

20 January, 2015.

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 351 – 357

At a Meeting of the **RECREATION AND WELFARE COMMITTEE** of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Tuesday, 20 January, 2015, at 4.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr. C. A. Rees (Chairman)

Cllrs.

L. J. Butler	S. M. Donoghue
D. M. Cundy	R. E. Evans
S. L. Davies	S. N. Lewis
A. G. Morgan	

Absent: F. Akhtar

351. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. T. Bowen and M. L. Evans.

352. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared and interest in the under-mentioned matters:-

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Interest</i>
354	Cllr. L. J. Butler	Personal and prejudicial – she had been involved in the original Lease transfer of the MUGA, Llwynhendy.
354	Cllr. S. L. Davies	Personal and prejudicial – she was involved in her capacity as a County Councillor with the MUGA site, Llwynhendy.

353. PROGRESS REPORT

RESOLVED that the report of the Technical Services Officer on work undertaken be noted.

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354. TRANSFER OF ASSETS PROGRAMME

**(1) PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND OTHER COMMUNITY ASSETS
(2) CLOS CILSAIG PLAY AREA, DAFEN**

Cllr. L. J. Butler declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item (1) because she was involved in the original Lease transfer of the MUGA, Llwynhendy and withdrew from the meeting before discussion commenced. Cllr. S. L. Davies also declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of item (1) because she was now involved in her capacity as a County Councillor with the MUGA site in Llwynhendy and withdrew from the meeting before discussion commenced.

Members considered joint correspondence from the Executive Board Members for Resources and Technical Services, Carmarthenshire County Council, on the future management of playgrounds, parks and amenity areas.

The County Council was currently engaged in discussions with several Community and Town Councils and other organisations in relation to the transfer of assets. Due to the current financial climate, the County Council was encouraging Community and Town Councils to take over the running of recreational facilities to protect them from potential closure.

The County Council's Executive Board had agreed to the provision of one-off non-refundable maintenance grants and a clear timetable to steer the process of transfer. A maintenance grant of two times the current annual maintenance cost of the asset was available. An improvement grant of up to £10,000 per community organisation was also available for agreed improvement works. Expressions of interest needed to be submitted to the County Council prior to 31 March, 2016, with transfers having to be completed by 31 March 2018.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Rural Council was currently involved with five transfers but was experiencing delays with the legal process.

Cllrs. L. J. Butler and S. L. Davies rejoined the meeting after the conclusion of item 1.

General discussion of asset transfers also overlapped into item 2 and the following comments, observations and issues were put forward in respect of both items.

Generally there was a feeling that the whole issue of asset transfer and pitch hire fees was disjointed. Members were of the view that information about expressions of interest made by community groups to the County Council should have also been shared with this Council to ascertain which groups had positively responded to the asset transfer scheme and to the programme of work associated with pitch hire fees. Gaps could have then been highlighted where there was a lack of interest or no response.

Members referred to some instances of the wrong user group being approached about asset transfers. Reference was made to the user groups at Dafen Park which had a Welfare Committee overseeing the co-ordination of the cricket, football and bowls fraternities using the park's facilities.

Members felt the Council should have been informed and or invited to community meetings organised by the County Council especially when hosting meetings with various community

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groups from within its administrative area. There appeared to be mixed messages of what's on offer and what lay ahead depending on which community group or organisation you spoke to. Interpretations were varied and uncertainty had arisen about what happens to the likes of Dafen Park and the future upkeep of park infrastructure if for example the cricket club elected to solely maintain the cricket pitch. What would happen to the rest of the park facilities and how would these be maintained going forward and by whom?

There needed to be a clearer and more effective communication strategy which pulled together the different strands and issues. The Council had no idea whether any community groups were seriously looking at asset transfer. Moreover, in respect of potential future pitch hire fees, the Council understood that depending where a user group played the cost for playing there compared to other county run facilities was likely to differ considerably. For example it was understood that Pwll Cricket had been quoted £9,000 for the season to use Pwll Recreation Ground whereas Dafen Cricket had been quoted £11,000 for the use of Dafen Park and £13,000 for the use of Seaside Park. If this was correct it was difficult to understand the rationale for such wide and significant variations in fees. The maintenance costs ought to be very similar.

Members then focussed on assets specifically affecting the Rural Council. Generally the Council would not transfer assets in a poor state of repair. It would not be saddled with any liability. Assets must be transferred in a good condition so the County Council would need to address this as part of the transfer process. Furthermore, the Council was still experiencing long delays over various asset transfers. The block appeared to be with the legal process and progress was very slow despite the County Council's legal department and the Rural Council's solicitor working through the various legalities surrounding leases. The Clerk summarised the status of the assets currently being pursued by the Council.

PWLL PAVILION, PWLL RECREATION GROUND

There appeared to be considerable delay in getting consent from the Millennium Commission for the pavilion to be transferred to the Council. This transfer had been on-going for over a year. Apparently there was also an issue to resolve about the transfer given the facility was constructed using lottery funding. The Rural Council was in the County Council's hands over this matter and could not take any further steps to complete the transfer. The question was how long did the Council have to wait to see a positive outcome?

MUGA, LLWYNHENDY

The situation with the MUGA was similar to Pwll Pavilion. An existing lease needed to be expunged before entering into fresh terms for a new lease between respective Councils. Furthermore, the MUGA was created thanks to grant funding from the Big Lottery and it appeared that consent needed to be obtained first from the Big Lottery to allow the transfer to take place.

