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COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT LLANOVER VILLAGE HALL & BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 13th FEBRUARY 2023 @ 19.45**

**Present**: Community Councillors, Owen Dodd, Andy Barnes, Janet Robins, Peter Daniel, Morgan Chandler, Jan Butler, Nigel Morrey and Scott Grayland.

**Guests** Mr. David Thomas, Ms. Angela Jones and Ms. Elaine Otton.

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

**Apologies**: None

**Absent without Apology:** None.

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | **Apologies for Absence.**  As above. | Clerk |
| 2 | **Declarations of Interest.**  The Chair 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 re-declared an interest in the MUGA as, depending on its siting, (if 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 Dodd took the opportunity to welcome everyone to the meeting. |  |
| 4 | **Approval of minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th January 2023.** The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Barnes, and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 5 | **Matters Arising.**   1. Item 5 (i) - Footpath between Longhouse Barn and Newtown Road. Councillor Butler reported that MCC have the issue recorded, but unfortunately this is one of a large number of legacy paths that existed around the urban areas of the County from the Gwent County Council days. As no path orders were made at the time to accommodate rights of way through new developments, it is not a recorded public right of way. Therefore, its ownership / status is unclear.   MCC has a substantial backlog of issues on recorded rights of way. With a very limited budget to address them, it’s not possible to extend this to cover these unrecorded routes. The Clerk to liaise with Councillor Butler to establish whether it is possible to work with MCC to resolve the situation.   1. Item 5(ii) – St Bartholomew’s churchyard wall has now been repaired and the bill paid. The topping has had to be replaced, as the original layer had not set before it was damaged by an overnight frost. 2. Item 5(iii) – The Clerk has sent the signed contract to Merlin Environmental Services Ltd, asking for their signature, but to date has received no response. Clerk to continue to chase. 3. Item 9 – Annual Report. The Clerk has filled in the ‘gaps’ on the report, presented at the last meeting, and posted it on the web site. 4. Item 12 – The meeting dates for full Council for 2023/2024 have been posted on the web site, and advised to Llanover Village Hall. | Clerk/ Cllr Butler  Clerk |
| 6 | **MUGA – review of plans / options** At this point the Chair asked Councillors whether they would agree to the item on the MUGA being brought forward, to enable the guests in attendance to speak without having to wait until later on in the meeting. This was agreed by Councillors.  **Mr** **David Thomas** spoke first. He began by saying that he lived on Newtown Road and followed this with some additional background to his time in the village. He explained that he had a vested interest in what happened in the village and was not happy with the proposed MUGA. He did not feel that the survey was carried out correctly, and said he did not receive the newsletter [which included the survey and dates for the engagement events]. He felt that the reported percentage of people in support of the MUGA only represented a relatively small number of the total village population. He wished it to be known that he had offered to personally fund payment for multi-use goal posts for either end of the playing field on more than one occasion  **Ms.** **Angela Jones** was the next to speak and advised the meeting that she had lived in the village for 20 years, and did not agree with the village green being dug up. She was also unhappy with the information provided under her recent Freedom of Information (FOI) request, and said that more FOI requests would follow. She was worried about the flooding, believing that the MUGA would affect the drainage and impact on the Village Hall & Social Club and believed a better site would be the field behind the school. She queried why, when other local authorities were cutting budgets, seeking to close play parks, were GFCC seeking to spend more than the allocated s106 money on the MUGA. She believed the s106 money could be used to fund multi use goal posts and additional play equipment, enhancing what we already have, and providing equipment to benefit those with special educational and additional needs.  **Ms. Elaine Otton** was the last to speak. She concurred with the views expressed by Mr Thomas and Ms Jones. Both she and her neighbour were very worried about the drainage of the area, and the possibility of flooding. She would like to see a copy of the MUGA plans and the Clerk will arrange for this. Councillor Butler and Councillor Dodd explained that nothing was cast in tablets of stone, and the outcome of the SUDs survey would determine whether the site was actually suitable. Councillor Dodd explained that subject to a positive survey, a further engagement event would take place. | Clerk |
