

13 November, 2007.

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 270 - 278

At a **COUNCIL** Meeting of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Tuesday, 13 November, 2007, at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr. D. J. Davies (Chairman)

Cllrs.

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| T. D. Bowen | M. Howells |
| S. M. Caiach | M. B. Hughes |
| D. V. Darby | T. J. Jones |
| M. Davies | S. N. Lewis |
| S. L. Davies | A. G. Morgan |
| C. Edwards | C. A. Rees |
| M. L. Evans | R. G. Thorne |
| G. H. Wooldridge | |

270. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman referred to the recent demise of Mr. R. Gravell, President, Llanelli R.F.C. and conveyed the Council's condolences to Mr. Gravell's wife and family. Members and Officers thereupon stood in silent tribute.

271. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. T. Devichand, R. E. Evans and M. P. Jones.

272. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. C. Edwards declared an interest in Minute No. 274 as she was employed by Carmarthenshire NHS Trust.

273. 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:-

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| Council | 9 October, 2007. |
| Recreation and Welfare Committee | 16 October, 2007. |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 17 October, 2007. |
| Learning and Development Consultative Committee | 25 October, 2007. |

13 November, 2007.

Planning and Liaison Committee
Finance and General Purposes Committee

29 October, 2007.
31 October, 2007.

**274. RECONFIGURATION OF GENERAL SURGICAL SERVICES
IN CARMARTHENSHIRE – INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO
THE PROCESSES ON CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Cllr. C. Edwards declared an interest in the following item as she was employed by Carmarthenshire NHS Trust and did not speak on the matter.

Pursuant to Minute No. 455 (13 March, 29007), Members considered a report written by Dr. N. Goodwin, CBE, regarding an Independent Inquiry into the processes on consultation and implementation of the reconfiguration of general surgical services in Carmarthenshire.

The report contained two sets of recommendations. The first aimed specifically at the NHS and other bodies in Carmarthenshire and derived from the summary of findings on the processes related to the reconfiguration of surgical services, to which eight recommendations were addressed to those local bodies. The second set stated various key lessons for NHS Wales following the analysis of events in Llanelli.

A letter received from the Regional Director, Mid and West Wales Regional Office, Department for Health and Social Services, was also circulated which suggested that, as more than one person from this Council had been interviewed by Dr. Goodwin when he undertook his Inquiry, the representatives concerned met with him as a group to discuss matters.

Also received was a letter from the Secretary, Committee for the Improvement of Hospital Services (CIHS), which stated that, although requests had been made for copies of amendments to the Inquiry report at all stages under the Freedom of Information Act, none had been forthcoming. It was noted that the report had been delayed and it was felt that the document was a disappointment. A future public meeting would be convened by the Committee to establish whether the public wished the Committee to remain in being, if so, an Annual General Meeting would be consequently held. The writer conveyed the Committee's appreciation to this Council for its past support and hoped that it would continue by attending the public meeting.

During a lengthy discussion, Members' conveyed their disappointment and dissatisfaction with the Inquiry Report and felt that a meeting with the Regional Director would not, following the outcome of the Report, be productive and should not be pursued. Continued support of the Committee for the Improvement of Hospital Services was unanimous.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Inquiry Report written by Dr. Neil Goodwin and the letter received from the Regional Director, Mid and West Wales Regional Office, Department for Health and Social Services, be noted;
- (2) Members' comments be conveyed to the Minister for Health, Welsh Assembly Government; and
- (3) a letter fully supporting the Committee be forwarded to the Secretary, Committee for the Improvement of Hospital Services.

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**275. STRADEY PARK DEVELOPMENT –
VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATION**

Correspondence was received from the Chief Executive, Llanelli Scarlets, together with a copy Witness Statement of Cllr. S. M. Caiach in support of the village green application. Clarification of three points contained within said Statement was requested in order to establish whether Cllr. Caiach was speaking for, and representing all, the Members serving on this Council.

Following Cllr. Caiach's address to Members explaining the content of her Statement, the following items were clarified:-

- 1) Item 4 - *“any thought it was still owned by the Stradey Estate or only leased by the club. At the Rural Council even our most senior councillors and our staff did not know and had to make enquiries”*.

This statement related to the planning application submitted by the Rugby Club for 450 residential units. When this Council was originally consulted, a question was raised over the ownership of peripheral land to the south of the rugby ground site. There was no reference to the training pitches at that time and the ownership of the training pitches had never been an issue for this Council.

