

**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Management, Estates and Strategy (MES) Committee
held on Tuesday 8 October 2024 at 6pm in the Old Wool Market**

Present	Cllr B Simister Cllr C Black Cllr T Moses Cllr S Pearce (joined 6.09pm) Cllr R Thomas-Turner V Lewis Camacho D Lawrence	MES Committee Chairman Town Clerk Facilities Manager
	M Cavanagh (<i>Agenda Item 5 only</i>) Head of Cultural, Leisure, Tourism and Registration Services, Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)	
Apologies (Item 1)	Cllr P Lewis	
Observers	Cllr M Lewis Cllr R Thomas Cllr H Lewis Cllr D Thomas-Turner Member of the public	Chairman of Council/ Mayor Vice-Chairman of Council/Deputy Mayor

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Mike Cavanagh.

Item 2 - Declarations of interest from Members

Agenda Item	Member	Interest	Nature of interest
8 – Community Wellbeing Plan/Community Engagement	Cllr T Moses	Personal	Employed by Together for Change (TfC) Pembrokeshire

Item 3 – The Chair noted that the meeting replaced the MES Committee meeting scheduled to be held on 1 October 2024.

Item 4 – Appointment of Committee Vice-Chairman

The Chairman proposed that Agenda Item 5 – Riverside Library – was brought forward to allow Mike Cavanagh to present his item first so that he would be free to leave the meeting afterwards.

Item 5 – Riverside Library – update on Summer public engagement on library usage / initial discussion on ongoing support by the Town Council

Mike Cavanagh (MC) referred to his correspondence dated 7 October addressed to all Town Councillors which had been included in the meeting pack, which recapped on the Council's support of the County Library Saturday opening since opening in December 2018 (pre-Covid). He noted that the Riverside Library remained by far the most visited and used of the County's libraries and it is the flagship facility. It is used by many local people of all ages and backgrounds, for many different reasons including social lifeline, IT usage, searching, printing, or gaining access to subscription services they are unable to afford at home, or simply to sit and read quietly. MC noted that while the initial opening of the library was key to the regeneration of the town, some of which had been delayed, the Western Quayside (old Ocky White building) will be open soon, and the new signature bridge is due to complete in the spring. The transport interchange will follow, as well as the Castle regeneration / visitor attraction scheme funded by UK government, PCC and the National Lottery Heritage Funding, with an anticipated opening date in 2027.

The associated performance of the Library Saturday opening had been shared with Council, which reflected that performance on Saturday afternoons was strong. This is the busiest time when members of the public collect/return books and deal with any issues. MC had also shared the findings of the Needs Assessment undertaken in the Summer, which showed that closing libraries and replacing with

digital/postal/mobile library services and further reductions of book stock were the least supported of six suggestions put forward during the public engagement, with staff-less access not far ahead of them. Much better supported were reductions to the unitary council's asset costs, and rolling out supported employment and working with volunteers. MC noted that he had been speaking with all five big town councils and other important organisations/stakeholders, to explore what opportunities may exist with regard to reducing asset costs, and volunteering through community managed partnership models. One such option was the potential for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) to retain library provision in partnership with the town council as a community managed partnership. This however recognised that there is no one size fits all for town councils.

The Committee thanked MC for his comprehensive update on the town's library provision and the potential options for the Town Council to continue to support the Riverside Library. While the benefits of a CAT and community managed partnership could be seen for some town councils, the Committee did not feel this opportunity would work for the Town Council and the Riverside Library building at this time. It noted however that in reaching this conclusion now it would not preclude the Town Council providing support to a community managed partnership model if one were introduced at the Library in the future. The Committee were given some assurance that the library was not likely to shut but that all decisions would need to be made by Members of the County Council.

The Committee considered the proposal for the Town Council to consider extending its existing agreement in order to keep the library open on Saturday afternoons. The proposed agreement would include a multi-year package allowing both library users and staff certainty over the medium to long-term that the facility will be open, and enable long-term strategic planning for the development of the site. While the costs of running the Library had increased due to the impact of inflation, the Town Council could continue to pay the current amount of £13,317.40 per annum over five years from 2025-26. Financial support provision on an annual basis was also an option but the annual figure would be increased.

Cllr R Thomas-Turner proposed that a recommendation be made to Full Council to extend the Town Council's support to the Riverside library to enable it to remain open on Saturday afternoons by providing financial assistance in the amount of £13,317.40 per annum over a five-year period from 2025-26. This was seconded by Cllr C Black. All votes were unanimous.

