

MINUTES OF DEVAUDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Held on Monday 31ST March at Devauden Village Hall

Councillors present:

J. Williams (Chair)
K. McElroy
A. Cooke
A. Williams
N. Knowland
M. Powell
J. Rowlands
I. Cavill

In attendance:

Cc Bob Greenland
CO Andy Jones
CO Sally Parker
N. James(Clerk)

Neil Arnold
Julie Guthrie
Georgina Hancock
Dominic Jones
David Maddocks
Caroline Marlow
Deborah Reed

1. Apologies.

There were no apologies.

2. Open Session

a. Georgina Hancock raised a planning and land dispute that she was experiencing. Six years ago she had bought some land from an Individual. The land was adjacent to hers but excluded a small portion in the middle of the area – the former turkey farm – which she understood was owned now by the Crown. The sale and ownership of the land had been in dispute over the six years and the Individual that she bought the land from was the subject of an ongoing court case. Last year the Individual had applied for planning permission on the Crown land but CC Greenland was able to show that the Individual was not the owner of that land and the application was suspended until ownership could be clarified. Now the Individual had recently applied for planning permission on the greater area, the area of land purchased by Georgina Hancock six years ago, and for which she has a purchase notice from the Individual. At this stage the application has been accepted by the Planning Officer. All applicants have to sign a declaration that they own the land in question. The County Council is aware that there is an ongoing court case involving this Individual but is obliged to follow normal planning procedures as long as they are satisfied that the application is valid. Moreover, the Land Registry records show that this land is in fact owned by the Individual. The application had only recently been submitted and hence the

Community Council had not yet been informed. CC Greenland has advised the Planning Officer of Georgina Hancock's purchase of this land six years ago and was hopeful that this current application would now also be suspended until ownership could be clarified and, in any event, he would ensure that the application would not continue to Committee stage until DCC had had a chance to comment. On the information presented at the meeting the Community Council members stated that they would be certainly minded to support Georgina as did the other residents present at the meeting, and to object to the application. CC Greenland agreed to email all as soon as he heard any further developments in this case. Georgina Hancock and other residents were also concerned that, once she had objected to the application and it was known that she had raised the issue at the Community Council meeting, the Individual might use the land for a gypsy camp. The DCC members understood and supported these concerns and asked what the policy of the County Council was on such occurrences. CC Greenland advised that the County Council would meet a need where a need could be proven but that any such action on this land could inevitably lead to a charge of trespass and become a civil matter. AW has been in discussion with Mrs Hancock.

b. CO Parker reported on incidents since the last Community Council Meeting:

- i. 28/02 – two reports received of excessive mud on the B4293 between Itton and Devauden – Highways informed. The police officers advised the meeting that the responsibility for clearing mud on the highway was the individual's if it came from private land. If the Highways Department cleared it they would normally try to charge the landowner if his/her identity could be subsequently ascertained.
- ii. 06/03 – report of a vehicle on the B4293, between Itton and Chepstow, on the road with no lights in the dark. Concerns that it might cause an accident – enquiries revealed that it had broken down.
- iii. 07/03 – theft of heating oil from a tank in a garden in Devauden between 21/02-02/03.
- iv. 18/03 – suspicious black vehicle seen on private land in Cobblers Plain at about 10 pm – three males were seen with it – believed possible poachers.
- v. 26/03 – report of six sheep having been killed on a farm in Newchurch, believed by a dog – possibly a black and tan one which was seen in the field around the time.

AC advised that there had been both a cycle event and horse event in Howick over the previous weekend, and wondered whether there were any control regulations when two such events were organized at the same time in such a rural area. The police advised that it would always depend on the size of the events and whether roads might need to be closed.

AC was also concerned that she had received scam letters recently, and wondered if there had been a spate of them. The police were unaware that there had been but would normally advise the public when this was the case.

JR asked the PCSO to find out how many vehicles had gone off the road on the B4293 just north of Itton where the wooden reflective markers had been placed.

