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GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT LLANOVER VILLAGE HALL & BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 11th SEPTEMBER 2023 @ 19.45**

**Present**: Community Councillors, Andy Barnes, Peter Daniel, Janet Robins, and Morgan Chandler.

**Guests** None

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

**Apologies**: Community Councillors Owen Dodd, Nigel Morrey, Community / County Councillor Jan Butler

**Absent without Apology:** Community Councillor Scott   
 Grayland.

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | **Apologies for Absence.**  As above. | Clerk |
| 2 | **Declarations of Interest.**  In the absence of the Chair overseas, Councillor Barnes presided over this evening’s meeting. He commenced by asking the members present whether they had any declarations of ‘interest’ to make, which includes previous declarations already made. The Chair reminded members that they should notify the meeting of any additional interests which became apparent during the progress of the meeting. Councillor Barnes himself re-declared an interest in the MUGA as, depending on its siting, (if on the lower section of the park), he was likely to object on the grounds of noise. No further declarations from the members were forthcoming. | All / Clerk |
| 3 | **Chairman’s Remarks.**  Councillor Barnes took the opportunity to welcome everyone to the meeting. |  |

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| 4 | **Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th July 2023** The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Chandler, and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 5 | **Matters Arising.**   1. Item 5(ii) - The speed cushion by the new zebra crossing is still missing. 2. Item 14 – Churchwood Surgery update. It has now been confirmed that Churchwood surgery and The Mount Surgery will merge from 1st October, to form Pontypool Medical Centre. This apparently was not entirely unexpected. It is not anticipated that the merger will have any effect on the village surgery. |  |
| 6 | **Maintenance.** (including items previously reported, but not yet addressed).   1. Item 1 – Public Conveniences. The replacement door has arrived and we have secured a colour match paint. The door will be fitted w/c 18th September. The Clerk is liaising with 24/7 Plumbing regarding the leak in the ladies’ toilets, and is to arrange a site meeting with Jeff Jones to see if we can gain access to repair the cistern. The broken toilet seat will also be replaced. | Clerk |

