

DRAFT

MINUTES OF DEVAUDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Held on Monday 27th October 2014 at Devauden Village Hall

Councillors present:

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

In attendance:

CC B Greenland
CO A Jones
N. James (Clerk)
Mr H Williams
Mr M Layzell
Mr P Maggs
Mr and Mrs M Fleetwood
Mr and Mrs C Jackson

1. Open Session

- a. Mr Maggs reported that there had been a large amount of garden refuse dumped in the corner of the Council allotments. JR agreed to have it removed and placed on the village bonfire. It was not thought appropriate to have to put a lock on the allotments gate but JR would put up a sign on the gate to advise people that dumping of garden waste in the allotments was not allowed. **Action: JR.**
- b. A number of local residents were present to voice their real concern over a proposed installation of a mobile phone mast in Newchurch. Whilst there had been a consultation between the Company and the planners about the project, and prior to a decision about sites had been made, no communication had been made with the local residents or the Council until very recently. The residents accepted that improved mobile communication in the area was necessary but objected strongly to the proposed site for this installation which would involve not only a tower at least 23metres in height but also various antennae, two large dishes attached to the tower as well as six equipment cabinets at ground level. An alternative site in Chepstow Park Woods was suggested as this would have significantly less impact on the local AONB. A similar site within a woods had been used in a nearby village. The Clerk had received two letters in support of the site but the overwhelming majority had been against it. He had also received an

email from the Company agent which detailed the reasons for excluding alternative sites. He would circulate that to all interested residents as well as other correspondence he received from the Company. **Action: NJ.** All the Councillors agreed that the site was completely unsuitable for the area and agreed to write to the Company agent seeking a public meeting with their representatives to go through the rationale for the site and consider alternative options. **Action: NJ.** In addition, BG agreed to pass on the views of DCC to the planning officers at MCC prior to their forthcoming meeting with the Company. **Action: BG.**

- c. Mr Williams raised the concerns of some residents of Well Lane regarding the car parking arrangements for the village bonfire night. Given the large number of cars that would be coming into the village some were concerned whether they would be able to get to their homes and wondered whether bollards could be placed at the entrance to some roads stopping parking there. The Chairman explained that the event was generally recognized as a very worthwhile community event and Hood Memorial Hall Committee had taken advice from the police and others who have sanctioned this year's planning arrangements. Following last year's event 100 bollards would be placed through most of the village, vehicles directed by signage and marshals to designated car parks and a Drop off/ pick up zone provided. There would be plenty of marshals to try to ensure that there was as little disruption as possible but the Committee and the Safety Advisory Group would again carry out a review after the event to see whether further improvements would be necessary.
- d. CO Jones went through the police report for the period which is attached at the back of these minutes. He was asked if the reports could in future contain more detail. He explained that they had to be careful as many involved did not want their details published; however he would try to provide more detail especially regarding the locations. The seemingly regular occurrence of double parking in Chepstow High Street was raised as it continued to be an issue with some. CO Jones explained that a lot of parking tickets were issued to those who double parked but, in some cases, delivery vans had no other option.
- e. A note had been received from Mr Maddocks stating that an amendment and new points must to be made in the minutes of the previous meeting. The Council considered his points but felt that the draft minutes as written were satisfactory.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from AW.

3. Matters Arising from the Open Session

There were no further matters arising from the Open Session.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 22nd September were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

a. Minute 2c1– KM would be looking into the issues outstanding regarding the drainage in Wesley Way. **Action: KM.**

b. Minute 2c2 – the Clerk was asked to take up the issue of traffic speed in Wesley Way with MCC. **Action: NJ.**

c. Minute 2c3 – Nigel Leaworthy would be attending the Council meeting on 22nd December to discuss the review of the grass verge cutting in 2014.

d. Minute 2c6 - the phone box had been painted and, as there were still funds available for the further refurbishment of the box at Itton, it was agreed also to obtain a local map of the area to place inside the phone box and consider shelving. **Action: JR/MP.**

e. Minute 4a – the Clerk had met with a MCC Highways Engineer and Mr Wigley on site near Castle Farm. As there had been little rainfall over the last weeks MCC would check the site regularly after periods of heavy rainfall to see if they could identify whether the problem remains or whether it had been resolved. A further meeting would be arranged at the end of November. In the meantime MCC would clear around the gullies in the road and check that the drains remained clear. The Clerk would continue to press MCC for a sign at Coal Lane. **Action: NJ.**

f. Minute 4b – a suitable site in Itton for the dog waste bin had been agreed on the Common near the sand bin next to the phone box. JR/MP would arrange for the bin to be installed. **Action: JR/MP.**

g. Minute 7l – In AW's absence JW would contact Ann Wareham and Steph Tyler to see whether they could consider possible sites for which a grant from Grow Wild Wales could be sought. **Action: JW.**

g. Minute 4c – the Clerk and IC had met a Highways Engineer from MCC on site at Church Lane and since that meeting MCC had laid scalpings down on the site to resolve the issue; the drainage issue at the Woodlands had been resolved; there had been some delay in clearing the garden at Wesley Way but it was hoped that individuals to do the job would be identified shortly. IC and AC confirmed that restricted access signs were still not in place and the footbridge was still not open; the Clerk would chase MCC for these. **Action: NJ.** Given that a new officer had now been promoted into the relevant managerial position BG would take up the issue of the danger area on the B4293 coming out of Itton. **Action: BG.** MCC had confirmed that the few other outstanding items were on their list to do. JW commented that MCC used to produce a list of priorities but this seemed to have stopped. BG felt it might have been stopped due to the cuts that had been made but he would ask the Highways staff. **Action: BG.**

h. Minute 12 – the Council had agreed at the last meeting to move the Clerk to point 22 on NALC salary scale LC1.

