

# COUNTY COUNCIL

**WEDNESDAY, 10 JUNE 2020**

**PRESENT:** Councillor K. Madge (Chair)

**Councillors:**

F. Akhtar	S.M. Allen	L.R. Bowen	K.V. Broom
C.A. Campbell	J.M. Charles	D.M. Cundy	S.A. Curry
C.A. Davies	W.R.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies	G. Davies
H.L. Davies	I.W. Davies	J.A. Davies	K.Davies
S.L. Davies	E. Dole	J.S. Edmunds	P.M. Edwards
D.C. Evans	H.A.L. Evans	L.D. Evans	R.E. Evans
W.T. Evans	A.L. Fox	S.J.G. Gilasbey	C.J. Harris
P. Hughes-Griffiths	A.D. Harries	J.K. Howell	P.M. Hughes
A. James	R. James	D.M. Jenkins	J.P. Jenkins
G.H. John	C. Jones	B.W. Jones	D. Jones
G.R. Jones	H.I. Jones	A. Lenny	M.J.A. Lewis
K. Lloyd	S. Matthews	A.S.J. McPherson	E. Morgan
A.G. Morgan	D. Nicholas	B.D.J. Phillips	D. Price
J.G. Prosser	B.A.L. Roberts	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	H.B. Shepardson
A.D.T. Speake	L.M. Stephens	B. Thomas	D. Thomas
E.G. Thomas	G. Thomas	J. Tremlett	A.Vaughan Owen
D.T. Williams	D.E. Williams	J.E. Williams	

**Also Present:**

W. Walters, Chief Executive  
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services  
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services  
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services  
R. Mullen, Director of Environment  
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law  
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)  
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services  
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

**Virtual Meeting - . - 10.00 am - 12.40 pm**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T. Higgins, J. James, T.J. Jones, S. Najmi, S. Phillips and G.B. Thomas

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

**3. PERSONAL MATTERS / OUTGOING CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Chair paid tribute to Mr David Tom Davies OBE, MM following his recent bereavement. Mr Davies had been the Chair of the former Dyfed County Council from 1981-82 and the founding Chair of the current Carmarthenshire County Council from 1995-97 and had worked tirelessly for the county and the local community in and around Dryslwyn. He was one of the founder members of the National Botanical Garden of Wales and played a large part in establishing Aberglasney Gardens and it was only right that in 2018, on the occasion of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, he had been granted the Honorary Freedom of Carmarthenshire.  
Mr Davies also saw service in World War 2 as a member of the Royal Artillery and spent three years as a prisoner of war. In 2016, he had published his story in a book.
- The Chair referred to the current difficult times faced by many due to the Covid-19 pandemic and expressed his thoughts to those families who had sadly been affected by the outbreak;
- The Chair expressed his appreciation to all the Council's staff and all the other public and health services for their hard work during the pandemic in ensuring public services within Carmarthenshire could still provide as many services as possible and in helping the vulnerable in the community. He paid special thanks to the countless volunteers who had helped in the crisis over the previous three months;
- The Chair extended his congratulations to the following residents within the County who had recently celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday:-

Ethel Wheeler –Capel Hendre

Joan Davies – Betws

Douglas Davies – Llanell-

The Retiring Chair, reflected on his year in office which, over the previous three months had been different to the norm due to the coronavirus. He expressed his appreciation to the many people who had volunteered to help the vulnerable in the community during the pandemic. He also referred to the many people he had met during his year of office and to the work they did for the communities they served and announced that a new "Civic Appreciation of Thanks Award" had been created to recognise their work. The names of the 2019-20 recipients would be published that morning, with the recipients receiving their awards later in the year. He also expressed his appreciation to those who had contributed to his charity raising £3,925 for food banks within Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli.

He thanked his Vice Chairman, Councillor Ieuan Davies, and Councillor Davies' Consort, Mrs Sue Allen, for their support and company during his term of office and wished Councillor Davies well in his year of office. He also thanked his Chaplain Reverend Caroline Jones for her spiritual support and guidance throughout the year.

He expressed his gratitude to the Chief Executive for her advice and professional guidance, and to the Directors and staff of the authority who had supported the work of the Chair, including the Democratic Services Unit, his driver Jeff Jones, and, in particular, Eira Evans for her professional and personal support, arranging his events and making sure everything always ran smoothly.

