

8 January, 2013.

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 348 – 358

At a **COUNCIL** Meeting of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Tuesday, 8 January, 2013, at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr. T. Devichand (Chairman)

Cllrs.

F. Akhtar	H. J. Evans
L. A. Beer	M. L. Evans
T. Bowen	R. E. Evans
L. J. Butler	T. J. Jones
S. M. Caiach	S. N. Lewis
D. M. Cundy	A. G. Morgan
M. V. Davies	C. A. Rees
S. L. Davies	A. Rogers
W. V. Thomas	

348. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. S. M. Donoghue, G. N. R. Edwards and G. H. Wooldridge.

349. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

**350. MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
DRAFT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2013 -2014**

Pursuant to Minute No. 286, the Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Director of Service Delivery, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Mr Derek Masson and the Head of Carmarthenshire County Command Group Manager Mr Robert Quin, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The Chairman then invited the Leader of Council to open proceedings by explaining the reason for inviting the Fire and Rescue Service representatives to the meeting. The Leader referred to the Council's invitation letter addressed to the Chief Fire Officer dated 30 November, 2012. The letter set out the Council's support for the five key areas identified in the draft action plan. However, Members were mindful of the separate report received from

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the Fire Brigade Union; specifically the changes to crewing arrangements (covered under 'Managing Resources' in the draft plan) and the impact on front line services at Llanelli Fire Station. Furthermore, the potential knock on effect to the wider community. The Leader also referred to the use of Rural Response Pumps by the Fire Service as a means of replacing the Emergency Response Pumps in some instances. The Leader commented that these issues had not been explained in detail in the plan and asked the Fire and Rescue Service representatives how the plan would maintain full cover in Llanelli if the fire crew was reduced from 23 to 15 staff and if a vehicle(s) was ultimately replaced and invited Mr Masson to comment on these points.

By way of introduction, Mr Masson explained that the crewing arrangements and vehicles were particular objectives for the Fire Authority in the 2012/13 action plan under the banner heading 'Improving better use of resources'. As part of the work Mr Quin had compiled a robust risk assessment for the people of Llanelli. The risk assessment raised two concerns namely: the standard of emergency response could not change with there being two fire engines covering Llanelli and two further engines in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the speed of response should not change. However, there had been a shift towards community safety initiatives, for example home safety and reducing house fires, dealing with road traffic accidents as well as more face to face community work with the introduction of various schemes in a bid to make the service more proactive rather than being responsive. However more needed to be done.

Mr Masson commented that the Fire Service faced a challenge with its budget settlement and having to look at how money was invested with no change to front line services. The Fire Service had looked at the crewing arrangements for one fire appliance in Llanelli covered by whole-time firemen. The other appliance (staffed by part-time crew) was not changing. With regard to the whole-time firemen, their rostering arrangements have been changed which had freed-up posts from that crew; the savings achieved from this had been reinvested in community safety. Mr Masson explained that under the old rostering system, 28 people covered one appliance at any one time but only five people were needed to man the fire appliance. The new system would enable the service to keep five of the crew on duty but with less personnel off duty (on standby). The number of crew members on the fire appliance would not change and the speed of response would not change. The change would improve proactive community safety work as more was needed to be done in this area and this is what the service was striving to achieve, as prevention was better than cure.

In regard to the vehicles, Mr Masson explained the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service provided emergency response for two thirds of Wales with most of the area being rural. He stated that depending on the terrain and weather conditions, large vehicles were not always appropriate and presented access problems to remote areas. Therefore, as part of a strategic review the service looked at different options to using a full scale fire engine for certain situations and in different settings. The Rural Response Pumps were smaller, four wheel drive vehicles capable of carrying state of the art fire and rescue equipment. The pumps would work in unison with full appliances. The closest pump to Llanelli was based in Ammanford Fire Station; it was planned to introduce 24 of these pumps across Mid and West Wales but the two fire appliances at Llanelli Station would remain and would not be affected by being substituted for a Rural Response Pump. In support of Mr Masson's comments about access issues, Mr Quin stated the reclassification of bridges by Highways Authorities had

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presented a problem with many bridges' weight limit being reduced to seven tonnes with no dispensation for emergency vehicles being granted; large vehicles were therefore unable to get access. This type of vehicle ceases to be effective in certain communities, so something else was needed to guarantee access, whilst at the same time providing the correct equipment and capacity to deal with emergency situations. Ammanford Fire Station was well suited for using a Rural Response Pump but it was not appropriate for Llanelli. The pumps were a welcome addition to the fleet.

