

**MAESTEG TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING**

Minutes of a **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE** meeting at the Council Offices, Talbot Street, Maesteg on **Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022.**

**PRESENT:**

**COUNCILLORS:**       **AR DAVIES (Chair)**

F Abedalkarim, C Davies, A James and L Thomas

**APOLOGIES:** NONE

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** NONE

**128.   TO DISCUSS THE ADOPTION OF .GOV.WALES DOMAIN ENDING FOR COUNCIL'S WEBSITE AND COUNCILLOR'S EMAIL ADDRESSES**

The Chair, Cllr AR Davies stated that he has contacted the Welsh Assembly for information for Maesteg Council to obtain a .gov domain name. They informed him that this should be no issue as long as the registrar of the council's domain name is listed on their approved companies – which it is. Cllr A James asked what the rough costings would be for this and the reply was given by the chair as approximately £100+VAT for a 2-year contract and then £50+VAT for each year afterwards.

Cllr L Thomas asked what would happen to the old domain name and email addresses and it was confirmed that an 'auto forward' can be placed on the website domain name and councillor email addresses for a certain period of time to allow for teething issues during the transition.

Members deliberated the name of the new .gov address and Cllr AR Davies suggested Maesteg.gov.wales and Cllr A James commenting that the shorter the domain name the better so users do not have to type out as many characters that opens the average user up to mistakes. This was countered by Cllr L Thomas who suggested that after sending the one email to a councillor then that email is saved and auto fills going forward. Cllr C Davies mentioned that this may not be helpful for the community as they may only need to email a councillor rarely.

Members decided that the initial proposed name by Cllr AR Davies may be declined at the application stage for not being specific in the domain to outline the purpose of the organisation. Cllr Abedalkarim stated that he preferred a longer domain name that would outline that Maesteg is a Town Council so would support a MaestegTownCouncil.gov.wales

It was **agreed to recommend** to council that the domain for the website and email addresses be changed to Maesteg.gov.wales but if that is declined then MaestegTownCouncil.gov.wales

**129. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ITCS SERVICES CONTINUE TO BE VALUE FOR MONEY AND EXPLORE OTHER POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Members were provided with ITCS' monthly invoices which covers ICT and telecommunication costs.

Cllr L Thomas suggested that this agenda item be split in two and the service be discussed by this communications committee and then the finance/contractual side of this to be discussed by the finance committee. Members were happy with this and Cllr L Thomas added that the chair of finance already has this issue on his list. He went on to add that the service he received recently to change the password to an email account was not up to standard and took 2 weeks to change a password with 4 users having to access his laptop remotely in order to successfully complete this task. Cllr AR Davies and A James confirmed that they have had similar issues and would like to understand if there is a time limit where passwords are randomly reset by ITCS as this seems to be a reoccurring issue.

Cllr L Thomas requested that we ask ITCS to meet with the council each quarter where queries can be raised by councillors and ITCS can share metrics and new technologies with us hopefully to improve the councils service as time goes on. Members agreed with Cllr Thomas and the clerk then highlighted the costings of ITCS. Cllr A James mentioned that the costs seem reasonable for what is being provided overall and Cllr L Thomas stated that he would still like the finance committee to scrutinise the contract as it has been a number of years since we started working with ITCS and its time to assess.

It was **agreed to recommend** to council that the Finance committee to review ITCS contract and to request quarterly meetings with ITCS.

**130. TO DISCUSS WHETHER THE COUNCIL SHOULD FORM A SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE ON CERTAIN PLATFORMS.**

Cllr AR Davies confirmed that this was brought up by Cllr P Jenkins prior to the last election and it was decided that the newly elected council were to decide this.

Cllr L Thomas stated that the council should have a social media page such as Facebook as everyone has one so its an excellent way to communicate with the electorate. The only questions he raised was how would we maintain the page and what would be its purpose – what would it post?

Cllr A James confirmed that the social media page would act as a tool for council to present news and community announcements. Cllr L Thomas was happy with this and mentioned that he would hope it would not become a complaints platform. Members

confirmed that there are settings that can turn off comments on Facebook so would be easily managed then.

It was asked who would operate the social media page and Cllr AR Davies felt that it cannot be a councillor as this would likely become a large political tool that holds no benefit to the community so it would fall to the Clerk/Deputy Clerk. Cllr Abedalkarim mentioned that the increase in workload may not be fair to staff but Cllr L Thomas advised that the page would likely only be for updates up to twice a week at most so would likely not be a lot of extra work for the staff.

The Clerk suggested that the council operate the social media page for a trial period of 6 months only to see how it is received and how the operating of it is going and then a review to take place to see how we proceed then, this includes to assess using additional social media accounts such as Twitter etc. Cllr C Davies asked what the social media account would be called and this was confirmed to be Maesteg Town Council.

It was **agreed to recommend** to council to trial operating a Facebook page for 6 months and then review the performance/public response following this.

**131. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (a) The domain for the website and email addresses be changed to Maesteg.gov.wales but if that is declined then MaestegTownCouncil.gov.wales
- (b) Finance committee to review ITCS contract.
- (c) Communications committee to request quarterly meetings with ITCS.
- (d) Maesteg Town Council to trial operating a Facebook page for 6 months and then review the performance/public response following this.

**Minutes emailed to all Councillors to read on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Minutes accepted at a remote meeting of the Council held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**

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**Mayor**