balanced against any benefit in doing so and after discussion it was

RESOLVED

THAT all the toilets should be closed subject to delegated powers to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in relation to arrangements for the toilet for all at Lion Yard.

692/19 CLOSURE OF PARKS

Members were informed that Powys County Council had decided to close their play areas, parks and green spaces with immediate effect and Members considered whether this Council should do likewise. After discussion it was

RESOLVED

THAT the parks and greenspaces owned and managed by Brecon Town Council should close with gates being locked where possible and signage put up to notify the public of this. With regard to bins that these would be temporarily sealed to prevent usage.

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693/19 PUBLIC STATEMENT AND COMMUNICATION TO STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Members discussed this and following discussion it was

RESOLVED

THAT a notice is put up to advise that the offices are closed and communications are made to staff and volunteers in this respect. It was also agreed to share the Public Health Wales suite of information going forward.

694/19 NOMINATION OF MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

The Mayor nominated Councillor Christopher Walsh as Mayor for 2020/21 this was seconded by Councillor Meredith and the Mayor called for a vote. It was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

That Councillor Christopher Walsh be elected as Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

695/18 NOMINATION OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

The Mayor informed Members that three nomination papers had been received proposing and seconding Councillor John Powell for Deputy Mayor for 2020/21. It was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT Councillor John Powell be elected as Deputy Mayor for the Municipal year 2020/21.

696/19 CORRESPONDENCE FROM GOUESNOU TOWN HALL - WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Submitted **C(B)** correspondence from Gouesnou Town Hall concerning work experience opportunities. The Mayor informed Members that she at the Town Clerk were due to meet the Chair of the Twinning Association but due to the outbreak of COVID-19 this did not go ahead. It was suggested to cancel this opportunity for this year and to pick it up again in 2021.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

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THAT the work experience opportunity be cancelled for this year.

697/19 TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL CLERK MEETING – POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Submitted **C(C)** minutes of a meeting of the Town and Community Council Clerks organised by Powys County Council.

RESOLVED

THIS information was taken as received and noted.

698/19 REPORT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Submitted **C(D)** report of internal Auditor.

This information was received and the contents noted.

699/19 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Mayor invited Members to consider the appointment of the internal auditor for 2020/21.

RESOLVED

THAT Mr Peter Jenkins MBE be appointed as internal auditor for 2020/21.

700/19 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW 2019/20

Submitted **C(E)** annual internal audit review for 2019/20. This item was discussed in detail and following discussion it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the internal audit review for 2019/20 be approved as submitted.

701/19 ANNUAL COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT (FINANCIAL) 2019/20

Submitted **C(F)** annual Council Risk Assessment & Management (Financial) 2019/20. The Chair of the Finance and Commissioning of Contracts Committee gave an overview and provided a recommendation

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to change the stock loss risk from medium to low. Following detailed discussion it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the annual Council Risk Assessment & management (financial) 2019/20 be approved as amended.

702/19 INTERNAL AUDIT & CONTROL TESTING 2019/20

Considered **C(G)** Internal Audit & Control testing questionnaire 2019/20, Annual Council Risk Assessment & Management (Financial) and Annual Internal Audit Review This item was discussed in detail and after discussion it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the 2019/20 report be completed as agreed.

703/19 TRUST ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/12/19

Submitted **C(H)** Trust accounts for the year ended 31/12/19 for **a)** Harley Thomas Trust, **b)** Brecknock Welfare Trust and **c)** Alderman Thomas Williams Trust.

THESE accounts were received and approved.

704/19 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP) FOR WALES

Submitted **C(I)** an email and draft supplementary report – the principles relating to the reimbursement of costs for care.

THIS information was taken as received and noted

705/19 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT – RELATING TO THE YEAR 2020/21

Submitted **C(J)** Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales annual report – relating to the year 2020/21.

THIS information was taken as received and noted.

706/19 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – IRP REQUIREMENTS 2020/21

Submitted **C(K)** the Town Clerk's report on the IRP requirements for 2020/21.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY AS FOLLOWS

THAT the provisions of determination 45 be paid to each Committee Chair, that determinations 45 & 46 be limited to travel costs and costs for overnight stays and that determinations 47 & 48 be agreed to the cost of £500 and £1500. It was also agreed that if a Member decides to stand down part way through a financial year that the costs would not be expected to be returned, and that one payment will be made to all Members.

707/19 PROPOSED NAMES FOR MAENDU WELL DEVELOPMENT SITE

Submitted **C(L)** an email from Powys County Council concerning the proposed names of the development on the land adjacent to Maendu Well. Members discussed this item and it was

RESOLVED

THAT Brecon Town Council's preferred name would be Maes Maendu.

708/19 PR OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE MEETING

Information relating to COVID-19.

709/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Town Clerk updated Members in relation to the position regarding support at Y Gaer.

710/19 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

SECTION B

RESOLVED

THAT in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted whereby matters of a possible personal nature might be discussed in relation to the finances or staff of the Council, and matters of a sensitive nature, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and that they be instructed to withdraw from the meeting.