Thereupon, the Leader commented he was impressed with the very comprehensive risk assessment in support of the Fire Service's good work but one concern was the way changes were being implemented and the speed of change and the potential impact on lives in Llanelli. He referred to the model used at Pontardawe Fire Station being used in Llanelli but Pontardawe handled 350 calls per annum compared to Llanelli which was nearer 1000 calls per annum; therefore how could the Fire Service introduce the same model? He added that 15 posts were being advertised but nobody from Llanelli was applying for the jobs with the posts becoming operational from April 2013. He commented that 23 staff would be moving from Llanelli Fire Station.

Mr Masson by way of response briefly described the background history for arriving at the current position. Discussions over staff changes began in November 2010 and had been going on until September 2012. During this lengthy period of time attempts to negotiate an option to agree upon with the Union had failed. This was despite the intervention of an independent negotiating panel based in London helping both sides to reach a joint agreement in July 2012. It was agreed that the situation would be resolved by September 2012. Regrettably no agreement was ultimately reached so the Fire Service had to move on and implement the changes as they had to be done. With regards to the posts not being filled by Llanelli firemen, a number of individuals did not wish to work to the new arrangements. The crewing arrangements at Pontardawe were working well with the changes achieving all the anticipated efficiencies and outcomes. The new crewing arrangements for Llanelli would hopefully come into effect in April 2013, with two lead managers remaining to take over the new arrangements. On a point of clarification Mr Masson stated Llanelli dealt on average between 750 and 800 calls per annum. All fire fighters were trained to the same professional standard so there would be no detrimental impact on the service in Llanelli. However, like anywhere else a period of bedding in time would be normal to acquaint new fire fighters to the area's unique community safety risks and local circumstances.

Members then asked Mr Masson whether he could give an assurance that no lives would be put at risk by the changes. Mr Masson gave a categorical assurance by way of response. Mr Quin commented in support that the system used in Llanelli was introduced in 1947 but roles had changed since then. Up until recently the service had been responsive but this was now no longer acceptable, more prevention was needed so hence the shift in focus to community safety work. He stated the Fire Service should be reducing the average number of calls to 500 or perhaps 300, that was the aim so the Fire Service needed to look at different ways of using its resources in order to achieve this.

Members then posed questions about night shift patterns and also the Fire Service's role in providing co-responders to help assist paramedics in stabilising patients. Mr Masson replied that the night shift started at 6.00 pm, leading up to 11.00 pm, thereafter crew could stand

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down and rest/sleep in the fire station and respond to emergency calls as and when necessary. He explained that the co-responders was a special arrangement with the Wales Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) and staff were specially trained to deal with cardiac arrests and to stabilize patients whilst waiting for paramedics to arrive. Firemen had been acting as co-responders for a number of years. They focussed on major trauma care injuries which was common place with road traffic collisions. Road traffic collisions were out numbering home fires so staff carried specialist equipment in the fire appliances but they didn't administer drugs but did provide oxygen.

Members referred to the current 28 whole-time crew positions and the need for five staff to man the fire appliances at anyone time. Mr Masson stated this would reduce to 14 crew positions under the new arrangements but would achieve the same service standards by changing rostered shift patterns. Under the new self rostering system the crew decided the cover but five firemen must always be available.

Effectively the new arrangement reduced the number of days crew members were off. By doing this it reduced the total number of people needed to meet the shift patterns. Readjusting hours of work and altering the rostering system so that crews would no longer work the pattern of two days, two nights followed by four days off. Crew members working more days would produce a saving in the total number of posts required.