Recommendation: **To Full Council that the Town Council provision of financial assistance to enable the Riverside Library to open on Saturday afternoons via a multi-year agreement at cost of £13,317.40 per annum over five years from 2025-26 be approved.**

MC left the meeting at 6.20pm.

Item 4 – Appointment of Committee Vice-Chairman (as per above re-ordering of agenda)

The Chair invited nominations from Committee members. Cllr(s) R Thomas-Turner and C Black put themselves forward for appointment. This was put to the vote resulting in Cllr R Thomas-Turner being appointed Committee Vice Chairman for the ensuing year, three votes to two in favour.

Recommendation: **Cllr R Thomas-Turner is appointed Vice Chairman for the civic year 2024-25**

Item 6 - Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 3 September 2024 and any MES Committee-related items discussed/decisions made at the Full Council meeting held on 19 September 2024.

The meeting noted the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024 which had been approved by Full Council on 19 September 2024. The Clerk noted that the paper prepared for Item 7 on the agenda included all actions and updates since the Full Council meeting.

Item 7 - Actions and updates, as set out in the Clerk's report, on matters relating to:

<p>Cemeteries</p>	<p>Upper Prendergast & Lower Prendergast No updates.</p> <p>St Martins Quote for the repair to outer wall caused by third party driver damage had been sent to insurers to claim on driver's policy. The previously reported moss (deemed a slip hazard) and equipment required to remove it effectively, had been removed/purchased.</p> <p>Poor condition of gate between City Road cemetery Facilities Manager had identified poor and rusty state (photos provided in Clerk's report) and a quote to replace the gate had been obtained from the current Steelwork supplier working on the Saltings Boardwalk. Given the gate's current state containing sharp edges and previous difficulty in obtaining alternative quotes for smaller projects and the significant price differential when quotes were received for steelwork, the Clerk recommended that the quote from Supplier X amounting to £1,615.35 +VAT, which included an additional small repair to the smaller gate at no extra charge, be approved as best value and in order to get the work done as quickly as possible to avoid incident. Proposed by Cllr R Thomas Turner and seconded by Cllr B Simister. All votes in favour.</p> <p>Recommendation: Full Council to approve quote from Supplier X in the amount of £1,615.35 + VAT for the replacement of the gate between City Road cemetery.</p>
<p>Community Garden (Havergardd)</p>	<p>Licence Agreement with Grwp Resilience Draft agreement reviewed by Committee. Subject to the suggestion of an inclusion of a sentence for the Town Council to receive an annual progress report, the agreement was approved for recommendation to Full Council for final approval and signature.</p> <p>Recommendation: Full Council to approve for signature entering into the Draft Licence to Occupy Agreement between the Council and Group Resilience CBC in respect of land for a Community Garden, located at Lower Cambrian Way, Haverfordwest (known as Havergardd), subject to the inclusion of a sentence for Grwp Resilience CBC to provide the Council with an annual progress report.</p>
<p>Priory Saltings</p>	<p>Facilities Manager noted the treatment of the pathway maintained in-house using the sit on mower is being extended 1 meter either side. The meadow area has been seasonally cut by the third-party contractor during September.</p> <p>Tents occupied by the homeless (total 4) had recently set up but two had already moved on and remnants left, removed by our Facilities. Due to concerns over no toilet facilities, contact had been made with the PCC Housing team who had sent an Outreach Officer to liaise with the occupants. Clerk will continue to monitor the situation.</p> <p><i>Board walk replacement</i> – structural steel base was in the process of being fabricated before it is sent for galvanizing.</p> <p><i>Steps / hand rail</i> – following the recce of the Saltings with stakeholders, concern was raised due to uneven nature of the</p>