Drivers of the school bus had expressed concern. Roger Hoggins of Monmouthshire CC was also to be contacted about the possibility of a crash barrier being provided along that stretch of road. **Action: JR**

c. Report by Mr D. Maddocks

i. Mr Maddocks reminded the meeting of the points that he had raised at the meeting of the Strong Community Select Committee on 23rd January 2014 and advised that he had raised the same issues at the full Council meeting on the 27th February 2014 including his view that the verge cutting in December and January had not been sensible – a view that the County Council acknowledged, stating that the original intention had not been to cut in those months. That meeting in February agreed to support the compromise solution for grass cutting of the verges (two cuts per year on some B roads) and this was confirmed at a meeting of the Cabinet on the 17th March in the form of a new Pollination Policy. JW stated that as soon as she received the new schedule of cutting, she would advise everyone. **Action: JW**

ii. Mr Maddocks was concerned that the drainage problems in the storm drains were caused in the main by leaves and felt that the DCC should try to resolve this issue.

iii. Mr Maddocks also noted that many overhanging trees were forcing lorries into the middle of the road and asked the DCC to press Highways to keep the roads clear.

iv. Mr Maddocks asked if a representative from NALC could be invited to a future meeting to discuss best practice for community councillors. JW would be attending a NALC meeting in April and would ask if anyone were able to come. **Action: JW**

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted, confirmed as a true record and signed by JW.

4. Matters Arising

a. Minute 1b – Monmouthshire CC had replied very promptly to the enquiry regarding a fourth drain near to Mr Wigley's property. However, they advised that levels in the area dictated that a further gully could not be installed. MP had discussed with Mr Wigley and they both questioned the Highways view, and felt that there was sufficient fall there to enable another drain to be installed; he would take it up again with Ryan Pritchard of Monmouthshire CC. **Action: MP.** In answer to Mr Wigley's second point the County Council had dye tested on site and felt the water leakage was not connected to any of the highway drainage. They had asked Welsh Water to test for a leak in that area, and would advise when this had been done.

b. Minute 3.2 – a new clerk, Mr Nigel James, had been appointed and a new contract and job description drawn up which all councillors had seen. The Chair and new Clerk signed the contract. AW was asked to set up the clerk@devaudencc.org.uk email address for the new Clerk. **Action: AW**

c. Minute 3.3 – JW confirmed that she had received a rebate of £57.07 from the County Council in view of the reduced number of verge cuts last year.

d. Minute 3.4 – JW had received an email from AED advising that there would be a delay until the end of April before the defibrillator cabinet was delivered due to a delay in the production of their latest batch. As we had already paid 50% of the cost for this KM was asked to seek an assurance from them that this date would be met and not slipped again. **Action: KM**

e. Minute 9.1a – most of the potholes on the 57.6 had been filled in but the erosion from a field gateway at the Croes Bleddyn end of the lane had not yet been dealt with. **Action: NJ**

f. Minute 9.2b – no action had yet been taken on this issue and CC Greenland agreed to investigate the possibility of the use of the gardening service offered by the prison system to tidy the particular garden. He was asked to see if it could be done before the 1st June which would be when the Best Kept Village Competition would be judged. **Action: BG**

g. Minute 9.4b – there was information that Spectrum would pay for a new phone for Devauden. AW would liaise with them to determine whether that was the case before taking this forward. **Action: AW**

h. Minute 9.4d - no action had yet taken place on the road erosion on the 60.3 and NJ was asked to chase Highways. **Action: NJ**

5. **Finance**

a. Balance at 25 February 2014 on the Current Account was £5148.00.

b. NJ had obtained the necessary form from the Bank to pass over the accounts and this was signed by JW and NK. NJ would draft a letter for JW to sign for the bank's records. **Action: NJ**

c. The following were agreed for payment: cheque 101390 for £54 for the temporary clerk's expenses last month and cheque 101391 for £119 for the 2014 membership fee for OVW.

d. The previous clerk had submitted a detailed monthly list of administrative expenses including stationery. It was recognized that the Clerk would incur such expenses but rather than ask him for a detailed list each month, the Committee agreed to pay a monthly allowance of £15 for such expenses for which the Clerk would submit a general invoice. **Action: NJ**

e. NJ was asked to liaise with Monmouthshire CC to set up his details on their payroll. **Action: NJ**

6. **Correspondence**

a. Notification of the Gwent Best Kept Village Competition 2014 – JW would forward an entry. **Action: JW**

b. From Monmouthshire CC – notification that the LDP had been adopted.

c. From Monmouthshire CC – notification that funding for broadcasting of council meetings, remote attendance and community council websites had been carried over into the FY2014/15.

d. March newsletter from Clerk and Councils Direct.

e. From Wicksteed playscapes – information on playground equipment.

