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COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2022**

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

**In attendance:** Jordan Harbin - Community and Corporate Fundraiser for McDonalds’
 House charities (Wales). Mr Julian Bowen-Sargent – Little Mill resident,
 Jonathan Lazenby (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Community Councillors Colin Deakins, Nicola Awni Syd Welford

**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. No ‘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, and in particular, Jordan Harbin from McDonalds’ House charities (Wales) as well as Mr Julian Bowen-Sargent, a resident of Little Mill.  |  |
| 4 | **Jordan Harbin - Community and Corporate Fundraiser for McDonalds’ House Charities (Wales)**At this point (7.35), the Chair suspended standing orders to enable Jordan Harbin to address the meeting and to explain the role of the charity. Jordan explained that the charity operates 12 houses across the UK with McDonald’s being a major sponsor, raising money through their food outlets. The houses are made available to provide families somewhere to stay while their children are treated in specialist hospitals away from their home. During 2019/20 the charity helped some 8625 families, with the average stay being 18 nights and 86 miles away from their home.Jordan asked if we could promote the charity. The Clerk offered use of the noticeboards for posters, and the Chair offered a post on the village Facebook page. Jordan also asked to let her know if we were aware of any local funds they can apply for. When asked, Jordan advised that typical donations range from £200 to £500.The Chair thanked Jordan for outlining the work of the charity during tonight’s meeting. The meeting reconvened at 7.41pm.  | Clerk |
| 5 | **Approval of the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17th January.**The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Rands. All Councillors voted in favour.  | Clerk |
| 6 | **Matters Arising**1. Item 6 (i) – Longhouse Barn street name sign. The language policy has now been signed off by MCC who have agreed to meet the cost of the new sign incorporating a ‘T’ to indicate a no through road. Once installed MCC will visit the site to consider the installation of a further sign to clarify the location of house numbers 1 to 15 (which may be at our cost).
2. Item 6 (ii) – Repairs to the pavement by the Village Hall. The ‘repair’ is still outstanding. It is believed Councillor Deakins continues to monitor via ‘MyMonmouthshire’.
3. Item 6 (iv) – Little Mill Pelican crossing – MCC have confirmed that the hedge has now been cut.
4. Item 17 (ii) – There has been no response to the voicemail the Clerk left regarding the possibility of an allotment site in the village. Councillor Dodd will approach the resident again to see if she is still interested.
 | Cllr DeakinsCllr Dodd |
| 7 | **Maintenance (inc. items reported but not addressed)**There were no items to report.  |  |
| 8 | **Finance**1. Payments made since the previous meeting  £

  1. Review of Accounts / Cashflow

The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the Jan 2022 cashflow.There was no further comment or observation regarding the cashflow.1. SLCC Membership Review

Our SLCC membership fee is due on 1st March (£186), which is just £1 more than last year. However, the Clerk does not feel that we are getting value for money from our membership. The advice line appears to cost 45p per minute and voicemails left are not returned. He has sent an email this morning to complain, but as yet has received no response. He therefore proposed that we postpone renewal of our membership for the time being until we receive a reply. This approach was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Robins. 1. Appointment of Internal AuditorIn preparation for this year’s audit, the Clerk request that Councillor approve that we approach EHAccountancy of Abergavenny to appoint them to undertake our Internal audit for the 2021/22 financial year. (EHA undertook this work last year). This was proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Rands.
2. Clerk’s salary from 1st April 2021 (Closed session)An increase, backdated to 1st April 2021 was agreed by Councillors
 | ClerkClerkClerk |
| 9 | **Planning Committee** 1. Update on the planning committee meetings held on 24th January 2022

The Committee met on 24th January to consider the following applications:1. DM/2022/00002 – Householder: Two Storey Side Extension

Mon Abri, Plough Road, Penperlleni, Goytre, Pontypool, Monmouthshire, NP4 0AL1. DM/2022/00013 – Householder: New domestic garage

Mulberry House, Berthon Road, Little Mill, Pontypool, Monmouthshire, NP4 0HL.1. DM/2022/00023 - Householder: Construction of rear extension and loft conversion.

