

DRAFT

MINUTES OF DEVAUDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Held on Monday 22nd December 2014 at Devauden Village Hall

Councillors present:

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

In attendance:

N. Leaworthy
Mr and Mrs R Brooke
Mr and Mrs C Andrew
Mr R Thompson
Mr P Savoie
Mr D Maddocks
Mr M –surname not known
N. James (Clerk)

1. Open Session

- a. There were no police officers present and no report for this month. The available speeding data for the area from Nov 13 to Aug 14 had been passed to DCC. The Chairman advised that he and the Clerk had attended a meeting for all Council chairs and clerks with Inspector Morgan in Chepstow at the beginning of December. At the meeting it was agreed that the Inspector would aim to attend council meetings on a quarterly basis with the CSOs attending more frequently; the CSOs would aim to continue to produce a report for each meeting.
- b. There had been some disagreement on the siting of the dog waste bin in Itton. All agreed that dog mess was a problem in the village but there was a view that its current location near the telephone box was too prominent and also a safety issue in times of bad weather. MP explained that the bin had to be sited next to a pavement for emptying purposes. After some discussion it was agreed that it should be moved further down from the telephone box near the oak tree/car spaces and MP would contact MCC to get their agreement to moving it. **Action: MP.**

- c. Mr Savoie was concerned about the speed of traffic through Itton. The Chairman explained that this subject had been raised with the local police inspector and in 2015 the police authorities were aiming to introduce a volunteer system which would allow local people to carry out camera speed checks.
- d. The Chairman welcomed Mr Nigel Leaworthy of Monmouthshire County Council to the meeting and invited him to report on the Council's review of the new pollinator policy that was introduced this year. He advised that it had been introduced as a part of a national emphasis on biodiversity and, as such, the MCC policy had been very successful and was held now as an exemplar for other councils in Wales. The reduction in grass and verge cutting and sowing of wildflower mixes had encouraged the sustainability of pollinators. MCC had only received 3 complaints during the year and over a 100 compliments. The MCC Countryside unit was monitoring the results and would continue to do so in an ongoing process, and a risk assessment had been carried out on all routes regarding the impact of the reduced verge cutting. The overall view was that the policy had been a great success; it had also reduced maintenance and the cost of bedding displays with an overall saving of approximately £45,000 in the year. Mr Maddocks questioned the history leading up to the introduction of the policy and expressed his concern for safety on a number of roads in particular the B4293, and JW also added that Mr Maddocks had been concerned about safety on the Raglan road at Star Hill. In addition there had been some areas which had been cut which in his view did not require cutting. He felt it would be a good idea for him and other farmers to meet with NL next summer to show him the problems. Mr Leaworthy explained that this was the first year of the policy and accepted that for instance the approaches into Usk had not required the cuts that it had but he reiterated a significant level of support had been received from the local population who generally wanted verges left uncut for longer unless there was a safety issue He advised that MCC was continually monitoring this aspect. In this respect MCC would consider any requests for cuts to be reinstated if the local population felt that there was a strong road safety issue, and Mr Maddocks was asked to provide evidence of specific problem areas for DCC to consider and, if in agreement, pass to MCC.
- e. Mr and Mrs Brooke attended the meeting to highlight a MCC investigation into the status of local routes through Panta Farm land. This was the latest in a series of investigations into routes in this area. They were concerned on a number of issues not least the lack of consultation by MCC with DCC and the local owners of the land/property alongside these routes. After some discussion it was agreed that DCC would write to MCC with the following points: what was the primary objective of the current investigation; how could MCC justify the ongoing investigation in terms of cost to the taxpayer; what consultation had there been with local property owners who were affected; and what evidence did they have indicating that the route designated 357/53 18/1 – 16/1-180/1 was an unclassified road as stipulated on their latest map, the Public Rights of Way map dated 31/10/14. DCC would wish to have sight of any evidence. **Action: NJ.**

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Kevin McElroy and CC Bob Greenland.

