

THE HAVENS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR CYMUNED THE HAVENS

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

3rd DECEMBER 2024 – BOWEN MEMORIAL HALL, LITTLE HAVEN – 7pm

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr. H. Jones (Chair)	Cllr. C. Alexander
Cllr. C. Stephens	Cllr. A. Devonald
Cllr. S. Bell	Cllr. S. Reynolds
Cllr. G. Bevan	Cllr. K. Sturman (Remote Access)
Cllr. E. Kother	

In Attendance: Gareth Havard (Locum Clerk), County Cllr. N. Neumann,

1. **Introduction:**
The Chair opened the meeting and thanked the locum Clerk for attendance.
2. **To accept apologies for absence:**
Cllr. V. Grey
3. **To disclose personal or pecuniary interests in items of business listed below:**
Cllrs Reynolds, Alexander and Sturman disclosed personal interests regarding Item 8(i) – grants for Broad Haven & Little Haven Village Halls.
Cllr Stephens disclosed an interest in Item 8(iii) – Audit 2022/23
4. **Public Participation in business of the meeting:**
None in attendance either in person or by remote access.
5. **To approve and sign minutes of the previous meeting of the Council:**
Having been circulated in advance of the meeting, minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 7th November 2024 were received and adopted as a correct record. Moved by Cllr Reynolds and seconded by Cllr Bell.
6. **To receive a report from County Councillor:**
CC Neumann reported:
 - (i) **Broadway Action Group** – a site meeting to discuss traffic management and pedestrian infrastructure occurred in November. This was followed up by consideration at the next PCC Scrutiny Committee meeting where representations regarding the footpaths, a bus stop and 30mph speed restrictions were well received. Designs and a scheme of works are being drawn up to install a traffic priority system and footpaths. This is being managed by the PCC traffic safety team and consultation with HCC will follow once designs matured. Phase II of this project will move on to consider feasibility of a pedestrian footpath between Broadway and Broad Haven to be potentially funded via S.106 monies arising from the Mill Bay development. Land ownership to accommodate the footpath is being explored by PCC.
 - (ii) **Havens Broadband** – Openreach have confirmed a 73% uptake in voucher commitment from residents which makes the installation of full fibre broadband a viable project.
 - (iii) **Atlantic Drive** – following a site visit, photographic evidence of the poor condition of communal areas has been submitted to PCC buildings maintenance team for attention.

- (iv) **Broad Haven School** – an invitation to become a Governor of Broad Haven School has been accepted by CC Neumann.
- (v) **Community Events** – attendance at the recent community lunch and festive light switch on proved successful.
- (vi) **Havens Signage** – damaged and/or missing road signage has been reported to PCC Highways and a lead time of approx. 6 to 8 weeks is expected for repair.
- (vii) **PCC Budget 2025/26** – PCC are hosting a budget seminar for Members on 6th December to explore options to address a potential £34.1m funding gap. Options to bridge this gap include: 15% Council Tax increase, cuts to non-statutory service delivery, increased charges for council services. A public consultation link will follow from PCC for residents to express opinion.
- (viii) **PCC Full Council** – the next Full Council meeting is scheduled for 12th Dec 2024.

7. Matters Arising from previous Minutes:

- (i) *Little Haven Car Park Wall* – CC Neumann reported that Gary Mephram of PCNPA had agreed to fund repairs to the stone wall.
- (ii) *Little Haven Slipway Seats* – CC Neumann advised that PCNPA do not acknowledge ownership of these, and further inquiries required.
- (iii) *Repairs to The Point wall and footpath* – CC Neumann reported that PCNPA had accepted responsibility for the footpath and repairs were noted but responsibility for the wall is not accepted by PCNPA and further inquiries needed.
- (iv) *Little Haven Stream* – CC Neumann advised that PCNPA acknowledge shared ownership of the stream to a mid-point with adjoining property owners. However, as a gesture of goodwill, PCNPA will clear the stream of debris during the coming financial year.

8. Finance Matters:

- (i) Cllr Alexander shared the following finance update with Members, and it was **resolved** that payments be authorised as follows:

£TBC	Cleddau Press Ltd – Community Diary
£520.00	Ocean Bar & Restaurant – Community Lunch
£200.00	Eaton Evans Morris – Legal fees Boules Pit lease
£121.80	HMRC PAYE Liability
£271.62	HMRC PAYE Liability (overdue and interest)
£1,000.00	Broad Haven Village Hall Grant
£1,000.00	Little Haven Village Hall Grant
£168.00	Total Tech Ltd – Village Halls Wi-Fi (2 months)
£185.00	PRAg – Christmas Tree
£12.00	Fasthosts Ltd – Webmail Account Fee
£6.52	Fasthosts Ltd – 50GB extra mailbox storage capacity
£5.00	Broad Haven Village Hall – Hire Fee
£216.00	Bevan Lawn Care – Grass Cutting Contract
£935.00	Blue Fin Designs – Street Column Advertising Signage
£305.00	Garden Doctor – Planters

It was noted that **Income received** was:

£105.67	Trafalgar Car Park Honesty Box
£140.43	Trafalgar Car Park Honesty Box

It was also noted that **bank balances** were:

£7,012.47	Current Account
£25,162.07	Funds for Purpose Account

(ii) **Payment Approval Powers** – Members acknowledged the practical difficulties faced in managing the ordinary business of the Council in the absence of a Clerk & RFO. As an interim measure, it was **resolved** to grant temporary powers to the Chair and Vice Chair (Cllrs Jones & Alexander) to process ad hoc contractual payments in accordance with the bank mandate. Such payments to be fully disclosed to Members at the first subsequent Full Council meeting.

(iii) **2022/23 Audit** – further to the conclusion of the 2022/23 external audit and qualified audit report issued by Audit Wales the Chair provided an update to Members following telephone conversations with Deryck Evans of Audit Wales. Investigations by Audit Wales, the Chair and the locum Clerk had confirmed that the unsatisfactory conclusions of the audit report were a direct consequence of the negligence of the outgoing Clerk. Members of HCC fully acknowledge their ultimate responsibility to manage the financial governance of the Council but note that this is heavily reliant on trust in the professional diligence of its employee(s). To take matters forward, the Chair shared guidance from Audit Wales which intimated that re-opening the 2022/23 audit would require the involvement of the Auditor General and would be time consuming, costly and may not represent best use of public funds. On the balance of public interest, therefore, it was **resolved** not to request Audit Wales to re-open the 2022/23 file.

(iv) **2023/24 Audit** – as noted in previous minutes of this Council, the outgoing Clerk had failed to prepare the annual financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024. Audit Wales are aware of this and have granted an extended deadline of Friday, December 20th 2024 for late submission. Members discussed options to meet this deadline, and it was **resolved** to appoint Gareth Havard as a locum RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) on a time cost basis to prepare and submit the annual financial statements for 2023/24. It was acknowledged that preparation of the financial statements by December 20th was dependent on supporting documentation being readily available, but it was agreed that the relationship with Audit Wales could be repaired materially by making best efforts to meet the deadline.

(v) **2025/26 Budget** – given the uncertainties associated with the financial governance of the Council, in particular a lack of understanding of the levels of general and earmarked reserves, the Chair proposed that a period of financial stability was needed and that a draft budget be prepared which closely mirrored the previous year uplifted for inflation. It was **resolved** to accept this proposal and the Chair agreed to circulate a draft budget for Members review in advance of the January 2025 meeting.

(vi) **Members Allowances** – it was noted that three councillors had accepted the mandated allowances to date. It was also noted that the new disclosure template issued by IRPW (Independent Review Panel Wales) was in an anonymous format.

9. **Planning Applications:**

None noted for consideration.

10. **Staffing Update:**

The Chair reported that following termination of the outgoing Clerk's contract, the Council laptop had been retrieved by CC Neumann. However, it was noted that both the laptop and Council email inbox were not password protected representing a serious risk of data loss/protection. It was **resolved** that the locum Clerk reset the email password at the earliest opportunity and share with the Chair and Vice Chair.

The locum Clerk advised Members that paper records such as paid invoices, cheque books, previous minutes etc had not been returned as yet and were urgently needed to complete the financial statements. The Chair agreed to follow up.

Cllr Sturman proposed that the Staffing Committee explore options to define the role(s) of a replacement Clerk/RFO and report back to a future meeting in the New Year.

11. **Website/Email/Social Media** – no update to report
12. **Honesty Box Grant Applications** – it was **resolved** to raise awareness of the January 2025 application window.
13. **Insurance** – no update to report
14. **Boules Pitch Solicitor** – the Chair reported that he continues to liaise with solicitor and PCC
15. **Play Park** – invoice paid
16. **Playgrounds Inspection Contract** – no update to report
17. **Weed Spraying** – no update to report
18. **Atlantic Drive** – see Item 6(iii) above
19. **Tiers Cross Bus Shelter** – no update to report
20. **Mill Moor Way Bus Shelter** – inquiries ongoing to access community payback scheme
21. **Book Shelter** – Cllr Bevan reported repairs still in progress to be completed in next couple of weeks. Cllr Reynolds proposal to send a thank you card to Playgroup accepted.
22. **Settlands Hill Footpath Grass Cutting** – ownership is uncertain between PCC and PCNPA. CC Neumann agreed to follow up.
23. **Football Pitch Footpath Grass Cutting** – defer to include in 2025/26 revised grass cutting tender contract.
24. **Concrete Base for Football Pitch Bench** – no update to report
25. **Community Lunches** – recent event at the Ocean well attended and successful. Cllr Bevan shared feedback that holding on a working day limited access to some. It was agreed to hold a coffee morning and another community lunch before Easter 2025.
26. **Litter Picking** – no update to report
27. **Christmas Lights** – ongoing liaison between Chair and PCC to complete necessary documentation. Formal consent from PCC is awaited. Cllr Bell proposal to purchase a gift for electrician accepted in recognition of his voluntary out of hours attendances.
28. **Lamp Post Sponsors** – it was noted that 19 sponsors secured at £50 each. Sponsorship of £300 from Broad Haven Caravan Park towards the Christmas Tree was also noted with thanks.
29. **Letters of Appreciation** – the Chair advised that letters had been sent to the previous Chair and organisers of Remembrance Sunday. Additional letters were in draft to volunteers supporting the Predict & Protect scheme and Honesty Box collections.
30. **Predict & Protect Rota 2025** – no update to report
31. **Community Awards** – no update to report
32. **WhatsApp Group** – Cllr Reynolds encouraged careful use of the HCC WhatsApp group. CC Neumann and the locum Clerk confirmed that WhatsApp should be used for communication purposes only. It was emphasised that Council business should not be carried out via WhatsApp.

33. **Broadband** – see Item 6(ii) above
34. **Little Haven Street Lights** – on behalf of Cllr Grey, the Chair summarised a concern regarding the inconsistent type of street lighting in Little Haven. There seems a mixture of traditional fittings and new LEDs. It was noted that the lights are the responsibility of PCC, and the inconsistency is the likely result of older failing fittings being gradually replaced with newer LED.
35. **Any Other Business** – Cllr Kother shared resident feedback regarding the condition of footpaths and hedgerows between Croft Road and Atlantic Drive in Broad Haven. CC Neumann agreed to follow up with PCC building maintenance team.
36. **Date of Next Meeting** – scheduled for Tuesday, January 7th, 2025

The meeting closed at 8.50pm