| 7 | **Maintenance** (including items previously reported but not yet addressed).   1. The pot hole by the football ground has now been ‘patched’ although Councillor Butler is to ask MCC to look at the condition of the whole road which she felt was in a poor state of repair. 2. The pot hole on the bridge (Star Road) has been filled in. 3. Monmouthshire Housing have repaired the pathway by the doctor’s surgery, and installed appropriate drainage. 4. Councillor Morgan advised there are three pot holes on the entrance road to the Rhyd-y-meirch estate. MCC had taken no action following his reporting them via the ‘My Mon’ and ‘Fix My Street’ apps. It is thought SWTRA may have some responsibility (although why this would be is unclear). The Clerk asked that he send the details to him to forward to SWTRA. | Cllr. Butler  Cllr Morgan  Clerk |
| 8 | **Finance**   1. Payments made since the previous meeting.  **£**      1. Review of accounts / cashflow The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the January 2023 cashflow. There was no comment or observation. 2. 2023/24 budget update (if required) Following his salary increase, the Clerk had quickly forecast that this would change the projected 2023/24 budget by only c£30, and as a result he did not consider it worthwhile to re-cast the numbers in detail, particularly as the possible April 2023 pay increase is itself only a forecast figure. |  |
|  | 1. Appointment of Internal Auditors (EH Accountancy Abergavenny) The company have indicated their willingness to act as our internal auditors again for 2022/23. Their fee will be £250 plus VAT (2021/22 - £220 plus VAT). Councillors agreed to their appointment, and this was formally proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Robins, and carried unanimously. Clerk to send the standard letter of engagement for EHA to sign. 2. Renewal of SLCC Membership A renewal notice has been received for the next 12 months at a cost of £187 (last year £186). Renewal of our membership was approved by Councillors and then formally proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Daniel, and carried unanimously. 3. Audit Update (if available)  There has still been no further communication from Wales Audit. The issue was raised during the recent OVW area meeting. As a result, OVW asked those Councils present to email to confirm whether their 2021/22 audit was still outstanding. The Clerk has responded accordingly. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 9 | **Planning.**   1. Any other updates / future meetings A meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 15th February at 7.00pm to consider application DM/2023/00109 - Householder: Single storey extension.   10 Frondeg, Penperlleni, Goytre, Pontypool, Monmouthshire, NP4 0AN     1. Motion:It is hereby resolved that the number of members of Council required to be present for a planning committee to be considered quorate shall be reduced from 4 to 3 with effect from 13th February 2023.The original quorate number was set when the Community Council had 12 members. Following the boundary change and subsequent reduction to 8 Councillors, the required numbers for a quorate planning meeting have been more difficult to achieve, occasionally leading to meetings having to be ‘abandoned’. Therefore, the above motion had been proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Daniel, with additional support from Councillors Barnes, Butler and Robins. The motion was then put to the vote and carried unanimously. Clerk to amend the terms of reference. | Clerk |
| 10 | **Insurance Valuations** Linnell’s estate agents and valuers advised the Clerk that the charge for revaluing the Olde Pounde Shop and public conveniences would be £300 plus VAT (less than the £400 anticipated). The Clerk advised them to proceed and their valuation report is awaited. | Clerk |
| 11 | **Goytre Park play ground - children’s play equipment** The bushes and shackles on two of the swings have now been repaired / replaced, and the rust and holes on the rocket and tractor climbing frame have also been repaired.  In addition, the rocket has been repainted in what looks like a base undercoat. There seems to be a consensus that the equipment is in need of an update.  Johnathan Wassal at MCC has already confirmed that he has started the ball rolling to look at funding in MCCs 2023/24 budget, although amounts / timing are unknown at this point.  Separately, it is possible that some funding may be available from the s106 development monies.  Clerk to follow up any possibility of MCC funding for playground equipment. In addition, Councillor Robins proposed that she look to identify other sources of finance – grants / national lottery etc.  This was agreed, being seconded by Councillor Butler, and passed unanimously. | Clerk /  Cllr Robins |

