

*St Clears Town Council / Cyngor Tref Sanclêr*

**Minutes of the Gate meeting held at the Gate.  
on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.00pm**

PRESENT: Cllrs CMDavies, DrWEVJDavies, RGEwards, OGrant, TMcDermott, JMiller, PJRogers and County Councillors Cllrs CJones and PHughes

181. **Apologies for absence.** Cllrs GADavies, KAMajor, IPrice
182. **Declarations of interest.** All Councillors (non-pecuniary)
183. **To receive an update in relation to the Gate.** Cllr P Rogers led on this and gave a background to the transfer of the Gate proposal. He informed members how a sub-task group had been formed to work with CCC with discussions managed in the spirit of trust and confidentiality as decisions impacted on employees. The idea was to take over the management of the Gate in 2021/22. However due to restrictions, such as COVID and others, there have been some delays, but the plan is to conclude matters by April 2023. (Please refer to Appendix i). A successful open day was held on 4<sup>th</sup> October to gather the views of the community plus other consultations undertaken previously. An agent has reviewed the commercial value of the rooms/units. The long-term view is to set up a management group to include community members and open the building as a community hub, where anyone can pay to use a room, the gallery space or lease/rent a unit etc. The next meeting with Carmarthenshire County Council personnel has been arranged for Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> January with a view to proceeding with outstanding matters. **RESOLVED to continue with the sub-group being allowed to make decisions on behalf of Council and updates provided during the Gate meetings.**
184. **Matters for the next agenda (exchange of information only)**

*The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:30pm*

## Appendix i

### **St Clears Town Council: The Gate/Y Gat. (Item 121)** **Discussions with Carmarthenshire County Council.** **21/12/21**

#### **Introduction:**

I'm grateful for the opportunity to give an update to Council and to summarise the position reached at the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting with CCC. Thanks to my fellow Councillors who have contributed to the process, particularly Cllr Graham Edwards and Cllrs Keith Major/Brian Newcombe for their work on the financial analysis.

I would like to clarify at the outset that whatever decision St Clears Town Council comes to this evening there will be an element of risk involved, but the proposal brings an opportunity for the town of St Clears to develop a community facility located at the heart of the town. If we decide to take on the management of the Gate, there could be significant benefit for the residents of St Clears and the surrounding area.

At the outset I would like to clarify what is on offer. **Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) would retain landlord responsibility for the Gate, with St Clears Town Council (SCTC) taking over management of the building and, in partnership with the local community, taking decisions regarding how the building would be used as a community hub.**

This agreement will be underpinned by a Heads of Terms agreement, a lease agreement and financial modelling work undertaken by both SCTC and CCC.

#### **Structure of this session:**

- (a) Background (March 2020 - June 2021)
- (b) The final position
- (c) The documentation
- (d) Financial modelling/notes (Keith)
- (e) Discussion
- (f) Proposal(s)
- (g) Decision.

#### **a. The Background**

All the work and meeting notes to mid July 2021 has been covered in previous updates to Council and is available on file with the Clerk. It should be noted that it covers a period of dislocation due to the impact of the Covid pandemic on the work of both County and Town Councils. It also includes a period of appointment and handover of a new Clerk to the Council. These factors have impacted on the timescale for decisions to be made.

#### **b. The final position.**

In June 2021, the SCTC task group discussed with CCC representatives a draft Heads of Terms agreement and draft financial projections prepared by CCC for the period 2022 – 2027 of the operation of the Gate. Following discussions, SCTC examined the proposals and requested a further meeting in July to respond to and to submit a revised set of figures. Following that meeting, CCC agreed to consider the revised figures and other comments with discussions to continue over the summer period. No contact was made over the summer and none until SCTC raised the matter with the County Councillor at the November meeting (Item 73e)

A meeting was arranged on 9th December 2021. At that meeting, the draft Heads of Terms document was presented alongside the financial modelling document. Internal staffing issues at CCC had prevented further work on the papers. Following discussion and an acknowledgement of the position both sides has reached, it was agreed that, due to the need for both Councils to agree draft budgets early in the New Year that a proposal would be put to SCTC seeking an “in principle” decision regarding the future management of the Gate.

#### **c. The Documentation**

Documentation on file includes: -

- The Draft heads of Terms agreement
- The Financial Modelling notes.

- Accompanying notes to the financial modelling
- The Consultation outcome report (September 2020)
- The Report from consultants at Urban Foundry
- Meeting notes (March 2020 – December 2021)
- Proposals at December meeting of SCTC

**d. Financial Modelling/notes**

See financial analysis/notes presented at meeting as screen shared documents.

**e. Discussion**

As a task group, we're not in a position to have all the answers regarding the future day to day management of the Gate. However, as a Council we need to come to an "in principle" decision regarding the Gate, preferably this evening, so that both Councils can confirm draft budget proposals for SCTC in January 2022.

The plan set out below seeks to consider some of the unknown factors likely to impact on the process in the medium term. These include the possibility of new Councils at both County and Town Council level, and also the possibility of a different County Member following elections in May 2022. These all have the potential to impact on the future development of the Gate

Links between this proposal and the Ten Towns initiative have not been clarified and the possibility of additional funding to assist with management costs of the Gate through other CCC grants has yet to be explored.

The impact of the continuing pandemic related to Covid, and the possibility of closure for an extended period is also a significant unknown.

A proposed plan for the next three months consists of five elements:-

- An "in principle" proposal to transfer the day-to-day management of The Gate to SCTC whilst CCC retain landlord responsibility for the building.
- Monthly meetings with CCC (Jan/Feb/March) with a view to finalising heads of terms and a final lease agreement for the transfer (if agreed).
- Final financial figures need to be agreed, including additional funding discussed in principle with the County Councillor.
- Final agreed documentation to be filed with the Clerk prior to the end of SCTC term of office prior to elections in May 2022
- The final decision regarding confirmation of transfer to be made by the new SCTC at their first full meeting in May 2022 following the election and subject to confirmation of the final position by the elected representatives of CCC.

To summarise, The Gate will be the responsibility of SCTC to manage, CCC will retain landlord responsibility and the local community will need to be part of any decision-making process on how it is to be used. Buy in from the local community will be essential for future success.

**f. Proposal:**

- *That St Clears Town Council accept "in principle" the transfer of the day-to-day management of the Gate, whilst Carmarthenshire County Council retain landlord responsibility.*
- *The final decision to confirm the transfer will be made by the newly elected St Clears Town Council at their first meeting in May 2022.*

**g. Decision:**

To be recorded following vote at meeting.

