

**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Management, Estates and Strategy (MES) Committee
held on Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 6pm in the Old Wool Market**

Present	Cllr B Simister Cllr C Black Cllr P Lewis Cllr T Moses Cllr S Pearce Cllr R Thomas-Turner V Lewis Camacho Town Clerk	MES Committee Chairman
Apologies (Item 1)	Cllr J Hackett (Observer)	
Observers	Cllr H Lewis Cllr M Lewis Cllr J Owens Members of the public	Chairman of Council/ Mayor

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting. Pending the Committee Chair appointments at the Full Council Meeting on 20 June, Cllr B Simister agreed to Chair the meeting (all voted in favour).

Declarations of interest from Members (Item 2)

Agenda Item	Member	Interest	Nature of interest
No declarations made			

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 9 April 2024 (Item 3)

Christmas Lights Re-tender – Clerk to progress tender papers and convene meeting of Sub-Committee. Cllr P Lewis questioned whether this Sub-Committee should report to the Personnel, Policy and Finance Committee. The Clerk confirmed that Christmas Lights fell within the remit of the MES Committee, albeit the ultimate expenditure may need further approval. [Post meeting note: the current Terms of Reference reflect that the Christmas Lights Sub-Committee reports to MES Committee, and had delegated power for the purchase and hire/lease of new displays within the approved budget].

Summer Bunting – members of the Committee commented favourably on the bunting which had been put up in the town during the week commencing 20 May, in line with Council's plans. To coincide with this, the summer flowers were also now in place, both of which had brightened up the town.

The Clerk then noted that her report submitted under Item 4 covered all other updates to the Committee and followed the same order as set out on the agenda.

Clerk's Report to MES Committee (Item 4)

Unless indicated otherwise, Clerk to provide next update at July MES meeting.

- a) **Cemeteries** – Upper Prendergast cemetery railings work had been deferred to start on 10 June as the metal work had not arrived back from the galvanizers. Lower Prendergast – grass cutting had been taken back in-house. St Martin's cemetery – the repairs to the inner wall had been delayed due to contractor illness. Clerk raised some concern over the state of an area, which contained very old graves with memorial stones which had been deemed to be unsafe, to the left of the lawn area which had been cordoned off to prevent entry by the public and grass left to overgrow, which looked unsightly in comparison to the “living lawn” area being developed and the bushes full of flowers.

Recommendation:	That the overgrown area to be turned into an ongoing feature, with more permanent fencing and signage added for the public to be made aware why no access is allowed to this area of the cemetery. All voted in favour.
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- b) **Community Garden** – the Community bench had been delivered to the Community Garden and welcomed by the volunteers. The Clerk still to progress formal agreement with Grwp Resilience. Cllr S Pearce, a volunteer, noted that a Committee under Grwp Resilience had been established and a bank account opened.
- c) **Priory Saltings** – Clerk to still progress insurance claim reported to insurers for the vandalised boardwalk. Committee noted the advisory note from and Officer of PCC which made reference to the Equality Act 2010 13 (1) as the most appropriate legislation covering the point whether to fit a handrail to the board walk steps. Cllr R Thomas-Turner sought confirmation as to which protected characteristics the advisory referred to which it was felt would be age and disability (or persons with more limited mobility, balance, etc) to safely use the steps.

Recommendation:	Refreshed quotes to be requested as soon as possible, ensuring that the contractor can guarantee to do the work before the winter, to replace the boardwalk, to re-stone the steps, fix the risers on the bottom two steps, and to add a handrail to the steps. Staff to proceed to organise the installation of appropriate signage at both entrances to the Saltings. All voted in favour.
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Cllr T Moses agreed to look into National Meadow Day on 6th July and to feed back to the Clerk.

- d) **Sports Pavilion / Lower Racecourse** – following a recent issue with a part failure to the water heating system, Clerk advised that quotes were being obtained for a permanent workaround and to replace the heating system entirely so that Council may make a longer-term decision to upgrade the hot water system at the Pavilion. The cost to heat the water / pavilion during winter use was significant given the age of the current system.

Recommendation:	Clerk to proceed to obtain quotes to both repair and replace the heating system with a preference for a more sustainable solution i.e. including hot water / solar panels which could likely generate enough energy to power the Pavilion. All voted in favour.
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The works to replace the height restriction barrier at the Lower Racecourse had been replaced and the replacement / new dog bin(s) installed to the Lower and **Upper Racecourse(s)**, respectively.

