CYNGOR CYMUNED

GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2020**

## **Present:** Community Councillors Andy Barnes, Jan Butler, Rose Thayers, Colin Deakins, Janet Robins, Peter Daniel, Nicola Awni, Lucyann Rands and Syd Welford

**Apologies:** Community Councillors Owen Dodd and Nigel Morrey

**Absent without apology:** Community CouncillorRoger Howells

**In attendance:**  Jonathan Lazenby (Clerk)

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | **Apologies for Absence**  As above. In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Andy Barnes chaired the meeting. |  |
| 2 | **Declarations of Interest**  The Vice-Chair asked members whether they had any declarations of interest to make. The Vice-Chair reminded those present that they should notify the meeting of any additional interests which became apparent during the progress of the meeting. |  |
| 3 | **Chairman’s Remarks**  The Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. |  |
| 4 | **Approval of the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 16th Nov 2020** (including closed session).The minutes of the meeting were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniels and seconded by Councillor Butler. | Clerk |
| 5 | **Matters Arising**   1. Item 6 (iii) – Lapstone Road sign – SWTRA have advised that the cost of the various assessments (visibility etc), would be circa £15k. However, they have agreed that these would not be necessary if the sign could be mounted on land owned by MCC. The Clerk has checked and MCC do appear to own sufficient land at the side to allow a sign to be seen from the main road. It was agreed that the Clerk should take the request to the next stage by submitting an application to MCC (at a cost of £100). This was proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Robins. 2. Item 7 (i) – the gritting routes have now been supplied. Clerk has requested that Plough Road be added – at least up to the Industrial estate. This has been rejected. Clerk has asked Highways if they will reconsider. 3. Item 7 (ii) - Trees by the park – it appears that MCC will not be cutting the branches to prevent nesting birds, and so Clerk will request the pavements are cleaned as and when they become excessively soiled. 4. Item 7 (iv) – The village pavements have now been sprayed by Sue Parkinson. Clerk has asked if a template can be provided for our use, but unfortunately, they do not have a spare 5. Item 8 (iv) – The Olde Pounde shop lease renewal has now been completed with the papers signed and returned by Mr Nawaz. 6. Item 8 (v) – The possible purchase of ‘accessible’ play equipment to be taken under item 8 (i) on today’s agenda (review of accounts / cashflow). 7. Item 12 – The temporary closure of School Lane has now come into operation. Clerk has written to MCC expressing disappointment at the lack of consultation with either councillors or residents. He has also queried what mitigation plans there are in case the scheme causes a backlog of traffic along Star Road. MCC have responded with a detailed note, confirming that traffic flows will be monitored. So far, the scheme appears to be working without any reported problems. 8. Item 12 – Equality & Diversity Training – Wendi Patience at OVW has advised that the course is now being re-written to allow for on-line delivery. It is anticipated that this will be completed in January. Clerk has diarised to follow up. 9. Item 19 (i) – Sight Cymru – the course has now been delivered and a short appraisal included under ‘Other reports’. 10. Item 19 (iii) – Town and Country Planning Strategic Development Plan Wales 2021 and regulations to establish Corporate Joint Committees. An on-line meeting has now been arranged for Wednesday 20th Jan from 10am until 12pm. Invitation forwarded to Councillors Rands, Robins, and Deakins who had expressed an interest in ‘attending’. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| 6 | **Maintenance** (inc. items reported but not addressed) (i) Mike Moran from MCC has advised that it will become a legal requirement to have a ‘no smoking’ sign on all park entrances. Clerk to co-ordinate a request through him. Some financial assistance may be available, although the cost is unlikely to be great. Clerk to progress.  (ii) Water has been seen cascading from a drain cover on the pavement outside Goytre Village Hall. Clerk to report to Highways | Clerk  Clerk |