6. **Finance**

a. Balances at 30 September 2014 were: Current Account £5610.39, Notice £275.74.

b. Cheques were signed as follows: OVW's invoice for Devolution of Services seminar for £25 – cheque number 101413; Clerk's expenses for October for £15 –

cheque number 101414; MCC for Clerk's salary from Apr-Sep for £1146.55 – cheque number 101415.

c. The Chairman and Clerk had checked the Council's assets on the register. It was noted that the notice board at Wolvesnewton was in a poor state of repair and needed replacement. It was agreed to transfer the notice board from Devauden to Wolvesnewton and, if funds permit, purchase a larger board for Devauden. **Action: NJ.**

d. The risk register was reviewed and, given the recent problem with a phone box door, this was added to the register.

e. The reconciliation and financial forecast as at the end of September were presented and agreed, and signed by JR. It was agreed that the precept should remain the same for next year and the Clerk would draft a budget for 2015/6 on that basis for the next meeting. **Action: NJ.**

7. **Correspondence**

a. Information regarding declaration of interests and website requirements. All councillors confirmed that they would be content for their telephone numbers to be placed on the Council website. **Action: NJ.**

b. Invitation to attend the launch event of the Diversity in Public Life Agenda.

c. Information on funding possibilities for community projects and groups.

d. Clerks and Councils Direct – November 2014.

e. Letter from the local AM, Nick Ramsay, offering to attend a future meeting to discuss the devolution of tax raising powers for the WG. It was decided not to accept this offer. **Action: NJ.**

8. **Planning**

a. New and completed enforcement cases for September 2014.

b. A copy of the MCC Adopted Local Development Plan February 2014.

9. **County Councillor's Report**

a. BG advised that, following the initial consultations with the public, MCC had recently finalized its draft budget for next year including the additional cuts that had been imposed by the WG. The recent tranche of a further £6million in cuts had been particularly difficult to absorb and hitherto untouched budgets had now been asked to make savings. Staffing levels in MCC had already been slimmed down and the Council was now looking at emptying buildings by moving departments in together, as well as using more volunteers in areas which the Council had traditionally run. Many of the proposals would be unpalatable but the Council would be going out shortly to meet the public to discuss these proposals.

b. MCC was continuing to look at the proposals made in the William Report into local government in Wales. It was not known how many savings could be made by these proposals especially given the recommendations of the Silk Commission. Amalgamation with other councils had been suggested but both MCC and Newport Councils had objected to a merger between them and MCC was not in favour of amalgamating with Blaenau Gwent or Torfaen Councils. Rather MCC was looking at the model undertaken in England whereby councils grouped services in a form of federation.

c. Three of the CABs in the area had joined into a form of federation in order to save money and, given that they provided help to individuals in communities as well as towns, might well seek some financial assistance from community councils towards their costs. The Council would consider this if and when a request was made.

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

a. the OVW response to the Welsh Government white paper on reforming local government.

11. **Ward Reports**

a. JW advised that the sign on the road going from Itton Common to the Woodlands could not be seen due to the overgrown hedgerow; MP agreed to sort this out.

b. NK advised that there were two road signs down between Yew Tree Cottage and Howells Green. **Action: NJ.**

c. JR asked if the Council wished to donate as in previous years to the Devauden bonfire night and to the pensioners' lunch. £200 and £50 respectively were agreed.

12. **Date of Next Meeting/Dates for 2015 meetings**

The next meeting will be held in Devauden Village Hall on Monday 24th November at 7pm. Meetings for 2015 would be held on:

Monday 26th January

Monday 23rd February

Monday 30th March

Monday 27th April

Monday 18th May

Monday 29th June - Itton

Monday 27th July - Itton

Monday 24th August - Itton

Monday 28th September

Monday 26th October

Monday 30th November

Monday 21st December

POLICE REPORT 22/09/14 to 26/10/14

28/09/14 – Report of a raddle harness cut off a ram at a field in Itton. The wax block which marks the ewe after the ram has done his job was also tampered with.

08/10/14 – Report of 2 males acting suspicious in Wesley gardens. They were seen changing the number plates on a smallish white van (make unknown). The plates that were being put on read ND04 YZZ. We believe this vehicle may have been involved in local shed breaks, thefts and other suspicious activity in the Chepstow rural area. Enquiries are on-going.

10/10/14 – Report of a stone wall damaged at a property just outside Devauden. Enquiries are on-going.

16/10/14 – Report of a fire set against a steel barrier in Fedw wood causing damage to it.

19/10/14 – Report of shed broken into at a property on the outskirts of Devauden. A petrol Haterer lawn mower and a petrol stihl chainsaw was taken from inside.

19/10/14 – Report of a barn broken into at a farm in Devauden. A handypro McCulloch brushcutter/trimmer was stolen from inside.

20/10/14 – Report of cannabis being grown at a property in the Devauden area. A male and female are helping us with our enquiries.