CYNGOR CYMUNED

GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 18th JULY 2022**

**Present**: Community Councillors, Owen Dodd, Andy Barnes, Jan Butler,   
Nigel Morrey, Peter Daniel, Janet Robins, Morgan Chandler,   
and Scott Grayland.   
Youth Representative Chloe-Marie Tapper (non-voting).

**Guests** None

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

**Apologies**: None

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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, which includes previous declarations already made. Councillor Barnes advised that he had an interest in the item on the School Lane / Star Road Zebra Crossing. 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, in particular Chloe-Marie Tapper, the Community Council’s newly appointed Youth Representative. |  |
| 4 | **Approval of minutes of the Council meeting held on 20th June 2022** The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Morrey and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 5 | **Matters Arising**   1. Item 9(i) – The footpath behind the house of Councillor Robins has now been cut. 2. Item 9(vi) – The Annual Return was sent to the Auditor General for Wales on 27th June. 3. Item 9(vii)a – The Arnold Baker Guide has now been ordered. 4. Item 9(vii)b – the Clerk has now purchased a conference microphone at £32.99 (inc VAT). This is slightly more than the initial £25 budget, but the selected item received higher consumer reviews, and can be utilised with a longer usb cable, if necessary. Confirmation of the purchase was proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Dodd and carried unanimously. 5. Item 12(i) – OVW have confirmed that whilst the legislation to allow members of the public to participate in an advisory capacity in Council committees is drafted very broadly, it specifically excludes: ‘A committee for regulating and controlling the finance of the local authority or of their area.’ Unfortunately, therefore, ex-Councillor Thayers will not be able to support the Committee’s work. |  |
| 6 | **Maintenance**   1. The defibrillator batteries in the unit at the Star Inn have been replaced at a cost of £23.17. The Clerk ordered these as a matter of urgency last week (under advice to Councillors), to ensure the unit was not ‘out of service’. Approval and confirmation of these actions was proposed by Councillor Dodd, seconded by Councillor Morrey and carried unanimously. 2. We understand that the footpath by the Scout Hut has been ‘looked at’, but to date, no action has been taken regarding the uneven surface. Clerk to chase for an update. | Clerk |
| 7 | **Finance**   1. Payments made since the previous meeting   The Clerk confirmed the following payments have been made.   £     1. Review of accounts / cashflow The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the June 2022 cashflow.   It was confirmed that during the Finance meeting held on 5th July, the cashflow balances had been verified to the closing balances in the Unity Trust Bank statements at the end of Apr/May/June 2022, with Councillor Daniel signing to confirm, in accordance with section 2.2 of the Community Council Financial Regulations (Wales).  There was no further comment or observation.   1. Finance Committee update inc Risk Review from Finance Meeting on 5th July   The Clerk referred to the Risk Assessment Document and Health & Safety Checklists, which have previously been circulated to members in advance of tonight’s meeting. The key areas highlighted / discussed during the meeting (and not previously notified / discussed at Full Council) are:   1. Training – Code of Conduct - All Councillors are to be invited to re-attend and the Clerk is waiting for MCC to run ‘refresher’ courses. Councillor Butler advised that she had recently attended this course, following her appointment as a County Councillor, (so will not need to re-attend). Clerk to ‘chase’ MCC for a date, most likely to be after the summer ‘break’. 2. Training – A Training plan for 2022/23 is now a legal requirement – Clerk/RFO is drawing up a plan, largely based on committee appointments. Clerk has forwarded the latest course list from OVW and encourages attendance on New Councillor Courses, and those relevant to statutory committee appointments (e.g. Finance / Audit Committee etc). The Place Plan Course may also be beneficial to help Councillors draw up an action plan to help prioritise service delivery and budgeting. 3. An Equality & Diversity course was run for all Councillors in June 2021, and an E&D Policy signed off in Sept 2021. Councillor Robins suggested that, as a result, the ‘likelihood’ score (based on a rating of 1 to 5), should be reduced from 3 to 2. This would reduce the potential severity score to 10 and classification to ‘Low’, and this was agreed by the Committee. 4. As suggested by the Internal audit, the Clerk will assess the insurance renewal levels against the asset register when the insurance is renewed in February next year. In particular, he will review whether Council should consider a professional property revaluation. 5. Health & Safety – Little Mill play Area – responsibility has now transferred to Llanbadoc Community Council. 