| 7 | **MUGA update** The MUGA item is being taken prior to the Finance item due to a new proposal from MCC which will have a significant impact on the CC’s future budget.  As advised to Councillors by email, MCC has agreed to utilise the s106 monies to take responsibility for purchasing, installing and maintaining the MUGA, based on the designs provided by Mike Moran. This avoids the need for the CC to lease the land for the MUGA together with the bottom area of the park (the latter incurring grass cutting fees in addition to the basic lease costs – c£1250 in total). Additionally, maintenance costs had been estimated at Circa £2000 a year. They will also drive the project including the SUDs (sustainable drainage) and planning applications. The CC is just requested to provide routine sweeping of leaves etc. In total this will save the CC an estimated £3250 per year in costs.  Given the previous apparent unwillingness for MCC Estates to compromise, and the reticence from MCC to proceed with a ‘traditional MUGA’, this new proposal was considered a significant step by Councillor Dodd and the Clerk, who had spent many hours trying to move the project forward. Whilst the design might not be ideal (the side fencing is only 1 metre high), and it is not ‘lockable’ (to prevent anti-social behaviour), both felt that this was a very welcome opportunity to implement the project and should be accepted. The members agreed and the proposal was formally tabled by Councillor Daniel, and seconded by Councillor Barnes and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 8 | **Finance**   1. Review of accounts / cashflow.   The latest cashflow statement was presented to the meeting. As advised at the previous meeting, the Clerk has adjusted the budget allocations by moving the taxable element of the Councillor Allowances and Honoraria payments (£360 and £150 respectively), to the HMRC budget line, from where they will be paid in due course.  There was no further comment or observation.  Following Councillor Awni’s request at the last meeting, the Clerk has established the cost for MCC to install an ‘accessible’ basket swing would be £4975 (plus VAT). This could be financed by using the £3k remaining in the capital account, and utilising the £2k allocated under repairs / maintenance / renewals for MUGA maintenance this financial year (which won’t be required). Clerk suggested the priority should be Little Mill Park, for which we have primary responsibility (Keep In View the CC is spending a significant amount in Goytre on the flower gardens / meadow, and has approved the proposal for the MUGA to be installed) – this was debated with some Councillors feeling that greater use would be made of the swing in Goytre. However, it was eventually agreed that LM should be the priority, but subject to a park survey to determine the adequacy of the current equipment – Clerk believes this may have been covered in the annual H&S report and will locate a copy to distribute to Councillors.  Clerk advised St Illtyd’s Church had requested the CC’s contribution of £500 towards the upkeep of the graveyard. Payment was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Deakins. Clerk to arrange payment.  The Clerk has also renewed the CC’s anti-virus software by purchasing a new copy from Amazon at a cost of £8.99 (much cheaper than on-line renewal at £45), which he will claim via expenses.  Wales Audit have advised us that we will receive a full transaction-based audit for the 2020/21 financial year, as part of their new three-year audit cycle. We will receive the basic audit in the following two years.   1. Payments made since the Nov 16th meeting  £ 2. Review of 2021/22 budget and finalisation of 2021/22 precept.  The following updated proposal (fifth draft) was presented to Councillors (changes from previous version in bold)     Given the acceptance of the proposal for MCC to install and maintain the MUGA the allowance of £2000 (+VAT) under maintenance is now no longer required and can be removed, or re-allocated to capital (perhaps to allow for spending on accessible equipment in one of the parks). Councillor Butler proposed the funds should be reallocated to capital spending and this was seconded by Councillor Robins.  Clerk advised MCC have confirmed their ground maintenance prices for Little Mill park - £416.27 for grass / hedge cutting and £156.15 for the annual equipment inspection (both plus VAT). Acceptance was proposed by Councillor Deakins and seconded by Councillor Rands. Clerk to confirm to MCC.  Based on the proposed 2021/22 budget figures, the following comments were made:   1. Councillor Awni challenged whether an increase in the precept from £34,000 to £35,000 was justified, highlighting that the precept in 2015 was £27,500, meaning residents had been subjected to a 27% increase over 7 years. As a result of the pandemic many people would see no pay rise, or even worse might lose their job. 2. Councillor Awni felt that much of the CC’s costs were in overheads, including wages, salary, Councillor allowances and honoraria. 