CYNGOR CYMUNED

GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 25th APRIL 2022**

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

**In attendance:** Community Councillor Peter Sutherland (Chair - Llanbadoc Community   
 Council), 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. 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, Community Councillor Peter Sutherland, Chair of Llanbadoc Community Council.  The Chair took this opportunity to confirm that Councillor Roger Howells had not attended any meetings of the Council since 11th October 2021. The Local Government Act 1972, Section 85, requires that ‘if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance, to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority’.  The Clerk had therefore advised the Chair, that, as a result, Councillor Howells had ceased to be a member of the Council by reason of the above. The Chair requested the Clerk to minute the many years of service given by Councillor Howells to the Community Council and in particular his contribution to the Community Centre and the establishment of the After School Club, which is an invaluable asset to the Community. The Chair’s comments were echoed by the other Councillors present. |  |
| 4 | **Minutes**   1. Approval of the Minutes of the Closed session held on 14th February**.** The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Robins. When the vote was taken, Councillors Awni, Deakins and Welford abstained as they were not at the February meeting. All other Councillors voted in favour. 2. Approval of the Minutes of the Closed session held on 21st March.The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Welford. When the vote was taken, Councillors Dodd, Awni, Rands and Thayers abstained as they were not at the March meeting. All other Councillors voted in favour. 3. Approval of the Minutes of the main meeting held on 21st March.Item 21 should read ‘Councillor **Butler** will check with Joan Howells’ (not Robins). The minutes were then proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Deakins and seconded by Councillor Welford. When the vote was taken, Councillors Dodd, Awni, Rands and Thayers abstained as they were not at the March meeting. All other Councillors voted in favour. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| 5 | **Matters Arising**   1. Item 4 – The Clerk sent an invitation to the North Monmouthshire Policing Team for tonight’s meeting, but received no reply. 2. Item 5 - Ukrainian Refugee Crisis. Councillor Robins advised that Rachael Beardsmore was not personally able to house a refugee family, and the other two households had not heard anything further. As a result, the co-ordination group had not yet got off the ground. 3. Item 7 (iv) - MUGA - The Clerk asked if the response prepared for Mike Moran regarding the original survey / engagement has been sent. The Chair confirmed it had. 4. Item 7 (v) – The diseased Ash Tree in Little Mill Park has now been cut down. The Clerk and Councillor Deakins have also cut the overgrown hedge back. 5. Item 8 (i) – Despite repeated notes to MCC, the pavement by Little Mill Village Hall has still not been repaired. 6. Item 8 (ii) – The Clerk has reported the non-functioning of the SIDs unit on the A472 as you enter Little Mill from the direction of Usk. 7. Item 8 (iii) – The trees along the A472 by the railway bridge. Councillor  Deakins confirmed they had not yet been cut back. 8. Item 8 (v) – The Clerk has been unable to identify the site of the damaged  kerb stones. Councillor Welford thought the original damage may have  been repaired but will check. 9. Items 9 (iii) & (iv) & (vii) – both SLCC and OVW memberships have been  renewed, as well as the Council’s domain name. |  |
| 6 | **Maintenance (inc. items reported but not addressed)**  The following items were reported:   1. The Chair advised that the road surface on the Railway Bridge in Goytre was still in need of repair, and asked the Clerk to investigate whether permission had yet been given by Network Rail for MCC to re-surface. | Clerk |
