

**MINUTES OF DEVAUDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
TUESDAY 1 APRIL 2008 AT DEVAUDEN VILLAGE HALL**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT** N Knowland, C Knight, J Williams (Chair), K Reece, M Powell, E Hall, A Duffield, A Cooke CC Bob Greenland

**IN ATTENDANCE:** C Martin (Clerk) PC Cowburn, Mr S Geratty (Post Office) and Ms A Hillier (Post Office)

**1) OPEN SESSION**

PC Cowburn presented his crime report which is attached. PC Cowburn left the meeting.

Mr Geratty and Ms Hillier introduced themselves and Mr Geratty set the context of his attendance by stating that Post office Ltd. has a network of 1400 post offices but the size is difficult to manage economically. Government have set a target to close 2500 branches against specific criteria. Postmasters are losing money, customer habits are changing. The P.O is now trying to grow income and reduce costs. Recognising that taking away a P.O from any community is difficult but the numbers using the local branch in Devauden is less than 150 per week. However are proposing an outreach service in Devauden so will not be a complete closure of the branch.

CC Greenland said his concerns are around the service the P.O and shop bring to the community, in particular the elderly who have no transport and rely on the P.O as their link to the community. He said 'In my view it is just a step too far to consider the consequences for these and other people as is only a 2 hourly bus service to Monmouth or Chepstow. These people will be isolated in a rural area'. He said that he had recently been involved with BT who have taken the view that they will not remove phone boxes where there is a vital social link. CC Greenland urged the P.O representatives to go back to government and say that cannot in all conscience make a move to close down Devauden's P.O.

Cllr Duffield stated that the pensioners use their mobility scooters to travel to the shop and if it is gone these people will have nothing. Cllr Reece said the P.O is a vital service for people. He also expressed concern that the outreach service would have the potential to attract criminals as people would be leaving the P.O with their pensions in a much restricted timeframe. Also parking the van in the village will cause a traffic hazard.

Cllr Cooke asked if there would be similar cost savings at head office of the P.O. Mr Geratty said that a number of initiatives are being taken to reduce costs including technology and will look at head office to reduce costs.

CC Greenland asked how much the P.O was likely to save by closing Devauden. He said 'I cannot see that is going to be substantial so could you give an indication of cost saving'. Mr Geratty said the information was covered by commercial confidentiality so cannot say. However he said 'The P.O are not removing the service completely and I would like to explore the advantage of the mobile service and how it can best serve the community. For example where would the service be best located?'. Cllr Williams said that that was not what was wanted. Mr Geratty said that the consultation period was over and the decision in terms of change is made and now we are consulting on the best way to deliver the new service.

CC Greenland said 'The likely saving is a post masers salary which I am aware is about £5000 per year'. Mr Geratty said he could not confirm or deny that. CC Greenland said that it is diabolical to isolate people for this sort of figure and that the P.O is ignoring its social responsibility. Mr Geratty said 'We are not taking it away as there will be a mobile service'. Ms Hillier said that there will be a sub post master running the outreach service so actually 3 P.O will be closing. Mr Geratty asked how the P.O could provide a mobile service to the best advantage of the community.

CC Greenland said that he feels the consultation period was an empty offer. It appears that the P.O has made up their minds and he asked whether there have been any changes as part of the consultation. Mr Geratty said that the first plan had been a 31% change and the second plan is now a 20% change. He stated that it has been a genuine public consultation but the government supplies the model that tells us where to make reductions. Mr Geratty said he wanted to walk the ground and find the best possible solution for the mobile location. Ms Hillier stated that Devauden would probably get up to 4 visits per week by the P.O of 5 hours in total per week. The P.O will work with the community to define the best way.

Cllr Knowland said 'This is a major concern for the community and will you please take into account the mitigations and reconsider the decision'. Mr Geratty said the decision could not be changed. So Cllr Knowland asked 'Where can we take this to now'. Mr Geratty replied that there is no appeal process. CC Greenland said that he finds this unacceptable as was a sham consultation and he said 'I will be making a public statement to this effect and will be taking it further'. Cllr Williams thanked Mr Geratty and Ms Hillier for their attendance and they left the meeting. CC

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Greenland said he would do a press release to reflect the meeting and say that he is seeking ways to try to keep the P.O open. He will send a copy to CM and JW.

## **2) CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes from meeting of 25 February 2008 were agreed and signed by JW and CM.

