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**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Management, Estates and Strategy (MES) Committee
held on Tuesday 3 September 2024 at 6pm in the Old Wool Market**

Present	Cllr B Simister Cllr P Lewis Cllr T Moses Cllr S Pearce Cllr R Thomas-Turner V Lewis Camacho E Greear D Lawrence	MES Committee Chairman Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Facilities Manager
Apologies (Item 1)	Cllr C Black	
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 Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting. Noted that the pending appointment of the Committee's Vice-Chair had inadvertently been omitted from the agenda and would be deferred until the next meeting. Cllr P Lewis wished the minutes to note that he had asked for Picton House, to be added to the Committee's July agenda. As the Committee did not meet in July, Cllr P Lewis' paper, which he had already circulated to Council Members directly, the Clerk had included the paper under Item 15 on the Full Council Agenda for the meeting held on 18 July, which unfortunately Cllr P Lewis did not attend at the last minute. Cllr P Lewis had expressed his disagreement with this course of action.

Item 2 - Declarations of interest from Members

Agenda Item	Member	Interest	Nature of interest
No declarations made			

Item 3 - Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 June 2024 (Item 3) and matters incorporated in the draft minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 18 July 2024 (in lieu of the July MES Committee meeting).

The meeting noted the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June which had been approved by Full Council on 18 July 2024. The Clerk noted that the paper prepared for Item 4 on the agenda included all actions and updates since the Full Council meeting. The Chair invited the Clerk to proceed to Agenda item 4.

Item 4 - Actions and updates on matters relating to:

Cemeteries	<p>Upper Prendergast Replacement railings and gates (Completed: August)</p> <p>Lower Prendergast Cuts taken back in-house following additional Groundsman recruitment (Effective from: August)</p> <p>St Martins Repairs to wall separating St Martin's and City Road cemeteries (Completed: August). Quote received for repair to St Davids Road wall following third party vehicle impact damage, subject to insurance claim on driver's insurance (In progress). Area cordoned off due to old and deemed unsafe burial stones to be revisited/tidied up with more permanent fencing/signs to be</p>
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	<p>installed – proposal to be brought back to the Committee (In Progress).</p> <p>Lawn area – grass length maintained longer to create meadow area as part of Living Lawn Project (Local Places for Nature Grant funding) since May. Engagement with PCC on treatment of various green spaces to ensure correct maintenance plan in place.</p> <p>Treatment of moss on pathway (potential slip hazard)</p> <p>Recommendation to purchase Kombi motorised engine/brush equipment to clear path instead of high-pressure jet wash which had caused damaged to tarmac path previously. Request to approve expenditure of £650 (applying Clerk/Mayor approval authority) to expedite path clearance to avoid potential injury. Noted equipment may be used at Bridge Meadow Play Area also.</p> <p>Recommendation to proceed with sourcing equipment approved. Full Council to be asked to note use of purchase authority under Council’s Financial Regulations to expedite before Full Council meeting on 19 September.</p>
<p>Community Garden (Havergardd)</p>	<p>Agreement with Grwp Resilience</p> <p>Clerk noted that the draft Licence to Occupy the Community Garden was currently being reviewed.</p> <p>Clerk agreed to bring this to the Full Council meeting on 19 September for approval.</p>
<p>Priory Saltings</p>	<p>Stone had been added by Groundsman to kissing gate area and to the steps leading to the former Board walk (Completed: June). Pathways were being kept clear, as well as the areas around the bench seating, and repairs undertaken as necessary (ongoing).</p> <p>A quote had been obtained to replace the Board walk and to add a handrail to the steps using a steelworker and the Council’s Groundsman resource (Completed: August).</p> <p>The insurance claim for the loss of the Board walk had been completed and monies received from insurer (Completed: August)</p> <p>Recommendation: to approve costings to replace Board walk and fit handrail to steps as set out in Appendix 1 of the report at a cost to Council of £1,344.68 (Board walk net figure to insurance claim for an improved Board walk) and £1,192.61 for materials to fit the hand rail using Groundsman labour.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr R Thomas-Turner, seconded by Cllr T Moses. All voted in favour.</p> <p>Having visited the Saltings with his dog recently, Cllr B Simister suggested that the pathway could be made wider to facilitate dogs passing which may be re-active. D Lawrence agreed to build this into the Saltings plan.</p>
<p>The Sports Pavilion</p>	<p>Concern was expressed by Cllr P Lewis and Cllr M Lewis that currently there was no hot water facility at the Pavilion for the start of the football season. The Clerk explained that this was because</p>

<p>Lower Racecourse</p>	<p>it was not deemed safe and while repair work was being established. The thermostat was proving to be unreliable and it was not just a case of adding a timer to control the switching on/off the heater system and restricting access of users to the water heater cupboard. A discussion ensued on the current state of the water heating system which had been assessed by the Council's regular plumbing supplier to consider the options a) to modify the existing system to return it to use, noting that there were obsolete parts and the need to modify the existing pipework; and b) a replacement system. The Clerk noted that quotes were being obtained from the existing plumbing supplier on a replacement to the existing system; from Wales & West Utilities for a gas connection supply to install a combi-boiler and radiators (90-day quote already obtained); and for a more sustainable option (ie solar hot water panels and possibly potential for grant funding) for Council to consider all options to replace what is a 45+ year old system.</p> <p>Recommendation: Clerk to prioritise efforts to return the use of hot water (once it is safe to do so). Secondary to that, to obtain quotes to replace the system entirely, recognising that this will take longer to achieve.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr R Thomas-Turner, seconded by Cllr T Moses. All voted in favour.</p> <p>Pesticide inspection A visit held by the Inspector on 1 August had resulted in some helpful recommendations, which had been implemented immediately. No areas of concern to note.</p> <p>The works commissioned by the Portfield Recreation Committee to replace the existing kissing gates to enable disabled access and pathway between the same and the main entrance were completed in July and had been well received by members of the public.</p>
<p>Picton Centre Lease</p>	<p>The Clerk referred to the independent valuation which Council had commissioned in response to the district valuation arranged by the PCC Property department. The Council's independent valuation was notably higher both in terms of rental and freehold value than the recommendation received from PCC which formed the basis on which PCC were prepared to enter into the lease for the Picton Centre. The Committee noted that this recommendation and against the independent valuation presented quite a different proposition to that entered into, in good faith, with PCC in 2021. Three years on there is concern that the Community Centre is being under-utilised by PCC Youth Services; meanwhile the community at large are losing out not having a Community Centre in the town. The discussion included consideration as to whether there was an opportunity to allow the Youth Services to continue to use the facility on a part-time basis if the Council chose to reinstate the Picton Centre as the town's Community Centre.</p> <p>The Clerk had recommended in the report to the Committee that the Full Council hold an additional meeting outside of the Full Council's regular agenda to focus on the strategic property issues with which the Council is currently facing.</p>