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 24th November were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

a. Minute 5b – there had been several emails between the Harlequin agent, Clerk and residents regarding alternative sites for the mobile telecommunications mast. At the moment Harlequin was still rejecting Chepstow Park Woods but a response was awaited about its consideration of a site lower in the field of its original proposal. MCC had confirmed that there would be no conflict of interest if and when DCC were asked to consider a planning application on this issue.

b. Minute 5d – KM was meeting with a highways representative from MCC this week to discuss again the drainage issue in Wesley Way. **Action: KM.**

c. Minute 6c – the Clerk had completed the annual precept form and received confirmation from MCC on next year's precept.

d. Minute 5f – JR had contacted the OS but still not received any maps. He would continue to push them but in discussion it was agreed that we should also contact the AONB office in Monmouth who might be able to help both for the Itton phone box and the one on Cobblers Plain. **Action: JR/MP/JW.**

e. Minute 5h – in view of the proposals for wildflower planting in and around Hood Hall it was agreed to await these before considering an application for a grant.

f. Minute 11a – the drains along Wesley Way had been cleared and it was hoped that this would now resolve the water issue in Well Lane.

g. Minute 5j – MCC had received the traffic and speed data for Wesley Way which showed an average of 100 vehicles a day at a speed of 16mph; they would not therefore be taking any further action other than the new signs and road lining. It was confirmed that the restricted access sign in Itton had not been erected and the Clerk would now confirm with MCC the revised position for this sign on the 57.2 immediately after coming off the B4293. **Action: NJ.** It had been agreed with MCC that, as there had been no signs of drainage problems when they had visited Castle Farm over the last 2 months, Mr Wigley would contact them direct when it occurred and they would try to respond that day. It was suggested that MCC consider installing a grit box by Castle Farm to help to alleviate the icing problem in bad weather. **Action: NJ.** The Council was concerned that new catseyes were not to be installed on the B4293 until the Spring.

6. Finance

a. Balances at 30 November 2014 were: Current Account £4749.86, Notice £275.74.

b. Cheques were signed as follows: contribution to the National Eisteddfod for £50 – cheque number 101420; Clerk's expenses for December for £15 – cheque number 101421;

c. The SLCC had issued the new salary scales for clerks effective from 1 January 2015.

7. Correspondence

a. Invitation to comment on the draft National Transport Plan 2015.

b. Advert for job vacancies for Cynefin Place coordinators.

c. Letter from British Weights and Measurements Association.

d. Invitation to attend the NEA Annual fuel poverty conference in January

e. Invitation from OVW on behalf of the Welsh Government to provide case studies of work done in local communities.

f. Updated Practitioners Guide of 2 chapters of the Governance and accountability of local councils

8. Planning

a. DC/2014/01257 – single storey extension to The Bothy, Devauden – recommended for approval.

b. DC/2014/01456 – erection of a timber car port and garden store at Garden Cottage, Itton Court Road, Itton – recommended for approval.

c. DC/2014/01432 – agricultural notification of a secure storage shed at The Gethley Farm, Newchurch – for information only.

d. New and completed enforcement cases for November 2014.

e.. Draft supplementary guidance on certain policies within the MCC Adopted Local Development Plan February 2014.

9. County Councillor's Report

In CC Greenland's absence there was no county councillor's report.

10. One Voice Wales (OVW)

a. Notification of training seminars for the first part of 2015.

11. Ward Reports

a. MP advised that a local resident, Malcolm Wigley, had heard that the Forestry Commission was planning to clear Gelli Wood. It was recognized that in such circumstances the Commission would normally contact the clerk of the local council but no information had yet been received, and local residents would be advised if such information was received.

b. JW advised that the road sign on the left hand side of the road towards Itton from Shirenewton was obscured, and the vegetation needed to be cleared. **Action: NJ.** She asked the Clerk to find out whether the schedules/routes of the bike and car rallies/trials for 2015 had been published. **Action: NJ.** JW, on behalf of DCC, also wished to record the Council's thanks to Mr Leaworthy for attending the meeting and providing such a comprehensive report of the MCC policy and how it had worked this year.

c. AC advised that the Kilgwrrwg Church carol service had had to be cancelled this year. In addition she pointed out that Kilgwrrwg Hill was particularly dirty and drains blocked from the mud deposited by large vehicles which would become an even worse problem if there was heavy rainfall. **Action: NJ.**

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Monday 26th January 2015 in Devauden Village Hall at 7pm.