

8 March, 2016

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 426 – 433

At a **COUNCIL** Meeting of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Tuesday, 8 March, 2016, at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr. M. V. Davies (Chairman)

Cllrs.

F. Akhtar	S. M. Donoghue
L. A. Beer	H. J. Evans
T. Bowen	M. L. Evans
L. J. Butler	R. E. Evans
S. M. Caiach	A. G. Morgan
D. M. Cundy	J. S. Phillips
S. L. Davies	C. A. Rees
T. Devichand	A. J. Rogers
G. H. Wooldridge	

426. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. T. J. Jones, S. N. Lewis and W. V. Thomas.

427. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

428. MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Further to Minute No. 278, the Chairman welcomed Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Mick Crennell and Group Manager Adrian Nicholas, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MWWFRS) to the meeting and invited them to address Members.

DCFO Crennell thanked Members for the invitation to the meeting and continued by explaining the geographical challenges faced by the MWWFRS.

MWWFRS covered 4,500 square miles of Wales (almost two thirds of the landmass of Wales) which comprised six Unitary Authorities; it had an annual budget of £43.8 million. There was a variety of risks ranging from:

- Major petro-chemical industries in Milford Haven and Briton Ferry;
- Heavily populated conurbations in Swansea, Port Talbot and Llanelli;
- An extensive coastline with major international ports and extensive inland waterways;
- Extensive farming community and many other light industries throughout the area.

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DCFO Crennell informed Members the service employed 1,400 staff which included on-call fire fighters and retained fire fighters. In the higher risk areas (where the population was highest) there were full time fire fighters, working a 24 hours a day roster crew. He went on to explain the internal management structure of the Fire Service which was made up of four Executive Board Members and DCFO Crennell was the Director of Delivery. DCFO Crennell was responsible for 58 stations spread over six county command areas and GMA Adrian Nicholas was responsible for the Carmarthenshire County Command area. The Fire Authority had 25 elected Members which were nominated from each of the six Unitary Authorities and in Carmarthenshire there were five Members. The number of Members serving on the Fire Authority was proportionate to the size of the population per County.

DCFO Crennell then presented Members with a range of performance charts for Carmarthenshire. The performance charts indicated fires in Carmarthenshire had decreased by fifty percent. DCFO Crennell explained some of the reasons for the decrease; there was now fire resistant furniture on the market, there was greater prevention awareness and cigarettes now extinguished instead of carrying on burning. There had also been a significant decrease in the deliberate fires that had been started in Carmarthenshire.

The MWWFRS's overall performance for accidental dwelling fires and injuries had slightly increased. DCFO Crennell stated there would be more community work rolled out to improve general safety. The performance for attending road traffic accidents in Carmarthenshire had decreased but in November 2015 there had been a 20% increase in incidents for the month. This could have been due to the wet weather.

DCFO Crennell then spoke about the co-responder service in Carmarthenshire. He explained this was an area of growth in Carmarthenshire especially in rural communities. DCFO Crennell stated that the fire crews were working well with ambulance crews. The fire vehicles were now equipped with defibrillators and DCFO Crennell was hoping that officer vehicles would be equipped with defibrillators in the near future.

DCFO Crennell informed Members that the prevalence of extreme flooding was on the increase. In 2014/15 the Fire Service attended 33 flood incidents in Carmarthenshire. However, figures dating back to 2007/08 were much higher by comparison. DCFO Crennell then stated there had been a significant decrease in deliberate grass fires from 2010/11 to 2014/15 for mid and south Wales from minor to major fires; this was good news. Deliberate fires took up a huge resource of the service. Preventive intervention work was a key driver in achieving the decrease and these preventative measures would continue.

Over the past five years, MWWFRS had carried out 107,000 home fire safety checks, this involved visiting the public at home and delivering safety advice. The MWWFRS attended 3,075 house fires and had attended over 5,500 road traffic collisions.

