

MINUTES OF PENZANCE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING held in The Guildhall, St. John's Hall, Alverton Street, Penzance on Monday 10th March 2008 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor F Granger (Town Mayor)
R Clark (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors MR Cotton
CA Dennis
JH Dixon
M Freeman
RM Lawrence
M Lovegrove
RA Mann
JF Moreland
D Nebesnuick
J Parkin
PCH Rendle
J Ruhmund
H Worth

ALSO PRESENT:

Mrs Frances Axford and Mrs Bernie Parks from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Office, Penzance.

86. **PRAYERS**

The Council's Chaplain, Reverend Julyan Drew, offered prayers and then left the meeting.

Prior to commencement of the business of the agenda, a presentation by the representatives of HMRC Office was received.

Members were informed that the Penzance office had been earmarked for a reduction in services so that by the year 2011 there would only be 4 members of staff on the premises as opposed to the 48 employees currently working in the office (5 years ago 80 people were employed in Penzance).

The other HRMC offices in the area are based at Redruth (restricted to customer access 3 days per week), Falmouth (customs only) and St Austell (mainly a call centre) and do not offer the same scope of services offered by the Penzance office which would have a significant impact on the residents of Penwith and the Isles of Scilly that are currently served by this facility.

The representatives reported to members that the skills and expertise offered by the employees in the Penzance office saved the government a significant amount of revenue each year through the compliance team that checked and corrected tax returns and that the costs to be saved by closing the office would not balance out this amount.

It was also recognised that direct customer-facing and service had deteriorated over the last few years and Mrs Axford and Mrs Parks requested that the Town Council

a) Support the retention of the Penzance office in its present format and raise strong objections to the reduction of services on a county basis, and

b) Support the initiative to re-introduce direct face to face customer service.

Councillors were urged to sign the petitions being circulated (also two online petitions available).

The Mayor thanked Mrs Axford and Mrs Parks for their presentation and they then left the meeting.

87. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors DJ Axford, CAC White, TE Williams.

88. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Parkin declared an interest in minute 90 (a) (vii) – Festival of the Arts in Newlyn, as a member of the committee.

Councillor Rendle declared a personal, prejudicial and pecuniary interest in minute 91 – Closure of Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs Offices in Cornwall, as an employee of HMRC Penzance, and

Councillor Ruhmund declared a prejudicial interest in minute 91.

General Purposes Committee – 25th February 2008

Councillors R. Clark, P. Rendle and R.M. Lawrence declared personal interests in minute 82, Councillors Clark and Rendle as members of Mebyon Kernow and Councillor Lawrence as a member of the Cornish Constitution.

Penlee House and Park Committee – 26th February 2008

No declarations of interest were received.

Planning Committee – 7th February 2008

In respect of application no. 0102-08-AD – S Buckfield & V Evans, Club 2K, Branwells Mill, 68 Market Jew Street, Penzance – Councillor CA Dennis declared a personal interest.

Planning Committee – 27th February 2008

In respect of application number 0145/08, felling of 3 Leylandii - 1 St. Mary’s Close, Penzance - Councillor J. Ruhmund declared a personal interest as she knows the resident at this property.

In respect of application number 1499/07, Wharfside Shopping Centre, Wharf Road, Penzance - improvement works and formation of new pedestrian walkways and landscaping - Councillor A. Dennis declared a personal interest.

Finance/Property Committee – 28th February 2008

Councillor Dixon declared a personal interest in item 50 (a)(i) – Minor Awards – the Friends of Jubilee Pool, as a member of the Jubilee Pool Committee.

Councillor Clark declared a personal interest in item 50(a)(ix) – Minor Awards – Hammered Steel, as a friend of the Chairman of the band.

Councillor Mann declared a personal interest in item 50(a)(x) – Minor Awards – The John Daniel Centre Appeal, as a member of the board.

89. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Town Clerk announced the following amendments with respect to the Full Town Council minutes of 4th February:

Page 57, Minute 80 (a) (ix) – the resolution should omit “In respect of these elections, Penzance Town Council should seek to pilot the single transferable voting system (in accordance with Recommendation 21 of the Report of the Councillors Commission of December 2007)” which was not brought forward from General Purposes Minute 69(d) of the 21st January 2008;

and the following amendment to the minutes of the Special Town meeting of 25th February:

Page 62, - ‘assimulate’ should read ‘assimilate’.

Subject to the above, the minutes of the meetings having been circulated prior to the meeting, it was

RESOLVED: that they should be signed as true and correct records.

90. **TO DEAL WITH BUSINESS EXPRESSLY REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE**

The Town Clerk advised that there were no items under this heading.

91. **TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor reminded members of the forthcoming events:

- (i) The Annual Town Meeting on 7th April at 7pm.
- (ii) ‘Sport Relief’ charity run on Sunday 16th March starting at 9:30am from the Station House, Marazion.
- (iii) Concert in aid of the John Daniel Centre Appeal at 7:15pm on Easter Sunday in St John’s Hall.

92. **QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 24**

The Town Clerk advised that no such questions had been received.

93. **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

(a) **General Purposes Committee – 25th February 2008**

(i) **Correspondence re Animal Aid’s New Compassionate Charter (Minute 76 (i))**

Following consideration of the request made in the correspondence received it was

RESOLVED: that a letter of support should be sent to the organisation.

(ii) **Meeting with Representative of Causewayhead Traders on Various Issues including ‘Plastic Bag Free Town’**

Councillor Freeman put forward the suggestion that cotton ‘eco’ bags with the word ‘Penzance’ printed on them could be purchased for resale and it was

RECOMMENDED: that this suggestion be taken forward.

