

DRAFT

MINUTES OF DEVAUDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Held on Monday 25th January 2016 at Devauden Village Hall

Councillors present

J. Rowlands (Chairman)

N Knowland

K McElroy

AWilliams

M. Powell

J. Williams

I.Cavill

In attendance:

D Maddocks

H Williams

N. James (Clerk)

Also in attendance: Mr D James – for items 1- 3 only.

1. Open Session

- a. There was no police report this month. Mr Maddocks commented that there were considerable problems on the local roads with excessive water caused by blocked gullies. He would provide a list of the specific roads.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from A Cooke and CC B Greenland.

3. Presentation from Mr D James

Mr James was the Rural House Enabler for Monmouthshire and, as such, his role was to work with, and on behalf of, communities, and help identify the local need for affordable housing and to facilitate its development. A site in Devauden for development to include up to 9 affordable homes had been identified in the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan and the rural allocations policy stipulated that only those living in, or with a connection to, Devauden would be eligible. He had never known a lack of suitable applicants for affordable housing but, if that were to be the case, housing would be offered up then to neighbouring community council areas. Monmouthshire Housing Association would be providing the housing and he

believed that pre-application discussions had taken place with MCC. The next step would be for him to arrange a consultation event with local residents at which he could obtain evidence of what kind of affordable housing would be most appropriate for the area to feed into the final planning documents. He hoped that such an event could be set up in early March with one in Devauden and one in Itton, and he would contact the MHA to determine whether that timescale was feasible, and liaise with the Clerk to arrange the meetings and dissemination of publicity material.

4. **Matters Arising from the Open Session**

There were no further matters arising from the Open Session.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 21st December were approved and signed by the Chairman.

6. **Matters Arising**

a. Minute 1a – IC advised that he had investigated the apparent growth of Japanese knotweed in Itton but believed it was in fact not knotweed.

b. Minute 5a – the follow up meeting with MCC on wildflower planting was still to be held. **Action: AW.**

c. Minute 5b – the Clerk had obtained 3 quotes for a small notice board to replace the one currently in Wolvesnewton. It was agreed to purchase the man-made timber board at a price of £894.78. **Action: NJ.**

d. Minute 5c – the Clerk had written to the clerks of neighbouring councils who had confirmed that they also saw little mileage in being able to effect savings from combining services.

e. Minute 5d/11d – the Clerk was still awaiting a response from MCC regarding the catseyes but the damaged finger post sign at Pentwyn Bach had been repaired. JR confirmed that the further remedial work on the allotment gatepost had now been completed.

f. Minute 11c – there was still some difficulty setting up the council email address for the clerk. **Action: AW/NJ.**

7. **Finance**

a. Balances at 31 December 2015 were: Current Account £5421.08, Notice £3277.11.

b. MCC had confirmed that there would be a refund of £121.40 for grasscutting services in 2015/16.

c. Cheques were signed as follows: Merlin Waste for January for £20.34 – cheque number 101468; Itton Village Hall for hire in 2015 for £44.00 – cheque number 101469; Clerk's expenses for January for £15 – cheque number 101470; MCC for salary for Sep-Dec for £823.11 – cheque number 101471. In addition, as it was agreed at the last meeting to make a donation to the appropriate charity following Mrs Reece's death, a cheque would be sent for £25 to St David's Foundation – cheque number 101472.

d. The reconciliation and financial forecast as at 31 December 2015 were presented and agreed, and signed by JR.

8. **Correspondence**

a. Wales Audit Newsletter for December 2015.

b. Guide to taking part in the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations in April.

c. Natural Resources Bulletin for January 2016.

d. Manifesto of the Climate Commission for Wales.

e. Letter from Gwent Young Farmers Club seeking financial assistance towards its running at County Level. It was decided not to make a grant.

f. Presentation to OVW Newport/Monmouthshire Area Committee on Superfast Broadband in Wales.

g. Invitation to attend an information event on 28 January regarding the First World War Partnership Day.

h. MCC Flood Risk Management Plan. In discussion the Council felt that there were more appropriate locations for reducing the flood risks in the area than the suggestion to spend £10000 on trying to alleviate funding on the lane to the Gelli that the document proposed eg the road that passed Castle Farm – the R122. The Clerk was asked to notify MCC of the Council's view. **Action: NJ.**

Planning

a. New and completed enforcement cases for December 2015.

10. **County Councillor's Report**

CC Greenland had forwarded advice regarding a small amount of money left for grants that was available from the MCC area committee. Bids needed to be made within the next month from community groups, but not a community council, for anything of a capital nature that was planned where matched funding was provided by the applicant.

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

a. JW reported on the recent Area Committee meeting:

1. There was a presentation on Superfast Broadband which advised that there were still 7 exchanges to be connected in Monmouthshire but it was hoped that these would be completed within the next 2 years.

2. OVW sought responses from all clerks regarding recent pensions correspondence. **Action: NJ.**

3. OVW advised that there would be new auditors this year and the audit would include a classification for competency.

4. The meeting included a briefing from officers of MCC regarding the coming budget and its implications. MCC considered that by working closer with local councils the MCC budget could benefit by £400,000. MCC envisaged local councils taking on running local Hubs and museums and organising themselves into clusters with other councils to provide and fund local services by increasing their precepts. This mandate had not yet been adopted and it was recognized that it required the agreement of all the local councils. However, DCC, as many other councils, could see no benefit from operating with other councils – as reported above – and noted that OVW was equally concerned with precept increases for this purpose.

b. List of local training opportunities for February 2016.

12. **Ward Reports**

a. AC had advised that waste collection was still chaotic in Kilgwrrwg; she had discussed the issue with MCC and a site meeting was now awaited.

b. AW advised that the tarmac used to fill four large potholes at the bottom of Well Lane had now been washed away, and needed replacement. In addition, the verge which had been stabilized on the road between Wolvesnewton and Cobblers Plain – the R80 – had also been damaged by the rain, and needed remedial work. Similarly IC noted that the remedial work that had been done on the roadside outside Itton Court on the 57.6 had also been washed away, and needed repair once again. **Action: NJ.**

c. JW noted that many of the road signs in the area were dirty and illegible. IC mentioned that 2 specific signs on the A466 coming out of Chepstow which pointed to the B4293 and the B4235 were obscured because they were covered in ivy. **Action: NJ.**

d. MP advised that the water issue outside Castle Farm was as bad as ever; the Clerk had raised this again with MCC after the last meeting, and would chase them. **Action: NJ.**

e. IC advised that there was an excessive amount of water coming down the drive of Parc-y-Ffnon on to the Itton/Shirenewton road, causing a real hazard. In addition, NK advised that large tracts of water were flowing down from the road into the driveway of Church Farm at Newchurch and the Clerk was asked to arrange for MCC to speak direct with the owner of Church Farm about the problem. **Action: NJ.**

f. NK also noted that outside Howick Farm on the B4293 between Itton and Chepstow one chevron was missing and another had been damaged. **Action: NJ.**

g. KM advised that lorries had been flytipping at the entrance to Chepstow Park Woods off the B4293. **Action: NJ.** He advised that he had heard nothing further from the MHA regarding the drainage issue at Wesley Way, and it was agreed that he would pass the relevant contact details to the Clerk for him to write a formal letter to the MHA seeking resolution of this issue. **Action: KM/NJ.**

13. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held in Devauden Village Hall on Monday 29th February at 7pm. In addition, it was agreed that there should be a meeting in July– the 25th – but that the meeting advertised for 27th August would be cancelled.