He also referred to the many people who had attended his events and those he'd attended for their support and to members of the Council for their support.

Finally, he paid tribute to his consort, Mrs. Catrin Madge, who had been at his side and guided him for the last 12 months and thanked her formally for her support. He considered that it had been an honour and a privilege to serve as the Council's Chair and thanked all for giving him the opportunity.

#### **4. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2020-21 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**It was moved by Councillor K. Madge and seconded by Councillor L.M. Stephens and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor I.W. Davies be elected Chair of Carmarthenshire County Council for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.**

Councillor K. Madge congratulated Councillor Davies on his election and advised that whilst, due to social distancing rules, he was unable to physically invest Councillor Davies with his Chain of Office, arrangements had been made for it to be delivered to his home.

Councillor Ieuan Davies made his declaration of acceptance of office and was invested with the Chain of Office.

Councillor Davies expressed his gratitude to all Councillors for their support in appointing him as Chair of Carmarthenshire County Council and that he was looking forward to his year in office representing the council and meeting people when the current lockdown restrictions were eased. Councillor Davies also paid tribute to the retiring Chair, Councillor K. Madge

Tributes were also paid to the Retiring Chair by the Leaders of the Plaid Cymru, Independent, Labour and New Independent Groups for the excellent service he had given to the Council during his year of office.

The Chair thanked members for all their kind words and advised that in view of social distancing rules, his Consort (Mrs Sue Allen) would not be invested with her Chain of Office that day. That would hopefully be arranged for the ceremonial function later in the year.

The Chief Executive also paid tribute on behalf of the Authority's staff to the retiring Chair and his consort (Councillor Kevin Madge and Mrs Catrin Madge) who had fulfilled his role with great professionalism and been very active and supportive of the work of the Council. She congratulated the newly elected Chair and Consort (Councillor Ieuan Davies and Mrs Sue Allen) on their appointment. She also referred to the nature of the AGM this year as being one of many new experiences, and advised that whilst for the first time, those who would normally be in the Chamber today to wish the Chair well were unable to do so they had kindly put their best wishes together on video.

The Council viewed the video.

The Chief Executive wished the Chair a very happy and successful year in office.

## **5. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2020-21 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**It was moved by Councillor W.T. Evans, seconded by Councillor G. Thomas and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Eirwyn Williams be elected Vice-Chair of Carmarthenshire County Council for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.**

The Chair congratulated the Vice Chair on his appointment and advised that due to the current social distancing rules, arrangements had been made for Councillor Williams' Chain of Office to be delivered to his home.

The Vice-Chair expressed his appreciation to the Council on his appointment and made his declaration of acceptance of office.

The Chair advised that due to the social distancing rules, the Vice Chair's Consort (Mrs Joyce Williams) would not be invested with her Chain of Office that Day. That would hopefully be undertaken later in the year.

## **6. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

The Leader presented his fifth Annual Report to the Council covering the period 2019/20 and looked back upon the achievements of the Council over the previous 12 months (copies of which had been provided to Councillors in advance of the meeting). He advised that whilst it was not his intention to go through the report in detail, he would like to highlight the following Council's achievements over the year (including a video presentation) prior to commenting on the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the county and the scale and measure of the Council's response.

The Council viewed the video.

The Leader reminded the Council that only a year ago it had hosted the final stage of the OVO Women's Tour of Britain when thousands of people had lined the county's streets to cheer the cyclists on their 79 mile race through Carmarthenshire. Hosting the race had provided the opportunity to showcase the county's beautiful scenery and the warm welcome that awaited visitors to the county. The Council had also set aside £20,000 for its Events Support Scheme for organisations and community groups to hold their own events. Those included Carmarthen's St David's Week, Llandovery Sheep Festival, Llanelli Pride and Gwyl Canol Dre.

He considered one of the Council's proudest achievements over the year had been the "Moving Carmarthenshire Forward" Report. Over 60% of the county's population lived in its rural areas and the council had a dedicated portfolio to represent the needs of those people. The Ten Rural Towns Initiative outlined the long-term strategic vision for the regeneration of the county's rural communities by securing economic, cultural, social and environmental sustainability for those

towns i.e. Llandovery, St Clears, Whitland, Newcastle Emlyn, Laugharne, Cwmamman, Llanybydder, Kidwelly, Llandeilo and Cross Hands. However, in light of Covid-19, it was realised, more than ever, that the need to look locally, and in supporting and developing that economy the county would become even more resilient and robust.