| 7 | **Finance**   1. Payments made since the March meeting  Payments included in the **2021/2022** financial year **£**     Payments included in the **2022/2023** financial year **£**     1. Review & acceptance of 2021/22 cashflow and end of year accounts   The end of year Cashflow, Bank Reconciliation and Account Statement had previously been circulated to members. The Clerk confirmed that the Cashflow balances had been verified to the closing balances in the UTB statements at the end of Jan/Feb/Mar 2022, with Councillor Barnes signing to confirm in accordance with section 2.2 of the Community Council Financial Regulations (Wales).  There was no further comment or observation. Acceptance of the documents as an accurate record of the transactions and closing financial position of the Community Council was proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Butler. All Councillors voted in favour. Clerk to send relevant docs to EH Accountancy.   1. Calculation of the transfer of reserves figure to Llanbadoc The Clerk has calculated the figure based on:   Existing properties in GFCC – 1135  Properties transferred to Llanbadoc – 246  246 / 1135 x end of year reserves £15417.07 = £3282.98  This sum was proposed to be communicated to Llanbadoc for acceptance and payment, sometime after the Annual Statutory Meeting, by Councillor Daniel, and seconded by Councillor Barnes. All Councillors voted in favour.   1. Re-forecast of 2022/23 budget The Clerk advised that our year end reserves had reduced to c£15k, down from £32.4k at the end of the last financial year. This was due to originally setting a budget deficit to bring them more into line with an appropriate level of reserves (c50%), coupled with the unforeseen maintenance expenditure on the Goytre Public Conveniences and Little Mill Park (Asbestos removal / cutting down of diseased / damaged trees). A similar budget deficit (£10k) has been set for 2022/23. However, the Clerk explained this was no longer appropriate given the reduced level of reserves. Although traditionally, the CC has underspent on its planned budget, next year it will need to be particularly careful with any discretionary expenditure. The Clerk felt that a balanced budget now needed to be set, and has already prepared figures for review. It is possible that some budgeted expenditure may well not come to fruition. For example: 2. Councillor allowances / honoraria – c£1k 3. Attendance Allowances / care costs - c£3k 4. Since the figures were discussed at the Finance meeting it has been confirmed by MCC that there will be no election costs (budgeted £1120)   However, in the meantime the CC also has some other options to reduce spend as well as additional expenditure are outlined below.   1. Donations - £1500 – reduce to £1000 (max single donation to be £250?) 2. Capital expenditure spend £5k – remove? Saves additional £1000 VAT 3. Maintaining fortnightly dog waste collections throughout the  year? Saves £1261 + £252 VAT 4. Remove £1000 budget for Annual Report – publish electronically 5. Remove £250 budget for bus shelters (never spent). 6. Remove £1000 for seeding in May (paid March 2022) 7. Reduce Cemetery maintenance costs to £1200 (£200 already paid by Llanover CC. 8. Reduce home allowance to £180 (the actual that will be claimed / paid) 9. A figure of £1200 has been left in for the street cleaning in Llanover, although it appears that they also pay for some street lighting at c£2000 per year, of which we were unaware. Therefore, budget may be required to cover this, if it cannot be re-negotiated. 10. The potential reserve transfer of £3282.98 to Llanbadoc CC has now been added in. 11. The (income) figure for reserves from Llanover is awaited, although the Clerk thinks it will be minimal.  A revised budget was therefore presented to the Council, showing the recommended adjustments (in purple), and those figures yet to be determined (in green), with a recommendation that the budget should be reviewed regularly, with adjustments as new figures (costs) come to light.   After discussion the above recommendations were accepted: d, e, g, h, i, j, k and m. The following amendments were agreed. Item f to be adjusted to include weekly collections until the end of Oct, then to revert to current alternate weekly collections (but to be reviewed). Item l – street cleaning in Llanover to be continued. However, the service to be reduced to bi-monthly for both villages (to ensure parity of service), whilst saving expenditure until the overall financial situation became clearer.  The new budget was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Morrey. Clerk to adjust and present to May meeting.   1. External Audit - Key Dates  The external audit papers have now been received. It has been confirmed that our 2021/22 review will be subject to the new 3-yearly full transactional audit. The key dates of the audit are: 2. (By) 20th June – the Notice of Audit to be published on the Noticeboard and on the Web site for a minimum of 14 days (then see iii below). 3. 30th June - latest date for Council approval of the annual return. 4. 4th July to 29th July (20 working days) - the period for all accounts, books, vouchers, receipts etc to be made available for public inspection. 5. 15th July – final date for receipt of annual return by Audit Wales. 6. 12th September – date from which electors can exercise their rights under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. 7. 