



MINUTES OF BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Details:

Date: Monday 27th February 2023

Time: 6pm

The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting both at Carnegie House and remotely via Microsoft Teams for Business under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021.

Chairperson: The Mayor (Cllr Tim Wood)

Staff: Mrs L Edwards (Town Clerk), Mrs D Jones (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO), Ms J Brown (Democratic Services Officer)

In Attendance:

Cllr Ann Lloyd – In Person

Cllr Nathan Deere – Remote

Cllr David Unwin – In Person

Cllr I Williams – In Person

Cllr Tim Wood (Mayor) – In Person

Cllr M Blundell-Humphreys – In Person

Cllr S Bletsoe (Remote – Noted - joined late with prior apologies)

Cllr A Wathan – In Person

Cllr A Felton – In person

Cllr D Brown – In Person

Cllr C Webster – In person

Cllr F Bletsoe – Remote

Cllr S Easterbrook (In Person)

Cllr B Johnston – Remote

Mr R Hearne – Quantity Surveyor appointed by Bridgend Town Council

The Mayor welcomed the Quantity Surveyor for The Town Hall, Mr R Hearne to the meeting.

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

- Cllr I Spiller and Cllr D Evans

2. To Receive Declarations of Interests (if any) of Members in respect of the business to be transacted

- Cllr T Wood made a declaration of personal interest as a Bridgend Town Trader in matters pertaining to Town Centre business and in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor
- Cllr S Easterbrook made a declaration of personal interest as a Bridgend Town Trader in matters pertaining to Town Centre business and in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor
- Cllr A Wathan made a declaration of personal interest in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor

- Cllr I Williams made a declaration of personal interest in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor and in matters relating to Oldcastle School and Brynteg School

3. To receive questions or comments from Members of the Public (Standing Order 3(e) refers)

- There were no questions or comments from Members of the Public.

4. Town Hall

1. To receive an update on the insurance, damage and next steps for the Town Hall Refurbishment project and consider budget

- The Town Clerk referred Members to additional reports which had been circulated. These reports provided updated information since the last Town Council meeting, up to 24th February 2023.
- The Town Clerk confirmed that the insurance assessor had visited the site last week and the contractor is currently awaiting a response regarding the insurance claim.
- The Town Clerk explained that she had contacted One Voice Wales to seek legal advice from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) solicitors regarding the insurance situation. A copy of the letter had been circulated to Members for their information.
- The Town Clerk explained that further to the request for legal advice, NALC solicitors had advised that the matters raised are outside of their advisory remit. Their advice is for the council to notify its insurers, which Bridgend Town Council has already done. NALC cannot say definitively whether a party has been negligent. Further to notifying the councils insurers the council may wish to instruct solicitors to act on their behalf.
- Cllr A Felton queried if it would be advisable to seek advice from other solicitors who are experts in this field.
- The Town Clerk advised that she had spoken to both the Architect and the Quantity Surveyor who had suggested waiting until an answer had been received from the contractor's insurance company before pursuing the legal advice.
- Councillors discussed the cost and time implications of pursuing legal advice and agreed to wait before further legal advice is sought.
- Cllr A Felton asked for clarification on the insurance being in 'joint names'. The Town Clerk explained that in the contract, it specified that the contractor should arrange a joint names policy, however the contractor had since confirmed that this project is covered under their Contract Works policy.
- Members discussed the leak in the attic of the Town Hall and whether this could have been caused by the cold weather. The Town Clerk highlighted that the information that had been provided indicated that the leak was caused by a failure with the Pressure Reducing Valve for the cold-water feed. It was noted that even if the water had been switched off, the compression joint is likely to have blown when the water was switched back on.
- Cllr S Easterbrook sought clarification regarding the pressure reading of the Pressure Reducing Valve and spoke about the normal bar range.
- Members discussed the fact that the water was not turned off and who was responsible for this. Cllr A Wathan asked the Quantity Surveyor for his opinion.
- Mr Hearne stated that a joint blowing by a failure with the PRV was a plausible explanation.
- Cllr A Wathan enquired where the theory of the cause of the leak had originated. The Town Clerk confirmed it came from the subcontractor working on the Town Hall Refurbishment project.
- The Town Clerk explained that enquiries had been made with local contractors to get a second opinion regarding the boilers. The Council had received a quote in the region of

£1,500 for an engineer to visit the site, carry out necessary inspections and prepare a report. This was not agreed by Members.

- Cllr M Blundell-Humphreys noted that the Council could pay solicitors fees, court fees and could still end up paying for the damage.
- Cllr Unwin highlighted that the equipment was decades old and suggested that initial legal advice could be up to £1,000.

