CYNGOR CYMUNED

GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 15th NOVEMBER 2021**

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

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

**Apologies:** None

**Absent without apology:** Community Councillor Roger Howells

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | **Apologies for Absence**  As above. |  |
| 2 | **Declarations of Interest**  The Chair asked the members present whether they had any declarations of interest to make. Councillor Awni had previously advised the Clerk that she had an interest in the item on Longhouse Barn under ‘matters arising’. Councillor Welford also advised that he has an interest in this item. Councillor Robins, is the wife of Mr Paul Robins, who has submitted a request for a sign for Capel Ed Chapel (see Communications agenda item). No other ‘interests’ were forthcoming. The Chair reminded members that they should notify the meeting of any additional interests which became apparent during the progress of the meeting. | All / Clerk |
| 3 | **Chairman’s Remarks**  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair also noted the sad passing of Robert French, the previous Chair of the Community Council, who had been a long serving member until ill-health led him to stand down in November 2019. The Chair has sent a card on behalf of the Community Council to Robert’s wife (Therese), to express our condolences. It was also proposed by Councillor Rands, and seconded by Councillor Daniel, that the Community Council should send a bouquet of flowers and this was passed unanimously. | Cllr. Butler |
| 4 | **Approval of the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th October.**  The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Morrey. | Clerk |
| 5 | **Matters Arising**   1. Item 5 (i) – The Clerk reconfirmed the opinion of One Voice Wales, that the CC can use s.72 of the 1984 Road Traffic Act to fund the purchase and installation of the signs. MCC Highways have advised the cost of a ‘no through road’ sign placed at the junction of Capel Ed Lane and Longhouse Barn (to include the house numbers), plus a separate sign on the opposite corner (again with house numbers) to indicate the location of house numbers 15 to 1, will be £210.00 plus VAT for each sign. The Welsh Language Policy is still to be agreed, but if a Welsh translation is required, the price will increase due to the need for an additional line. Councillors agreed that, notwithstanding the policy, the Welsh translation should be included and proposed a maximum budget of £275 + VAT to cover the cost. This was proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Deakins and the motion passed (Councillors Awni and Welford did not vote). 2. Item 5 (ii) – Defibrillator Training. A decision to postpone the training until 2022 was taken, due to the challenges of ensuring social distancing guidelines were observed, and the extremely high Covid infection levels in the village. 3. Item 5 (v) – Dog Waste. The move to fortnightly collections has caused issues with overflowing bins in the village and excessive amounts for Merlin to deliver at the disposal centre. As an emergency measure, Merlin agreed to alternate weekly collections for the central part of Goytre village, two bins in Little Mill and 1 or 2 bins on the towpath – 10 bins in total (Clerk is trying to ascertain exactly which ones), at an additional fortnightly cost of £62.50 (so £125 per month). This arrangement has now been regularised with a collection schedule, which the Clerk has distributed to Councillors. This will still save us nearly £700 over the cost of weekly collections for all the bins. Agreement to the new schedule was proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Daniel and passed unanimously. The Clerk to monitor (with the assistance of Councillors) how well this works. This may allow us in the longer term to target weekly collections only where necessary, saving costs, whilst ensuring well-used bins are emptied promptly. 4. Item 6 (i) – The battery for Goytre Village Hall defibrillator has been replaced. 5. Item 6 (iii) – Little Mill Pelican Crossing. The Clerk has reported the overgrown hedge (which is obscuring the red light), to MCC Highways. Councillor Rands advised that she had been contacted by Highways, who have confirmed that it is a private hedge and they have requested it be cut. MCC will cut the hedge if the resident fails to remedy the situation. 6. Item 12 (i) – The Clerk has sent an email to the IRPW advising them of Councillors’ Comments. 7. Item 14 – Council meeting dates. The Clerk has had an initial look at potential meeting dates for 2022/23. Although the second Monday of the month can be avoided in the most part, the ideal dates would see the majority of meetings scheduled for the second Monday. Clerk to bring the suggested dates to the next meeting. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 6 | **Maintenance (inc. items reported but not addressed)**   1. Councillor Robins has advised that the chip shop flower trough would benefit from the planting of some spring bulbs. The cost of the bulbs is £18.80. The purchase was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Awni and passed unanimously. 2. Councillor Deakins asked if the Clerk could chase the repairs to the pavement outside Little Mill Village Hall. Clerk to action 3. Goytre Railway Bridge Surface – this continues to deteriorate. Clerk to forward to Councillors the latest emails from MCC on the situation. