

21 June, 2022

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 74 – 81

At a Meeting of the **RECREATION AND WELFARE COMMITTEE** of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, and via remote attendance on Tuesday, 21 June, 2022 at 4.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr. D. M. Cundy (Chairman)

Cllrs.

T. M. Donoghue	S. N. Lewis
A. Evans	A. G. Morgan
E. M. Evans	A. J. Rogers
R. E. Evans	W. E. Skinner
J. P. Hart	A. G. Stephens
B. M. Williams	

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. S. K. Nurse (Cllr. A. G. Stephens deputising).

75. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared an interest in the following matters:

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Interest</i>
78	D. M. Cundy	Personal interest – member, Trallwm Hall Management Committee.
78	T. M. Donoghue	Personal interest – member, Trallwm Hall Management Committee.
80	S. N. Lewis	Personal interest – member, Dafen Welfare Management Committee.
80	A. J. Rogers	Personal interest – member, Dafen Welfare Management Committee.

76. COMMUNITY FACILITIES – MAINTENANCE WORKS

RESOLVED that the Facilities Manager's report on work undertaken be noted.

21 June, 2022

**77. LETTERS OF SUPPORT
(1) LLANELLI & MYNYDD MAWR RAILWAY**

Members considered correspondence from Cllr. A. Evans requesting a general letter of support from the council to assist in multiple applications for grant funding which Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway intended applying for.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that a general letter of support be issued to Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway.

(2) PONTHENRI RECREATION GROUND

Members received correspondence from Cllr. A. Evans requesting the council to issue a letter of support to the Ponthenri Park Committee, so that it could apply for grant funding to the Local Places for Nature Fund to enhance and promote biodiversity in the recreation ground.

If successful, the application for funding would restore and strengthen the woodland area as well as creating a wildflower and biodiversity area behind the playground.

Cllr. Evans, also sought the council's support in maintaining the planned enhancements and whether the council could offer logistical support and guidance in developing the local initiative and following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that:

1. A letter of support be issued to Ponthenri Park Committee in support of the grant bid.
2. Officers be authorised to provide the necessary logistical support and guidance in support of the general development of the initiative.
3. The areas of the recreation ground earmarked for enhancement shall be managed under the council's normal maintenance regime, provided the funding bid was successful.

78. TRALLWM COMMUNITY HALL

Cllrs. D. M. Cundy and T. M. Donoghue both declared personal interests in the following matters as they were members of Trallwm Hall Management Committee.

(1) DEFIBILLATOR

Email correspondence was received from Trallwm Hall Management Committee requesting the council's permission to install a defibrillator on one of the hall's external walls. The hall committee had been in discussion with representatives of the Ambulance Service and the Community First Responders and had been advised that the defibrillator did not require a mains power supply and that the equipment could be installed by them.

Members were informed the hall committee had raised the necessary funds and were hoping to install the defibrillator in late July 2022.

Following discussion, it was

21 June, 2022

RESOLVED that the hall management committee be permitted to install the defibrillator on the council's property and that the council's Facilities Manager be authorised to liaise with the management committee in order to co-ordinate the work.

(2) HALL SIGNAGE

Members received email correspondence from Trallwm Hall Management Committee requesting permission for signage to be erected on the building to better identify the hall and also to highlight where patrons should park vehicles at the rear of the property.

Illustrations of the proposed signage were provided for member approval, the cost of which was £560. The hall management committee enquired if the council could contribute towards the purchase cost on the assumption the proposals were acceptable.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that:

1. Permission be granted for the signage to be erected on the property and grounds as proposed in the illustrations.
2. A council contribution of £300 shall be made towards the purchase cost of the signage.
3. The hall management committee shall be responsible for making enquires with Carmarthenshire County Council as to whether planning permission was required to erect the signs and if so, the cost of preparing and submitting a planning application shall be met by the hall management committee.

(3) KITCHEN MODIFICATIONS

Email correspondence was received from Trallwm Hall Management Committee informing of ongoing issues with the cooking appliances in the hall's two kitchen areas.

The ventilation in the main kitchen was inadequate and this was preventing the safe use of the large commercial gas cooker. Moreover it was the hall committee's intention to replace the gas cookers in both kitchen areas by switching to electric cookers. However, the mains power supply to the building was insufficient to cope with the planned changes. The hall committee put forward suggestions on how to possibly remedy the situation, which involved making building alterations to both kitchen areas. Members discussed these suggestions but it was clear that more dialogue was needed with the hall committee to discuss all potential options and, it was

RESOLVED that Officers meet with Trallwm Hall Management Committee representatives to further explore options and report back to a future Recreation and Welfare Committee meeting with a preferred solution.