Members then posed further questions surrounding the difficulty in predicting and preventing road traffic accidents (RTAs) and how the risk assessment was compiled. In response Mr Quin stated a range of road engineering solutions were being introduced by the Fire Service's partners via the Carmarthenshire Community Safety Partnership, for example, identifying accident black spots, using different types of road surfaces. However, it was recognised that RTAs were a challenge and it was impossible to prevent everything but the difficulty was not educating local people but transient visitors who were not aware of local road conditions. With regards to the compilation of the risk assessment, Mr Quin confirmed he had been personally responsible for compiling it using various data sets and statistics. The Fire Service representatives then commented on how the service would deal with a major incident requiring more than one appliance. The service would redirect resources from other stations/areas which was the current standard operating procedure and this would not change under the new arrangement. If more resources were needed to deal with an emergency then a request would be called in via radio to the central control centre and additional appliances would then be mobilised.

Members reiterated concerns over the 50% reduction in the crewing arrangements covering Llanelli, the call volume in Pontardawe was virtually three times less compared to Llanelli. The reduction would place huge pressure on the workforce; fatigue could effect safety and impact upon decision making and wondered whether there was flexibility to increase crew numbers. In response Mr Masson confirmed the service's primary responsibility was to its staff then the community. No system would be introduced which compromised staff safety. Standard operating procedure provided for risks associated with tiredness and fatigue whereby no fire crew could remain at an incident for more than four hours at this point they would be relieved. During the four hour work period operational rest breaks were built in. In addressing the question about call volume, Mr Masson stated call analysis data revealed that on average 250 calls out of 800 calls per annum were false alarms. The call rates for Llanelli

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during the nighttime showed that the crew were called out once every three nights with call outs lasting on average 40 minutes.

Attention then turned to crews supporting the work of paramedics and the pressure faced in responding to incidents in a timely manner. Mr Masson recognised that this presented a challenge during the interim period waiting for paramedic crews to arrive but firemen were trained to stabilise and sustain patient care. The Fire Service had good working relationships with WAST. He confirmed there were discussions taking place at a national level over respective roles and responsibilities; however should roles be merged in the future this would need to be determined at ministerial level in the first instance. In recognition of the support provided to WAST, Mr Quin stated there were 195 call responder incidents in Carmarthenshire in 2012 and ambulance managers had asked to place ambulances at certain fire stations.

Members then commented about the extent of the Fire and Rescue Service's annual budget and the possibility of having to work with less resources as a result of further budget cuts in the future. The Fire and Rescue representatives were then asked to comment on how the service would deal with the largest disaster likely to affect Llanelli, namely flooding. Mr Masson in reply stated the Fire and Rescue Service was no different to other public bodies when setting budgets, he agreed there was only so much that could be done by reconfiguring services but the changes in Llanelli would make savings but finance was not the driving force as the savings identified were to be reallocated to other service areas such as community safety. With regard to major flood incidents, the service could not deal with this single handedly. Other agencies would be mobilized in order to provide help; indeed there was operational harmony with multi agency partners with them all working to the same standards. This resource was available at regional and national level providing a UK wide response capability and the Fire Service could call upon other fire service areas as well as other support agencies as and when needed. The main issue was the logistics and planning not the level of support. He also mentioned that a high volume pump vehicle to pump up water quickly was located in Ammanford Fire Station.

In drawing the debate to a conclusion, the Chairman asked what would happen if the level of call rates did not fall from 800 per annum and would the staffing arrangements be revisited and reviewed as a consequence? Mr Masson stated the service would constantly monitor and keep under review its staffing resource as a matter of good practice. It was observed by Members that the cuts were being made to the service's spare resource capacity but there was a chance of cutting too fast and too quickly but only time would tell.