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 7 | **Finance**   1. Payments made since the previous meeting   **£**    There are still three outstanding HMRC forms to be received from Councillors, and so the allowances have not yet been paid. We have unfortunately now missed the November payroll run, and due to end of year volumes, it will not be possible to set up the new accounts in December. Payment will therefore not be made until January 2022 at the earliest (assuming receipt of the outstanding forms).   1. Review of Accounts / Cashflow   The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the Oct 2021 cashflow.  This included payments to MCC for the cleaning of both villages cleaning, Little Mill Park hedge cutting and play area inspection, plus the £400 for the recent asbestos survey.  There was no further comment or observation.   1. 2020/2021 Audit Outcome (if available)   The audit outcome has not yet been received.   1. Budget 2022/23 – Latest draft The Clerk / RFO presented the following first draft budget for 2022/23 for consideration. Items added since the last meeting include:    1. A budget of £1600 to provide for an attendance allowance of £10 per meeting (including full Council, Planning and Finance groups).    2. A budget of £100 in case of need for membership of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.    3. An adjustment to reflect that the first 8 collections of the dog bins will be based on 20 bins (reflecting the current boundary). In addition, Merlin will be VAT registered, so an additional amount of £1123.20 has now been included in the VAT budget line.   The proposed revised budget is shown below (adjusted figures highlighted in bold purple), and incorporates a suggested figure of £37,000 for the precept (as proposed by the Finance Committee at their meeting on 5th October).    There was some debate as to whether the precept should be increased, with Councillor Awni objecting, due to the number of likely price increases to be faced by residents in the coming months. Councillor Butler said that while she understood the concerns regarding inflation, she felt it was more difficult to ask for future increases if the precept had been ‘frozen’. Councillor Morrey advised that the suggested increase amounted to less than 3p a week for each household. It was acknowledged that Llanover residents would see a significant increase in their Band D rate, and it was queried whether there would be any transitional arrangements. The Clerk thought not, but would submit this question to be answered at the meeting arranged by Matt Phillips to be held next week. It was eventually agreed that the final decision on the precept should be deferred until the December Council meeting, by which time Councillors can take into account the response to the question above.  Councillors also debated whether to include a budget (of £1600) for the attendance allowance proposed by the IRPW. Councillor Morrey felt we should include the budget to safeguard the monies, and then it would be up to the new Council to decide if they wished to implement the policy. As with the precept debate there were mixed feelings. Eventually, the budget was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Thayers. The vote was 6 votes for, 2 votes against (Councillors Awni and Barnes) and 2 abstentions (Councillors Deakins and Morrey). The Chair, (Councillor Dodd), did not cast a vote. The motion to include a budget was therefore carried. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 8 | **Planning Committee**   1. To accept the responses of the Planning Committee held on 12th Oct. 2021   The Committee met to consider the following applications:   1. DM/2021/01420 - Planning Permission - Demolition of existing apartment blocks and erection of 6 dwellings with parking and associated works.   Melyn Bach Avenue, Little Mill, Pontypool, NP4 0HP   1. 21/20410/FUL (BBNPA) - Proposed erection of double garage with studio above.   New Barn Farm, Maes Y Coed, Pen-Y-Stair Lane Goytre NP4 8RG  Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting of 12th October was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Deakins.   1. Other updates  There were no other updates.   The next scheduled meeting is on 18th November. |  |
| 9 | **Public Conveniences – maintenance update** Following the survey undertaken for the Community Council (which confirmed the presence of Asbestos), the Clerk approached the surveyors for the names of recommended approved removal contractors. Two company names were provided, one based in Hereford and one in Liverpool. The Liverpool based company had no local office/personnel, and they advised any contract with them would incur additional hotel accommodation costs, which would make it unviable for us. The Hereford based company attended the site within days and confirmed that there was a substantial amount of debris in the loft area, meaning that removal would have to be undertaken under controlled conditions. They have also recommended removal of the ceilings given their deteriorating condition (as a result the gents toilet has been closed with immediate effect). Total costs will be:   * For removal works in accordance with latest regulations £3998 (plus VAT). This is comfortably below the estimated cost suggested by the surveyors. * Specialist air monitoring over 4 days @ £450 per day (plus VAT) * Reinstatement of the ceilings at an approximate cost of £1200 (plus VAT). * Contingency of 10% - £700     This brings the total of the main works to £7700, (excluding incidental costs such as the removal and reinstatement of ceiling lights. The Clerk has now secured Herras fencing from MCC, FOC), to provide a safe corridor to the decontamination shower.  