6. Health & Safety – St Bartholomew’s Graveyard – Clerk / RFO to arrange a headstone safety assessment. An initial meeting with Nigel Leaworthy has been arranged for Tuesday 19th July at St Bartholomew’s. 7. Register of Interests – ‘Interests’ have been recorded for all ‘elected’ Councillors, and are awaited from remaining two co-opted Councillors. Councillor Dodd queried whether our Youth Representative should also declare any interests. Although in a non-voting role, the Clerk thought that in the interests of transparency (and the potential ability to influence Councillors), this may be advisable. Clerk to confirm with OVW. 8. Data Protection - ICO registration was renewed on 1st June 2022.   The previously distributed Risk Assessment and Health & Safety checklist (both dated 05/07/22), were proposed for ‘acceptance’ by Full Council by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Grayland. The vote was carried.   1. 2023/2024 Budget – initial thoughts (see also 2023 Council Plan below). The Clerk requested that Councillors give consideration to what specific funding requests will be required as part of the 2023/24 budget, to support the delivery of specific services as part of next year’s plan. This will ensure that any proposed service delivery is not inadvertently frustrated by insufficient funding. The Finance Committee will consider the initial budget at their next meeting on 4th October, following which this, together with any suggested amendments, will be presented to Full Council at its meeting on 10th October. Councillor Dodd felt that a degree of uncertainty around the MUGA might impact on future funding considerations. However, the Clerk advised that if it went ahead, MCC had agreed to meet all maintenance and cleaning costs. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 8 | **Planning**   1. Updates – There have been no meetings of the Planning Committee since the last Council and there are currently no applications pending consideration.   Councillor Barnes advised that there has been some ‘movement’ on previous applications considered by the Community Council, including one non-material change. However, overall, there was little to report.  Councillor Butler advised she had been in contact with MCC regarding the ‘stile’ at the property known as ‘Springfield’ on Plough Road. MCC had visited the site and noted that the path to the stile was slightly overgrown, and this had been cleared by them. It was agreed that the stile was slightly on the high side, but was no taller than the long-established stile further along the path. However, the path on the other side was completely obstructed by a very large fallen tree. Additionally, it was noted that the stile was not exactly on the legally recorded alignment of the path, so MCC will approach whoever is responsible for the hedge line. Details of the landowner were obtained from the planning application and are to be forwarded to MCC by Councillor Buter.  It was noted that there was wire at the bottom of the stile, but there is no legal requirement for landowners to accommodate dogs, so there is little MCC can do to require its removal. The site has recently been granted planning permission, but in order to accommodate the development, the line of the path will need to be diverted. Only when the order for the diverted path is certified, will MCC be able to insist that the stile is replaced with a gate. | Cllr Butler |
| 9 | **Annual Report 2021/22** The Chair advised the meeting that both he and Councillor Daniel have undertaken an initial review of the report and would revert back to the Clerk asap. | Cllrs Dodd & Daniel. |
| 10 | **Council Plan for 2022/23 & 2023/24 update and next steps** The Clerk re-iterated the need for the Council to have a plan on which to base its service delivery priorities (and subsequently its budget). This led on to a discussion regarding the Community / Place Planning course run by OVW. The next course is on Thursday 28th July – from 2pm until 3.30pm which was not ideal for many Councillors. Clerk was requested to clarify the content with a view to potentially running a bespoke course (possibly with Councillors from Llanbadoc to share costs). | Clerk |
| 11 | **Ton Land – Update on tree safety / agreement to tree surgery**  The tree safety assessment report from Dan Sainsbury at MCC has now been received. The key outcomes are:   1. Tree 1 - The Oak nearest to the property next door has a small old cavity at its base, which is typical of its age and species. There is a tolerable amount of deadwood throughout the canopy. Two large limbs extend over the adjacent property. It’s suggested we consider end weight reductions to these limbs, and remove any damaged and dead branches contained within the tree. 2. Tree 2 – Has features typical of age and species. Tolerable amount of deadwood throughout canopy. No action required 3. Tree 3 - Has features typical of age and species. The crown is a little thin with a small amount of tip die back. Remove chicken wire from around stem. 4. Tree 4 - Has features typical of age and species. Fruiting bodies present on deadwood from a historic wound. Tolerable amount of deadwood throughout canopy. No action required   Overall, the level of Risk to individuals is put at 1 in a million.  Three quotes were sought. Unfortunately, one contractor had just come down with Covid, so ruled himself out for the time being.  That left:   * An initial quote from our regular contractor of £650, subsequently reduced to £500 with work availability tomorrow. * A Cwmbran based company - who have quoted £480 following a visit to the site with the Clerk.   After careful consideration, Councillors decided to go with the CC’s current contractor (Joshua Tree Services), based on their known high standard of work, and this was formally proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Robins. | Clerk |
| 12 | **Community Council domain / email supplier** The customer service provided by our existing domain / email supplier has deteriorated in recent years. Contact has become increasingly difficult with long call queue times and no follow up emails to confirm action taken / issue resolved. Recently the requirement to renew our Domain name (managed by a third party) went up to the wire, with no action being taken until the Cabinet Office asked the Domain Registrar to intervene. This finally prompted the opening of a ‘ticket’ with M247 to action the renewal. There has still been no separate confirmation of the renewal, although everything appears to be functioning as required.  Given the poor service record, the Clerk has looked at other potential suppliers. We currently use ITC Vision for our real time back up (OVW also uses this supplier), and they can provide a web mail facility (similar to Gmail). To have access to view and send emails, Councillors would log in to the ITC Vision system, and then send and receive emails in the normal way. It can also be set up on phones and tablets (additional links to on-line guides have been supplied to Councillors).  One benefit of their service is that all emails would be received into and sent from a ‘goytre.gov.uk’ account. The service costs £18 per email account, so £180 plus VAT each year vs the £30 plus VAT with M247. However, ITC Vision are easy to contact and seem more customer focussed.  Given the technical nature of the change, Councillors were unsure whether to proceed, and it was agreed that Councillor Barnes would investigate options via IONOS as a possible alternative. Similarly, Councillor Morgan will look at the Llanover (now Gobion Fawr) email set up, and report back to the clerk. | Cllrs Barnes & Morgan |
| 13 | **Consider ‘ban’ on Co-operative funeral services undertaking burials at St Bartholomew’s due to non-response to repeated requests to move soil / stones** Following a burial in May, undertaken by Co-op funeral services, the sexton (gravedigger) left a pile of surplus soil and stones near the grave. It is specifically stated on our charges sheet that the gravedigger must remove all surplus stones /soil. Up until last week the Co-op had not responded to emails / calls from the Clerk / Rector. They have now acknowledged there is a problem (this has apparently happened elsewhere), but will not commit to paying for an alternative contractor to remove the soil – potentially leaving local residents to pay the bill. There were mixed responses from Councillors, but with Councillor Grayland in particular, feeling that the Council needed to ‘send a message’, given that the graveyard was a ’very special place’. In the end, it was agreed that the Clerk should look at options for third parties to remove the waste, (max cost £100), and send the bill to the Co-op. This was proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Barnes and carried unanimously. |  |
| 14 | **School Lane / Star Road Zebra Crossing** At this point it was agreed that Councillor Barnes could address the meeting to relay details of the ‘conversations’ that he (and the residents opposite his property), had had with Gareth Freeman from MCC, regarding the crossing. He confirmed that the ‘new’ position of the crossing had now effectively been ‘agreed’ by all parties. Two lighting options have been proposed by MCC, both with beacons:- (option 1), with street lights above each beacon, and (option 2) with a separate street light instead of the lights above the beacons. Option 2 was the residents’ preferred option, but they had suggested the use of an existing telegraph pole by the crossing to house the light, rather than install an additional pole/light. This is being investigated by the MCC Street lighting team. Following his update, Councillor Barnes took no part in the following discussion.  MCC have asked for the CC’s comments. Given that the crossing is to be built in the location originally requested (and hence supported) by GFCC, Councillors felt that, subject to meeting the required illumination standards, the lighting design should be left to be agreed between MCC and the residents directly affected. This was then proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Robins and carried by the meeting. Councillor Barnes took no part in the vote. Clerk to advise MCC. | Clerk |
| 15 | **Boundary Changes Update**   1. Llanover Community Council Unfortunately Roger Joy from MCC has not yet confirmed the final position regarding the ownership, maintenance and running of the three street lights in Llanover which were paid for by Llanover CC. This is required before a final settlement figure can be agreed with Llanover (now Gobion Fawr). Councillor Butler to chase again. 2. Llanbadoc Community Council **-** A meeting of Llanbadoc Community Council was held on Wednesday 13th June, during which the members considered GFCC’s proposed final asset transfer figure of £4,428.79. This is based on the end of year reserves figure of £3282.98, plus an additional £1145.81, representing Little Mill residents’ share of the rates rebate and VAT reclaim from 2021/2022.   The Clerk was pleased to advise that this had now been accepted as full and final settlement. Accordingly, the transfer of these funds was formally proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Grayland and carried unanimously. The Clerk to action. | Cllr. Butler  Clerk |