Additional works commissioned by the Portfield Recreation Committee (PRC) to replace the two kissing gates to enable disabled access and to instal a pathway between the two (kissing gate) entrances had commenced on 3 June. As Chair of the PRC and local resident, Cllr P Lewis, noted that he would keep an eye on the works for the duration to ensure there was no undue disruption to the users of the car park/lower racecourse. A notice advising of limited access the car park by the PRC had been issued had been posted on Council's social media page and to the website.

- e) **Picton Centre** – All monies invoiced to PCC had been paid covering the occupancy to 31 March 2024. Clerk had received an update from the PCC Head of Property on the timing of the district valuation and this was imminent, which would allow the outstanding points on the lease to be finalised, for completion. Clerk to update at next MES meeting or sooner if matters forward more quickly.
- f) **Town Improvements**
Summer Bunting

Recommendation:	Bunting to be taken down after the National Sheriffs' Association AGM being held in Haverfordwest at the end of September. All voted in favour.
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Notice Boards

Recommendation:	Clerk to bring proposal to MES to repair / replace existing notice boards in the town for use by Council and the Community, having viewed existing boards/locations with the Business Circle. All voted in favour.
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Salt bins – no further recommendation. Clerk to progress proposal (ahead of the winter months) and bring back to MES in due course.

- g) **Old Wool Market (Development)** – the Task & Finish Group, comprising five members of Council (Cllr K Jones, Cllr H Lewis, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr J Owens, Cllr B Simister) and which reported to Full Council, had met with the Consultant charged with liaising directly with the architect on development plans and costings and support with accessing funding, on 22 April, who went away with some revisions. Clerk followed up on 31 May, while a response is awaited. Cllr P Lewis suggested the T&FG membership be expanded and its progress tracked by PPF rather than MES, albeit OWM in the main formed part of the Council's estate.

Recommendation:	To await updated report from the Consultant before bringing update to MES or Full Council (dependent on timing). All voted in favour.
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- h) **Website** – a paper to MES and PPF, recommending moving to an alternative website provider (following a consultation process with two new and existing provider) to create a new website solution which would enable the Administration to have greater control/access to upload content effortlessly to ensure Council met its legal obligations on a timely basis, as a matter of priority, and to provide an overall better experience for all end users. Cllrs B Simister and S Pearce had met the preferred supplier with the Clerk and Senior Admin Officer and agreed with the choice of partner and service provision, as being appropriate to Council's growth aspirations and its plans to raise awareness of the Council's activities in a positive way. Cllr J Owens also noted that she had previous experience with the preferred website provider, which had been very positive.

Recommendation:	Subject to PPF Committee recommendation on costings, to recommend engagement with the proposed new website provider with immediate effect.
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- i) **Civic & other events** - the upcoming events noted as:

- Civic Service – St Martin's Church, Sunday 30 June at 11.00 am
- Beating of the Bounds/River Festival – Sunday 21 July at 4.00 am (timing to be confirmed)
- Remembrance Sunday – Sunday 10 November at 11.00 am
- Christmas Lights Switch on – Saturday 30 November at 6.00 pm
- Christmas Carol Service – Friday 13 December at 7.00 pm

Cllr R Thomas-Turner asked if Council had any plans to commemorate D-Day 80th Anniversary. The Clerk confirmed regrettably that staffing pressures had not been conducive to arranging another town event on this occasion. A Communion service (11.00 am) at St Mary's Church on Friday 7 June would be commemorating D-Day. As a mark of respect, the Town Council offices would be displaying a D-Day 80th Anniversary flag.

The Mayor noted that Council would do better by encouraging other groups to arrange other town events with the Council then 'facilitating' in any way it can and/or by providing funding from its annual budget. Examples would be reinstating the annual town carnival as well as other commemorative or celebratory events as they arise. The Clerk noted her discussion with Pure West Radio who, working through other organisations, support other town councils events in this way beyond what they promote free as a radio station.

Items for next agenda (Item 5) – Cllr P Lewis - request to include discussion with PCC regarding Picton House, which had been left to deteriorate.

With no further business to consider, the meeting ended at 7.20 pm.