

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF BEAUMARIS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2019 AT 7.00 PM IN THE TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: The Town Mayor Councillor J P Zalot
The Deputy Mayor Councillor C J Theakston
Councillor D T Evans
Councillor K M Jones
Councillor R A Jones
Councillor D R Owen
Councillor L J Roberts
Councillor J A Rowlands
Councillor M G Sarsfield
Councillor S Zalot

The Town Clerk was in attendance

APOLOGIES: Councillor D W Gallichan
Councillor A J V Grant
Councillor H Mattocks

The Town Mayor took the Chair

104.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

105.0 TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS FOR GAOL AND COURTHOUSE

Resolved (unanimous) to go into Committee.

The Town Clerk outlined the main points from the meeting with Anglesey County Council following submission of the business case:

- o The staff at the Gaol and Courthouse are seasonal and appointed year by year.
- o Two options for the coach park were offered:
 1. A five year lease with the Town Council taking full responsibility for running and maintaining the coach park, emptying cash machines and enforcement.
 2. A lease but with Anglesey continuing to run the coach park in return for a percentage of the income.

Subsequently to the meeting the Town Council had expressed a preference for option one.

- o Substantial work is needed on the fabric of the buildings. They are suffering from lack of maintenance. Some minor works have been done subsequently but not all (e.g. windows and window frames have not been repaired).
- o To show good will the Town Council did paint part of the courthouse.

Income generated by the Gaol and Courthouse were reported:

	Gaol	Courthouse
2016	£47,000	£14,500
2017	£56,000	£13,500
2018	£58,000	£15,000

It was pointed out that there was very little publicity for the facilities whether as leaflets, online or on social media.

Councillor S Zalot joined the meeting

Visitor numbers at the Castle were reported:

	Visitor numbers
2015-2016	87,000
2016-2017	82,365
2017-2018	90,807

It was observed that this suggests that there is scope to improve visitor numbers at the Gaol and Courthouse by improving publicity and visitor experience (especially at the Gaol).

Councillors were reminded of the management structure in the business case. The opinion was expressed that there is talent in Beaumaris that could be mobilised on a voluntary basis to supplement the paid staff.

Concern was expressed at the Town Council resources that would have to be committed to take on the two sites and whether the Town Council had the capacity. Even with the management structure proposed there would still be an impact on the Town Council (e.g. salaries, purchasing etc.).

It was suggested that a not-for-profit company could be set up to run the facilities. This would provide some protection for the Town Council. However Town Councillors' attention was drawn to the report on the failure of Rhyl Sun Centre (which used this management structure).

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors that a condition of the transfer would be that the Town Council could not sell on (or transfer) the properties without sharing the capital gain (profit) with the County Council. There would also be a condition that the properties had to be run as a tourist attraction. The implications of this on setting up a not-for-profit company would have to be explored.

If the Town Council owned the properties they would be able to apply for grants. Match funding would be needed. The Town Clerk reported that if grants were applied for at the time of the transfer the value of the properties could be used as match funding.

The opinion was expressed that the town cannot afford to let these facilities close but that the Town Council had to protect itself against the risks involved (for example the probable three quarters of a million pounds of work required). One way would be to ensure that income from the coach park was secured for longer than five years. The opinion was expressed that the Town Council did not have the capacity to run what would be a commercial operation and that running a commercial enterprise by Committee was not a good model.

It was pointed out that the statement in the business case that the Gaol and Courthouse would break even in year two was totally unrealistic. There would be a drain on Town Council funds which would mean that other things could not be funded.

The benefit to the town of taking on responsibility was explored. They will be a drain on Town Council resources. The alternative is to risk them falling into disuse and disrepair and becoming a blot on the townscape which would have a negative effect on the town. Taking on the properties has to be seen as a community project to make the facilities part of the town and to be two of the best tourist facilities in town. Having two good facilities alongside the castle and other tourist attractions could generate multiple visits to the town as there would be more on offer than could be done in a single day. This would have a positive effect on other businesses in town.

There was a discussion of whether or not it would be beneficial to have the business case and cash flow re-examined and rewritten and to commission a resurvey of the properties. The view was expressed that any business case and cash flow would be largely guesswork and assumptions and that any new work would not produce an appreciably better result. Some Councillors thought that the existing condition survey painted too black a picture of the condition of the properties. However others stated

that the surveys were professionally done and that a new survey would not materially change the result.

Recommendation to Council (by majority, 7 for, 2 against (Councillors R A Jones and D R Owen)):

That the Town Council agrees in principle to take on the Gaol and Courthouse and to seek a 99 year lease for the coach park.

Recommendation to Council (by majority, 6 for, 3 against):

To seek independent professional advice on the appropriate ownership and management structure for the Gaol and Courthouse.

It was suggested that Business Wales might be able to advise. Wales Co-op advised the Canolfan.

Recommendation to Council (nem con):

That the Town Clerk, The Deputy Mayor, and Councillors S Zalot and K Jones negotiate with the County Council.

It was pointed out that taking on the Gaol and Courthouse has implications for the Town Council's budget for 2019/2020. In response to a suggestion that the budget should be reviewed in light of the decision it was felt that decisions on the day to day running of the building could not be made until the Town Council knows that it will be running it.

Resolved (unanimous) to go back into Council.

Resolved (nem con) to adopt the recommendations of the Committee.

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Town Mayor
Councillor J P Zalot

Date