The Chair has written to Councillor Murphy at MCC who has agreed that the County Council will meet half of the costs.  The model Financial Regulations (Wales), s11.1 (g) state that the Clerk / RFO should strive to obtain three quotations unless for specialist services (as per 11.1 (a) (iii)). In this case, of the two recommended companies approached, one has declined to quote, due to their distance from the work and required accommodation costs. Given the very specialist nature of this work and associated regulatory requirements (the removal will be under ‘controlled conditions’ approved by the HSE), the Clerk recommends that we contract with the site surveyor recommended by MCC, and one of the surveyor’s recommended companies. In addition to the exceptions allowed by 11.1 (a) (iii), our Financial Regulations state that if applications are made to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council – as per s11.1 (c), and detailed here (as above). This recommendation was accepted by Council and formally proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Morrey. The proposal was carried unanimously.  The Clerk to confirm with the contractors and agree a date for the work to commence (currently likely to be Monday 6th December) | Clerk |
| 10 | **Plans for updating/replacing/adding play equipment in the Park** At the last meeting Councillor Rands agreed to explore the costs of installing a ground level trampoline with wheelchair access. The following quotes have been received:   1. GL Jones Playgrounds   - 3.5m x 2m £9800 + VAT  - 2m x 2m £7790 + VAT 2. Wickstead   - 2m x 2m £7139 + VAT 3. Hags   - 1m x 4m 7082 + VAT   All quotes include the trampoline and rubber mat surround. Councillor Butler thought that in general, the smaller (2 x 2m) trampolines would be more appropriate. However, the 1 x 4m unit may also allow use by the wheelchair user’s carer at the same time, and so both options should be explored. It was thought that we may also need to provide a ‘pathway’ to the unit for wheelchair users.  It was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Deakins, that Councillor Rands arrange for surveys to be undertaken by both Wickstead and Hags. | Cllr. Rands |
| 11 | **Youth Representatives** A decision to postpone the advertising of this position was taken before the summer ‘recess’ due to the Covid situation. The Clerk wondered whether Councillors now wished to progress this, or perhaps to delay until the spring when the position could be opened to young people from the new area (i.e., Llanover). It was agreed that this would make sense and that the issue should be brought back before Council in the New Year. | Clerk |
| 12 | **Boundary Changes**  The order covering the new boundaries has now been released: [The Monmouthshire (Communities) Order 2021 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2021/1227/contents/made). It is a lengthy document (c45 pages), although the vast majority of the order simply sets out the changes to the existing and the new wards. There is a short section on Finance and the requirement for meeting of the new Councils. The Finance section is difficult to interpret, but OVW believes both sections only apply to completely new Councils.  Matt Phillips from MCC has now sent through a draft checklist for Clerks and is shortly to organise a videoconference meeting to enable common issues to be discussed. The checklist advises that the changes will take place under The Local Government Changes Regulations 1976 (see especially reg. 62.2). This means that all property, assets, contracts, deeds, bonds etc will automatically transfer to the new Community Council.  However, discussions with OVW have indicated the likelihood of there being no defined process regarding the transfer of reserves, and that it will be up to individual CC’s to ‘negotiate’ between each other. The (GFCC) Clerk has suggested it should be calculated based on the percentage of properties moving to the new area and applied to the reserves as at 28.04.22 (the day before it is believed the first tranche of the 2022/23 precept will be received). Llanbadoc CC have agreed to this in principle. This is to be put to both Councils in due course (unless WG legislation suggests / imposes an alternative approach).  In the meantime, Councillors Deakins and Rands, together with the Clerk, held a teleconference on Tuesday 2nd November to discuss a number of issues that will need to be concluded as part of the boundary re-alignment which will see Little Mill transfer to Llanbadoc. Notes taken by the Clerk at the meeting have been distributed to Councillors.  It was queried whether meetings of the new Council will be held in Llanover Village Hall. Councillor Dodd pointed out that Llanover will only have one Councillor, and that any decision on meeting venues will be a question for the new Council. |  |