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| 7 | **Finance.**   1. Payments made since the previous meeting.   £     1. Review of accounts and cashflow The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the July and August 2023 cashflows. There were no comments or observations. 2. 2024/2025 budget – initial thoughts The Clerk requested that Councillors give consideration to what specific funding requests will be required as part of the 2024/25 budget, to support the delivery of 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 3rd October, following which, it will be presented to Full Council, at its meeting on 9th October. The Clerk mentioned that we will need to include the legal costs of renewing the lease on the Olde Pounde Shop, and he suggested £1500 (to include VAT). Funding for additional equipment in the park was also mentioned. 3. New laptop & back-up Unfortunately on Sunday 27th August, a leak at the Clerk’s house resulted in water coming through a ceiling light onto the laptop, causing a complete computer failure, together with the external back-up which was plugged in at the time. The data from the external disc was irrecoverable, but thankfully the cloud back-up provided by Vision ICT enabled all the files to be accessed, so the Clerk could continue to work. Given the need for a replacement asap, the Clerk sought out a similar machine from the previous suppliers (HP), which he secured, at a discounted price of £566.99 + VAT, (plus cables/adapters for £16.02 + VAT). Vision Computers, in Abergavenny, cloned the data from the old machine onto the new one (cost £54.17 + VAT), and used the old hard drive to create a new external back-up, for just £16.67 + VAT. Regulations 4.1 & 4.5. allow for expenditure up to £500 in the case of emergency, subject to Chair approval. However, as yet, no direct expense has been incurred by the Council. The total cost for the purchase of the new equipment and set up, which the Clerk is seeking re-imbursement of, is £653.85 plus VAT of £130.77 (the VAT to be reclaimed from HMRC). Approval was proposed by Councillor Robins, seconded by Councillor Barnes, and carried unanimously.   The Clerk has already contacted Zurich Insurance, and has commenced an insurance claim which should see re-imbursement of the net amount of £653.85, less a £100 excess.   1. Renewal of Electricity Contract for Public Conveniences   The existing contract at 6.113p per kWh, plus standing charge of 28p per day expires at the end of September. Obviously, prices have risen significantly since that time – the latest variable quote from Opus being 45p per kWh plus £2.50 per day standing charge, which would cost us over c£1260 per annum (versus c£220 at present).  The Clerk has now obtained a number of quotes from two independent utility brokers, being Consultative Technologies and Northern Utility Solutions Ltd. Both provided a range of options for 12, 24 and 36 months, all of which were substantially cheaper than the new variable option with Opus Energy. Councillors agreed that a 36-month option would provide the best certainty for our budget, and the cheapest of these contracts with both brokers was ‘BG Lite Acquisition’, at 30.18p per kWh and a standing charge of 45p per day, giving a projected annual cost (based on current usage), of £396, so a little under twice what we currently pay. There was no distinction between the two broker quotes and so it was decided that a toss of the coin would be used to select the ‘winner,’ which was Northern Utility Solutions Ltd.  It was therefore formally proposed by Councillor Barnes that a 36-month BG Lite contract should be entered into via Northern Utility Solutions Ltd. This was seconded by Councillor Daniel, and then carried unanimously. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| 8 | **Planning.**   1. To accept the responses of the planning committee meeting held on 3rd August   The following applications were listed for consideration during the meeting:   * + DM/2023/00483 - Proposed Two Storey Extension & Alterations at Parkview, Parc Y Brain Lane, Goytre, Pontypool, Monmouthshire, NP4 0BL. Due to the close proximity of the site to the cross road of Parc Y Brain and the A4042, the comments of the Environmental Health Officer regarding the timing of lorries to and from the site were endorsed. There were no other concerns.   + DM/2023/00892 - Removal of garage and replace with office/garden room at 76 Meadow Bank, Penperlleni, Goytre, Pontypool, NP4 0AY There were no issues or concerns with the application.   Acceptance of the minutes (previously circulated), was proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Daniel and passed unanimously.   1. Any other updates There are currently no other meetings in the diary, although an application has been received (DM/2023/01175) for a change of use for an annexe in the garden at 86 Newtown Road in Goytre Pontypool NP4 0AZ. It is likely that Councillor Barnes will convene a meeting of the Planning Committee on either the 24th or 25th of this month to consider the application (and any others received by this date). |  |
| 9 | **County Council update – County Councillor Jan Butler.**  There was no update in the absence of Councillor Butler |  |
| 10 | **Community Engagement – Councillors Janet Robins / Jan Butler / Nigel Morrey** Councillor Robins confirmed that she had sent the proposed questionnaire to Councillors for feedback, and as a result had made a slight amendment. It was suggested that the engagement should be comprised of the survey (to be hand delivered to all the properties, or accessed via the village Facebook page), plus one or more face to face meetings in the Village Halls and Community Centre. Completion of the survey would also be encouraged when residents attended the face to face meetings. ‘Post boxes’ would be provided in the village halls, (chip shop?), and the Goose and Cuckoo pub (plus others?), to encourage the return of the completed surveys.  Councillor Daniel advised that Goytre Village Hall was holding an open day in October (28th), and this would provide an opportunity for Councillors to attend and engage with residents, (although on different issues to the Village Hall agenda).  The Clerk suggested that hand delivering a survey to every household was a ‘big ask’, and that the village Facebook and web sites would provide an easier option, provided that paper copies were readily available for those without internet access. The Clerk also suggested that the use of survey monkey (for those completing the form electronically), would make the analysis of the results much less time consuming. However, if adopted, any paper returns would need to be manually input by someone from the Council.  A target date of the end of October for the survey to go out was agreed, with Councillors Robins, Butler and Morrey to meet before the next Council meeting to tie up any loose ends and confirm the dates & venues for the face to face events, with a final presentation to Council on 9th October. | Cllrs Robins, Butler,Morrey |