21 June, 2022

79. 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.

80. DAFEN PARK – ASTROTURF

Cllrs. S. N. Lewis and A. J. Rogers declared a personal interest in items (1) and (2) below as they were both members of Dafen Welfare Management Committee.

(1) RECREATION AND WELFARE SUB-COMMITTEE

Members received the following Minutes of a meeting of the Recreation and Welfare Sub-Committee held on 31 May, 2022:

“At a Meeting of the **RECREATION AND WELFARE SUB-COMMITTEE** of Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, and via remote attendance on Tuesday, 31 May, 2022 at 11.00 a.m.

Present:

Cllrs.

D. M. Cundy	A. G. Morgan
R. E. Evans	A. J. Rogers
S. N. Lewis	N. A. Stephens

Together with Mr P. Clement and Mr D Letheran, Dafen AFC.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Cllr. D. M. Cundy be appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Cllr. A. J. Rogers be appointed Vice Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the ensuing year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

21 June, 2022

4. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared an interest in the following matter:

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Interest</i>
6	S. N. Lewis	Personal interest – member of Dafen Welfare Management Committee.
6	A. J. Rogers	Personal interest – member of Dafen Welfare Management Committee.
6	N. A. Stephens	Personal and prejudicial interest – son was the manager of Dafen AFC.

Cllr. N. A. Stephens left the meeting.

5. 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.

6. DAFEN PARK – ASTROTURF FACILITY

Cllrs. S. N. Lewis and A. J. Rogers declared personal interests in the following matter as they were members of Dafen Welfare Management Committee. Cllr. N. A. Stephens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following matter as his son was the manager of Dafen AFC and left the meeting before discussion commenced.

Further to Minute No. 40, the Chairman welcomed representatives of Dafen AFC to the meeting to discuss the wide ranging issues associated with managing the Astroturf facility at Dafen Park.

To facilitate discussion of the key issues, the Technical and General Operations Manager guided members and football club representatives through his covering and copy report (previously presented to the Recreation and Welfare Committee meeting on 24 May 2022, and to which Minute No.40 refers).

Discussion focussed on the following considerations:

- The adoption of a code of conduct which would set the rules for the legitimate use of the facility. It was envisaged that signs would be erected to convey general information including the type of footwear to be worn. The correct choice of footwear was an important consideration in order to preserve the surface material's ten year lifespan and guarantee.
- The day to day management arrangements for controlling access and bookings and which body might take responsibility for this, noting the council currently had no spare capacity to provide a daily key holding service nor could it control and supervise bookings.

21 June, 2022

- Clarification about which body or organisation should be responsible for meeting the energy costs associated with using the facility's floodlights and moreover, whether it was desirable to charge a hire fee to local users to support the facility's general sustainability. Expressions of interest had been received from other local sports teams to use the facility from across the council's administrative area.

During the ensuing discussion, Cllrs S. N. Lewis and A. J. Rogers suggested that Dafen Welfare Management Committee could take on the day to day management arrangements, especially as the committee comprised 14 individuals who could share the necessary responsibilities, including providing cover to open and close the facility on weekends. In this regard they felt that in addition to proposed weekday opening and closing times of 5.00pm to 8.30pm; weekend openings could be accommodated from 10.00am until 6.00pm. In response to questions about the facility potentially interfering with cricket matches during the cricket season, both councillors envisaged no issues with this. Discussion then centred around Dafen AFC using the facility where it was desirable for the football club to have sole access to the facility on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with the remaining availability throughout the week then being given over to wider community use. Questions were then raised about potential hire charges and whether the local football club would be entitled to use it free of charge or whether it could enjoy a form of subsidy, given the facility was located in Dafen and was extensively used by the club over many years prior to the facility being refurbished.

By way of reply officers made observations about price discrimination and the legitimacy attached to this, although this would be investigated further; the amount of public money invested in refurbishing the facility; the amount of public interest in using the facility and importantly the general sustainability of the facility including meeting costs to replace the surface material in ten years' time and in meeting the ongoing electricity charges for using the floodlighting during the autumn and winter months.

Officers then referred to other existing Astroturf facilities located across Llanelli, which were available for hire, and specifically to the new 3G pitch planned for Bryngwyn School in Dafen. It was important to consider the impact of the Dafen Park facility (albeit not being suitable or large enough to support competitive matches) on the sustainability of all existing and new facilities when contemplating whether to charge a hire fee for using it. Given the number of associated considerations, officers held the view that in order to regulate demand and to recover costs that an hourly hire charge should be introduced to safeguard the sustainability of the facility as well as the use of other similar facilities nearby. Applying no charge would likely create high demand by attracting a large volume of users from other facilities, making them unsustainable and this would not be a reasonable or sustainable policy to pursue.