DCFO Crennell commented that over the last 10 years the Fire Authority was delivering public value. It had realised efficiency savings of £7.5 million on the overall budget. Furthermore, 23% of station based posts had been removed since 2005. This had all been achieved with no impact on service delivery and the reduction in staffing numbers had been achieved through a process of natural turnover. DCFO Crennell emphasised that there had been no impact on service delivery but if the budget was reduced further front line services might be affected going forward.

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DCFO Crennell then briefly focussed on the public opinion survey, which sought views from the general public about the service. The survey received 1266 responses. The overwhelming response was the Fire Service was providing value for money and all for just 13 pence per day per person. The survey had helped the Fire Service plan certain priorities and areas of work so that it was more centred around public need.

The Chairman thanked DCFO Crennell for addressing Members and then invited questions from the floor.

Members congratulated the MWWFRS for its efficient handling of the recent floods experienced in and around Llanelli and also for the home safety visits to the elderly in Llanelli. Concern was raised for people with dementia and how the fire fighters might help to assist them. DCFO Crennell informed Members he was the Fire Services' Age Champion. The service was working towards becoming a dementia friendly association. Crews worked closely with other organisations as part of the process. It required operational diversity to assist and signpost to ensure people suffering with dementia were safe. Crews would try and prevent slip, trips and falls. Home assessments were undertaken and from this arrangements were made to make the home safe, prevention was a key part. If crews spotted something when conducting a home visit but it was not within their remit of responsibility they would flag up and sign post people to obtain the appropriate help. Working in collaboration with other stakeholders such as the police and health service was very much the new way of working and moving forward.

In response to a question on the Fire Service's annual funding arrangements, DCFO Crennell explained the process. The Fire Service was not a precepting authority like other public bodies. The budget was annually approved by the Fire Authority and presentations to each of the six Unitary Authorities would follow in turn for approval. Following approval a precept demand was made by the Fire Authority to the six local authorities on behalf of the Fire Service. He commented that Welsh Government did provide an element of grant funding direct but this was for things that lay outside the Fire Service's core business functions. For example, national resilience arrangements, mass decontamination and marauding arson attack.

DCFO Crennell then turned his attention to the objectives and areas set out in the current Improvement Plan and two objectives might potentially have an impact on Llanelli depending on future budgeting requirements and whether faced with tighter constraints. However, to quantify this he gave a limited assurance that if any changes were made to the service supporting Llanelli a full root and branch risk assessment would be required in the first instance. The level of risk follows the population. He reassured Members that citizens were at the heart of the service and given Llanelli's population sufficient resources would be made available to keep people safe from harm.

Members then proceeded to comment on the importance of Llanelli Fire Station and thanked GMA Nicholas for the recent site visit. It was clear the station had good facilities and a very good motivated crew. DCFO Crennell was then asked about the funding arrangements associated with fire crews being used as co-responders to support the ambulance service. By way of reply Members were informed that the initiative had been in place for 15 years. There was no profit in making Fire Service resources available for this purpose but money was recovered from the NHS Ambulance Trust on a cost of service basis. No money was made in providing the co-responder cover. DCFO Crennell then addressed concerns about Fire

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Service support to outlying villages and communities in and around the Llanelli and district area. He explained that decisions on service levels were based upon evidence based risk led decisions. The Fire Service had a strategic network of large, medium and small vehicles. In some instances it was not appropriate to send a large vehicle, particularly in such areas where access might be difficult because of the terrain and road infrastructure. There needed to be a policy shift to assess the level of risk to determine which was the best vehicle to attend at the incident. Having a blanket policy where a large vehicle was sent to every incident was inappropriate and was not sustainable.

Members then referred to the Fire Service's work in supporting community resilience initiatives and to one of the interventions the Council had earmarked in its Whole Place Plan to create community flood wardens and whether the Fire Service could lend its support to help with the initial steps needed to implement the intervention. DCFO Crennell confirmed the Fire Service was using Fire Stations as community resilience hubs. The Fire Service would be happy to lend its support and he suggested that the Council should liaise with GMA Nicholas to start the necessary conversation. Members thanked DCFO Crennell for his in principle support and whether he would be prepared to follow up today's Council visit by attending a further meeting in 12 months time. DCFO Crennell was happy to accept the further invitation and on behalf of Members, the Chairman thanked DCFO Crennell and Group Manager Adrian Nicholas MWWFRS for their attendance following which they withdrew from the meeting.