17 Trem Yr Ysgol, Penperlleni, Goytre, Monmouthshire, NP4 0DDAcceptance of the minutes of the meeting (previously circulated), was proposed by Councillor Rands and seconded by Councillor Robins. All were in favour.Councillor Barnes wondered whether our standard comments regarding the consideration of climate issues in our responses to the applications were pointless (as they are not a planning requirement). However, Councillor Butler felt that it was important that we make these comments. 1. Other updates There are currently no scheduled meetings with just a consultation on an application to create a public footpath at Cwm Wood to be considered. However, Councillor Barnes advised that the application is only for a footpath through a wood, and unless anyone had any specific local knowledge, he did not feel it worth convening a meeting specifically to discuss the issue.
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| 10 | **‘We don’t buy Crime’ Gwent Police initiative.**At last month’s meeting Gwent Police presented the ‘We don’t buy crime’ scheme, and invited the Community Council to support its implementation by purchasing a smart water ‘kit’ (£9.95 each – normally £30), for every house in the Community. A 75% take up rate would see the installation of street signage as a further deterrent. The Clerk has checked the legislation and confirmed that the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 (s31) allows us to take action to help the detection or prevention of crime in the area. The Council currently has 1135 properties (this will fall to 1021 under the new boundary). Either way the potential cost is therefore likely to be in the region of at least £10k. Councillor Butler thought that in principle this was a good idea, but felt uncomfortable to potentially commit such a large sum of money when the boundaries were changing in May. Councillor Butler felt that any decision should be the responsibility of the new Council. There was general agreement to this and so the Clerk will put on the May agenda for the new Council to consider. | Clerk |
| 11 | **One Voice Wales / (SLCC) / WG self-evaluation toolkit – formation of Task and Finish Group**This was discussed at the last meeting, when the Clerk advised we are being asked to undertake completion of Parts 1 and 2 for the Vision Purpose and Community Planning Theme of the toolkit.  Part 1 is for the Clerk to complete. The completion of Part 2 is the responsibility of Councillors. Councillor Daniel and the Clerk have been asked to feedback the results to Welsh Government via a focus group on Monday 28th February. In response to this Councillors provided the following comments:* The guide provided some useful questions for Councillors to consider, but overall was too complicated.
* The size and complexity of some sections could put-off smaller less well-resourced Community Councils. Those with greater resources would find it easier to implement, therefore, potentially creating greater divergence between those adopting best practice and the rest.
* The Clerk felt that two separate manuals – one for Clerks (section 1) and one for Councillors (section 2) might be a better approach.
* It was also felt that the timing for CCs in Monmouthshire wasn’t ideal with Councillors trying to get to grips with the new boundaries / responsibilities.
* After further discussion, it was agreed that the above points should form the basis of our feedback, and this was formally proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Morrey.
 | Cllr Daniel /Clerk |
| 12 | **MUGA update**Mike Moran has provided the following update:* He has a design which addresses the issue of the need for higher sides and which is affordable from within the budget available.
* Planning application hasn’t been submitted yet as he has received strong representations from two local people concerned at the proposed location (loss of a portion of the field for football / rugby / village events).
* It would be possible to install a smaller unit on the upper level and may leave funding to address the drainage issues on the main field and/or to upgrade the children’s play area on the site.

