



Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Glynneath Town Council
held on a remote basis in accordance with the provisions of
The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
at 6:30pm on Thursday, 24th June 2021

Present:

Cllr S Knoyle (Chair)

Cllr J Collins

Cllr H Morgan

Cllr S Evans

Cllr M Powell

Cllr S McMenamin

Cllr G Reynolds

Cllr D Morgan

Cllr J Roberts

7 x Residents

Absent:

Cllr R Simons

Clerk / RFO:

Ms J van Tonder

Council staff:

A Pughsley

1. Presiding: Cllr Simon Knoyle

The Mayor asked that members wishing to speak raise their electronic hands rather than calling out.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Janet Gregory, C Edwards and R Knoyle.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in respect of the business to be transacted.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th June 2021

a) Amendments to the Minutes

No amendments.

b) Confirm as a true and accurate record

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Meeting held on 8th June 2021 as a true and accurate record.

c) Matters arising from the Minutes

Min. 8(d): Cllr Marie Powell asked to have sight of the amended hire agreements to check for accuracy. The Clerk to forward them on.

5. Matters pertaining to Finance and Governance

a) Recommendations of the Finance & Audit Committee

i) Financial Accounts 2020/21

The Clerk talked through the larger variances explaining that the Council had lost a significant proportion of its budgeted hire income as a direct consequence of the covid restrictions in place throughout the financial year in question. Additionally, the staff changes that had occurred had resulted in a saving against the salary budget.

Members noted the recommendation of the Finance & Audit Committee. It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To adopt the Financial Accounts for 2020/21 as presented.

ii) Earmarked Reserves as at 31 March 2021

Members noted the recommendation of the Finance & Audit Committee. It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To approve the Schedule of Earmarked Reserves totalling £14,977 as at 31 March 2021.

iii) Internal Audit Report for the year ending 31 March 2021

Members asked the Clerk for her view on the Internal Audit Report. She suggested the majority of the recommendations were fair although she had been disappointed with some of the points raised.

The Clerk advised that there were still some discrepancies within the report with references to English law that were not applicable in Wales, despite her having raised this with the internal auditor. The Clerk was asked to write to the auditing firm forwarding the relevant pieces of legislation and/or Welsh Government guidance.

The Clerk advised a schedule of actions in response to the Internal Audit report recommendations would be presented at the next Finance & Audit Committee meeting in October.

Following further discussion and taking note of the recommendation of the Finance & Audit Committee. It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To accept the Internal Audit report for the year ending 31 March 2021.

b) Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2021

The Clerk read out each statement contained within the Annual Governance Statement with members agreeing to respond as follows:

Statement 1	YES	Statement 6	YES
Statement 2	NO	Statement 7	YES
Statement 3	NO	Statement 8	NO
Statement 4	YES	Statement 9	n/a
Statement 5	YES		

Resolved: To approve the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2021.

c) Policies and Procedures

i) Concerns and Complaints Policy

The Clerk advised this policy would enable members of the public to raise their concerns with the Council and be assured of a prescribed set of actions in response. The policy and corresponding complaints form would be available on the Council's website.

In answer to a question raised, the Clerk advised that she consulted a number of sources within the sector such as One Voice Wales, SLCC and NALC when putting together the Council's policies in order to ensure the most appropriate policy wording for the Council's specific circumstances.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To adopt the Concerns and Complaints Policy as presented.

ii) Policy on Unacceptable Actions by Individuals

The Clerk explained that, while this policy was aimed at a tiny minority and that the Council experienced very few incidents of this nature, a Vexatious Policy was no longer considered good practice with Councils favouring the policy as presented.

Members considered and discussed the draft policy at length.

Following a discussion around telephone abuse, Cllr Marie Powell proposed and Cllr Jennifer Roberts seconded the following **motion**:

To include a requirement for the Council's telephone calls to be recorded.

Following a vote, **motion not carried**.

Concerns were raised regarding those with authority to restrict contact and it was agreed the policy should be reworded in line with the Council's handling of Freedom of Information review requests.

Resolved: To consider an amended draft policy at the next meeting.

7:29pm – Cllr Del Morgan left the meeting for a prior commitment

6. Matters pertaining to the Cemetery

a) Granting of retrospective Exclusive Rights of Burial

The Clerk advised members that, as a result of an administrative oversight, the Council's decision taken on 8th July 2014 to cease offering Exclusive Rights of Burial (EROB) had not been communicated to funeral directors. As a result, in excess of 116 new burial and cremation plots sold since then had had EROB conferred on them without the issue of Deeds or a record made in the Council's Register of Purchased Graves.

The Clerk explained that investigations into this matter were ongoing and that a report outlining the financial implications would be presented to Council at its next meeting.

Following discussion, it was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To accept the Clerk's recommendation and

- i) retrospectively grant Exclusive Rights of Burial over all new plots with at least a first interment from 9th July 2014 to 30th June 2021,

ii) issue deeds to all individuals identified as having had an expectation of being the rightful owner of the plot, and

iii) update the records as held within the Register of Purchased Graves.

b) Length of EROB lease with effect from 1st July 2021

The Clerk explained that, under S10(2) of The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, a lease granted under an Exclusive Right of Burial was not permitted to exceed 100 years.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To reinstate the offering of Exclusive Rights of Burial on all new burial and cremation plots, sold at the point of need only on a 99-year lease from 1st July 2021.

c) Schedule of Cemetery Fees effective from 1st July 2021

Members discussed the definition of a "resident" qualifying for the lower rates and it was agreed to include anyone who had been resident in Glynneath for a period of ten years or more, within the last two years prior to their death. The Clerk to include a clause to this effect on the Schedule of Fees.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To agree the amended Schedule of Cemetery Fees effective from 1st July 2021.

7. Transformation Project Phase 1: Stakeholder consultation on draft plans

Cllr Simon Knoyle presented his report and outlined the next phase of the project. Draft illustrations incorporating the Council's initial interpretation of the preferred options identified within the Urban Foundry report would be presented to key stakeholders for consultation.

In response to a member's question around the proposed timescale for the project, Simon explained progress would be dependent on the various funders' cycles. He confirmed the funding application process would begin within the next couple of months with the aim of securing the first tranche of funding by the end of the year. Project works would begin in approximately twelve months.

Simon advised he was in discussions with Manning Construction regarding possible options for a carpark.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To proceed to the next phase of the project being key stakeholder consultations.

8. Non-councillor membership of Council Committees

a) Parks & Open Spaces Committee

No applications had been received.

b) Town Hall & Community Centre Committee

The Clerk advised there had been one application received from Jennifer Lake.

Members congratulated Jennifer and welcomed her to the committee.

c) Cemetery Committee

No applications had been received.

The Meeting concluded at 7:55pm.