**NEATH TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF AN EMERGENCY CORONAVIRUS MEETING (2)**

**HELD BY WHAT’S APP VIDEO MESSGING ON 1ST APRIL 2020 AT 3PM**

1. Attendance

Cllr Bob Price (Mayor), Cllr Sheila Penry (Leader), Cllr Jan Lockyer (Deputy Leader) and Kathryn Charles (Clerk)

1. Clerk updated and gave summary of the existing situation/national guidance and reminded those present that Emergency Procedures & Council Delegation Scheme were in place and active during this unprecedented period.
2. Confirmation of the postponement of the Annual Meeting of Council in May has not be received by Welsh Government.  This is causing significant problems for Town And Community Councils (& NPTCBC).  After speaking with other NPTCBC Clerks, Paul Egan of One Voice Wales and Craig Griffiths of NPTCBC about a way forward for NTC, it appears that NPTCBC have slightly different rules via their Constitution.    What we do know is that NPTCBC Cabinet Members are working and adapting well to this dire situation and using ‘Teams’ for their ‘virtual’ meetings.  It would appear that this isn’t in NPTCBC’s Constitution but shows that everybody has to work differently to move progress in these difficult times.    In order that NTC also tries comply as best it can with its Constitution, some of you will be aware that we have been looking at different ways in which the Council can operate legally, similar to the way NPTCBC have adapted. Again and mirroring NPTCBC approach, virtual meetings are not in NTCs Constitution either (but neither is the Coronavirus pandemic)!
3. Whilst it was recognised that NPTCBC is a much bigger ‘power house’ to NTC, we will need to show and provide evidence that we have tried to think and adapt differently to ensure that functionality of the Town Council, where needed, is addressed.  Whilst there are confidentiality issues with holding virtual meetings via Zoom (which all NTC staff have trialled), all NTC meetings must be held in public anyway so this is not a concern.  For all matters which are confidential, such as investment properties, this can be done via emails which we are already managing successfully.  The same issues regarding confidentiality  arise with telephone conferencing.
4. You will recall that under these emergency situations, the ‘Delegated Powers’  of the Clerk come into force.   We need to ensure that NTC can show and evidence that we have tried to put in place arrangements for the meeting to go ahead as Government stipulate in Law.  We are anticipating that this Legislation will eventually be passed via Law and we will receive it mid-April (hopefully) and we can postpone the Annual Meeting of Council to a later date but if it’s not, we can’t leave it until the 11th hour to come up with a solution.  Therefore, it has been agreed that:-

* The Annual Meeting of Council be postponed now until September/October, of when we arrange for our next Full Council meeting in Chambers.
* The current Mayor and Deputy Mayor will remain in place until that time.
* The next Full Council meeting in Chambers will be our rescheduled/postponed Annual Meeting of Council.  This will include the Mayoral Changeover and also updating of all current Committees.
* The current Mayor (Cllr Bob Price) and suggested that the incoming Deputy Mayor (Cllr Sheila Penry) carry as Mayor for the remainder of the year from the revised Annual Meeting of Council until May 2021. It is expected that the Mayoral diary will be very quiet during this time until the community rebuilds itself after this pandemic.
* At the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021, the Mayor (Cllr Sheila Penry) will remain in the Mayoral post for a full calendar ‘mayoral’ year and up to May 2022.