He has asked for the Council’s views before he proceeds. The following points were made: * Councillor Morrey said there had been no football or rugby training for a number of years, and so these weren’t valid objections. Councillor Butler also commented that football was very rarely played on the existing pitch. Both felt that the top section had been dismissed as it was too visible (i.e. visually ‘intrusive’), from the main road.
* Councillor Barnes said that moving the site to the top section would mean disrupting the fruit trees and flower beds recently planted.
* Councillor Daniel felt there would be plenty of remaining green space for the annual fete / carnival, and couldn’t see the point of moving the existing proposed location.
* Councillor Rands felt that the two voices who had ‘objected’ shouldn’t outweigh the greater number who were in support.
* Councillor Robins wondered if it could be made smaller, so it could be moved slightly further away from the boundary trees to reduce the need to clear the pitch of leaves and moss.
* Councillor Thayers felt that originally the top section had been our starting point, and it had been MCC who had advised against locating the MUGA there.
* The Clerk re-examined the plan supplied by MCC, and was not sure that this was an accurate depiction of the exact position of the MUGA. There appeared to be an opportunity to move it closer to Star Road to preserve more of the exiting football pitch. Size was important to make sure the MUGA could be used for all the required sports (tennis required plenty of space around the actual court markings).
* Councillor Dodds advised that the survey (including drainage) was just the first step, and that once completed there would be a full planning application with opportunity for the Community council and residents to comment further.

Overall, at this stage, it was agreed that the existing bottom section of the park was the most appropriate location. This was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Morrey. All were in favour with the exception of Councillor Dodd who abstained from the vote. The Clerk to respond to Mike Moran’s email with the CC’s decision.  | Clerk |
| 13 | **Dog waste bins – Collection frequency**Merlin Environmental Services have reported that they believe all 20 bins require emptying on a weekly basis. The Clerk checked all the bins the day before collection last week and found only two bins (at bridge 76 -Lapstone Lane, and Greemeadow Crescent), were more than half full. The Clerk suggests we continue to monitor and then consider weekly collections (if necessary) from April (as we have the budget).This was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Morrey. | Clerk |
| 14 | **Little Mill Park Tree Maintenance** The discussion and review of the quotes was due to be held in a closed session due to the commercial sensitivity of the bids. However, as the information and names of the companies concerned had been distributed to all Councillors in advance of the meeting the Clerk felt that it was possible to discuss in open session without referring to the company names with the exception of the successful bidder.

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| Tender | Ash Tree and small Elms | Comments |
| Company 1 | £900 (no VAT) | Preferably undertake both at the same time.  Can undertake the work the w/c 14th Feb |
| Company 2 | Promised to call to arrange site visit – still o/s | Very busy doing at present. April will be the earliest date |
| Company 3 | £1000 if can gain access to the neighbouring field, £2,000 if not.  | Extremely busy – but will do the work if we can’t find anyone else – probably April at earliest |
| Company 4 | £900 + VAT | Likely to be April before work can commence.  |

Generally speaking, all three costings received were fairly similar. However, only one company 1 (Joshua Tree Services) is able to undertake the work at short notice. This was felt important as the nesting season begins in April and may mean the Ash could not be cut down until later in the year. It was therefore agreed that the contract should be awarded to Joshua Tree Services at a cost of £900 (No VAT), with the work to be undertaken as soon as possible. This was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Rands. | Clerk |
| 15 | **Consultation on Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**Welsh Government are seeking views on the guidance that will support community and town councils to put in place the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021. This covers in the main:* Multi-location meetings
* Public participation at full council meetings
* Annual reports
* Training plans
* Eligibility to exercise the general power of competence