| 16 | **Reports – questions based on previously distributed update**   * **Goytre Village Hall**    + The Jubilee event went well. Plenty of people turned up. Lots of thanks to all involved.   + Food hall has now reopened 2 hours in the morning and afternoon every other day.   + The Post office is back and up and running   + Bookings are escalating, which is really positive.   + Looking for grants to have the windows fixed through the ‘Halls  together project * **Llanover Village Hall**   + No report submitted * **Goytre School Governors**    + Final meeting held (AGM) for this academic year.   + Although the pandemic has affected progress, the school overall has come through with positive results. They have reorganised their staff after one member retired, and are currently writing a procedure policy to introduce a new system of learning (The Curriculum for Wales), for the next academic year. * **Goytre Community Centre**   + At the recent AGM, Peter Daniel, Kayleigh Little and Paul Robins were co-opted.   + The removal of the back building moves on a pace. Electrics were being disconnected this morning. We are waiting on a date for demolition. Last fortnight of August is the aim.   + Community engagement survey regarding regeneration continues.   + County Councillor Jan Butler is liaising with officers of MCC to move forward on Community Renewal Fund. * **Other Reports**   + There were no other reports |  |
| 17 | **Donations**   1. Well-Being café – request for £30 for Mugs The Well-Being café have requested a donation of £30 to purchase mugs for their regular tea / coffee mornings. (They hadn’t realised that their previous request for the fish and chip supper was so high in relation to the CC’s donations budget). If approved, the Village Hall has agreed that the funds can be paid via them, the Well-Being café not having its own bank account. It was agreed that the café was very popular and should be supported with a donation, and this was proposed by Councillor Robins and seconded by Councillor Dodd and carried unanimously. Councillor Butler said she felt that the original ‘decline’ for the fish and chip evening was ‘unfair’. However, Councillor Morrey noted the Council had not declined the request as such, but had queried the cost of £500, and in the meantime the event had been and gone. However, this would not preclude the café from requesting funding for a future event. | Clerk |
| 18 | **Communications**   1. Electricity Contract  It was confirmed the renewal contract would see an increase in the annual bill for the public conveniences from £221.94 to £1041.98 (an increase of 370%). This is largely made up of the Targeted Charging Review (TCR) – effectively the standing charge for business users. The Clerk recently spoke with a contact from the CC’s previous utility broker, who saw a similar price in the quotes he obtained. He suggested that we wait until after September, (when our contract has less than 12 months to run), at which time additional suppliers in the market are likely to make other contracts available. For example, British Gas have a light users tariff, which may have a noticeably lower TCR. This was agreed and formally proposed by Councillor Dodd and seconded by Councillor Morrey, and carried unanimously. ` 2. Usk hub post office MCC have provided leaflets to promote the Post Office in the Usk hub, which is open Monday and Thursday from 09.00 to 17.00, and Saturdays 09.00 to 12.30. Councillor Butler thought the PO was being run by the Community (hence the promotion by MCC). However, the Clerk advised there was nothing in the leaflet to suggest that. Whilst it might prove useful for some people, Councillor Barnes advised that the PO in New Inn was open every day (Mon-Sat 06.00-23.00 and 08.00 to 22.00 Sunday), and had a nearby car park.  It was agreed the Clerk should leave some leaflets at the Chip shop and shop. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 19 | **Advertising** - **Usk and Raglan Diary contributions Sept / Oct 2022.**  The closing dates for contributions will be towards the end of July.  It was agreed that there were no items for the next issue. | Clerk |
| 20 | **Clerk’s Plenary Powers**  As usual, there will be no meeting in August. The Clerk advised that he was quite comfortable with the normal spending limit of £500 (in case of emergency, with sign-off by the Chair or Vice-Chair), as provided for by the Financial Regulations. As a result, he did not feel the need for any special plenary powers. |  |
| 21 | **Date of next meeting and close:**  Monday 12th September at 19.30.If the new broadband service has been installed in Llanover Village Hall by this time, the meeting will be held in the front committee room, with remote access available for both Councillors and the public via <https://meet.jit.si/GoetreFawrCommunityCouncil> | All |

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