The Council's plans to increase its housing stock across the County would also support the rural strategy. Over the next five years the council had committed to invest £150m to build 900 new council homes across the county, with many of those being in the rural areas where there had been a shortage of housing for many years. Work was also underway in Pembrey and Bryn, Llanelli to build 300 homes before 2022 and, although, work on those had been halted at the start of the lockdown, the sites were beginning to re-open and work had restarted.

The Authority had renewed its commitment to climate change, becoming the first local authority in Wales to publish a climate change action plan outlining how it would be net zero carbon by 2030. The Plan was ambitious and the Council was committed to its success. A more energy- efficient vehicle fleet was being purchased and the council was collaborating with other bodies to deliver wider change and renewable energy generation on council owned land. To date, more than £2m had been invested in over 200 energy efficient projects, saving more than £7m in running costs and 41,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over the projects' lifetime. That was an exciting plan which would evolve to meet the challenges of the future for the benefit of our, and future, generations.

The Council was making significant investments in other areas too. It intended to invest almost £255 million in capital projects, with a focus on boosting the economy, creating jobs and enhancing the quality of life of our residents. The programme included a further commitment of £86 million to build and transform even more schools as part of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme. Improvements would also be made to our roads and bridges, and much needed changes would be made as promised for a 'changing places' facility for disabled residents and visitors to Llanelli.

In August last year, the Council celebrated the success of A-level and GCSE students across the county and saw marked improvements with pass rates again above the national average. Almost 71 per cent of pupils achieved grade C or higher, with 21.3 per cent awarded the top A-A\* grades – both higher than the average for Wales. There was strong progress in Welsh and English language skills and pass rates in the sciences also continued to improve and surpass the national averages.

The Leader advised that whilst it was difficult to refer to all the council's achievements, the annual report would provide a fuller understanding of its successes this year and its plans for the future.

The Leader thereupon referred to these extraordinary times and the way over the past few weeks where we had pulled together in ways that he considered had astounded everyone. Back in March, the authority had offered the NHS some of its sites in Carmarthenshire for use as field hospitals – the NHS was at a point where it feared there weren't enough beds to cater for the projected scale of the pandemic. The local community had been asked for help to convert four venues

into 600 emergency beds to deal with the expected pressures and within 24 hours we received more than 350 responses. Over a period of 21 days, volunteers, builders and contractors had come together to transform a rugby stadium, the Selwyn Samuel Centre and Carmarthen and Llanelli Leisure Centre into field hospitals.

The Leader paid tribute to all community groups, food banks, town and community councils, and individuals throughout the county who had volunteered during this period. He expressed his heartfelt thanks to those who had offered practical, emotional help or given of their time to support others, and to those workers who had continued to go to work and kept going.

The Leader also took the opportunity to draw attention to Sir Garedig, which had recently been established to connect people in need with those who could provide help. Sir Garedig's intention had been to be a focal point for community activities and to encourage people to share stories of kindness – helping to bring people together where necessary. Whilst it was a new message, it had never been a secret that Carmarthenshire was a kind county (Sir Garedig).

The Leader referred to the commitment of the Council's staff and their terrific response to the covid-19 pandemic had been humbling. They had worked tirelessly to ensure that residents, communities, organisations and businesses were kept safe and supported. The authority really must pay tribute to the front line staff who had shown great courage in continuing their work, often putting others before themselves and their families. Also, to those who had moved from their day-to-day work to cover other areas of front line service – those who usually worked in offices and were now working in care homes, driving buses, and delivering food. Their commitment and willingness to support others was truly inspiring and he thanked, in particular, those who worked to secure enough PPE for those who needed it, ensuring the safety of staff at all times.

He thanked Education and Children Services for their hard work and ability to adapt so quickly to the changing needs of our pupils and children. Whilst the authority had initially been forced to close its schools several of them reopened, literally a few days later, as hubs providing childcare for those needing it. He expressed the authority's unstinting support as the Department started to reopen school sites over the coming weeks.