‘Councillors were happy to delegate this review to the Clerk and for him to respond on behalf of the Community Council. This was proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Daniel. | Clerk |
| 16 | **Public Conveniences – maintenance update**The Clerk confirmed that the contractors have now completed the refurbishment. The total costs of all work are listed below (those marked \* will be shared with MCC – excluding the VAT element which GFCC will reclaim in full) * Air monitoring - £1800\* plus VAT
* Removal of ceilings and asbestos - £3998\* plus VAT
* Re-instatement of ceilings £1795.29\* plus VAT
* Removal and reinstatement of ceiling fittings (lights etc) - £300\* plus VAT
* Hire of temporary portaloos - £207\* plus VAT.
* General Refurbishment (cleaning / repainting / repairs to tiles etc) £3344.44 plus VAT.
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|  | Clerk to email MCC to obtain the 50% funding where previously agreed. The following payments now require authorisation:Gwenlecs £300 plus VAT = £360Mayglothling Waste (portaloos) = £207 plus VAT = £248.40Ian Williams Ltd £3344.44 plus VAT = £4013.33Ian Williams Ltd £1795.29 plus VAT = £2154.35To cover these payments and provide a buffer until the receipt of the next precept payment, the Clerk requested the transfer of £10k from reserves (the Unity Trust bank savings account).Authorisation for all four payments and the reserves transfer was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Morrey. All voted in favour.The Clerk wished to place on record his thanks to councillor Deakins for his help in erecting and removing the Herras fencing. | Clerk |
| 17 | **Boundary Change Update**There have been no updates from MCC or to their on-line FAQ, since the 10th December. |  |
| 18 | **Reports – questions based on previously distributed update.*** **Goytre Village Hall**
	+ Have had a few difficulties with the banking system but all cleared now.
	+ Still getting bookings and the food hall are complying with the new regulations.
	+ Post office still in regular attendance.
	+ Had an open meeting on 9th February to discuss the Queen’s Jubilee with many different ideas put forward. Will probably have a fun day with lots of activities involving the community.  Next meeting in two weeks.
* **Little Mill Village Hall**
	+ Are now taking part of 'Halls Together' which is proving informative.
	+ The current Covid risk assessment has been reviewed and amended.
	+ A new Social Sub Committee has been set up to plan the Queens Jubilee and going forward
	+ Are hoping to plan other social events for Little Mill and surrounding areas.
	+ The Queen’s Jubilee and Little Mill Party in the Park date is set for 3rd June.
	+ The village hall is actively seeking to find villagers interested in running a Community Cafe,
* **Goytre School Governors**
	+ Meeting held on the 9th February. Confirmed out of 173 children, 96.9% have attended during the term. A few staff and children have been off with Covid symptoms with the remaining staff stepping up to cover.
	+ Financially in a positive situation
	+ School Lane closure will be reviewed in May 2022.
	+ Next Meeting on the 30th March (an open meeting).
* **Goytre Community Centre**
	+ Committee met on 25th January and, after relayed Community Council view that it would be up to Centre Committee to take forward asset transfer possibility with MCC, agreed to explore this further with MCC although would keep Community Council informed of progress as the Council are the Custodian Trustees
	+ Finances seem okay at present although impact of gas/electric increases may impact on this going forwards.
	+ Annual return submitted to Charity Commission.

Councillor Butler was able to provide the following update since the original report was distributed to Councillors:* Nicholas Keyes, Property Manager with MCC has confirmed that the Jack & Jill’s buildings will be removed.  They are looking for a contractor to do the work which should be agreed within 6 weeks.
* Once appointed the contractor will draw up a schedule of works (likely to take a further 6 weeks to finalise).  Health & Safety and users of the Centre will need to be considered (perhaps undertake the work in August?). Councillor Butler has offered to be the point of contact to liaise.
* Hopefully once started the work should take 2 -3 days.
* MCC has no proposals for the land and therefore it is available for asset transfer.  A case can be put forward for future usage.
* Councillor Butler explained that the portion of the old schoolhouse and the Jack and Jill’s buildings are considered our community facility.
* GFCC have been maintaining the school building and have spent c. £70K to repair the roof as well as routine upkeep of the building/central heating system.
* Nick is happy to join us for one of our scheduled meetings but, would like some advance notice of the questions we want to ask.
* The lease to GFCC (to pay an annual nominal rent) has expired*.*
* Councillor Dodd felt that with no vehicular access, the removal forecast of 2/3 days may be optimistic. Also, it is possible that asbestos could be present in the buildings, which may slow the work down.
* **Other Reports**
	+ **Carbon Literacy Update - January 2022**This was previously distributed to Councillors at the request of Councillor Awni
	+ **MCC Climate Emergency working group update**A presentation was made regarding the Welsh Government Net Zero Carbon report. The following points were noted:
		- Vehicle emissions are determined by how vehicles are driven. The design of roads with a view to limiting speeds will be key to reducing vehicular emissions, going forward.
		- There is a difference between driving in an urban area compared to driving in rural areas in respect of vehicular emissions.
		- We only have control over 2% of emissions within Monmouthshire.
		- There is a need to engage with the town and community councils and local communities as a whole in order to further reduce emissions / undertake decarbonisation within the County.
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| 19 | **Donations**1. 1st Felin Fach Scout GroupHave requested £1000.98 to purchase the following items:  £1 x Event shelter at £230                     230.00