In response to Mr Masson's remarks about keeping matters under review, the Chairman mentioned the Council would like to extend a further invitation to the Fire and Rescue Service to attend a future meeting to reflect and report upon the new arrangements and how they were working in practice. Mr Masson welcomed the opportunity and stated he would be pleased to update the Council about the impact of the changes. He concluded his address by stating that staff safety was paramount, all changes would be subject to monitoring and review but the primary driver for change was to improve service delivery whilst maintaining emergency response standards. The Fire and Rescue Service needed to improve the amount of its proactive work: the service could not be deemed responsive by adopting a reactive approach to its role in the community.

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Thereupon, the Chairman thanked Mr Masson and Mr Quin for attending and they both withdrew from the meeting.

351. 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	11 December, 2012
Civic and Ceremonial Committee	17 December, 2012
Planning and Liaison Committee	17 December, 2012
Recreation and Welfare Committee	18 December, 2012
Policy and Resources Committee	19 December, 2012
Finance and General Purposes Committee	20 December, 2012

352. CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Further to Minute No. 332, it was

RESOLVED that apologies be noted for Cllr. L. A. Beer and that Cllr. H. J. Evans' attendance at the meeting be formally recorded.

353. SELECTION OF CHAIRMAN ELECT AND VICE-CHAIRMAN ELECT

Pursuant to Minute No. 316, it was

RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Civic and Ceremonial Committee be accepted:-

- (1) Cllr. T. J. Jones be confirmed as the Chairman Elect of Council with his Consort being Miss C Montgomery for the ensuing municipal year;
- (2) Cllr. L. J. Butler be confirmed as the Vice Chairman Elect of Council with her Consort being Mr R Butler for the ensuing municipal year.

354. YOUR HEALTH YOUR FUTURE – PRINCE PHILIP HOSPITAL (PPH)

PROGRESS REPORT

Further to Minute No. 310, the Clerk provided Members with a brief progress report on events since the last Council meeting. The Clerk informed Members that not a great deal had happened since the last meeting especially because of the Christmas break. However, he confirmed that no reply had been received from the Health & Social Services Minister, Welsh Government to the complaint letter about the Wales Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) sent to the Minister on 6 December, 2012.

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Furthermore, the Clerk referred to the health board's December 2012 clinical services strategy briefing report (circulated to Members during the discussion). The wording contained in the report seemed to be preparing the way for bad news. The Clerk stated that the health board had published on its website this afternoon, the full report prepared by Opinion Research Services (ORS) on the health board's consultation exercise. The report totalled 174 pages and unfortunately time didn't permit any meaningful analysis of the findings prior to the meeting but the Council did feature in the report. He thereupon invited the Leader to add any supporting comments about the points addressed in his progress report.

The Leader responded by explaining that it was likely that the health board would be making a final decision over its reconfiguration plans at an extraordinary board meeting to be held in Carmarthen on 15 January next. The Leader also expressed disappointment with the lack of response from the Welsh Government over the Council's complaint letter about WAST and it was

RESOLVED that the information be noted and that the Clerk make further enquiries with the Health and Social Services Minister, Welsh Government, as to when the Council can expect to receive a written response to its complaint letter dated 6 December, 2012.

355. EXTERNAL EVENTS

Members having received invitations for the Council to be represented at the following, and it was

RESOLVED that

- (1) DCK Beavers Ltd – Clerks Congress Wales – 22 February, 2013 – that the Clerk, Deputy Clerk (Administration) and the Leader be authorised to attend;
- (2) Carmarthenshire County Council – Code of Conduct Training – 26 & 27 February, 2013 – that the Clerk and Leader be authorised to attend.

356. MATTERS REPORTED

RESOLVED that the schedule of matters reported be noted.

357. LLANELLI JOINT BURIAL AUTHORITY

Members received the following Minutes of a meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held on 14 November, 2012:-

“At the Meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held at Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Wednesday, 14 November 2012 at 4:00 pm.

Present: L. A. Beer (Chairman)

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Cllrs.

T. Bowen	P. J. Edmunds
S. L. Davies	S. N. Lewis
R. M. Davies	C. C. Lucas

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. J. Williams.

42. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

43. 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 - 10 October 2012

44. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS

RESOLVED that the income and expenditure reports for September 2012 and the provisional report for October 2012 be noted.

45. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Consideration was given to the schedule of payments for October 2012, which revealed expenditure for the month, amounted to £51,444.48.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

46. NATURAL BURIAL AREA

Further to Minute No. 40, Members considered the Cemetery Manager's report on the provision of a natural burial area in Llanelli District Cemetery. Following a lengthy discussion it was

RESOLVED that

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- (1) The report together with the proposed regulations, costs and fees be accepted and taken forward for adoption;
- (2) the wooded area adjacent to section 1 in the cemetery grounds be earmarked to create the natural burial area;
- (3) the Cemetery Manager arrange for the site to be prepared including the provision of appropriate screening to boundaries; and
- (4) the area of land be surveyed to calculate the positioning and total number of burial plots.

Cllr. T. Bowen joined the meeting.

47. MEMORIAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT – POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Following the recent revision of BS8415 (Monuments within Burial Grounds and Memorial Sites – Specification), Members considered the Cemetery Manager’s report on the impact this would have on the application of the Burial Authority’s memorial safety policy. After a lengthy discussion it was

RESOLVED that

- (1) The report be accepted and the Burial Authority adopt the revised British Standard;
- (2) the Authority’s extant memorial safety policy and procedures be duly amended and re-presented to a future meeting for adoption.

Cllr. S. L. Davies withdrew from the meeting midway through discussion of Minute No. 47 above.

48. CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

RESOLVED that in accordance with Minute No.45 (10 December 2003), this year’s Christmas holiday arrangements at the cemetery be confirmed as detailed below, with two and a half days annual leave being added to employees’ annual leave entitlement for 2012/2013.

Monday	24 December	2012	-	Christmas Eve (Finish at 12 noon)
Tuesday	25 December	2012	-	Christmas Day
Wednesday	26 December	2012	-	Boxing Day
Thursday	27 December	2012	-	Locally agreed holiday
Friday	28 December	2012	-	Normal working day
Saturday	29 December	2012	-	Non working day
Sunday	30 December	2012	-	Non working day
Monday	31 December	2012	-	Normal working day
Tuesday	1 January	2013	-	Bank Holiday
Wednesday	2 January	2013	-	Normal working day

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49. 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.

50. LLANELLI CREMATORIUM LTD – RENT REVIEW

Members considered the Secretary’s report informing of the impending annual rent review and which confirmed the amount of rent payable to the Burial Authority from Llanelli Crematorium Ltd, with effect from 1 December 2012.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the rent for the ensuing year be confirmed as £28,214 and that Llanelli Crematorium Ltd be notified accordingly.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the facility to pay by monthly instalments be withdrawn.

Cllr. C. C. Lucas withdrew from the meeting.

51. CEMETERY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Further to Minute No. 114 (24 May 2012), Members considered the Secretary’s report on the proposed cemetery infrastructure improvements.

In support of the report, Pembroke Design Ltd (consultant architects for the project) had also prepared a tender evaluation report and had recommended that the lowest tender be accepted and following discussion it was

RESOLVED that

- (1) The recommendation contained in the tender report to accept the lowest tender received from Lloyd and Gravell Ltd, 43 Myrtle Hill, Ponthenri, Llanelli for the sum of £99,768.50 be accepted.
- (2) The sum of £14,335 be transferred from general reserve balances to meet the anticipated shortfall of money required to complete the specified works and in order to cover all professional fees associated with the project.

.....
The meeting concluded at 5:00 pm”
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RESOLVED that the Minutes be noted.

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358. LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

RESOLVED that the letters of appreciation for the Council's assistance received from the following, be noted with pleasure:

- (1) Dafen Welfare Bowls Club;
- (2) Llwyn Yr Ynys Luncheon and Complex Clubs.

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The Meeting concluded at 7.30 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 February, 2013, adopted by the Council.