| 11 | **Goytre Recreation Park.**   1. Sports recreation hub inc MUGA update Disappointingly there is no update on the MUGA. The Clerk to ask Councillor Butler to seek clarification on MCC’s position, as progress appears to have completely stalled. 2. Playground equipment update   The new table tennis table was installed at the end of July. The total cost, including installation, was £2595 + VAT (the VAT is recoverable). The remaining funds (from the original £5000 grant), can be used towards other facilities in the park. Disappointingly, the supplied bats and balls were destroyed – provoking some comment on the village Facebook page. In addition, some youths have taken to playing football on the table, which has resulted in balls going over the fences of the nearby properties, and the residents have requested that the table be moved away to a more open location. This is likely to incur additional costs for ground levelling. The Clerk arrange to meet with MCC to get an estimate, although, at c16 feet from the boundary, the table would seem to be appropriately sited for normal use.  The Clerk advised that he had seen a comment on Facebook that the flower beds were full of weeds this year. He noted that, for whatever reason, they had not been prepared and re-seeded by MCC this year. The beds themselves have self-seeded, and whilst the displays are not as ornate as in previous years, they are generally considered perfectly acceptable (less the weeds). The clerk suggested that options for next year (for which we will need to budget) are:   1. Do nothing, and allow them to re-seed (including the weeds) 2. Do nothing, and allow them to re-seed, but pay for (monthly?) weeding or ask for village volunteers 3. Pay c£1000 for the formal preparation and re-seeding of the beds as in previous years.   In the end Councillor Barnes proposed that we prepare a budget based on the preparation and seeding of just the one bed, and this was seconded by Councillor Daniel. Clerk to contact and discuss with MCC. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 12 | **St Bartholomew’s Graveyard**   1. Radar Ground Survey update. The ground survey was carried out last Monday, 4th September. It should be noted that the surveys are not an exact science, and some interpretation of the results is required. Whilst the full report is awaited, the provisional findings are:  * The majority of the north side of the church appears ‘clear’, and suitable for burials. There is evidence of quite a bit of ground disturbance towards the road end, possibly a structure was in place many years ago? Also, there is a ‘sounding’ of what may be a pipe running along the line of the church, about 8 feet from the wall. However, the rest of the area is clear and should provide plenty of scope for future graves. * The Clerk also asked the surveyors to ‘test’ two rows in the main graveyard, where there are two long gaps in between fairly recent gravestones. The survey indicated, that there is a high probability of graves in this area, and so, despite the absence of any headstones, it should be avoided in future.   The Clerk will share the full report when it is received.   1. Request for salt Bin and Grit Sue Davies-Fletcher, the new vicar at St Bartholomew’s has requested whether, because of the sloping path leading through the church yard, (which can become slippery in the winter months), it would be possible to locate a grit/sand bin in the churchyard. The Clerk has identified, on Amazon, a 30-litre salt / grit bin for £17.99, with 25Kg of white rock salt available for £18.99. It was agreed that this would make sense and the purchase was proposed by Councillor Robins, seconded by Councillor Chandler, and passed unanimously. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 13 | **Village Committees’ Reports – questions based on previously distributed updates**   * Goytre Village Hall * The stage has now been removed. * A cupboard has been introduced to be used by the free food hall. Next step is to introduce the audio update and paint the new cupboard. * Bookings good - lots of bookings for October. * Llanover Village Hall   + No report submitted. * Goytre School Governors   + The new academic year has just begun   + The next meetings are later this week, with a full Governor’s meeting scheduled for 27th September   + One teacher has left so they will be interviewing for a replacement later this month * Goytre Community Centre   + Les Root has joined as Treasurer   + Architect Stephen Peel has visited and is drawing up plans FOC   + Funding is available for the audio-visual equipment in the meeting room   + Open Day engagement event planned for Sunday 14th October * Other Reports * There were no other reports |  |
| 14 | **Donation requests.**  The Clerk reminded Councillors that this year’s donations budget (of £1000) has now been spent.  Cerebral Palsy Cymru (CPC) Last year, the Community Council made a donation of £50, and CPC have asked if we would consider another contribution this year. Given the budget situation outlined by the Clerk, Councillors felt that it would be inappropriate to donate at this stage, and we should politely decline their request. This was proposed by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Barnes, and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 15 | **Communications.**  The Clerk advised that there had been no communications. |  |
| 16 | **Advertising** - **Usk and Raglan Diary contributions Nov/Dec 2023.**  The closing date for submissions will be towards the end of September. It was agreed that, at present, there were no submissions for the next edition. Clerk to advise Penny Reeves. However, it was thought that the results of the engagement, when available, should be communicated via ‘The Diary.’ | Clerk |
| 17 | It was at this point that Councillor Chandler announced his intention to resign from the Council. He felt that his work commitments meant that he was no longer able to devote an appropriate amount of time to serving the local community. All those in attendance, felt that his knowledge of ‘all things Llanover’ had been invaluable, and he would be sadly missed. Clerk to advise MCC to put in place the statutory process to advertise for an election opportunity if requested by residents. | Clerk |
| 18 | **Date of next meeting and close.**  The next meeting is to be held on **Monday 9th October** at **19.45**. The venue to be Llanover Village Hall, and by teleconference via: [https://meet.jit.si/GoetreFawrCommunityCouncil](about:blank) | All/  Clerk |

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