## **3) MATTERS ARISING**

- 3.1 At the September meeting CM presented a revised draft of her contract. NK and JW's view is that this needs to be looked at by a legal representative. JW to contact MCC monitoring officer.
- 3.2 CM contacted MCC cleansing department by phone to request bins at Wesley Way and the Green. Our request is on the waiting list but they are doubtful that we will get them. If we want to purchase them the council will empty them if they are the standard type which are approximately £350 each plus delivery. Unanimously agreed to fund and install the bins. JW will contact CM to give delivery address. CM to purchase and contact MCC, once the delivery address is supplied.
- 3.3 Info board for Devauden. JW to pursue.
- 3.4 Highways form response for form sent 5 March 2008 . File
- 3.5 WAG local member code of conduct – forms distributed to councillors for completion. All signed. CM to file in code of conduct file.
- 3.6 Local election nomination packs had been distributed and all councillors aware of the deadline.
- 3.7 Electoral roll forms – remaining 2 completed by MP and EH. CM to send to county hall.

## **4) FINANCE**

*Balances 25/3/08 Current; £ 1009.33 No Notice: £ 4007.70*

### **4.1** Agreed for payment by JW and NK.

Clerks salary and expenses £223.17 cheque no 101107

Additional expenses for mileage to distribute election notices £ 21.76 cheque no 101108

4.2 Allianz Cornhill – Insurance renewal at £437.49. Agreed to accept the proposal. Defer cheque to next meeting.

## **5) CORRESPONDENCE**

- 5.1 MCC cabinet agenda 5 March and 2 April. File 2 months
- 5.2 Mor Hafren area Committee agenda 19 March. File 2 months.
- 5.3 Wye Valley AONB Picturesque - distributed
- 5.4 MCC Highways – weekly road works and co-ordination distribution lists. CM to request lists sent to her and will then distribute to councillors on email.
- 5.5 Clerks and councils direct. No action
- 5.6 Monmouthshire LHB – review of race equality scheme consultation by end of May. File.
- 5.7 WAG – draft fire and rescue national framework consultation. Responses by 20 June 2008. File.
- 5.8 WAG – statutory guidance on developing and delivering community strategies. JW taken to review.
- 5.9 Monmouthshire Community Strategy Consultation Meeting Thursday 3 April, Abergavenny. File.
- 5.10 GAVO Gwent Best kept village entry forms. JW completed form for Devauden. CM to send off. Other forms have gone directly to relevant ward councillors.
- 5.11 Play for Wales Newsletter. No action.
- 5.12 MCC – LDP newsletter 1. File
- 5.13 GAVO newsletter. No action
- 5.14 One Voice Wales – request for Buckingham Palace Garden party, 15 July. Taken by JW.

## **6) PLANNING**

- 6.1 Planning committee agenda 4 and 18 Mar and 1 April. File 2 months
- 6.2 Planning list for Devauden for wks 8-11 (2008). File 2 months.
- 6.3 Enforcement lists for Feb 2008. File
- 6.4 DC/2008/00243 – Erection of single storey timber framed replacement conservatory, Cobblers Hill, Devauden. No objections. Recommend approval.
- 6.5 Following plans approved by MCC;
- 6.5.1 DC/2008/00065 Demolition of store and erection of single storey extension to provide ensuite bedroom and garden room.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## **7) COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

County councillor had nothing further to add

## **8) ONE VOICE WALES (OVW)**

2008 Local elections – posters and timetable for election. Distributed and file copy.  
Agenda for meeting 17 April at Usk. Minutes of meeting 17 January 2008. File

## **9) WARD REPORTS**

**KR** – Heavy rain on the B4293, 50-60 yards to the south of the Llansoy junction – water pools in the rain and is hazardous. Pot holes on B4293 between Devauden and Cobblers Plain.

**CK** – Pot holes on Rocky Road 43.9

**MP** - B4293, new road surface outside Itton Hall – is a 9 inch deep gully on the edge of the road that needs filling in.

**Meeting closed 9.30pm**

**Next Meeting Monday 28 April at Devauden Village Hall**

**Meeting dates 2008** 19 May (AGM), 30 June, 28 July (Itton), 18 Aug, 29 Sept, 27 Oct, 24 Nov, 22 Dec.

### **Police Report**

#### **Devauden Incidents 25/2/08 to 31/03/08**

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**3/3/08 - Possible domestic problems, Devauden - Did not occur.**

**3/3/08 - Dog trespassing at Newchurch - Resolved.**

**7/3/08 - Report of suspicious vehicle Devauden - White Transit van.**

**7/3/08 - Fatal accident between Devauden and St Arvans.**

**8/3/08 - Burglar alarm Itton - False alarm.**

**12/3/08 -Hounds gave chase to a fox - called back. Nr. Devauden.**

**13/3/08 - Dispute over a car which had been sold, Devauden. Civil matter.**

**14/3/08 - Suspicious male asking about hedge trimming, Devauden. Area search negative.**

**21/3/08 - Neighbours dispute, Devauden - resolved.**

**27/3/08 - Cow on road B4293 Devauden. Negative search.**

**28/3/08 - Branch across the road near Itton - removed.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_