	<p>Recommendation: that Full Council do not accept the recommendation from PCC which comprised a significant annual rent reduction for the Picton Centre and to consider reinstating the Picton Centre as a Community Centre for the town as an alternative proposition if PCC are not prepared to enter into a lease on the basis of the rent agreed on occupation, albeit with further consideration to be given for the inclusion of appropriate rent reviews/break clauses to be built into the lease agreement.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr P Lewis, seconded by Cllr. R Thomas-Turner. Two further votes were in favour, with one against.</p>
<p>Old Wool Market</p>	<p>Recommendation: a separate meeting of Full Council is held to consider OWM plans and future as the Town Council's offices.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr. R Thomas-Turner, seconded by Cllr P Lewis. All votes in favour.</p> <p>Meanwhile further paint preparation and a clear out of the rear office space on the ground floor will be undertaken ahead of the NACTSEW (Sheriffs) 2024 AGM and Conference 27-29 September.</p> <p>Items not on agenda (for noting only)</p> <p>The subject of Picton House was raised by Cllr P Lewis and the concern from electors for how the building had been left to decay. The Clerk noted that a meeting had been set up with Officers of PCC, instead of with William Bramble, which Cllr P Lewis suggested should be cancelled. He felt this could be addressed by sending a letter.</p> <p>Cllr T Moses raised the matter of Council having a fuller engagement with the community. It was suggested that Cllr Moses bring a Community Wellbeing Action Plan (linked to his new role outside of Council) to the next meeting.</p> <p>The desire for the Council to start produce newsletters was also expressed which the Clerk noted is being built into the website activity and that which is maintained on the Council's social media platform. She noted that not all Councillors access the latter so miss this content and element of engagement.</p>
<p>Town Improvements</p>	<p>Summer Bunting</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the bunting will be taken down after the Sheriffs event i.e. early October and so that it is removed before Remembrance Sunday. Cllr R Thomas-Turner shared the compliments he had received from visitors to the town on how welcoming the bunting was perceived to be.</p> <p>Christmas Lights Tender</p> <p>The Clerk noted that while a refresh of the tender documentation had been undertaken there were knowledge gaps/areas which required further consideration ie status of lights, various checks, etc before a full tender process could be actioned. She therefore recommended that the full tender is deferred until the new year,</p>

	<p>when the process can be completed properly and fairly. Meanwhile, it was proposed to extend the existing contractual arrangement for the putting up/taking down of the Christmas lights to be formally extended for 1 year under a variation of agreement arrangement.</p> <p>Recommendation: to defer the full tender for the contract for the putting up/taking down of Christmas lights until the new year and for the existing contractual arrangement to be formally extended for 1 year from end of March 2024 and documented.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr P Lewis, seconded by Cllr R Thomas-Turner. All votes in favour.</p> <p>Notice Boards A proposal to refresh the town and community notice boards would be brought back to MES. Cllr R Thomas suggested that there should be one notice board in each ward.</p> <p>Recommendation: that the Clerk’s proposal should include the potential to instal a notice board in each of the five wards, and not just those which are situated centrally in the town.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr R Thomas-Turner, seconded by Cllr P Lewis. All votes in favour.</p> <p>Salt Bins (update only) Clerk to revisit requests for salt bins to bring back to the MES Committee.</p> <p>Portfield Fair (Town Voice initiative / engagement) The Clerk noted that a leaflet drop had been carried out to the residents immediate to the Rifleman Car Park, seeking feedback to hold the October (2-5 October) fair at that location, with a view to potentially the fair returning to St Thomas Green in 2025. The feedback to date was mostly positive. The deadline for responses to PCC/Showmen’s Gild was 10 September.</p>
Civic and Other Events	<p>Civic Service – held on 30 June</p> <p>Beating of the Bounds – held on 21 July. 2025 date to be determined as soon as possible for invitations to Oberkirch Mayor/Band to be sent out. Cllr M Lewis congratulated the staff on a successful event.</p> <p>Remembrance Sunday – 10 November Clerk meeting with Royal British Legion representatives on 3 September and Squadron Leader (Brawdy).</p> <p>Christmas Carol Service – 13 December Schools and other local groups (i.e. guides, scouts, etc) to be contacted during September to encourage participation.</p>
Website development	<p>New website design and content provision is in progress. Anticipated completion by end of October. Project running</p>

	alongside others including Scribe Accounting and Cemetery Management.
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Item 5 - Items for next agenda

- a) Appointment of Vice Chairman
- b) Community Wellbeing Plan (Engagement) – Cllr T Moses

Item 6 – Next meeting – 1st October 2024, 6 p.m. at Old Wool Market

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