| 13 | **Future of Community Centre - Report from Community Centre Committee** Councillor Butler reported that Councillor Jane Pratt, Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services had visited and was shocked at the state of the Community Centre, and felt that residents didn’t have a community building that was fit for purpose. She cited Paul Matthews, MCC CEO and his mission statement that “We want to build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.”  Councillor Pratt has contacted Nicholas Keyse, the Estates Development Manager regarding Jack & Jill’s. He thought that demolition was probably the most appropriate way forward, although would look at the possibility of refurbishment, but felt this would probably not be viable.  There is also the possibility of a Community Asset Transfer of the main building. The Clerk and Councillor Awni reminded Councillors that the Community Council acted only as a Custodian Trustee for the building, and that all decisions regarding the management of the Community Centre were down to the Management Committee, who were all Trustees of the Centre. These were mainly Community Council members, although there are two members of the ‘public’ (unfortunately, efforts to recruit from the wider community had not proved successful).  The meeting acknowledged the responsibility of the Centre Management Committee who will now look at the options available and take these forward as appropriate. |  |
| 14 | **Issues from Councillor Pratt’s visit to village**  Following her visit to the Community Centre Councillor Pratt accompanied Councillor Butler on a tour of the village. Items raised included   * Potholes in railway bridge surface and lack of completion of the re surfacing that took place in 2019 * Pedestrian Crossing – unfinished for 18 months. This has been taken up with Mark Hand (Head of placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding). Councillor Barnes declared an interest in this item. * Toilets – made her aware of the asbestos report that was not given to us and that we had asked for 50% of ensuing costs (now agreed). * Breakdown of the high friction surface on A4042 junction at Goytre Arms was noted. * WG legislation means there will be a 20mph speed limit for the whole village (this may possibly include the village stretch of the A4042) * MUGA – said we were expecting the go ahead from Mike Moran soon – (MM confirmed today that he is meeting with the architects on 17th Nov). * Zero food waste project in Village Hall – Cllr. Pratt was impressed by this and provided a contact: Desirie Mansfield who’s is the Community Food Project Lead. Details have been passed to Deb Fury as there may be the possibility of obtaining a fridge for the project. * Walked around the Fairfield Road/Newtown Road/Star Road loop. Discussed the narrow roads/ wide pavements and the resultant pavement parking and double parking that impedes the school buses, and has forced the returning children from St Alban’s to have to cross the A4042 at peak time. Jane noted that the Mon Housing development is on this road and the inadequacy of parking. Cllr Butler has had a number of Communications with Mark Hand to link this to the issue of service bus pickups on A4042. If this ‘loop’ was a clear route, then we would be able to approach the bus companies to drop off and pick up near the village shop too. * Electric charging points were also discussed – currently WAG want a maximum of 20 miles between points. MCC run a number of electric vehicles and felt that charging points in the car park would be desirable. * Faded street signs - emails have been sent to Libby Jones (Street naming and numbering officer), and the signs in Goytre have been added to the list. However, budgetary restrictions are likely to delay replacements which average about £210 plus VAT   Councillors thanked Councillor Butler for her update. |  |
| 15 | **Reports – questions based on previously distributed update.**   * **Goytre Village Hall**    + The food hall is operating well.   + Hall bookings are going ok.   + The Post office has attended regularly since the last report. * **Little Mill Village Hall**   + A new ramp has been installed inside the Annexe entrance to allow for disabled access.   + A senior Christmas dinner at the hall is being planned. * **Goytre School Governors**    + There has been no meeting since the last report.   + As reported above, residents continue to express concern regarding the traffic problems in the village, some of which may be exacerbated by the closure of School Lane during dropping-off and picking up times. This is leading to cars being parked inconsiderately, on street corners etc, often causing access problems and for other vehicles passing. * **Goytre Community Centre**   + (Covered as part of a separate agenda item)   **Other Reports**   * **None** |  |
| 16 | **Donations**  There have been no donation requests. | Clerk |
| 17 | **Communications**  Mr Paul Robins has approached the Clerk on behalf of the leadership of Capel Ed Presbyterian Chapel to request that signs are erected in the village to advertise the location of the Chapel. Similar ‘tourist’ style signs are already in place for the Shop, Scout Hut, Community Garden etc. The Clerk has written to Councillor Howells (who installed these), who has responded that he personally does not have any sign making materials or equipment and that all the signs he has done in the past have been using equipment belonging to GASC.  Clerk suggests that as an alternative the Chapel may want to approach MCC, although the application process appears a little onerous. The Clerk to explore other options in the meantime. | Clerk |
| 18 | **Advertising** - Usk and Raglan Diary contributions Jan / Feb 2022.  Councillor Welford advised the deadline for submissions is November 19th. It was suggested that the following items be included in the next edition:   * Plans for the MUGA are to be drawn up soon * Boundary Review – forthcoming changes in May 2022 * School Buses – trying to resolve the access problems for the school buses * Little Mill Village Hall has installed a wheelchair ramp. | Cllr. Welford |
| 19 | **Date of next meeting and close:** Monday 13th December 2021 at 19.30. | All |

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