

DRAFT

MINUTES OF DEVAUDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Held on Monday 27th June 2016 at Itton Village Hall

Councillors present

J. Rowlands (Chairman)

N Knowland

K McElroy

A Williams

M. Powell

I. Cavill

J Williams

A Cooke

In attendance:

CSO A Jones

CC B Greenland

N. James (Clerk)

1. Open Session

As CC Greenland had to leave the meeting early he was offered the opportunity to report first. He started by offering public congratulations to the Chairman for his award in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, an award that was richly deserved. He then advised that the proposed changes to local government reorganisation had been shelved. Whilst there might be changes in the local government operations in due course amalgamation of various councils was unlikely unless councils wished it. MCC would be going ahead with elections next year which would be for a five year period. Moreover, the Boundary Commission looking into local government and community councils had now been asked to revert to its original plans; any changes that they recommended would be considered in due course.

The police report is attached at the back of these minutes.

Mr Joe Atkinson of NRW gave a short talk on their policy for regeneration and replanting in the locally harvested forests, a policy that was incorporated into a Design Plan for the Lower Wye area. He explained the rationale and procedures that NRW adopted for replanting and

that, for certain areas, contracts were in fact let to various contractors to carry out the work required. In such circumstances, NRW did not have complete operational control over the site and indeed that had been the case at Wern-y-Cwm. Once a contractor had completed his task the responsibility for restocking the area reverted to NRW and this would generally take place within a period of 2 years. Although he was not responsible for the works at Wern-y-Cwm he noted, and appreciated, the considerable concern of the local residents who were present of the state in which the site had been left when the contractors departed which was an awful eyesore, and the length of time that had elapsed with still no reinstatement as yet. Although the Local Area Manager had advised that reinstatement work was timetabled it had still not begun, and he promised to pass on the feelings expressed at the meeting to the Local Area Manager.

Several local residents also wished to pass on their considerable concerns about a planning application, DC/2015/01541, an application to quarry stone at Cledd-y-Tan Wood. Their main concerns were: the application lacked significant bits of information, noise throughout the day from constant excavation, extraction from the site by 32 ton 8 x wheeler lorries on narrow rural roads with a significant safety issue for walkers and cyclists, dust created by the constant excavation, the possible lack of agreement to cross NRW land, the lack of an effective environmental report since it was known that for instance dormice and goshawk were located in this area and would be affected, the blocking of a popular public footpath and bridleway for effectively a five year period and the use of a hazardous junction on to the B4293.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Matters Arising from the Open Session

The Council considered the concerns raised by the local residents regarding the planning application and agreed wholeheartedly with the points raised in the Open Session, and noted also that previous similar work at Cobblers Plain had led to significant disruption and issues once that permission had been given. In addition there was concern that no hydrological report had been provided by the applicant on the proposed extraction. It was agreed that more information was necessary but that a strong recommendation that the application be refused should be made. The Clerk would draft the Council response which he would pass to NK before submitting. **Action: NJ.**

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 23rd May were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

a. Minute 5a – MCC believed the drainage issue arose from water off the fields and therefore had installed the 2 gullies. In view of water coming up through the road they would monitor during heavy rain to see whether further remedial action was necessary.

b. Minute 5b –MCC had finally accepted ownership of the car park area; following a further site meeting between MHA and MCC, MHA had agreed that 2 soakaways were insufficient for the amount of rainfall now being experienced. MHA was arranging for quotations for the necessary work. In addition, as surface water coming

down Wesley Way was not reaching the gully in the corner of the car park, MCC would move the dropped kerb once residents had been consulted on its proposed location.

c. Minute 5c –NRW had advised that complete reinstatement of the Wern-y-Cwm car park area would be started by the middle of June but, as no action had yet begun and following the concerns raised again by local residents, the Clerk would write again to the Local Area Manager. **Action: NJ.**

d. Minute 11b – the gravel had been swept up on the Wolvesnewton-Cobblers Plain road.

g. Minute 11a/c/d – action was still awaited on these issues but the Clerk would chase NRW regarding the water issue above Hood Hall and, in this respect, JW would pass on some recent photographs showing the extent of the water coming down the hill. **Action: NJ/JW.** In addition he would chase again the planners for a response on 11a. **Action: NJ.**

h. Minute 11e – the Clerk had inspected the phone box and it was agreed that JR would ask Fred Richards for a quote to repaint the exterior of the 3 phone boxes at Devauden, Cobblers Plain and Itton as well as a general tidying up/cleaning of the interiors. **Action: JR.**

6. **Finance**

a. Balances at 31 May 2016 were: Current Account £4795.85, Notice £3277.68.

b. Cheques were signed as follows: Merlin Waste for June for £20.34 – cheque number 101488; Grasscutting contributions to the churchyards of Itton, Kilgwrrwg, Wolvesnewton and this year Newchurch also for £50 each – cheque numbers 101489,90,91,92; Hood Hall for hire from Feb-May 2016 for – cheque number 101493; Clerk's expenses for June for £15 – cheque number 101494.