3. The Clerk advised that much of the overheads were necessary staff costs or in the case of Councillor allowances, mandated. 4. The Clerk advised that the areas of spend had changed over the years with a move from funding the Community Centre to direct spending on community services – for example the village cleaning and maintenance, and the expansion of the dog bin collections. Councillor Rands also mentioned the purchase of the SIDs units. 5. The Clerk advised that he thought the proposed increase would likely be in the order of a little over 50p per household. Generally, the GFCC Band D equivalent compared favourably with many other T&CCs in Monmouthshire.   After further discussion two proposals were tabled:  - An increase in precept to £35,000 - proposed by Councillors Barnes and seconded by Councillor Deakins, and;  - Leaving the precept at its current level of £34,000 – proposed by Councillor Awni and seconded by Councillor Butler.  A vote was taken on the proposal to increase to £35,000 which was passed by 7 votes for and 2 against. The second proposal therefore fell and the 2021/22 precept was set at £35,000.  MCC have also asked again whether the CC would prefer a single payment in April, or three separate payments (as now). Clerk advised that there was little advantage in having the funds all at once as interest rates were so low or even zero. It was therefore proposed to retain the status quo by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Daniel. Clerk advised by MCC that they will adopt only one payment system and the final decision will be based on the majority view of T&CCs. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| 9 | **Planning Committee – To accept the responses of the planning committee meeting held on 23rd November 2020.**  The Council considered the planning committee’s reports from their meetings of the 23rd November. The Chair of the committee, Councillor Barnes, moved that the responses in the minutes from the meeting be accepted by Full Council. These covered the following proposals:   * DM/2020/01589 (MCC) - Sunnyview, Abergavenny Road, Penperlleni, Pontypool, NP4 0AD * 20/19239/FUL (BBNPA) - Court Bleddyn Farm, Folly Lane, Pontypool Torfaen NP4 8TS Acceptance was proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Deakins and carried unanimously.   It was noted that application DM/2020/01459 (Proposed rebuilding of outbuilding  1 Pen Y Wern Cottage, Pen-y-wern Road, Penperlleni, NP4 0AB) has been resubmitted to MCC with the location of the outbuilding moved to avoid the route of the by-way. This appears to satisfy the only concern the Planning Committee had raised during their review, and as a result it was proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Daniel that the Clerk should confirm with MCC that Councillors had no further concerns or issues with the proposal.  Council also took the opportunity to consider the diversion of Footpath no.93 (as part of planning permission DM/2019/00241) – this related to the new property by the football ground. Councillors agreed the proposed diversion seemed reasonable, although a gate (to help dog walkers gain access to the footpath) appeared to be more practical than the stile which appears to have been installed. Other than this suggestion Councillors had no issues or concerns and this was formally proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Butler.  There are currently no scheduled Planning Committee meetings | Clerk  Clerk |
| 10 | **Youth Representatives – advertisement** As requested at the last meeting, the Clerk has redistributed the proposed advertisement for final comments and approval.  The advert was proposed by Councillor Awni and seconded by Councillor Butler.  A discussion then followed as to whether it was necessary to include all of the schools in any distribution (aside from Goytre Fawr Primary which was mandatory). Some Councillors felt this was unnecessary given their distance from the Community. Others pointed out that all would be attended by young adults from the villages. However, it was recognised that all schools and colleges were currently pre-occupied with maintaining teaching during the pandemic. In the end it was agreed to limit the advertisement to the following:   * The village Facebook sites * The local Churches/Chapels * The Scouts / Guides * Goytre Fawr Primary * The Village Noticeboards (including the village halls) * The CC web site   As a post-Christmas lockdown appeared likely, it was felt that the advert should be delayed until at least the third week in January (w/c 18th) – the latter being the date of the next Full Council meeting, when it was suggested that the situation be reviewed and this was agreed. | Clerk |