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| 12 | **St Bartholomew’s Graveyard**   1. Initial consideration of the use of ground radar, to identify future burial plots – likely cost £1500 to £2000.   This item is for information and consideration only at this stage. There are presently only spaces for another 3 or 4 burial plots along the current row of graves, at which point the main areas in front of the church will have been exhausted.  As a result, the Clerk has been reviewing the future of the graveyard, conscious that available burial plots are now limited.  There is an area behind the church, which has largely been discarded in the past, for being ‘in the shadows’ (where the devil is considered to lurk).  It is unclear whether any burials have ever taken place in this area. To help determine whether there are any free areas, it is possible to bring in a specialist in the use of ground radar.  However, the cost is likely to be in the range of £1500 to £2000. As the principal area of ‘opportunity’ is likely to be behind the church, the Clerk would not wish to commit to this level of expenditure, only to find out that parishioners would not wish to be buried there.  There appear to be a handful of other possible individual plots scattered around at the front of the church.  However, it would not be economically viable to just explore these areas, given the cost, and the likelihood of the plots being ‘vacant’.  The Clerk has written to the Reverend Kevin Hasler, who has responded that he believes few who attend regularly will know where they would like to be buried, or have plans for cremation. As a result, it is difficult to know what future ‘demand’ might look like.  However, he will make enquiries and get back to us, and which point the Clerk will revert to Council. It was also suggested that the Clerk investigate whether additional land might be obtained from the field behind the church, (Councillor Morgan believed that this belonged to the Estate). Clerk to explore this option.  Should the back of the church not prove viable, the Clerk has been looking into the possibility of turning this area into a nature site (together with one or two other possible ‘test’ areas at the front of the church). The site would be mown in the Spring and Autumn and the grass taken away to deny the grass nutrients, and then sewn with native species – yellow rattle etc. Llanelli Council have undertaken a similar project, which appears to have been successful. It is important that the area is signposted, so that parishioners understand what is taking place, and that the area hasn’t just been abandoned. Rachel Carter, Places for Nature at OVW has been providing initial guidance.   1. Review of burial fees to align with those published by the Church in Wales. Following the ‘acquisition’ of the cemetery at St Bartholomew’s in Llanover due to the change in boundaries in May 2022, the Community Council took the decision to align its burial fees with those in the Church in Wales (CIW). The Church in Wales had increased its fees for burials / headstones etc from the  1st January 2023, and it was therefore recommended that those for St Bartholomew’s be brought into line. This was formally proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Robins and passed unanimously. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 13 | **GDPR - Review and update as necessary, of GDPR document retention policy.**  GDPR was introduced into UK legislation in 2018. A requirement of the legislation was that organisations should have a retention policy for documents and data. GFCC’s policy was signed by Councillor Dodd on behalf of Council in December 2018 and is now overdue for review (required every three years).  Subsequently, having reviewed the document, Councillor Dodd thought that some timescales should perhaps be re-visited, particularly those with regard to sundry documents and papers. He agreed that he would consider the current document and report back to March Council, with any proposed changes for the members to consider. | Cllr Dodd |
| 14 | **Village Committees’ Reports – questions based on previously distributed updates**   * **Goytre Village Hall**    + The Food hall and Wellbeing café are still being well used.   + A bingo session is run on Wednesday afternoons.   + Bookings have been taken for parties every week.   + The following clubs and activities take place: The Walkers meeting, Zumba, Martial Arts, and on a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, indoor bowls.   + The smoke alarm system was recently updated. * **Llanover Village Hall**   + No report submitted. * **Goytre School Governors**    + There are significant budget issues for the next academic year.   + Teachers were on strike last Wednesday. The strike planned for Tuesday 14th February has now been called off.   + The first consultation on the Asymmetric programme took place on Monday 6th February and was attended by 35 parents. The consultation period will last until the 6th March, with all stakeholders, parents, staff, children and LA community. A report will then be prepared for the Governors to decide upon introducing the system.   + A new Parent Governor joined and there is a vacancy for a Local Authority Governor.   + Five policies have been adopted. * **Goytre Community Centre**   + Russ Whitfield has been co-opted to help with an application to the Community Ownership Fund. He comes with experience and will be a great asset to the committee.   + An asset transfer is on the table but the Committee can continue to lease at a low rate if it prefers. The MCC Asset manager will help with this.   + A discussion has taken place as to the way forward. The first step is to get an architect involved, and obtain a survey. Funding is being sought for this.   + There is a need to fundraise.   + A survey is to be included in The Diary with a QR code.   + The Committee could bring the remaining Jack & Jill’s building back into use, and this would be a protected space for GASC to continue whilst other works are done on the main building.   + MCC will erect scaffolding to fix the ridge tiles. It will not affect GASC as it will be in next door’s garden (agreed).   + Resumption of classes depends on reliable Wi-Fi and remote meeting tech - this is being sought. Community Council can then return.   + It has been agreed to meet monthly. * **Other Reports**   + There were no other reports. |  |
| 15 | **Donation requests.**   1. The Marie-Curie foundation has approached the Community Council for a donation (no amount specified). To help understand the level of support provided to the Community, the Clerk wrote to them asking if they could provide details of work undertaken within the NP4 postcode. However, as the support line is for anyone who has questions, or needs support, and not a direct nursing service, they are unable to attribute any statistics to a postcode. Notwithstanding there were no definitive statistics, Councillors agreed that it was still appropriate to make a donation to support the organisation. It was then proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Robins, that a donation of £100 be made, and this was passed unanimously. | Clerk |
| 16 | **Communications.**   1. The Clerk has received two communications from companies offering to provide Coronation commemorative items (mugs etc). Having distributed one such email, there seemed to be little appetite amongst Councillors to purchase this type of item to gift to the Community, (and there is no separate budget for this). Therefore, the Clerk requested confirmation that similar approaches should be declined. This stance was confirmed by Councillors, although it was agreed that it would not preclude other organisations from making a donation request for the purchase of these items. This was proposed by Councillor Barnes, seconded by Councillor Morrey and passed unanimously. | Clerk |
| 17 | **Advertising** - **Usk and Raglan Diary contributions May / June 2023.**  The closing date for submissions for the May / June 2023 edition will be the end of March. Councillors should forward any articles for inclusion to the Clerk. | Clerk |
| 18 | **Date of next meeting and close.**  The next meeting is to be held on **Monday 20th March at** **19.45**. The venue to be Llanover Village Hall, and by teleconference via: <https://meet.jit.si/GoetreFawrCommunityCouncil> | All/  Clerk |

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