12th September - No audit opinions will be issued before this date.   The Clerk confirmed that the dates were in line with previous years and none should pose any difficulty.   1. Finance Committee update inc Risk Review 2. Income – Precept - First payment of 2022/23 precept due end April 2022. 3. Income – Precept - Budget review to be undertaken by Full Council in April to reduce forecast budget deficit based on new proposals (now done). 4. Salaries & wages – updated wage details for cleaners forwarded to Beverley & Williams (B&W) for payment from April 2022 onwards. Standing orders for both employees updated to reflect new salaries. B&W advised of Clerk/RFO’s new salary. 5. VAT Recovery – Clerk will submit a claim for VAT in due course . 6. Training of Staff - Clerk/RFO sent email to S & A Fodden 30/03/22 asking for confirmation of adequate safety supplies / materials safety guidance / training issues. Clerk confirmed that an email had been received 19/04/22 confirming both are happy with the current safety supplies, guidance and training. 7. Training – A training plan will be required from May 2022. 8. Assets – Insurance renewed 2nd February 2022 (adjustments for new boundaries from May 2022 cannot be made until 1 month before changes). 9. Health & Safety - Annual safety inspection by MCC of Little Mill children’s playground undertaken 11/02/22. Recommendations:    * Bug Climbing Frame - suggest treating moss growth on safety surfaces. Councillor Deakins to address.    * Goal Posts are leaning but still secure in the ground - will need to monitor for any further deterioration.    * x2 fence bolts nearest main entrance to be tightened. Clerk has requested Councillor Deakins to address.    * Following the tree safety assessment report from MCC, the diseased Ash Tree and dead / dying Willows were removed 28/03/22. 10. Removal of Asbestos from Goytre Public Conveniences now complete. 11. Maintenance of Proper Records - Prompt signing of Full Council meeting minutes continues to be an issue. However, the Minutes for December 2021, January 2022 and closed meeting minutes of Feb 2022 had now been received. 12. Clerk’s outstanding expenses claims now signed off and complete.   Acceptance of the Risk Review and Health and Safety update was proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Welford. All voted in favour, except for Councillor Butler who abstained, having temporarily lost internet connection and so was unable to hear the discussion. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 8 | **Planning Committee Updates** Councillor Barnes confirmed that the following (more ‘substantial’), applications had been approved   * DM/2021/01420 - Demolition of existing apartment blocks and erection of 6 dwellings with parking and associated works - Melyn Bach Avenue, Little Mill. * DM/2021/01716 - Erection of two no. one bedroom, two person apartments, relocation and upgrade of children's play area, car parking, boundary enclosures, landscaped SUDs features and associated work. * DC/2018/00171 - Springfield Nursery, Plough Road, Goytre, NP4 0AL. However, it was noted, that the change of stile, which we believe was to be a condition of planning, has still not been changed.   There are currently no meetings in the diary |  |
| 9 | **‘Elections’ outcome and thanks to ‘retiring’ Councillors** The Chair was pleased to announce that the following members have been elected ‘unopposed’, to serve the Community Councilfor the next five years from May 2022.  **Goytre ward**   * Mr Nigel Morrey * Mrs Janet Robins * Mr Peter Daniel * (one vacancy remains to be filled by co-option)   **Goetre Wharf**   * Mr Owen Dodd (one vacancy remains to be filled by co-option)   **Nantyderry**   * Mrs Jan Butler   **Llanover**   * Mr Morgan Chandler   The Chair also wished to express his thanks to those current Councillors who would be leaving, having successfully stood for election to Llanbadoc CC.   * Mr Colin Deakins * Mrs Lucyann Rands   Plus those who had chosen not to stand for election.   * Mr Andrew Barnes * Mr Syd Welford * Mrs Rose Thayers * Mrs Nicola Awni   Their contributions over many years were gratefully acknowledged on behalf of the Community Council. |  |
| 10 | **Appointment of Youth Representatives from May 2022**  The Clerk reported that, disappointingly, he has received no enquiries whatsoever following the recent advert. Without a secondary school within, or adjacent to the ward, it was difficult to take a more targeted approach to ‘advertising’. Clerk to keep under review. | Clerk |