(iii) **Reports from Outside Bodies – CCTV Upgrade (Minute 76 (o))**

Correspondence had been received from Penwith District Council concerning the proposed upgrade of the CCTV system and comments regarding the placement of cameras and the Service Level Agreement were requested by 12th March and it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk should write to PDC reminding the officer concerned of the conditions attached to Penzance Town Council’s support of the upgrade and requesting advice as to when the Town Council would be ‘brought to the table’ in terms of drawing up the new specification for the system and involvement in the tendering process.

(iv) **Larger Councils Conference in London, Thursday/Friday 24th/25th April**

Correspondence and an invitation had been received for the Larger Councils Conference in April, however, due to the prohibitive costs involved, it was

RESOLVED: that a representative of Penzance Town Council would not attend.

(v) **Enjoy England – Celebrate St George’s Day**

This was a national initiative aimed at making people more aware of St George’s Day and suggesting various ways in which the day could be marked throughout the country and it was

RESOLVED: not to take part in this initiative.

(vi) **Alcohol Designated Spaces Order 2008**

Correspondence had been received from Penwith District Council regarding updates to the existing Alcohol Designated Spaces Order and requesting suggestions for any areas that should be added to the plan. However, the Town Clerk pointed out that most areas were already included in the plan and it was

RECOMMENDED: that no additions to the plan be made.

- (vii) Festival of the Arts in Newlyn

Following the success of the first Festival of the Arts in Newlyn in October 2007 another event for 2008 was being planned and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

- (viii) Street Trading Applications – Jean-Francois Lasnon, Continental Market (Minute 77)

It was

RESOLVED: to offer no objection to the application.

- (ix) Licensing – Report of Licensing Committee/Police Meeting on 4th February 2008

Due to the absence of Councillor White from the meeting, it was

RESOLVED: to carry this item forward for consideration at the next General Purposes Committee meeting on 19th May 2008.

- (x) Health Matters (Minute 80)

Councillor Cotton reported that the upgrade and installation of the CT scanner at West Cornwall Hospital should be ready by April but there was still great concern about the removal of the pathology facility to Royal Cornwall Hospital Truro. The operation of an Accident and Emergency Department at West Cornwall Hospital was still being planned but members expressed concern over the lack of a 24 hour anaesthetic facility and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

- (xi) Report of THI Meeting (Minute 81 (a))

Members were informed that the proposal for works at the Greenmarket and Queen Street was still under review and estimated costs were in the process of being configured. It appeared that all the allocated money for the project would now be used and a list of the properties involved in the THI scheme would be copied out to all members and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

- (xii) ‘One Cornwall’ – General Update (Minute 82 (a))

The Town Clerk informed members that the meeting taking place at the Berlewen Building, Trevenson Road, Pool would be on 20th March (not on 30th March as reported) and would include the Boundary Review and it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Council should be represented by the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Rendle, Councillor Moreland and Councillor Nebesnuick and, in the event that only four representatives would be allowed, the Deputy Mayor offered to withdraw.

It was further

RESOLVED: that a One Cornwall sub-committee to look at all issues related to the Unitary Authority should be formed and this would consist of Councillors Moreland, Nebesnuick, Lovegrove, Freeman, Worth, Dennis and Rendle and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

(xiii) **Town and Parish Poll re EU Reform Treaty (Minute 84)**

The Town Clerk had been informed by Penwith District Council that a Town and Parish Poll would not be legally allowable and they had therefore refused the request for such a poll to be held and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(b) **Penlee House and Park Committee – 26th February 2008**

(i) **Review of Car Park Charges (Minute 42 (e))**

It was

RESOLVED: that a meeting of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman of the Finance/Property Committee, Chairman of Penlee House & Park Committee, The Museum Director, Councillor Nebesnuick and Tony Claypole (car park attendant) should take place to review the proposed changes to the car park charges.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(c) **Planning Committee – 7th February 2008**

(i) **Area Action Plan (Minute 80 (h))**

A meeting of ward members, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had taken place the preceding week from which notes were being prepared and it was

RESOLVED: that a Special Council meeting should take place on Monday 17th March at 7.30pm to further review the Area Action Plan and to formulate a response.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(d) **Planning Committee – 27th February 2008**

It was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(e) **Finance/Property Committee – 28th February 2008**

(i) **Penlee Park Playgroup (Minute 48 (f))**

It was

RESOLVED: that an extension of one year on the current tenancy agreement should be agreed to.

(ii) **Hammered Steel (Minute 50 (a))**

The Town Clerk informed members that 9 members of the band were residents of Penzance and that local schools in Penzance benefit from the activities of the band and it was

RESOLVED: that a donation of £105 be made.

(iii) **John Daniel Centre Appeal) (Minute 50 (a))**

Councillor Mann left the meeting and it was

RESOLVED: that a donation of £100 be made.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

94. **Closure of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Offices in Cornwall**

Councillors Rendle and Ruhrmund left the meeting.

The Town Clerk reminded members that in December 2006 the Town Council had written to the Paymaster General in support of the retention of the Tax Office in Penzance and it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Council would support the efforts to retain the Penzance office and would also support a county-wide campaign for the retention of services in Cornwall and for the increase of face to face customer service. It was also agreed that the fragility of the local economy and the level of deprivation in West Cornwall should be stressed and that the aim should be to increase employment in the area not to take jobs away.

8:48pm

Town Mayor
2nd June 2008