RESOLVED: Not to progress with a quote of just over £1,500 to seek a second opinion regarding the cause of the water leak and boiler situation and await a response from the insurance company.

RESOLVED: To request that the contractor provide an update on the insurance decision by the end of the week.

- Councillors discussed the option of buying versus hiring of specialist equipment to dry out the building.

RESOLVED: To request that the contractor ensures the building is heated and dried out with temporary heaters and dehumidifiers as a matter of urgency, to prevent further deterioration of the building.

- It was noted that the contractor may already have this equipment that they could bring to site. If not, the Council would need to seek quotes to hire or purchase this equipment.
- The Town Clerk drew Members attention to the previously circulated spreadsheets which showed in detail the Town Hall budget approved to date and the current financial position for the Town Hall Refurbishment Project, which had been prepared in liaison with the Quantity Surveyor.
- The Town Clerk requested that Members thoroughly scrutinise the financial reports to ensure they are fully aware of the current financial situation.
- The Town Clerk highlighted the initial budget approved by the Council for the Refurbishment project and the variations agreed to date which totalled £356,487.33.
- Members were advised that three interim certificates had been issued for work completed and that £ 274,714.57 had been paid to the contractor to date.
- The Town Clerk explained variations numbered 1-32 and additional costs anticipated by the Quantity Surveyor. Some of these costs had been agreed in principle, whilst others were being queried.

RESOLVED: That the Quantity Surveyor liaises with the contractor and relevant suppliers regarding the 'Agreed in Principle' and 'At Risk' Variations to challenge/negotiate costs on the Councils behalf.

- Chair of Finance Committee explained that he had reviewed the costs and spoke of the current situation regarding budgets and general reserves.
- Councillors held a lengthy discussion regarding the current deterioration of the building due to water damage and mould, options for completing the current refurbishment contract, budgets and expenditure as well as options for a replacement heating system.
- It was noted that when the contractor has finished the works and left site, the Council can change the insurance from FLEA cover to full cover.

- The Quantity Surveyor advised Council of the detailed work involved to plan and design a new heating system.
- The Town Clerk provided information sought by the Facilities Officer from the Welsh Government Energy Service. It was noted that the newly installed radiators/piping system at the Town Hall can only work with a gas boiler (natural or hydrogen) and are incompatible with an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) system.
- Members were provided with information about grants and loans available for a replacement heating system.
- Members were provided with a quote of £18,599.16 for an independent hot water supply in the form of a single immersion heating system to heat the water for the kitchen and all toilet facilities.
- Members were provided with an update on the BCBC Bridgend Heat Network Scheme.
- The Town Clerk drew Councillors attention to Town Council Financial procedures, noting that under the Council's Financial Regulations, for expenditure over £3,000 and less than £25,000, Council must seek at least three quotes. She clarified that the procurement of a new heating system, would require preparation of a detailed specification and tender documents. It was noted that a brief would need to be prepared and issued to several specialist companies to quote for this specification work.

Cllr F Bletsoe left the meeting at 7pm

- Members were advised that after a company has been appointed and the tender documentation has been prepared, a full tender package for the replacement heating system will need to be advertised on Sell2Wales to comply with Public Procurement Law and Part 4 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for contracts over £25,000.
- It was noted that the Council should not approach local companies to design the system that they may also wish to submit a quote for as part of the official tender process.
- It was confirmed that the building could not open to the public or staff without a hot water supply.

Cllr S Bletsoe joined the meeting at 7.15pm

- Town Clerk drew attention to the cost of replacement boilers which had not been budgeted for and asked that Council consider whether or not they wanted to retain Professional Consultants for the scope of the work.
- Cllr Unwin urged Council to revisit grant opportunities as a matter of urgency.
- Cllr I Williams enquired if the Town Council will write to BCBC regarding the amount of work the Council has had to do on this local authority building.
- The Town Clerk clarified that BCBC advised of the asbestos and that the boilers were past their life expectancy before the Town Council purchased the property.
- The Quantity Surveyor advised Council to inform their insurers of the extended programme of works.
- After a lengthy discussion Council agreed the following:

RESOLVED: That the current refurbishment project with Manning Construction is completed and signed off (subject to the insurance issue and relevant repairs) without heating and hot water, subject to an additional cost to hire heaters/dehumidifiers to dry the building if necessary.

RESOLVED: That Manning Construction complete all contracted works, albeit the boiler system and that Building Control are requested to issue an approval with conditions, covering the replacement boiler system to be retrospectively fitted.

RESOLVED: Not to progress with independent hot water systems such as an immersion heater or independent hot water heaters.

RESOLVED: To extend the scope of works for the architect/project manager and Quantity Surveyor for the replacement of the boilers to assist in the procurement process.

