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GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT LLANOVER VILLAGE HALL & BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 9th DECEMBER 2024 @ 19.45**

**Present**: Community Councillors Nigel Morrey, Lewis Carter, Andy Barnes,
Peter Daniel, Scott Grayland, Janet Robins and Community / County Councillor Jan Butler.

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

**Apologies**: Community Councillor Owen Dodd

**Absent without Apology:** None.

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | **Apologies for Absence.**As above.  | Clerk |
| 2 | **Declarations of Interest.**The Chair commenced the meeting by asking the members present whether they had any declarations of ‘interest’ to make, which includes previous declarations already made. Councillor Robins again declared that the founder of Edenstone homes (the possible developer of additional houses at Trem Yr Ysgol), is a personal friend. His son is the Chairman. To date she has had no involvement in any decisions relating to this development. Having originally indicated that she would not attend the engagement event on 2nd December, she subsequently decided to attend in a personal capacity, to understand what the development would entail. However, she did not discuss the proposal with residents or canvas for any opinions. The Clerk has previously noted this interest, and will add it again to the register of interests for today’s meeting. No further declarations from the members were forthcoming.  | Clerk |
| 3 | **Chairman’s Remarks.**Councillor Morrey welcomed everyone to the meeting.  |  |
| 4 | **Minutes.** 1. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2024.The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Barnes, and carried by all who were present at the meeting (Councillor Morrey did not vote, having been absent from the November meeting).
2. Approval of the closed session minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2024.

The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Barnes, and carried by all who were present at the meeting (Again, Councillor Morrey did not vote, having been absent from the November meeting). | ClerkClerk |
| 5 | **Matters Arising.** 1. Item 6 (ii) – The defibrillator pads at Goytre Village Hall, The Star Inn and the Secret Garden have been replaced.
2. Item 7 (vi) – The clause regarding the rent review has been re-inserted into the lease and forwarded to the tenant’s solicitors. We await confirmation that it has been signed.
3. Item 7 (vii) – The Clerk’s new salary has been advised to our payroll providers, Beverley & Williams.
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| 6 | **Maintenance.** (including items previously reported, but not yet addressed).1. Repairs to / replacement of Old Pounde Shop side door.The Clerk has visited the shop again to re-examine the side door. Whilst there is some severe rot at the very base of the door, it looks as though much could be repaired – for example by two new storm guards at the base of each door leaf. The bottom of the frame on each side is clearly more challenging, but it is probably worth exploring whether a replacement section could be spliced in. As the tenant is now aware of his maintenance responsibilities, he wishes to explore alternatives to the significant cost of replacing what is only a side / service door. The Clerk to continue to liaise and monitor the situation.
2. Llanover Village Hall defibrillator battery. The battery will need replacing shortly, (it is showing at less than a quarter full – one level above ‘low’) at a cost of £205 + VAT. It will be five years old next February. In addition, we have had a report that some Chinese made Duracell replacement batteries for the Zoll units (we have four) have failed during the units’ self-tests. These batteries are typically sourced via Amazon, or similar, for c£25. The more expensive US made batteries (which apparently contain more Lithium) typically retail for c£66. The Clerk advised that we have purchased a number of our replacements from Amazon, but can’t confirm the country of origin at the moment. It was agreed that he should examine the Zoll units and replace any Chinese made batteries with those manufactured in the US. An overall authorisation of up to £500, plus VAT, for both the Zoll units and the WEL-Medical unit at Llanover VH was proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Butler and carried unanimously.
3. St Bartholomew’s Path lighting.The Clerk has visited the site and noticed that there are already two floodlights on a telegraph pole, which should illuminate both the top path and the section which leads up from the road. There is an additional fluorescent light in the lychgate. However, the church team advised that there appeared to be an (unknown) electrical fault somewhere in the circuit. Further investigation by the church team, who traced the cable (underground) from the church, revealed that there were two buried (non-water-proof) junction boxes, one by the church door and another (wrapped in a plastic carrier bag!), by the telegraph pole. The latter was used to connect an ordinary (non-armoured) fire alarm cable underground to the light by the Lychgate – obviously a breach of electrical regulations. Clearly both circuits need to be replaced with full armoured cabling and, where required, waterproof junction boxes above ground. