CYNGOR CYMUNED

GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 17th JANUARY 2022**

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

**In attendance:** Sergeant Jack Purcell and PC Hannah Brown, Gwent Police.   
 Councillors Peter Sutherland, (Chair), and Councillor Jenny   
 Carpenter, Llanbadoc Community Council.   
 Jonathan Lazenby (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Community Councillor Nigel Morrey

**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. The Clerk noted that Councillors Awni and Welford have previously advised the Clerk that they have an interest in the item on the Longhouse Barn street sign under ‘matters arising’. 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, and in particular, Sergeant Jack Purcell and PC Hannah Brown from Gwent Police, and Councillors Peter Sutherland, (Chair), and Councillor Jenny Carpenter from Llanbadoc Community Council. |  |
| 4 | **North Monmouthshire Neighbourhood Policing Team** At this point (7.35), the Chair suspended standing orders to enable Sergeant Jack Purcell and PC Hannah Brown, from Gwent Police, to address the meeting on the ‘We Don’t Buy Crime’ initiative. It is being rolled out across Gwent over the next 6-12 months and covers six strands, including theft, burglary, car crime and robbery, and has been identified as best practice by the Home Office. The initiative uses ’smart water’ to provide a unique signature to identify the owner of any stolen property. It has a 100% conviction rate where used, and is an excellent deterrent to potential thieves when supported by street signs which highlight that this is an area to avoid. The cost is £9.95 per pack (usually £30), and requires a 75% take up rate for the PCC to provide the supporting village and street signage. It is recognised that this is a significant cost for a local Council to bear on behalf of its Community.  Councillor Awni asked what the crime rate was for our area – Sergeant Purcell is to check, but he advised that even in low rate areas the crime rate can quickly spiral and create fear and uncertainty. Sergeant Purcell confirmed to Councillor Daniel that the scheme also covers community halls and commercial properties which are just as vulnerable. It also includes property in cars, but not the cars themselves. In answer to a question from Councillor Deakins, it was confirmed that residents can inform the database if they subsequently sell property ‘marked’ by the smart water. Sergeant Purcell advised that he was not aware of the cost being split between residents and a Community Council, although it would be possible to phase the cost over two years. Councillor Awni thought that the scheme should perhaps be put out for a community consultation.  It was agreed that the Clerk should add this to the agenda for the February meeting so Councillors could consider the initiative at greater length  The Chair thanked both Sergeant Purcell and PC Brown for their time and input into tonight’s meeting.  The meeting reconvened at 8.00pm. | Clerk |
| 5 | **Approval of the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13th December.** Item 7 - Councillor Awni believed that she had voted against the increase in the precept. The Clerk confirmed that he was aware of her opposition, but checked his records which confirmed that both she and Councillor Thayers had not yet arrived at the meeting by the time the vote was taken. Clerk will annotate the minutes accordingly. In the same section of the minutes Councillor **Owen** should read councillor **Dodd**.  The minutes were then proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Welford. All Councillors voted in favour. | Clerk |
| 6 | **Matters Arising**   1. Item 5 (i) – Longhouse Barn street name sign. It appears that MCC are proposing not to change existing English only street signs to be bilingual. The Clerk’s contact at MCC has confirmed she will advise us as soon as this becomes formal policy. 2. Item 5 (iii) – Repairs to the pavement by the Village Hall. Other than the original acknowledgement, no response has been received or action taken at present. Councillor Deakins to monitor via ‘MyMonmouthshire’. 3. Item 5 (iv) – Goytre railway bridge resurfacing - Again, other than an acknowledgement, no response has been received from MCC. 4. Item 6 (v) – Little Mill Pelican crossing – The request for action does not appear to have submitted correctly via ‘MyMonmouthshire’ and so the Clerk has written directly to MCC. This has now been acknowledged. 5. Item 6 (i) – Clerk advised that the tree safety report from MCC was received today. This confirms the Ash tree, already identified as diseased, requires cutting down, as do the dead or declining trees in a small group of mixed species (mainly Elm – one of which has already fallen). The Horse Chestnut tree by the Village Hall (LMVH responsibility) also needs attention. Clerk to forward the report to Councillors and obtain quotes for the work. 6. Item 6 (ii) – Little Mill Park has been cleared of moles at a cost of £165. 7. Item 7 (iv) – The Clerk has notified MCC of our precept request for 2022/23, which has been acknowledged.   (viii)Item 12 – the 2022/23 meeting dates have been added to the on-line   calendar.  (ix)Item 13 - The minutes for the July, Sept and Nov meetings and the Clerk’s  expenses for July, August, Sept and Oct have all now been signed. | Cllr Deakins  Clerk |
| 7 | **Maintenance (inc. items reported but not addressed)**   1. There were no maintenance 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 Dec 2021 cashflow.  It was confirmed that the balances had been verified by the Finance Committee to the closing balances in the Unity Trust Bank statements at the end of Oct/Nov/Dec 2021, with Councillor Barnes signing to confirm, in accordance with section 2.2 of the Community Council Financial Regulations (Wales).  At the last meeting the Clerk was asked to identify funding of £700 (£10 for each year of the Queen’s reign), for the forthcoming Jubilee celebrations, (with the actual form of commemoration yet to be agreed). The Clerk suggested that these monies should be taken from the Communications budget line, where £1,000 has been allocated for Newsletters, but not spent. During the discussion Councillors Daniel and Rands confirmed that both Village Hall Committees would be meeting shortly to decide on their activities to mark the event. The suggestion to allocate £700 from the Communications budget was then proposed by Councillor Awni and seconded by Councillor Rands and agreed unanimously.  There was no further comment or observation regarding the cashflow.  The Clerk also provided a budget projection as at 31.03.22 showing a reduction in the reserves to £20k, representing 57% of this year’s precept (£35k). We will need to bear in mind that, as a result of next year’s boundary changes, approx. £4200, (circa 21% of reserves), will transfer to Llanbadoc. A similar percentage will transfer in from Llanover, but the Clerk’s best estimates are that this will be in the region of only £1700. Therefore, there will be a net outflow of c£2500 early in the new financial year.  This was noted by the meeting.   1. 2020/2021 Audit Outcome (if available)   The Clerk is pleased to advise that we have received an unqualified report from Audit Wales. There are no recommendations or actions for us to take.  Councillor Dodd wished to place on record his thanks for the work the Clerk had done to secure another ‘clean’ audit on behalf of the Community Council. The Clerk requested that Council accept the report and this was proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Butler, and passed unanimously.   1. Finance Committee update re Risk Review    1. The third payment of our 2021/22 precept monies have now been received.    2. The 2022/23 precept request has been submitted and acknowledged by MCC.    3. The National salary increase for 2021/22 (so from 1st April 2021), for Clerks has yet to be agreed. 1.75% has been tabled, but is still to be agreed by the unions. Councillor Dodd asked that this be added to the next meeting, in case Councillors wished to make an award in this financial year.    4. Legislation will require us to have a Training Plan in place for 2022/23 covering all Councillors and staff    5. Visual safety checks of children’s play equipment are now undertaken by the Clerk on a monthly basis. The Ash Tree in Little Mill Park developed a serious crack in the trunk and was removed in Dec 2021. MCC have been requested to provide a full tree assessment for the park (now received), as it appears other ash trees have the first signs of ‘die-back’.    6. Declarations of Interest remain outstanding for two Councillors 2. Insurance Renewal Our insurance policy with Zurich is due for renewal on 2nd February. The premium for the next year as part of our Long Term Agreement (LTA), is £1220.65 (up from £1177 last year). Due to the increase in construction costs, the index linking for rebuilding property has increased by approximately 9%.   The LTA provides us with a definitive discount which currently stands at 10%. Without the LTA, the fee would be c£1355.  The Clerk has explored adding the new assets for Llanover and deleting those from Little Mill from May. However, Zurich have advised that it is too early to make these changes. When implemented, Zurich have confirmed there will be no mid-term premium supplements for us to pay, although renewal will likely be £20-£30 more expensive (excluding any inflationary changes). This is possibly down to the cost (c£250) of insuring the cemetery wall at St Bartholomew’s in Llanover for c£56k. Longer term, it may be worth considering whether this is justified, as we will not be covered for ‘wear and tear’ (by far the most likely cause of ‘damage’). However, the Clerk noted that two bus shelters in the village have been ‘demolished’ by vehicles in the last 20 years. It was therefore suggested that we insure for the time being and consider again at the 2023 renewal.  Renewal at the quoted price was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Welford.   1. Web site - renewal payment to continue advert free The annual fee of £29.95 to maintain the operation of the web site ‘advert free’ is now due. Renewal at the quoted price was proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Deakins. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| 9 | **Planning Committee**   1. Update on the planning committee meetings held on 20th December 2021 and 10th January 2022.   The Committee met on 20th December to consider the following applications:   1. DM/2021/01780 - Proposed alterations with 1st floor extension to side.   Robyrna, Berthon Road, Little Mill, Pontypool, Monmouthshire, NP4 0HE   1. DM/2021/01945 - Planning Permission. Conversion of redundant agricultural barn into a dwelling. Brook Farm House, Old Abergavenny Road, Pencroesoped, Llanover, Monmouthshire, NP4 0JG   The Committee then met on 10th January to consider the following application.   1. DM/2021/01781 - Planning Permission. Proposed new build 2 bedroom detached dwelling with off street parking. Robyrna, Berthon Road, Little Mill, Pontypool, Monmouthshire, NP4 0HE  Acceptance of the minutes of the meetings of 20th December and 10th January (previously circulated), was proposed by Councillor Deakins and seconded by Councillor Butler. 2. Other updates  The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 24th January, when there are currently three applications for consideration. |  |
| 10 | **Public Conveniences – maintenance update** The contractors have now completed the removal and cleaning of all asbestos from the ceiling and loft areas. Unfortunately, the cleaning took longer than anticipated, requiring the company’s presence for an extra day. This meant that the air monitoring company was also required for an extra day, incurring additional costs of £450 + VAT, (to be shared with MCC) which now need to be authorised (the total costs are in line with the original budget advised to MCC). Payment was proposed by Councillor Awni and seconded by Councillor Welford.  The Clerk advised that the (originally planned) refurbishment of the interior and exterior will now commence on Wednesday 19th January. | Clerk |
| 11 | **One Voice Wales / (SLCC) / WG self-evaluation toolkit – formation of Task and Finish Group**  This was discussed at the last meeting, where 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. At the December meeting, it was agreed that Councillors would revisit / review Part 2 of the self-assessment, with a view to forming a ‘task and finish group’ to compare thoughts which could then be summarised for ‘approval’ at the February meeting.  Having looked at the content briefly, Councillor Dodd felt that the required responses were rather subjective and could lead some Councillors to consider all was well, and others not. The Clerk suggested that this would be valuable feedback as part of our review. Others felt that this was an unnecessary additional piece of bureaucracy and that the Community Council operated well. However, Councillor Robins felt that it was a useful tool for us to consider how we operate – for example we don’t have a ‘vision’.  Eventually it was agreed that all Councillors would look at the document and bring their thoughts to the next meeting. | All |
| 12 | **Plans for updating/replacing/adding play equipment in Little Mill Park** It was agreed at the December meeting to postpone a final decision until the New Year, when the overall financial position was known. The only option currently available is the GL Jones Playgrounds 2m x 2m trampoline at a cost of £7790 + VAT. To this must be added the requirement to move the goal posts (minimal cost if we can do this ourselves). However, we will need to construct a path using a suitable surface (rather than the grass), to enable wheelchair access. This has not been costed so far. The final tree maintenance costs are still unknown, but will likely be £1000+. Councillor Awni queried whether, with the change of boundaries, whether this was the right time to be spending money on Little Mill Park. It was suggested that the issue should be the topic of discussion with Llanbadoc Councillors.  Given the impact that this would have on the end of year reserves, the Clerk suggested that Councillors consider postponing the work until the final end of year position is known. At that time, it would be possible to earmark additional funds to transfer to Llanbadoc to contribute to the scheme if Councillors so wished. |  |
| 13 | **Boundary Change Update** Clerk has confirmed that Councillors will be unable to sanction payment of invoices between the dissolution of the existing Council (at a minute to midnight on 4th May), and the formation of the new Council at the ASM on 16th May (this does not affect any standing order payments due during that period).  There have been no updates to the MCC FAQ since the 10th December. |  |
| 14 | **MUGA update** Councillor Dodd advised that despite promises, there had been no update from Monmouthshire County Council. |  |
| 15 | **Reports – questions based on previously distributed update.**   * **Goytre Village Hall**    + No report submitted (next meeting due Tuesday 25th January). * **Little Mill Village Hall**   + Bookings are still being taken, with some new interest.   + Boundary fence is ongoing, with quotes being sourced.   + Queens jubilee – The Committee are hoping to set up a small group of volunteers to lead plans for a ‘Party in the Park'. * **Goytre School Governors** * No report submitted. * **Goytre Community Centre**   + No meeting held since the previous report (next meeting due Tuesday 25th January). * **Other Reports**   + MCC Climate Champions Councillor Awni had previously distributed to Councillors, a Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment report which had been presented to MCC’s Climate Group.   + One Voice Wales OVW Monmouthshire/Newport Area Committee Meeting held on 13 January 2022 – Councillor Deakins had previously distributed a synopsis of the meeting.   + Local Govt Elections 5th May. A briefing was held for Clerks on 12th January. Key dates to emerge from the briefing are:     - Notice of Election 16th March (purdah commences).     - Delivery of nominations commences 17th March.     - Close of Nominations 5th April (16.00).     - Uncontested election results announced 5th April (post 16.00).     - Deadline to register for the elections 14th April.     - Notice of Poll 26th April.     - Polling Day 5th May.     - Counting Commences – 6th May (09.00).     - Deadline to submit expenses 10th June.   A separate briefing is to be held for prospective candidates – two dates  are offered – 19th and 27th January. |  |
| 16 | **Donations**  No donation requests have been received. |  |
| 17 | **Communications**   1. Consultation on Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021:  The Clerk reminded Councillors that responses to the Statutory Guidance are due in March. Clerk to resend the email to Councillors and to include on the February agenda.  Councillor Deakins advised that Hybrid meetings could be achieved by a 4G dongle on a lap top, or by tethering a phone to a lap top. 2. Allotments Councillor Dodd advised Councillors that we have contact details of a village resident who may have some land to offer for use as an allotment. Separately, Mike Jones may also be aware of another opportunity. | Clerk |
| 18 | **Advertising** - Usk and Raglan Diary contributions Mar / Apr 2022.  Councillor Welford advised the deadline for submissions will be January 21st.  Suggestions for inclusion are:   * Refurbishment of the toilets * Allocation of funds to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. * Request for allotment land * Preparations are underway for the forthcoming boundary changes. | Cllr. Welford |
| 19 | **Date of next meeting and close:** Monday 14th February 2022 at 19.30. | All |

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