Cllrs. T. Bowen, L. J. Butler and R. E. Evans left the meeting.

429. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following Minutes (copies of which had been previously circulated to Members) be confirmed and signed as a true record of proceedings:

Council	9 February, 2016
Special Finance and General Purposes Committee	10 February, 2016
Special Recreation and Welfare Committee	11 February, 2016
Recreation and Welfare Committee	16 February, 2016
Planning and Liaison Committee	22 February, 2016
Special Council	23 February, 2016

430. MATTERS ARISING PLAY AREA AND DEPOT – FELINFOEL

Further to Minute No. 405, the Clerk in reply to a question about information regarding the potential play area and new depot at Felinfoel, informed Members that he along with the Leader of Council had met with the Head of Corporate Property, Carmarthenshire County Council this afternoon to discuss the Council's requirements and would provide Members with further information once available.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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431. LEASE OF GWILI FIELDS, LLWYNHENDY

RESOLVED that the Chairman and Clerk be authorised to sign the Deed of Dedication between Llanelli Rural Council and the Big Lottery Fund.

Arising out of the brief discussion where Members thanked the Clerk for the diligence in pursuing the completion of the MUGA, the Clerk confirmed that arrangements were progressing with the respective solicitors over the £10,000 capital contribution to be made to the Council by Carmarthenshire County Council. This was being expedited with the drafting of a separate legal document referred to as ‘a side letter’.

432. LLANELLI JOINT BURIAL AUTHORITY

Members received the following Minutes of a meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held on 13 January, 2016:

“At the Meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held at Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Wednesday, 13 January, 2016 at 4:00 pm.

Present: M. J. P. Burns (Chairman)

Cllrs.

L. J. Butler	R. E. Evans
M. V. Davies	L. J. Stedman

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R. M. Davies, P. J. Edmunds, and T. J. Jones.

47. MEMBERS’ DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

48. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes (copies of which had been previously circulated) be confirmed and signed as a true record of proceedings:

Ordinary Meeting - 9 December 2015

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49. MATTERS ARISING

(1) BURIAL ADMINISTRATION SERVICE – COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES WITH NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES

Further to Minute No. 42, the Secretary informed Members that the Cemetery Manager's report had been submitted to Pembrey and Burry Port Council.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

(2) LLANELLI CREMATORIUM – WESTERLEIGH GROUP

Further to Minute No. 43, the Secretary informed Members that he had been in contact with The Westerleigh Group but no date had yet been set for a meeting to discuss the re-assignment of the lease.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

(3) CEMETERY LAND ENCROACHMENT

Further to Minute No. 44, the Secretary provided Members with an update report on the latest developments and it was

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

50. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS

RESOLVED that the income and expenditure report for November 2015 and the provisional report for December 2015 be noted.

51. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Consideration was given to the schedule of payments for December 2015, which revealed expenditure for the month amounted to £38,846.15.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

52. SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING

The Secretary informed Members that the special budget meeting would be held on Tuesday, 26 January 2016, at 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli.
RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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53. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT, 1960

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the following matter be considered in private and that the power of exclusion of the public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960 be exercised.

54. STAFFING MATTERS

Consideration was given to the Secretary's report on staffing matters.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted.

.....
The meeting concluded at 4:35 pm”
.....

RESOLVED that the Minutes be noted.

433. LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

RESOLVED that the letter of appreciation for the Council's assistance received from Ysgol Y Felin be noted.

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The Meeting concluded at 7.05 p.m.
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The afore-mentioned Minutes were declared to be a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman presiding thereat and were, on 12 April, 2016, adopted by the Council.