8. **Correspondence**

a. Request for financial assistance from Shelter Cymru.

b. Invitation to attend Homestart Monmouthshire's AGM.

c. Invitation to the Consumer Council Water Wales Regional Event on 29 Sep 16.

d. MCC Press Releases: requesting applications for ambassadors to welcome Eisteddfod visitors; Monmouthshire partnership to promote environmental events featuring sustainability; MCC improvement plan and commitment to efficient and cost effective services.

e. Latest update from Community Energy Wales.

f. Invitation to meet the Future Generations Commissioner.

g. Details of the Cardiff festival of action to celebrate the life of Jo Cox.

h. Annual Report of the Public Sector Ombudsman.

- i. Revised Code of Practice on workforce matters.
- j. Details of appointment of members to the Arts Council of Wales.
- k. Information of recruitment for 2 new members for the Heritage Lottery Fund Committee for Wales.
- l. Annual Report for 2015/16 from the Wales Audit Office.
- m. Invitation to apply for Green Growth Wales funding for projects in 2016/17.
- n. Recruitment for an appointment to the Building Advisory Council for Wales.
- o. Information about a seminar on 13th September on Redesigning public services – the strategic importance of digital.
- p. Public Services Staff Commission Annual Report.

9. **Planning**

- a. DC/2015/01541 – mineral permission review to excavate stone for building purposes at Cledd-y-Tan Wood, Kilgwrrwg – recommended for refusal.
- b. DC/2016/00462 – variation of Condition No 2 of planning permission of DC/2014/01032 at Tyn-y-Coed, Star Hill, Devauden – recommended for approval.
- c. E6840/A/16/3150437 Appeal against the refusal of planning permission for DC/2014/01489 – demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with new residential dwelling with associated access, curtilage and landscaping works at Pwll-y- Cath, Newchurch – for information only.
- d. APP/E6840/A/16/3143186 – Appeal decision dismissing the appeal for Old Shop Cottage, Star Hill – for information only.
- e. New and completed enforcement cases for May 2016.

10. **County Councillor's Report**

See above in the Open Session comments.

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

- a. Details of training sessions locally up to the end of July.
- b. Details of training seminars on the Council as an Employer on 4th July and the Council Meeting on 14th July.
- c. Details of OVW Larger Councils Conference on 6th July.

12. **Ward Reports**

a. JW raised the earlier request for catseyes replacement on the B4293 and AC raised the issue of the footbridge and gradient sign that had similarly been outstanding for some time. The Clerk acknowledged that, although some highways' requests had been resolved recently including patching on the Kilgwrrwg/Newchurch road, there were still several requests that had been outstanding for some time. He would try to arrange a meeting with the appropriate person at MCC to go through the list and attempt to get some timescales put on these requests. **Action: NJ.**

b. JW mentioned that, when visiting the church in Devauden recently, she had noted that the Village Bell, which had been retained when the local school closed and placed on an oak plinth, had an incorrect inscription on the plinth. She was concerned that, since a local resident was putting together a publication on the village with various photographs including one of the bell, this error should be rectified for posterity. The Council recalled the work it had done at the time to save the bell for the village and agreed that she should approach the local resident and arrange for this to be done. **Action: JW.**

c. AC asked when Howells Green might be considered for wildflower planting as had been discussed at a recent meeting. AW agreed to approach Nigel Leaworthy at MCC to take this forward. **Action: AW.**

d. AW had forwarded an email to councillors advising them that the verges on the whole length of the B4293 from Devauden to Chepstow had been cut just as flowering had reached its peak. Apparently MCC had changed its policy and that now all roads were cut only once a year. Whilst this could be beneficial from a wildlife and pollination policy point of view, timing was critical. Cutting at this time of the year meant that the benefits of the wildflowers were lost immediately and later-flowering plants denied an opportunity to set seed. It was agreed that the Clerk would draft a suitable letter to be sent to MCC expressing the Council's concern at this policy, the lack of consultation on the change and requesting that a later cut be introduced instead. **Action: NJ.** AW noted also that significant dips at various points along the length of the road at 66.3 had appeared. **Action: NJ.**

e. IC advised that there was a significant infestation of Japanese Knotweed at Church Wood on 57.6(Itton Church Lane) just south of Itton Church, and needed to be removed. **Action: NJ.** He also noted that a sign had appeared on the B4235 making drivers aware of alpacas. In view of this he asked if MCC could provide a further sign on that road before Itton Church Lane identifying the way to Itton Church. **Action: NJ.**

13. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held in Itton Village Hall on Monday 25th July at 7pm.

POLICE REPORT 23 May-25th June

17/06 – report of break to a garage in Itton. Quite a bit of garden equipment has been stolen and it is believed that a vehicle was used. Unfortunately, no-one saw or heard anything.

25/06 – there was a report of off-road bikes being ridden around Chepstow Park Wood Itton during the afternoon. Observations were passed out and no other calls were received.

On the 24th June we received a report that a garage was also broken into in the Llangwm area and garden equipment and a motor for a boat was stolen, so making sure people are locking their garages and securing them appropriately for the value of the items they are storing.

Members of the public in attendance for the Open Session: Justin Cooke, Chris Jackson, Ian Johnson, Malcolm Wigley, Andrew Jenkins, C.A. Jenkins, Peter and Jayne Kirby, Julie and Michael Layzell, Phil Rumbold, Martin Chainey, JW Fatcher, Ken Fatcher and Medina Johnson.