| 11 | **Meeting Dates 2021/22** The Clerk had previously distributed the following dates for the 2021/22 meeting dates.  **Existing dates**  18th Jan – OK to retain  15th Feb – Clerk suggests moving to 22nd Feb as clashes with half term  15th Mar – OK, but Clerk suggests moving to 22nd Mar to maintain 4-week interval between Feb and March meetings  19th Apr – OK to retain as the current date maintains a 4-week interval after the suggested new date for the March meeting    **New dates**  **2021**  17th May / 14th June / 12th July (it is acknowledged this leaves a significant gap between Aug & Sept meetings). However, the 19th/20th July are INSET days, so schools will effectively close on Fri 16th July)  6th Sept / 11th Oct / 15th Nov / 13th Dec  **2022**  17th Jan / 14th Feb / 21st Mar / 25th Apr  16th May (inc ASM) which must follow within 14 days of the election.  It was agreed that the suggested 2021 dates be confirmed, with the 2022 meetings remaining tentative at this stage. This was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Daniel and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 12 | **Reports – questions based on previously distributed update.**   * **Little Mill Village Hall**    + No report submitted. * **Goytre Village Hall**   + No report submitted. * **Goytre School Governors**    + No report submitted. * **Goytre Community Centre**   + No report submitted. * **Other Reports**    + Sight Cymru – provided a training presentation to Councillors Butler and Rands, and the Clerk on the challenges faced by people with sight loss, especially during the current pandemic. We also have the opportunity to appoint a sight loss champion and become an accredited sight loss friendly organisation. Councillor Rands agreed to become our Sight Champion (supported by the Clerk). This was proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Robins.   + Code of Conduct Training – Councillor Robins confirmed that she had completed her Code of Conduct Training on-line which she had found interesting and informative. | Clerk |
| 13 | **Donations**   1. **Sparkle** – a charity providing for the relief of poverty, sickness and distress amongst children and their families have approached the CC for a donation.  Clerk has requested further information to confirm the level of support provided within the ward, which Sparkle have confirmed will follow. Clerk to carry forward. 2. **Pink Bins** – the school have requested two bins to enable them to join the monthly food collections. In addition, Angela Jones has indicated an additional bin would be useful to widen the collection area. Councillor Awni wanted to establish how they would be funded. Clerk confirmed they would be purchased from the donations budget (current spend £590 vs £1500 budget). The purchase of the three bins at a cost of c£55 under the power of well-being was proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Robins. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 14 | **Communications**   1. Refill Wales have provided a press release for possible inclusion in the diary. Although not directly sponsored by the Community Council (the idea is sponsored by Welsh Govt.), Councillors felt that during the current pandemic it was not appropriate to promote a scheme that might include the need to use third party water supplies to top up a personal bottle. Councillors therefore agreed that the time was not right at present and decided to take no further action for the time being. 2. The University of Southampton have requested help with a survey they are undertaking to understand peoples’ behaviours to avoid Covid-19. Councillor Awni said she had already posted their Facebook link on the village site. 3. MCC has invited T & CCs to a consultation and engagement meeting on the Replacement Local Development Plan and Spatial Options, on Thursday 21st January between 6.00pm and 7.30pm via teleconference. Councillors Butler and Daniel said they would like to attend. Clerk to arrange for invitations to be sent. 4. MCC has invited T & CCs to a consultation on the draft budget proposals for 2021/22 on 2nd February between 6.30pm and 8pm via teleconference. Councillor Butler said she would like to attend. Clerk to arrange for an invitation to be sent. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 15 | **Advertising - Usk and Raglan Diary contributions Mar / Apr 2021**.  There are currently no items for inclusion. Any further items should be advised to Councillor Welford |  |
| 16 | **Date of next meeting & close –** Monday 18th January 2021 at 19.30.  (Clerk advised that ‘the office’ would be closed from this Friday until Monday 4th Jan). | All |

Chairman: **…………………………………….……………** Date:**…………………….**