He also thanked those involved in creating, supporting or working in food hubs who had worked hard to support the most vulnerable members of the community.

He made particular mention of the Council's Media and Marketing Team and I.T. Division who'd worked closely together to deliver key messages to our residents in order to keep them safe.

He expressed his thanks to each and every officer and councillor for their work during the pandemic, and to the chief executive for her direction and commitment as always.

The Leader expressed the hope that as we entered the recovery phase, people would quickly come to understand what normal meant again for us and that whilst

there may be some difficult times ahead, the county was resilient and innovative and the Council would continue to do its best for all of its residents, in the way it had always done.

In concluding, the Leader expressed the view that all could agree it had been an extraordinary year, a year that had brought people closer together and thanked everyone for their support.

The Leaders of the Labour Group, New Independent Group and the Independent Group were afforded the opportunity of commenting on the Leader's report. They all expressed their thanks and appreciation to all those who had provided help and assistance during the Covid pandemic.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Leaders 2019/20 Annual Report be noted.**

**7. TO CONFIRM APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2020-21 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Council considered the composition of Regulatory, Scrutiny, Other Committees and Panels and the membership of those committees. The Leaders of the Political Groups confirmed that there were no additional membership changes.

It was duly moved and seconded and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the composition and membership of Regulatory, Scrutiny, Other Committees and Panels for the 2020/21 Municipal Year, as detailed within the report be approved.**

**8. TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS RECEIVED AND TO ELECT CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS FOR THE COMMITTEES / PANELS OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2020-21 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Council, in accordance with Corporate Procedure Rule CPR 17.6, considered nominations which had been received for the appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

It was duly moved and seconded and

**RESOLVED that the following appointments to Chairs and Vice Chairs of Regulatory, Scrutiny, Other Committees and Panels be made for the 2020/21 Municipal Year:-**

<b><u>COMMITTEE / PANEL</u></b>	<b><u>CHAIR</u></b>	<b><u>VICE CHAIR</u></b>
Community Scrutiny Committee	To be appointed by the Committee	Councillor G.B. Thomas
Education & Children Scrutiny Committee	Councillor D. Price	Councillor E.G. Thomas
Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee	Councillor J.D. James	Councillor A. Vaughan Ower
Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee	Councillor A.G. Morgan	Councillor G. John
Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee	Councillor G. Thomas	Councillor I.W. Davies
Appeals Committee	Councillor J.K. Howell	Councillor S.M. Allen
Appointments Committee A - Directors	Councillor E. Dole	Councillor L.M. Stephens
Appointments Committee B - Heads of Service	Councillor L.M. Stephens	Councillor E. Dole
Democratic Services Committee	Councillor S. Curry	Councillor W.T. Evans
Dyfed Pension Fund Committee	Councillor D.E. Williams	Not required
Licensing Committee	Councillor E.G. Thomas	Councillor D.E. Williams
Member Appointments Committee	Councillor A.D.T. Speake	Councillor W.R.A. Davies
Planning Committee	Councillor A. Lenny	Councillor H.I. Jones
Housing Review Panel	Councillor G.B. Thomas	Councillor I.W. Davies

(NOTE: Separate votes were taken for the contested seats for Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee and Vice Chair of the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee)

## **9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

The Council was reminded of the requirement for it to review its Constitution on an annual basis and that as part of that process it had established a Constitutional Review Working Group to present any recommended changes.

It was reported that whilst no legislative changes had been introduced during 2019/20 requiring changes to be made to the Council's Constitution, there was a

need for Part 6.1 thereof to be amended to reflect the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' (IRPW) prescribed amounts to be paid to Councillors for 2020/21, as detailed within the report.

With regard to the work of the Constitutional Review Working Group, it was reported that whilst it had been tasked with reviewing and recommending any changes to the constitution that had not proved to be possible following the suspension of all Council meetings in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. It was therefore proposed that the Annual Review be deferred to a future Council Meeting.

## **RESOLVED**

- 9.1 That the Councillors' and Co-opted Members' Salaries and Allowances Scheme for 2020/21, as detailed within the report, be adopted;**
- 9.2 That any necessary membership changes contained within the Constitution arising from decisions made earlier in the meeting be approved;**
- 9.3 That in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the full annual review of the Constitution be deferred to a future meeting of the Council.**

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**