



Cyngor Tref Rhydaman Ammanford Town Council

Minutes of Extra Ordinary General Meeting of Ammanford Town Council (ATC)

on

Thursday 25th February 2021

Via Virtual Media on MS Teams

Attendees: Councillor Stephen Davies (SD) (Chairperson); Deputy Mayor Gruff Harrison (GH); Councillor Stefan Butler (SB); Councillor Llio Davies (LD); Councillor Colin Evans (CE); Councillor Rhys Fisher (RF); Councillor Deian Harries (DH); Councillor Gwenllian Harries (GH1); Councillor Emyr John (EJ); Councillor Geraint Jones (GJ); Councillor Rhodri Jones (RJ); Councillor Helen Rees (HR); Councillor Stephen Roberts (SR)

Minutes taken by: Clerk Duncan Morgan (DSM)

Councillor Stephen Davies Presiding

Meeting commenced at 18:08

1) Apologies and reasons for absence

Mayor Julia Bell – Technical Issues Joining Meeting

2) Declarations of interest

Councillor Stephen Davies – Ammanford AFC

Councillor Colin Evans – County Councillor

Councillor Rhys Fisher – Ammanford AFC

Councillor Deian Harries – County Councillor & Ammanford AFC

Deputy Mayor Gruff Harrison – Ammanford AFC

Councillor Emyr John – Ammanford Foodbank

Councillor Rhodri Jones – Ammanford AFC

Stephen Roberts – Ammanford AFC

3) To agree and ratify the budget for the 2021/2022 Financial Year

EJ – Commented that this was a missed opportunity to discuss other pressing Council matters in this meeting and should have been a full council meeting – issues such as verifying minutes, the 19/20 Audit and it is believed a further Councillor resignation

SD – Responded stating that this is the biggest meeting of the year for ATC and 2.5 hours was spent discussing matters in last night's meeting.

EJ – Stated that it was unfortunate that in last night's Finance Committee Meeting it was the first time we had seen a breakdown of the last year's expenditure.

SD – Replied by stating that in the current situation we have had challenging times. It is planned to make the information more visible next year.

SD then continued by stating that ATC is in a healthier position this year compared to the previous year. The budget expenditure figures were then presented in detail. The summary of which is listed below.

The full report will accompany the minutes.

Asset Management Budget – Combination of CCC DLO and Parks but it has not been possible to split the CCC figure down and this expenditure appears against Ammanford Park.

Going forward ATC had meeting with CCC DLO and it was resolved that a breakdown of expenditure would be provided by CCC in the 2021/22 fiscal year and future financial years. CCC DLO had also presented their accounts late which led to last year's and this year's bills falling into the 2020/2021 fiscal year.

Playground Inspections – To be reduced from weekly to bi-weekly

Public Conveniences – It should be noted that a retrospective bill had been presented by CCC for cleansing of the toilets. A reduction is anticipated in the 2021/2022 Fiscal year.

COVID Grants – Should be received before the End of the current financial year from CCC.

Hanging Baskets – To be reintroduced to improve appearance of Town Centre.

Capital Investment – Provision of £40K to enable upgrades to equipment.

Ammanford Park – Playpark – Tarmac, Water Park maintenance Park equipment needs to be looked at along with improvements to the other parks under ATC's responsibility.

Events Budget – This was predominantly for Christmas lights. ATC also ran two virtual talent competitions.

SD then thanked LD for project managing both virtual events and they provided a much needed boost to both entrants and residents of the Ammanford Community.

The Budget was being reduced to £38,115.

Administration Budget – Legal fees for Asset Transfer are due to be received in the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

Accountancy – Standard work undertaken.

Members allowances – it had been agreed by the members that they would not be claiming any allowances in the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

Mayor's Allowance – To be kept and to be used to support local charities at the discretion of the Mayor.

Grants – Donation made to Ammanford foodbank and Dawnsyr Penrhyn. A further donation of £1,000 to be made to the foodbank before the end of the 2020/2021 fiscal year.