The Clerk further clarified that the Council has not taken part in the village green application process. The only involvement the Council had with the application was to assist Carmarthenshire County Council in keeping, on deposit at these offices, copies of the application should members of the public wish to inspect it locally. The Planning and Liaison Committee Minute confirmed the Council's role and position in that respect (Minute No. 525, 10 April, 2007, refers).

- 2) Item 5 - *“The Llanelli Rural Council strongly objected to the Stradey Development on several grounds which are on record”*.

This statement again related to the planning application. The Council did object to the application and this was a matter of public record. The objection was based on material planning considerations identified at the time. However, these issues had since been addressed by the Planning Inspector and the Minister at the Welsh Assembly Government. The Council respected the decision to grant consent. The Council was also consulted over the Club's relocation proposal to Pemberton and the planning application received the Council's full support. This was also on public record.

- 3) Item 8 - *“I and my fellow councillors support the village green application”*.

Cllr. Caiach maintained that she was referring to the Hengoed Ward Councillors and that she was not speaking on behalf of all Councillors serving on the Council.

The Clerk stated that individual Councillors could not make decisions on behalf of the Council, nor could they commit the Council to support or take a particular course of action. As the Council was a corporate body, decisions or commitments could only be democratically agreed by Councillors at properly constituted meetings.

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RESOLVED that a letter of reply be forwarded to the Chief Executive, Llanelli Scarlets, informing of the above clarified matters.

276. MATTERS REPORTED

RESOLVED that the schedule of matters reported be noted.

277. LLANELLI JOINT BURIAL AUTHORITY

Members received the following Minutes of a meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held on 13 September, 2007:-

“At the Meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held at Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Thursday, 13 September 2007 at 4:00 pm.

Present: Cllr. T. J. Jones (Vice Chairman (in the Chair))

Cllrs.

T. D. Bowen
S.L. Davies
D. J. Harries

M. Howells
M. E. Prothero
C. E. Richards

20. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman extended a welcome to Cllr S.L. Davies who was attending her first meeting.

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C. C. Lucas, A. G. Morgan and E. Smith.

22. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

23. 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 - 11 July 2007

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24. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS

RESOLVED that the income and expenditure reports for June and July 2007 and the provisional report for August 2007 be noted.

25. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Consideration was given to the schedule of payments for July and August 2007, which revealed expenditure for the months amounted to £22,789.12 and £19,148.57 respectively.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

26. MEMORIAL TESTING FIGURES

Consideration was given to the memorial testing figures for July and August 2007, which revealed that 346 memorials had been tested at Stage 1 level and that 4 had failed.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

27. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2006/2007 – FINAL REPORT

Further to Minute No. 93 (14 March 2007), Members considered the final report in respect of the Authority's Internal Audit for 2006/2007, compiled by Auditing Solutions Ltd.

The final report did not differ from the interim report and there were no matters that needed addressing.

The report author commented that once again, no significant queries had arisen that required further referral to the Authority and as such no action plan had been prepared. Having congratulated the staff for all their good work it was

RESOLVED that the report be accepted.

28. WELSH PURCHASE CARD

The Secretary informed Members that the Burial Authority did not have petty cash available in the cemetery office and any sundry items were initially purchased by staff at their own expense who were then subsequently reimbursed by the Authority by cheque payment. Furthermore many suppliers were moving to electronic payments and would not accept official orders for goods especially when ordering online. The Welsh Purchase card was recognised by the Assembly Government and would allow staff to purchase items over the Internet and at local businesses. The Secretary stated that a monthly statement would be received for use of the card and payment would be made in full so no interest charges would be incurred. The card would allow the Authority to source goods and services at cheaper prices over the Internet thereby taking advantage of the speed and convenience of ordering online.

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Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Secretary be authorised to apply for three Welsh Purchase Cards to be issued to himself and the two members of staff at the cemetery office.

29. INTERMENTS IN GRAVES WHERE MEMORIALS
HAVE BEEN MADE SAFE BY THE BURIAL AUTHORITY

Members considered the Secretary's report regarding interments in graves where memorials had been made safe by the Burial Authority. The current policy was not to allow further interments in a grave if the family concerned refused to repair the memorial in instances where it had failed an inspection test. However, before an interment could take place policy dictated that the memorial was removed from the cemetery in any event by the appointed memorial mason prior to the burial. This was to facilitate the opening of the grave. Therefore if interments were permitted in graves where memorials had been made safe by the Authority, the hazard would be automatically removed from the cemetery grounds. The removal of the memorial would force the grave owner to take some form of action. This would either result in the memorial being retained by the grave owner off site, or alternatively, it being fully repaired, during its reinstatement in the cemetery grounds. Either way the Burial Authority would rid itself of the problem. After a brief discussion it was

RESOLVED that the policy be amended to allow an interment in a grave where the memorial had been made safe by the Authority on the proviso that the memorial is removed prior to the interment taking place. This policy revision will also apply to the interment of ashes.

30. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOLLOWING MEMORIAL
INSPECTION TESTS

The Secretary informed Members of the administrative difficulties experienced by the cemetery office staff when having to contact a grave owner about a memorial inspection test, where a memorial had failed the test and where very little contact information about the grave owner was held on the original address record and/or where records were obsolete. The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) had confirmed that in such cases the Authority could by-pass the normal notification procedures and instead advertise details of the memorial in the local press. This would streamline the notification process by not having to send out letters to grave owners based on incomplete or obsolete contact details. After a brief discussion it was

RESOLVED that the policy be amended so that henceforth no letters will be sent out to grave owners where insufficient contact information is held or where records are obsolete. Furthermore, and in accordance with the advice received from the ICCM the Authority will attempt to contact grave owners by proceeding direct to public notice and by using the local press.

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31. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Further to Minute No. 81 (14 February 2007), the Secretary provided Members with a progress report regarding the Authority's risk assessment action plan:

- A fire risk assessment had now been completed for the main office, and assessments for the chapel and storage sheds were currently being drafted;
- A full report on the effectiveness of CCTV would be presented to Members at the November committee meeting;
- Data Protection Staff at the Information Commissioner's Office had confirmed that the Burial Authority was not required (at present) to register under the Data Protection Act because the data processed was only used to support the Authority's primary activity of contacting grave owners from time to time. Data Protection staff had also sent the Authority a self assessment guide to check its exempt status;
- Llanelli Rural Council's Technical Services Officer had initiated a records/analysis check of the Authority's assets to assist internal control. Documented control sheets were being formulated; and
- Memorial Testing procedures were well documented and memorial inspection tests were ongoing.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

32. CEMETERY ENHANCEMENTS

The Secretary provided Members with a progress report on ongoing cemetery enhancements as follows:

**(1) INSTALLATION OF BENCHES, INTERPRETATION
PANELS AND GENERAL SIGNAGE**

Further to Minute No. 88 (14 March 2007), the Secretary confirmed that several cemetery locations for the placement of various items of cemetery furniture had now been agreed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman following a site visit. Furthermore a quotation had been received for £700 for the installation of five concrete foundation bases required for the benches. Members were reminded that the cost of which would be met from general reserves.

(2) TRAFFIC SIGNS

New traffic signs had been erected throughout the cemetery grounds to improve road safety.

(3) CEMETERY CAR PARK

Further to Minute No.81 (8 March 2006) a site meeting was held with the representatives of Carmarthenshire County Council, the Gwalia Group and Tycoes Construction Group to

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finalise plans for converting the compound area into a car park and to rectify shortcomings with the car park strip at the northern end of the cemetery near the private lane adjacent to the Bryngolau estate. The work was due to start during September 2007.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the progress report be noted.

Cllr M. E. Protheroe left the meeting to attend another engagement.

33. 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.

34. STAFFING MATTERS

(1)WORKFORCE SHIFT PATTERN

The Secretary presented Members with a report on the current working hours of the cemetery workforce and how their work pattern might change in the future. After a brief discussion it was

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that the Secretary be authorised to start discussions with the cemetery workforce and Trade Union(s).

(2)ASSISTANT CEMETERY SUPERVISOR

The Secretary reported the receipt of a resignation letter from M.E as he wished to take early retirement. However, as M.E. had not given 12 months notice he would not be entitled to his long service pay award. M.E. had been made fully aware of this, and his employment would terminate on 30 September 2007. The Secretary felt that the impending vacancy should not be advertised immediately. This would enable a review of staffing arrangements to take place.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to M.E. accepting his resignation and thanking him for his service and that the impending vacancy shall not be advertised for the time being so that the Secretary may carry out a general review of the staffing arrangements, the findings of which are to be reported to a future committee meeting.

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The meeting concluded at 4:40 pm”
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RESOLVED that the Minutes be noted.

278. LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

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

- (1) British Red Cross - Wales;
- (2) Carmarthenshire Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs;
- (3) Llanelli Air Raise;
- (4) Llanelli Blind Bowls Club;
- (5) Marie Curie Cancer Care;
- (6) Ponthenri AFC;
- (7) Pwll Athletic.

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The Meeting concluded at 6.30 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 11 December, 2007, adopted by the Council.