SWISS VALLEY PLAY AREA

The Council had been successful in its pursuit of grant funding with the assistance of County staff and it looked as though the Council could now proceed with the transfer. A capital scheme of around £80,000 had been identified to completely refurbish the play area. So far the Council had a funding pot of £70,000 leaving a shortfall of £10,000. The asset was in a

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very poor state of repair and would need brand new equipment. A specific report on the play area followed in item (3) below.

CILSAIG PLAY AREA, DAFEN

There were delays associated with the transfer of the play area from the private housing developer to the County Council. However, following the recent receipt of an erroneous letter (to which item (2) refers) informing that County Council maintenance to the play area would cease on 1 April, 2015 and thereafter the Rural Council would be solely responsible for its upkeep; it was confirmed by the County Council that it would complete the transfer from the private housing developer by 1 April. This would either be achieved via a statutory declaration process or by direct transfer from the developer. However, there still remained the issue of progressing the lease and resolving the poor condition of the play equipment. The equipment was no longer fit for purpose and was potentially unsafe.

PONTIETS PARK

The equipment in the park was very poor and needed to be replaced with new equipment. Quotes amount to £60,000 to fund new facilities. The lease transfer would remain on hold until it was clear what level of support could be provided from the County Council.

Attention then turned to the issue of the grants potentially on offer from the County Council. The Council had already transferred Bryngolau play area but had received no funding for this. Clarification was needed as to whether the council would receive any form of grant? Looking at the other transfers in the pipeline £10,000 had been promised from the Housing Revenue Account once the MUGA at Llwynhendy was transferred. No funding had been mentioned for the transfer of Pwll Pavilion. The one off payment of the £10,000 improvement grant per organisation referred to earlier was not enough to cover the shortfall in funding at Swiss Valley and then complete the revamp of Cilsaig and Pontiets parks. An improvement grant per £10,000 for each asset should be sought from the County Council. Leaving aside the MUGA at Llwynhendy, this equated to £40,000 being transferred to cover Pwll Pavilion and the three play areas in Dafen, Pontiets and Swiss Valley. It was also positively assumed that the Council should receive the maintenance grant of two times the current annual maintenance costs for these assets.

Given the issues identified it was

RESOLVED that:

- (1) A letter be sent to the two Executive Board Members inviting them to attend at a future Council meeting to discuss the various issues highlighted by Members on the subject of asset transfer. Furthermore that key County Council officers leading on asset transfer shall also be invited to the meeting.
- (2) Presuming the invitation is accepted the service users from Dafen, Pwll and Trallwm shall be invited to the same meeting so that all stakeholders can fully participate in the planned discussion.

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(3) SWISS VALLEY PLAY AREA

Members received correspondence from the Executive Director, Veolia Environmental Trust informing that the application for funding for Swiss Valley Play Area had been approved by the Board of The Veolia Environmental Trust on 8 December, 2014.

The formal offer of a grant would be £35,960.00 towards the play area.

Members then considered the report of the Deputy Clerk (Administration) informing of the shortfall in funding the new play area after the grant from Veolia had been awarded. An anticipated project cost of £80,960 had been estimated for the new play area. A total of £50,960 had been awarded from funding organisations which included £15,000 from the Cwm Community and Environmental Fund.

It was intended to complete the transfer of the play area as soon as possible and therefore the Council could take advantage of the County Council's offer to apply for an Improvement Grant for which up to £10,000 could be awarded per organisation for agreed improvement works; this would negate the shortfall if received in full.

To take the project forward the Council would have to

- Invite companies to submit tenders for the supply and installation of new play equipment.
- Hold a consultation event at Swiss Valley Community hall to enable tendering companies to directly hear the wishes of the local community on the preferred type of play equipment.
- The local community would then be given the opportunity of selecting its preferred scheme after illustrations and tenders had been received at a further consultation event.
- Finally it was envisaged that a report on the tenders received together with community opinion would be presented to the Recreation and Welfare Committee for decision.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The grant award from Veolia Environmental Trust be noted.
- (2) The suggested actions and timing of events presented in the Deputy Clerk's report be accepted.

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

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the following matters 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.

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**356. PWLL RECREATION GROUND
ACCESS ROAD AND CAR PARK**

Members considered the report of the Deputy Clerk (Administration) informing of a quotation obtained from the Council's consultant architect to design a scheme for the access road to Pwll Pavilion and car park.

Members were informed that the quotation provided for a schematic design, drawings and submission of a planning application, preparation of tender and contract documents and preparation of the final account. It also allowed for the disciplines of: architect, Quantity Surveyor, Project Manager/Contract Administrator and Civil Engineer. An additional charge of a further £1,000 would be made if the services of a CDM Co-ordinator was required.

It was felt however more professional input would be required so the architect had been requested to quote again for providing a full service to include all investigatory and testing works, formal site meetings and defects period services to negate any problems occurring during or at completion of the scheme and going forward.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that

(1) The report and the amended quotation tabled during the meeting received from Pembroke Design Ltd to design a scheme for the access road to Pwll Pavilion and car park in the sum of £10,035 excluding VAT be accepted;

(2) The following services be also engaged directly

- Utilities and topographic survey by Utilimap Ltd in the sum of £2,300 excluding VAT
- Site investigation and percolation tests by Terra Firma Ltd in the sum of £1,965 excluding VAT. The quotation was based on a schedule of rates basis and would be re-measurable as was usual for site investigations.

**357. FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORTS
PWLL RECREATION GROUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Members were circulated with a Statement of Accounts received from the above Management Committee.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the annual grant of £400 be awarded to Pwll Recreation Ground Development Committee.

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The Meeting concluded at 5.50 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 10 February, 2015, adopted by the Council.