Salaries – Taking OVW's recommendations into consideration an allowance has been made to recruit and employ extra staff.

Mayors Parlour – In view of the current COVID situation the budget is based on 6 (six) months occupation.

Grants – To be set at the same level as the 2020/21 fiscal year. EJ commented that we need to introduce a policy as to how we allocate grants going forward and to ensure all organisations are aware of the opportunity to apply to the Town Council for funding.

SD – Then presented the budget proposal the 2021/22 financial year to be £277,560 minus a projected income from grants of £17850 equalling £259,710

SD then asked if there were any comments.

CE – Then completed SD on producing such a detailed report. He then added that with reference to playgrounds inspections will CCC be providing a more detailed breakdown in the future to reflect the work they are undertaking.

CE continued stating that the Footpath Bridleway/Riverside walkways were in need of repair and was concerned that £1,000 allocated expenditure would not be sufficient to cover the works required.

SD – Replied by stating ATC has created a Capital Investment Provision for such contingencies.

EJ – Then asked where was the legal agreement/document outlining the legal responsibilities of ATC in relation to these matters.

CE – Responded that this goes back years with delineated boundaries with ATC.

EJ – Need to question this. Does CCC still have any responsibilities?

SD – Stated that we will investigate this at future date. The comments have been duly noted.

EJ – Then raised if an allowance had been made for the maintenance of the paths located at the Recreation Ground.

SD – Replied that given they have only recently been constructed that they should require no maintenance for some time. He added that this matter would have to be discussed in another meeting.

EJ – Requested to know what CCC are paying for and need this documented now. Also queried where the street lights were that ATC were paying for.

SD confirmed that he did not know but would ask CCC.

SD – Then stated with reference to the point raised by CE, playground inspection would now be undertaken fortnightly. CCC will now provide documented evidence of this. ATC will investigate if an outside contractor could undertake the playground inspections cheaper than CCC when the contract comes up for renewal.

SD then added he had spoken with Llandybie Community Council to investigate if other Community councils could join in to form a consortium to go out to tender for playground inspections.

EJ – Then queried if there was a sufficient allowance in the budget to cover redress payments given the number of current ICO investigations.

SD – Suggested that with the additional staff that ATC are proposing to employ the redress payments should decrease.

EJ – Then commented that a generic Capital Investment Provision was not the correct way to allocate resources and should be based on specific projects.

SD – Replied that ATC have taken advice on this from OVW and they stated that there was nothing inappropriate with what was proposed.

EJ - Then wished for it to be agreed that at least the money would be ring fenced for improving ATC assets and not used for other purposes

SD - Confirmed that this would be the case

EJ – Then asked what was happening with funding for the Memorial Avenue Lighting project.

SD – Replied that there was a grant coming to cover 90% of the costs.

EJ – Stated that this budget requirement would need to be put in the budget.

A motion was proposed that the 2021/2022 Financial Year budget be set at £277,560.

Proposed – RJ

Seconded – CE

Agreed by all members present except

ClIr Emyr John – Abstained from voting (as 19/20 audit had not been completed)

4. To discuss agree and ratify the Precept for the 2021/2022 Financial Year

SD – Then presented the Precept figure of £259,710 with a 0% increase on last year.

EJ – Then commented that the Precept figure could be reduced by an amount of £40K funded from the £50k savings made in the 2020/2021 financial year which was now sitting in ATC's account.

SD – Then commented that there are now two proposal that need to be voted upon.

EJ – Then proposed a motion that the Precept should be reduced by an amount of £40k to £219,710

Proposed – EJ

Seconded – None

Motion FAILED as it was not Seconded

SD – Then placed a motion in front of the Full Council that the Precept should be set at £259,710

Proposed – GJ

Seconded – LD

A vote was then taken and all members present voted in favour with the exception of Cllr Emyr John who voted against.

Meeting Closed at 19:09

Signed: (Chair)

Print Name:

Date: