

Ammanford Town Council
Cyngor Tref Rhydaman



**Minutes of the Extra Ordina Council Meeting of Ammanford Town Council
held on 17th February 2025 via MSTeams**

Meeting commenced at 18:01

The Mayor, Cllr. Heulwen Howells presided over the meeting.

Minute no.131 - Members Present:

Cllr. Heulwen Howells (Mayor)
Cllr. Anthony Jones
Cllr. Johnny Owen
Cllr. Deian Harries
Cllr. Emyr John
Cllr. Nigel Morgan
Cllr. Colin Evans
Cllr. Wayne Erasmus

Also Present:

Mrs Sara Murray (Interim Clerk)
Ms Jayne Grazette (RFO)

Minute no.132 - Apologies for absence

Cllr. C. Higgins – Holiday
Cllr. Ll. Davies – Bereavement
Cllr. C. Hope – Work commitment
Cllr. L. Brodrick –
Cllr. M. Griffiths – Stuck in traffic

Minute no.133 - Declarations of Interest

Cllr. H. Howells – Spouse is an employee of Carmarthenshire County Council

Minute no.134 - Matters arising from the Public

None

Minute no.135 – Motion by Cllr. Wayne Erasmus to request that the day of Ammanford Town Council meetings be moved

Cllr. Wayne Erasmus had provided a written motion to the interim Clerk to request that the Town Council's meetings be moved. The reason is that Cllr. Erasmus sits on both Cwmaman Town Council and Ammanford Town Council, both councils meet on the same night.

Proposed by Cllr. W Erasmus that Ammanford Town Council meetings are moved from the last Monday in the month. There was no seconder to his proposal.

Resolved that meetings will continue to be held on the last Monday of the month.

Minute no.136 – Meetings to be held online

The Mayor explained to the members that the Chambers are currently unable to be used for meeting due to some damage to the ceiling. Carmarthenshire County Council have advised that they will look at repairing the ceiling, but this cannot be guaranteed. The councillors discussed the need for a premise big enough to accommodate the councillors, officers and members of the public. The interim Clerk informed the members that she had a meeting arranged with the library to look at a potential space for meetings to be held.

Councillors queried whether CCTV/audio is used within any potential meeting rooms, the interim Clerk advised that she would confirm if this is the case or not with the library.

Proposed by Cllr. J Owen that meetings are to be held online until a suitable space is found, seconded by Cllr. W Erasmus. All present in favour.

Cllr. Erasmus also requested that meetings are recorded and made available for 6 months. Interim Clerk advised that policy needed to be written in order to adhere to GDPR & ICO legislation and that the Council had previously agreed to the recording of meetings purely for the purpose of the accuracy of the minutes and that any changes would need to be approved by the Council.

Resolved that Ammanford Town Council meetings be held online until a suitable premise is found or that the Chambers is able to be used.

Minute no.137 – Update from the Mayor regarding Ammanford Town Hall

The Mayor advised members that she and the interim Clerk had met with officers of Carmarthenshire County Council on 14th February 2025. The following, which was read out to the officers, was also read out to all members:

The Town Council is officially opposed to its eviction from its Offices of many years. 50+ serving the Towns people of Ammanford.

The Town Council has just come through a difficult period where, Audit Wales report proved very negative. An enormous amount of work has been undertaken over the past year and ATC is now in a much better position. The new Council planned for works to benefit Towns taxpayers, (e.g.) parks upgrade, young people activities, skate park, wellbeing areas etc.

The current situation puts ALL Town Council planned progress in jeopardy. Notwithstanding Precept impact on Taxpayers.

The council was very disappointed in the press release by Depuy Leader & Board member which gave false misrepresentation of the situation. We request this is addressed apology given or statement proven.

Guardian Extract

“Ammanford Town Hall has been deemed no longer suitable for purpose and needs significant refurbishment. The building’s sole occupier is Ammanford Town Council. The plans include the relocation of the town council’s office to a more suitable accommodation, the Amman Centre, Margaret Street, which is a short walk from the town hall.”

Councillor Linda Evans said: “These provisional plans will retain the character, features and appearance of the existing town hall building whilst supporting the regeneration of Ammanford – due to the town hall’s close proximity to the town centre and facilities.”

Members of the Ammanford Town Council have been a part of the discussions regarding the proposals. Councillor Evans added: *“We are glad to also offer better alternative options for the town council to locate their offices and keep the building within the county council’s control and prevent it from falling into disrepair.*

The Mayor went on to provide further details of the conversation that had taken place with the officers of Carmarthenshire County Council. The Mayor posed a number of questions to the officers including why the Town Hall had not been offered to the Town Council as an asset transfer, their response being that there is a need for social housing and that it is financially more viable to convert the Town Hall as it is already owned by CCC. The interim Clerk advised the members that a date of 1st June 2025 had been given to the Town Council in which they would need to vacate the Town Hall. Alternative premises had been looked at by ATC officers and a suitable space had been found to carry out the operations of the Council.

The members questioned whether the correct procedures had been followed by CCC and when the decision had been made by them to convert the Town Hall into social housing. The interim Clerk informed councillors that CCC officers had stated that the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which provides high level information on the development programme, is agreed every year at Full Council. They also stated that the Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel also considers the plan as part of the political sign off process. No minutes or relevant documentation has been seen by ATC, councillors asked that the interim Clerk submit an FOI to CCC to request any paperwork (agendas/minutes/decisions or supplementary documentation) which relates to the Town Hall being converted into social housing.

Further discussions continued regarding the financial implications of the Town Council having to rent/purchase alternative premises. The RFO stated that the members needed to make a decision regarding their plans as the Town Council offers need to know how to proceed.

The councillors asked the interim Clerk to seek guidance from One Voice Wales to clarify if 'Assets should be offered to a local government body not an outside body'.

The Mayor proposed that the officers do not undertake any further work in relation to new premises or offices. The interim Clerk interjected to advise the Mayor that she should not be tabling any proposals.

It was then proposed by Cllr. A Jones that Ammanford Town Council officers make no further enquiries into potential premises or offices. This was seconded by Cllr. J Owen and all members present voted in support of this proposal.

Resolved that ATC officers will not look for or make any enquiries to find suitable premises or office space to operate from.

The Mayor then informed the members that Cllr. C Hope had suggested the Council write to the Chief Executive of CCC as well as the press and members of the public regarding the situation as clear & transparent plans are needed in order to move forward. The Mayor stated that Cllr. Hope would assist her and the deputy Mayor in writing a letter.

Cllr. A Jones proposed that the Council send a letter to the Chief Executive of CCC and to the public/press. Seconded by Cllr. N Morgan. All present voted in favour.

Resolved that the Mayor would write a letter to the Chief Executive of CCC and to the public/press.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 19:46

Signed(Chair)

Date

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