RESOLVED: To accept that the Town Hall building cannot be opened without hot water and will therefore remain closed until a replacement heating system is installed.

RESOLVED: To allocate budget and seek at least three quotes to appoint a specialist to prepare a detailed specification and tender documents for the new boilers.

RESOLVED: For the Town Clerk, Project Manager & QS to work together to prepare a brief to seek quotes for a specialist to prepare a detailed specification and tender documents for the new boilers.

RESOLVED: To allocate budget and advertise a tender package on Sell2Wales as soon as possible for a new heating system for the Town Hall.

RESOLVED: To seek grant funding opportunities that the Town Council can apply for to help with the cost of the replacement of the heating system.

RESOLVED: That delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk in liaison with the Chair of Finance and Chair of Facilities Committee to convene a further Town Council meeting if necessary.

2. To consider seeking a plan for the maintenance of the grounds of the Town Hall and quotes for a grass cutting contract at the Town Hall for 2023 (Cllr Unwin)

- Cllr D Unwin advised members that he had identified 9 areas which would need cutting 4 times a year which could be completed by a contractor and possibly extended to a longer contract in future.
- After a short discussion and following advice from the Facilities Officer regarding 'no mow May', Cllr D Unwin proposed that a contractor be appointed from June 2023.

RESOLVED: That a contractor be appointed from June 2023 to maintain grass cutting at the Town hall for a one-year contract.

7.45 pm – Computer restart – recess until 8pm

Cllr N Deere and Cllr S Bletsoe left the meeting

5. Community Engagement & Well-being

1. To receive an update regarding a proposed event to mark The King's Coronation

- The Town Clerk referred Councillors to the updated report following the resolutions Council made at the meeting held of the 20th of February 2023. She explained that since the report had been issued, a further email had been received from the Rugby Club to advise that the

cost of hire would be between £5,000- £10,000 and that the cost of a big screen was not included in the hire fee.

- If the weather is inclement, the pitch will not be able to be used for a picnic, but the Rugby Club have suggested that the terraces could be used as an alternative.
- Stewards would be needed. The Rugby Club can provide stewards or alternatively, the Council can source and provide its own stewards.
- It was confirmed that the Community Engagement and Events Manager had not contacted the Cricket Club, pending a decision regarding the Brewery Field.
- The Town Clerk advised members that there were additional considerations for Council regarding the location of the Cricket Club including consideration of noise and the timing of the event late into the evening so close to residential streets, the safety of attendees in a poorly lit area and difficulties reference vehicular access.
- After discussion Cllr D Unwin proposed that the hiring of the cricket club be discounted.

RESOLVED: That the hiring of the cricket club be discounted.

- Members discussed alternative venues and cost. It was suggested that a family picnic could be arranged in the town centre, either in Dunraven Place or Wyndham Street.
- Members debated the public demand for an event in the town centre and how this would be perceived.
- Members were provided with information about lighting up Newcastle Castle for a cost of £610 + VAT for one day, on Sunday 7th May.
- Members discussed the lighting up of Newcastle Castle. After a short discussion Cllr D Unwin proposed lighting up the castle for 3 days on the weekend of the Coronation.
- Members discussed the gifting of seeds and/or mugs to children under 11 through local schools within the Town Council's ward boundary.
- The Town Clerk provided an overview of costs for the King's Coronation activities. She explained that Council had agreed a budget of £5,000, however activities proposed to date totalled a minimum of £11,500 and that this figure could be as much as £16,500 depending in the hire cost of the Brewery Field.

RESOLVED: Not to go ahead with organising an event for The King's Coronation at the Brewery Field or in Bridgend town centre.

RESOLVED: That the Community Engagement team pursue the following:

- a) Lighting up of the castle for the whole of the Coronation Weekend.
- b) To purchase seeds in packets with Town Council branding to distribute via local schools.
- c) To research the possibility of purchasing mugs or a similar commemorative gift for local school children.

6. To receive quote for summer planting and discuss colours

- Cllr D Unwin referred to the paperwork circulated and proposed that Council engage Plantscape for this year with a colour scheme of red/white/blue.
- Cllr T Wood proposed that the flower towers have a Bridgend Town Council sticker with the Council's crest.
- Cllr D Unwin proposed that Plantscape be approached to provide a 3-year contract.

RESOLVED: That Plantscape be engaged to supply Flower Towers for the Town centre in a red,

white and blue theme clearly marked that are these are supplied by Bridgend Town Council as well as being approached for a 3-year contract.

- The Deputy Town Clerk referred Members to an invitation which had been extended by the Charity B-Leaf for Members to visit them to discuss ways in which they may assist Council. The Deputy Town Clerk asked Members to liaise with the Facilities Officer directly to attend the event.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Signed

Date

Mayor