2 x cooker stoves at £40 each               80.001 x Pots / pans / kettle at £60                60.002 x Table at £27.99 each                      55.985 x tents at £115 each                          575.00                                    Total  1000.98Although the donations budget has only c£600 remaining, Councillors were conscious that only £1200 of the £2550 of allowances and honoraria for Councillors for 2021/22 had been claimed, and wished to reallocate the remaining £1350 to support worthy requests for financial support. Councillor Rands wished to support the group which had only recently been set up and is already well attended. Councillors agreed that Mr Julian Bowen-Sargent (who is one of the leaders) could be in attendance whilst the request was discussed. He confirmed that they already had 13 members (5 scouts and 8 cubs) with 4/5 females in the group. After discussion Councillor Rands proposed we donate the full amount and this was seconded by Councillor Morrey. All Councillors voted in favour of the resolution.  1. Welsh Air Ambulance. In recognition of our rural location, and the use of the air ambulance in the area, Councillors have traditionally been keen to support the service, with donations of £500 in each of the last four financial years under s137. However, given the current overspend on the donations budget Councillors Rands and Robins proposed we reduce the amount to £300. However, with no-one in favour, the proposal ‘fell’. A second proposal, for a donation £500, was put forward by Councillor Butler, which was seconded by Councillor Morrey, and this was carried, with Councillors Robins and Rands abstaining.
2. Borough TheatreThe refurbishment of the Theatre is being supported by MCC, The Arts Council of Wales and Abergavenny TC. The Theatre manager (on MCC headed paper) has asked if GFCC could support the refurbishment by adopting a seat. A donation of £350 which would see a plaque remain on the seat for 6 years or £500 which would see the plaque in place for 10 Years.

Councillor Barnes felt that they Theatre was already well supported, and this sentiment was endorsed by Councillor Daniel, with both recommending that no donation should be made. However, Councillor Butler proposed, and Councillor Robins seconded, a donation of £50. Three Councillors voted in favour of the motion, three against, with one abstention. With the casting vote, Councillor Dodd voted against, and the motion fell. With no other proposals forthcoming no donation was approved. No other donation requests have been received, although Deb Fury has been in contact and it was thought may approach us for money towards a freezer for the Village Food service, which she runs from the Village Hall. However, Councillor Dodd believed that a fridge freezer had now been donated to the group. | ClerkClerkClerk |
| 20 | **Communications**1. Silent Soldier

An email has been received from MCC’s contact centre regarding a complaint they had received that the statue had sharp edges and was close to the playground, therefore being a risk hazard to children.  At present the soldier has been removed as it has blown over in the wind. It has also been confirmed that it is not going to be re-instated. Instead, it is planned that in due course a mock-up of a proposed permanent structure will be put in place to test public opinion. There are also plans to plant a tree to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee.1. Carer Awareness Session Lisa Yokwe, Carer Friendly Officer for the Carers Trust, South East Wales

Has offered to provide a free 30-minute carers awareness sessions to members of the Council via Teams / Zoom etc. This would cover what an unpaid carer is, the types of roles and responsibilities and what local support is available, including services from the local authority and the Gwent Carers Hub Councillor Butler expressed an interest, and the Chair asked whether the sessions could be opened up more widely. The Clerk to contact Lisa to follow up.  | Clerk |
| 21 | **Advertising** - Usk and Raglan Diary contributions May / June 2022. Any suggested items should be forwarded to Councillor Welford. | All / Cllr. Welford |
| 21 | **Date of next meeting and close:** Monday 21st March 2022 at 19.30. | All |

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