Local members, in supporting the football club then suggested the Dafen Welfare Management Committee's offer to assist the council in managing the day to day use of the facility free of charge (including if necessary issuing invoices to users and taking receipt of payments), and whether this offer could be used indirectly to offset the impact of hire charges on the football club as well as the local cricket club if it also wished to hire the facility. Reference was made to how the local management committee might further support the club(s), for instance by potentially diverting annual financial donations made to the football and cricket clubs from its general funds, and whether instead the donations could be directly put towards hire fees to mitigate the impact of the annual hire charge levied on the club(s) as

21 June, 2022

the case may be. Moreover, it was generally felt that if hire charges were introduced then they should be inclusive of electricity charges for using the floodlights. This would simplify the general administration arrangements. Local members suggested that if desirable to the council, all monies collected locally could be paid over to the council on a monthly basis and accumulated in an earmarked reserve to be drawn upon when looking to replace the surface material.

As debate drew to a close, concern was raised by the football club representatives that there was no signage currently on display at the facility. Furthermore, children were gaining unauthorised access by climbing the fence and if this was not attended to this could possibly damage the surface due to inappropriate footwear being worn. A point was then raised about weed control which then culminated in officers confirming the council would be carrying out all necessary maintenance on the facility and keeping the surface in good order. However, officers agreed to investigate making modifications to the perimeter fence. The fence, by its design, was a rebound fence and not a climb proof fence so this was something that would need to be generally addressed as soon as possible. The issue of signage would also be addressed. However, information to be included on the signage had not been finalised but once the council agreed the management model to be applied, the signs would be manufactured as quickly as possible.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for attending, and it was

RESOLVED that the sub-committee minutes be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the council’s Recreation and Welfare Committee for information and general consideration, along with a cost appraisal of the day to day management costs, encompassing all other infrastructure costs connected with the general sustainability of operating the facility and the potential impact on hire charges.

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The meeting concluded at 12.06 p.m.

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RESOLVED that the sub-committee meeting minutes be received and accepted.

Arising out of discussion of the above it was

FURTHER RESLOVED that officers be authorised to purchase additional fence brackets to affix to the perimeter top of the rebound fence to prevent unauthorised access to the facility, the cost of which was estimated at £900.

(2) FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Further to committee minute No. 40, and sub-committee minute No. 6, members considered the Clerk’s report which provided an appraisal of facility management costs in the form of an illustrative table. The report also sought approval of a sustainable management model premised on several recommendations to provide for the general administration and operation of the facility.

21 June, 2022

The illustrative table addressed the following key elements:

- Recovery of surface material costs and energy charges;
- General management costs for providing key holding services and managing facility bookings;
- An analysis of the combined costs of both of the above illustrations and the potential impact on hire charges; and finally
- An analysis of Dafen Welfare Management Committee's offer of providing local voluntary support in providing a key holding service and managing facility bookings on behalf of the council and the potential impact on hire charges.

Having considered the illustrative costs, members were then invited to consider a preferred management model, which, it was suggested, should encompass the following:

- A code of conduct for regulating facility usage by patrons;
- To reduce facility overheads, the inclusion of Dafen Welfare Management Committee's offer to help with the day to day operations including key holding services to open and close the facility and to supervise bookings seven days a week;
- The implementation of an hourly hire charge of £10.00 plus VAT levied on all hirers on the proviso the council accepted Dafen Welfare Management Committee's support offer. If the offer was not accepted this would increase the hourly hire charge rate;
- To facilitate and ease administration the council would control and take bookings and issue invoices to hirers. Systems would be investigated to facilitate the efficient and effective processing of bookings via electronic means to eliminate the handling of cash receipts as far as possible. Payments should be received in advance. Terms and conditions of hire would need to be developed to cater for such things as cancellation of bookings;
- All proceeds from the annual hire charges should be used to pay the council's electricity account for the facility with the surplus income paid into an earmarked reserve to offset the cost of replacing the surface material in 8 to 10 years' time;
- A review of hire charges should take place 12 months from inception of the charging policy;
- The council should fully maintain the facility at its cost without any impact on hire charges. This would also help safeguard the surface guarantee and prolong its lifespan.

