

HAVERFORDWEST TOWN COUNCIL – FULL COUNCIL MEETING 16 JULY 2026

AGENDA ITEM 10 – CLERK'S REPORT

10.1 Current Councillor Vacancies & MES/PPF Committee Memberships (updated as at 1 September)

Current Notice of casual vacancy issued 1 September and open until 21 September for potential candidates to call an election (Portfield Ward).

Current Co-option vacancies – Portfield (2) and Prendergast (2).

Status: 1 Application received (October Full Council). 1-2 Pending.

MES and PPF Committees – Current Membership (Updated)

Management Estates & Strategy Committee	Personnel Policy and Finance Committee
Cllr B Simister (Chair)	Cllr J Odlin (Chair)
Cllr C Black (Vice Chair)	Cllr S Williams (Vice Chair)
Cllr K Blake	Cllr A Benson-Davies
Cllr L Hinksman	~~Cllr R Thomas~~
Cllr K Manikonda	Cllr D Thomas-Turner
Cllr T Moses	
Cllr S Pearce	
Total 11	Total 4

NB The Mayor of the Year – Cllr R Thomas-Turner attends the Committees Ex-Officio
Total 12 of 17 seats filled.

10.2 Leave of Absence – Cllr C Black under Section 85 of LGA 1972 (Item deferred from 16 July 2026 due to meeting ending inquorate).

Cllr C Black has requested a leave of absence of six months **from 16 July** due to personal circumstances. Council is therefore asked to consider granting this leave of absence to Cllr Black.

Cllr Black is aware that should his circumstances change, the period of leave could be shortened, or, if necessary, extended, subject to further approval by the Council.

Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that where a councillor fails to attend any meeting of the authority for a continuous period of six months from the date of their last attendance, they automatically cease to hold office unless the Council has approved the reason for their absence before the expiry of that six-month period.

For completeness, it may be helpful to note that:

- The reason for the leave does not need to be published in detail and can simply be recorded as "personal circumstances".
- The approval must be formally recorded in the Council's minutes.

- The leave is granted for a defined period and can be reviewed if circumstances change.
- Attendance includes Full Council meetings, and meetings of any committee or sub-committee of which the councillor is a member.

Recommendation:

Council is asked to consider and approve the following resolution:

*"Resolved: To approve a leave of absence for Councillor C Black under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 for a period of six months **effective from 16 July 2026** due to personal circumstances, with the position to be reviewed at the end of that period if required."*

10.3 Approval of Recommendations arising from Christmas Lights Planning Meeting with Installers on Thursday 16 July

Update to be added to pack.

10.4 i) Update on Civic Week (10-15 August) and Events Committee held on 3 September 2026

ii) Upcoming Events

Mayor's Opening of Portfield Fair Opening – Wednesday 30 September at 6 pm

Halloween – Saturday 31 October

Proposal: Michael Jackson Thriller Experience, Masonic Hall. Confirm approved Budget.

Festival of Remembrance – Friday 6 November (New).

See separate paper with costings and recommendation for approval.

Remembrance Sunday – Sunday 8 November (cost of road closure only)

Christmas Lights Switch On & Related expenditure (to be confirmed against Budget):

Saturday 28 November at 6pm, Riverside Shopping Centre

Fireworks £3,150+VAT (2025: £3,000)

Santa Sleigh £tbc

Santas Grotto £tbc

Christmas Civic Carol Service – Monday 14 December 2026 at 6 pm - arrangements to be made.

10.5 2025-26 Audit Wales Basic Audit Submission

The Town Council submitted its 2025-26 on 7 July and has published the necessary Notice(s) to electors to inspect the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026. The filing is available to view on the website: [Finance - Haverfordwest Town Council](#)

10.6 Approval of Final Draft of 2025-26 Annual Report

Work has not progressed as planned. The AR t will be completed for consideration by Council in October.

10.7 Clerks Attendance at CloudyIT AI Seminar (Llanelli)

Output has resulted in recommendation for Clerks to move from free **ChatGPT to CoPilot** which is tied into HTC Microsoft 365 tenant, but with a request to upgrade to CoPilot Business which respects existing permissions, access controls, and compliance settings. Prompts and data are not used to train Microsoft's underlying models, and nothing is retained or shared outside HTC tenant. This is a meaningful different from consumer AI tools like the free or paid version of Chat GPT, where there is no organisational control over how data is handled, stored, or potentially reused. This makes it much easier to demonstrate GDPR compliance as existing Microsoft 365 data protection and residency commitments extend to Copilot usage.

Clerks currently use AI to review, check, speed up day to day correspondence preparation and reporting. While being mindful not to fully rely on it, it does save on admin time.

A draft AI policy is being drafted and will be brought to PPF Committee in October.

Clerks also viewed **GovMeetings** which supports meetings admin; from start to finish and during live meetings including agenda, pack and minutes generation, storing attendance, apologies and conflicts information automatically. Currently the programme is discounted for one year (50 per cent). The Clerk is setting up a further meeting with Cloudy IT to have a thorough demo / access for a trial period with a view to bringing a proposal to Council for consideration in due course.

Recommendation

Council is asked to approve to upgrade from CoPilot Business, the licence for which is currently £20.30 +Vat per month per user. Two licences required only.

Vanessa Lewis Camacho
Town Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer
September 2026