	<p>steps, that the height of the proposed new handrails would not comply with regulation. Consequently, the suggestion is to replace the steps and include handrails which could benefit from grant funding. Clerk noted that the steps are one of the Saltings items for put forward by PCC with potential to be completed via a 'community benefit' arrangement with one of the three contractor firms working on the big projects in the town. An alternative is to obtain quotes for replacement steps/handrail (which had proved an issue most recently) and to seek to secure match funding via a grant to support the cost.</p> <p>Recommendation: Full Council to approve the most expedient form of action, as recommended by the Clerk/Facilities, to replace the steps and include hand railing by obtaining quotes for replacement and, preferably using grant funding, or pursuing potential for the community benefit option, to cover the cost. Proposed by Cllr R Thomas-Turner, seconded by Cllr T Moses. Votes all in favour.</p>
<p>The Sports Pavilion / Lower Racecourse</p>	<p>Clerk instructing heating supplier to proceed with replacement water heating system as approved by Full Council on 19 September. No update – Lower Racecourse.</p>
<p>Picton Centre Lease</p>	<p>Letter issued to PCC on Council's decision not agreeing to rent reduction proposed by PCC and formal response awaited. If PCC are accepting of this then the outstanding terms requested by PCC would need further consideration by Council to sign the 10-year lease.</p>
<p>Old Wool Market</p>	<p>As approved by Full Council on 19 September, a separate meeting of Full Council to consider OWM plans and future as the Town Council's offices to be arranged by the Clerk.</p> <p>Recommendation: Full Council OWM meeting discussion to include insight from PCC Planning Listed Building Officer into what improvements can be made i.e. improve flood defences, replacement windows, exterior soffits and existing metal canopy for this to be put into 2025-26 Plan and to revisit discussions with Funding Consultant. All in favour.</p>
<p>Town Improvements</p>	<p>Summer Bunting Committee was in agreement that Summer bunting should be included in the 2025-26 Action Plan. Clerk noted that the existing bunting had purposely been costed and purchased with the aim of re-using it, subject to the quality standing the test of time. Worst case it was suggested it may be possible to recycle it for alternative use. Clerk to determine.</p> <p>Recommendation: Summer Bunting to be included in MES 2025-26 Action Plan. All in favour.</p> <p>Notice Boards Clerk provided with a contact to make boards locally to include in quotation exercise.</p> <p>Christmas Lights As approved by Full Council, Re-tender of contract to put up/take down lights has been deferred to the New Year and relevant parties since notified. Existing supplier contract extended 1 year from 31 March 2024 on same basis. No impact on 2024 Xmas lights installation. The existing lights stock is also suitable for 2024.</p>

	<p>Salt Bins No update.</p> <p>Portfield Fair (Town Voice initiative / engagement) Feedback from the 2-5 October Fair discussed. Areas which would require more time for organisers to implement, given the short notice of this year’s event taking place i.e. 2 for 1 ticketing for schools and morning allocated for special needs pupils.</p>
Civic and Other Events	<p>Remembrance Sunday – 10 November Clerk had met, and is liaising, with Royal British Legion representatives on wreaths, order of service and related events, and with the Squadron Leader (Brawdy). Road closure arrangements being discussed with PCC/DPP.</p> <p>Christmas Lights Switch On 30 November / Carol Service – 13 December Lights Switch on to come Full Council. No update on Carol Service.</p>
Website development	New website design and content provision is in progress. Anticipated completion by end of October (potential slippage due to recent event pressures and only part-time resource being dedicated to it). Other project running alongside Scribe Accounting and Cemetery Management system projects.

Item 8 – Community Wellbeing Action Plan / Engagement (Cllr T Moses)

Cllr T Moses, representing Together for Change (TfC), introduced the scheme for town/community councils in Pembrokeshire to coproduce Community Wellbeing Action Plans, drawing on a strong history of plans being created and used in the County on which to build. Project support is being funded by UK Government between September and December 2024. A dedicated Link Councillor from the Town Council’s membership would need to be nominated with delegated authority to act on behalf of the Council. They would need to be pro-active, make community connections and follow up on tasks arising, reporting back to the Council. Estimated this would take 20 hours over the period. Successful town/community council applicants were in the process of being considered. While an important initiative in terms of its relevance to the Council, and a great opportunity, the timing was such that the dedicated resource and off the shelf project was not in place at this time, to submit an application. The Clerk raised the matter of Council considering securing a dedicated Link Officer who would be the link to making community connections and to bring forward / manage projects which the Town Council could support. This role had potential for grant funding and operate on a similar 20 hours per month basis.

Recommendation Clerk to bring a proposal to next meeting for Link Officer for discussion. All in favour.

Item 9 – 2025-26 Action Plan and Budget

Recommendation Clerk to liaise with MES Committee members to bring draft Action Plan and Budget to the November meeting.

Item 10 - Items for next agenda

- a) 2025-26 MES Action Plans and Budgets
- b) Link Officer Proposal

Item 11– Next scheduled meeting – 5th November 2024, 6 p.m. at Old Wool Market

With no further business to consider, the meeting ended at 7.40 pm.