During consideration of the above, members were informed that it was important that arrangements to manage the facility follow the principles of sustainable development. In particular, the council, through the introduction of a hire charge, should seek to recover costs for replacing the playing surface in 8 to 10 years' time by making annual contributions to an earmarked reserve and to cover utility charges. Introducing the above management model and applying a £10 plus VAT per hour hire charge levied on all users would help achieve these aims.

In regard to the application of VAT, the Clerk confirmed the council's accountants had advised that VAT had to be applied to the hourly charge. Moreover, the council was VAT registered and so was best placed to account for and process VAT returns. This would be too much of a burden for Dafen Welfare Management Committee to be tasked with, especially as the committee comprised volunteers. Hence the management model recommending the council took on the administration of facility bookings and invoicing patrons using a bespoke bookings system.

21 June, 2022

It was envisaged the public would be able to use the facility for four days of the week (inclusive of weekends) to promote general community usage of the facility, assuming the council agreed to Dafen AFC having use of the facility solely on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. If the football club was to have exclusive access on these three consecutive days, then it would need to book and pay for the facility directly with the council in advance to secure bookings. Schools and casual users would also be permitted to use the facility in addition to other recognised local sports teams.

Notwithstanding the desire to implement a hire charge, Cllrs. Lewis and Rogers advocated that Dafen AFC should not have to pay the hire charge and should enjoy free use of the facility. The Clerk commented that the council should adopt a consistent, fair and reasonable charging policy which was levied on all users. However, if the council elected not to implement a hire charge, then in the interests of reasonableness, this should be applied to all users, rather than just the football club. The Clerk added that if the council decided to do this, the management of the facility over the longer term would be unsustainable. The playing surface had a ten year lifespan and must be replaced by 2032. The income raised from annual hire charges from all users would help offset surface replacement costs ahead of this date and would also pay for utility charges for using the pitch floodlights. If the facility was free to use, the council would not receive any income to offset usage costs. This would necessitate the council having to raise extra money from public funds to cover usage costs and to fund a replacement surface. This was not a viable proposition. It was more prudent to adopt an incremental approach by accruing funds annually from hire charges. This would have less of an impact on future finances and the public purse.

Furthermore, if the facility was provided free of charge, in all likelihood this would create high demand across Llanelli and district to use it, because patrons would want to move from other existing and planned new facilities (for example Bryngwyn School) making these facilities less sustainable. The hire charges associated with booking some other local facilities ranged between £80 and £90 per hour. This was likely to have a negative impact on Dafen AFC by possibly limiting the club's access to the facility across the week because more teams would want to book the facility to save money. Denying general access by other teams in this instance would be difficult to justify and would be open to challenge given the facility had been fully refurbished using public funds. All teams would need to be treated with equal favour and so bookings would have to be managed on a first come first served basis.

To mitigate risk, budgets would also need to be adequately financed annually. This was essential to keep the facility in good, safe working order. The facility would have resource implications for council staff in dealing with the necessary administration and for the council's DLO team when carrying out routine maintenance on an ongoing basis but these costs would be absorbed by the council.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be accepted and the suggested management model for operating the facility as outlined in the report be approved; but particularly
2. A code of conduct to regulate facility usage by all patrons be approved, and that the associated facility signage be procured and displayed prominently on the facility;
3. As a concession to Dafen AFC and in anticipation of accepting Dafen Welfare Management Committee's offer to provide a key holding service to oversee and monitor

21 June, 2022

bookings on a daily basis, the football club be offered first refusal and granted exclusive access to the facility on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings on a weekly basis until advised otherwise by the club (a total hire period equating to 10.5 hours per week, payable in advance);

4. A hire charge of £10 per hour plus VAT be levied on all facility users and that a review of the general hire arrangements be conducted 12 months after the hire charge was introduced;

5. The income generated from hire charges shall be paid into a specific earmarked reserve, in order to defray facility utility charges and to accumulate funds to be put towards replacing the pitch surface in 8 to 10 years' time;

6. In order to facilitate public access to the facility as quickly as possible, officers be authorised to investigate the procurement of bookings software and the subsequent development of terms and conditions of hire, with the findings being reported to a future committee meeting for further consideration and approval, but in the interim, officers be granted discretion to introduce temporary arrangements to help oversee the administration of the bookings process.

**81. FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT
SARON COMMUNITY HALL – 31 DECEMBER, 2021**

Members were circulated with the Statement of Accounts received from the above management committee.

RESOLVED that the annual grant of £400 be made to Saron Community Hall for the year ending 31 December, 2021.

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The Meeting concluded at 6.10 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 July, 2022 adopted by the Council.