| 11 | **Little Mill Park Play Area**  Llanbadoc CC have commissioned their own separate report on Little Mill Play Area and have sent it to us for comment. This had confirmed the MCC findings that all equipment represented either a low or very low risk. There was still concern from Llanbadoc, at the level of investment the report had suggested was required to replace some of the equipment to meet modern design standards. Councillor Morrey suggested that perhaps, as a supplier of play equipment, Hags had a vested interest in recommending improvements. Councillor Sutherland said he did not believe this to be the case. In the meantime, the Clerk has asked MCC for a quote to re-hang the main entrance gate (the hinge post is slightly out of vertical). Councillor Deakins is also exploring whether we can undertake this ourselves. | Clerk |
| 12 | **Ton Land – motion proposed under Standing Order 7a** Last month, Councillors agreed to offer the land for lease for a period of 23 months. However, after a number of residents voiced their concerns that the land was not being offered for allotments, the Clerk received the requisite four ‘signatures’ from Councillors for the Council to reconsider the length of the lease, reducing it to 12 months, during which the land could again be considered for use as allotments.  This topic has been explored in depth before, with the main issues being the need for planning permission (it is in the BBNPA), the distance from the village, no parking, toilet facilities etc. A letter of objection from a local resident has also been received, citing many of the above issues.  However, after further discussion it was agreed that the opportunity for use as allotments should be explored again, ideally with a community led proposal. This was formally proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Welford. All Councillors voted in favour.  The Clerk will now proceed on the basis of a 12-month let. | Clerk |
| 13 | **Boundary Changes update**   1. Llanbadoc – The Clerk has advised that they will need to effect insurance on the Little Mill Play Area, bus shelters, dog bins and benches from 5th May as they will automatically transfer on this date, and from that point on, cannot be covered by GFCC as we will no longer have any insurable interest. Councillor Peter Sutherland thought that it was not the case that the lease would automatically transfer. The Clerk to try and obtain a definitive ruling. 2. Llanover    1. The Clerk will hold a meeting with the Rural Dean, Reverend Kevin Hasler, to put an appropriate burial system and records process in place.    2. The Clerk is trying to query the contract and charge for the Llanover street light(s?) which the Community Council purchased.    3. The existing maintenance contractor for the graveyard has not responded to any of the Clerk’s attempts to contact him. A back up quote has been obtained in case of need.   Councillor Butler, had earlier expressed her deep concerns at the response she had received from a number of residents of Llanover while campaigning this afternoon. It had been reported to her by 8 residents that an existing Goetre Fawr Councillor had told them that Goytre Village will be the dominant Council and that they won’t get any money. This is simply not the case, and the current GFCC has already budgeted for a street cleaning service for Llanover, in addition to current known expenditure. After some debate it was agreed that this would be an issue for the new Council to address. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| 14 | **Reports – questions based on previously distributed update.**   * **Goytre Village Hall**    + Bookings are beginning to increase.   + Jubilee meetings are going well and there is now a plan for the afternoon.   + Unfortunately, due to certain issues which need to be addressed, the food hall has closed down. It is hoped it can re-open it in the next few weeks.   + The well-being mornings have increased in number and appear to be a success.   + The Chair reported on the issues which have affected the zero-food waste project in the hall. The ‘problems’ have featured extensively on the village Facebook site, and it was felt by the Village Hall Committee, had been the subject of much misinformation. The Trustees needed to ensure that there were proper financial controls and governance with bank accounts in place. They could not agree to the project continuing until the issues raised over several months had been resolved. The decision was not taken lightly, but was a unanimously agreed by all the Trustees, who had a duty to protect the reputation of the Village Hall. Councillor Butler agreed it was a great project, but needed to be run properly. For the record, Councillor Robins advised she had previously volunteered for the project, as had Councillor Awni’s partner.  It was hoped however, that the project could be re-instated in some form at a later date. * **Little Mill Village Hall**   + No report Submitted. * **Goytre School Governors**    + Covid is still having an impact on the staff and children. Overall, things are still progressing well, thanks to the staff.   + A plan for the next 3 years has been presented, and appears ok. * **Goytre Community Centre**   + GASC remain as sole user. Waiting to be told after 18th April what COVID guidance will remain in place.   + No date yet for demolition of Jack and Jill’s.   + There was a leak in the roof during recent storms. Roger Howells replaced 3 tiles.   + Main concern is the increase in energy costs likely to impact in October. * **Other Reports - One Voice Wales Area Meeting 21/04/22**   + Guest speaker Inspector Hannah Lawton - who was very enthusiastic about Community/Town Councils promoting the use of Smart water marking in their communities. This has been trialled in the Llanyrafon and Croesyceiliog Community Council areas and, in conjunction with using street signage, has proved a great deterrent against “acquisition crime”   + Jeff Cuthbert, Gwent Police & Crime Commissioner - Spoke mainly on anti-social behaviour by young people and how the police are working with affected communities to provide better sport and youth facilities to avoid young people “hanging about” with nothing to do.   + Community Boundary Changes - Very little discussion other than comments on how unhelpful MCC has been with this. OVW is assisting Community Councils where there are big problems by talking to MCC.   + Hybrid meetings - these should be offered by all Community/Town councils. Where no internet is available in the meeting venue a dongle or mobile phone tethered to the clerk’s laptop to access the internet may be satisfactory and if challenged the Council can prove they were doing their best to comply with legislation.   + St Arvans has obtained grant aided internet access for their meeting venue, which they don’t own. Advice is to have a dummy run prior to a council meeting.   + Training: A brief summary of each module is provided on the OVW website and the link, in future, will be provided for the modules available.   + Extra trainers have been recruited for the expected increased demand after May’s elections. |  |
| 15 | **Donations**   1. Gwent Young Farmers A ‘round robin’ (non-personalised) request for a donation, has been received from Gwent Young Farmers – the same letter is received each year. Given the unspecified nature of the request, (what the funds would be used for), Councillors did not feel able to support a donation. This was formally proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Barnes. The vote was carried with 7 Councillors in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions (the Chair did not vote). 2. Kids Cancer Charity   Whilst Councillors wished to support in principle, they felt that with a limited donation budget, funding need to be allocated to organisations with a more direct involvement in the village, and hence no contribution should be made. This was proposed by Councillor Daniel and seconded by Councillor Morrey, and was carried with all Councillors in favour, with the exception of Councillor Butler, who abstained.   1. Councillor Butler asked if some of the £700 jubilee monies could be used for prizes in a best dressed garden competition. It was noted that money had been set aside for Jubilee Expenditure, but with no defined agreement as to how it would be used. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 16 | **Communications**   1. Monmouth & Parkwall Ambulance Stations – request to Lobby Welsh Ambulance Service (WAS). A detailed response was received by return of post, outlining the operational reasons for the decision. The rationale was that Rapid Response Vehicles could not convey patients to hospital, and consequently it was felt that investment should be made in emergency ambulances, which could both treat patients at the scene and convey them to hospital. Councillors concluded that on the facts, this appeared a reasonable response, and that other than to thank the Chief Executive for his timely response, no other action was required. | Clerk |
| 17 | **Advertising** - Usk and Raglan Diary contributions July / August 2022.  Councillor Welford advised that the closing date would be towards the end of May and that he would no longer be the contact for the diary in the near future. | All |
| 18 | **Date of next meeting and close:** Monday 16th May at 19.30.  This will be the Annual Statutory meeting to establish the new Council and will include the election of a Chair, the appointment of the Vice-Chair, establishment of Committees and members, as wellas agreeing Council Representatives on outside bodies / committees.  This will be followed by a short ordinary meeting to deal with normal Council business. | All |

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