7. **Planning**

JW advised that she had forwarded the DCC recommendation for approval for DC/2014/00094 to reposition the extension west by 1.6m.

8. **County Councillor's Report**

On the basis that larger councils might attract more economic development there was a move towards the establishment of a Cardiff City Regional Council which would include ten local authorities joining together. One of the first projects this new body would be looking at was a metrosystem based on Cardiff, a light railway system linked into the heavy railway operation. The plan was in its very early stages with a timescale not before 2020, and was aimed to be mainly funded by private industry. It was hoped that when buses were also linked into the system, the county of Monmouthshire would also become linked in.

9. **One Voice Wales (OVW)**

There was no information received from OVW.

10. **Ward Reports**

JR

- a. The West Glos and Forest of Dean motorcycle club had organized a trial on the 23rd March which had included parts of the DCC area. However, they had used Well Lane and Coale Lane which were not approved routes for trials. NJ was asked to write to them to advise them of this issue so that they were not used in future. **Action: NJ**
- b. The hedge at 15 Wesley Way had not been sufficiently cut back and needed to be cut back properly. **Action: NJ**
- c. The hedges opposite School House were obstructing pedestrians walking towards the church and needed to be cut back. **Action: NJ**
- d. There was a problem with the right of way and access opposite The Firs at the junction of R82 and the B4293. The access needs to be cleared so that walkers could use it. **Action: NJ**
- e. There was a wish to extend the 30mph speed limit north of the village along the B4293 to the Phillips bus depot and south to Windy Corner near R82. **Action: NJ**
- f. JR felt that the concern over the number of vehicles leaving the road on the B4293 north of Itton had been covered in the opening session. He asked CC Greenland if he would also cover their concerns with Highways. **Action: BG**

NK

- g.** Inappropriate vehicles were being sent down 57.2 by their satnavs. A Restricted Access sign was required on 57.2 going out of Itton on the left hand side. **Action: NJ**

AC

- h.** The road surface was poor and needed repair on R82 opposite Devauden Court. **Action: NJ**
- i.** There were a lot of grey bags on occasions being dumped at the crossroads in Kilgwrrwg and it was a health and safety issue as they attracted vermin . It was thought that many could be left by the occupants of some holiday accommodation along Five Barrows Lane off 58.7 by the crossroads. Part of the problem was that the refuse lorry was too big to get down the lane and NJ was asked to contact Highways to see if they could provide a smaller refuse lorry. **Action: NJ**

IC

- j.** There was still a pothole to be repaired at the field entrance at the top of Croes Bleddyn and he felt it would be helpful to have a Restricted Access sign on the lane at 57.8 leading to the Gelli since some satnavs had mistakenly directed cars that way. **Action: NJ**
- k.** He was continuing to investigate a permissive footpath from Itton to the village hall.

KM

- l.** There had still been no action to resolve the drain works at Wesley Way and NJ was asked to chase Highways to find out when this work was going to take place. **Action: NJ.** KW was also asked to chase the positioning of the two signs at the top of Wesley Way. **Action: KW**

AW

- m.** Further to the announcement that the County Council had agreed the compromise solution for the grass verge cutting, AW emphasized the advantages to community councils of the new formal appeals process of the Pollination Policy on verges as well as the planting of wild flowers. He also advised that, in future, displays in public places like parks and gardens would have wild flowers planted and not, as now, garden flowers. AW was asked also to contact Anne Wareham of Veddw Gardens to see if she would become involved in a working party to introduce areas of natural planting/wild flowers in the village. **Action: AW**

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the Itton Village Hall on Tuesday 22nd April at 7pm.

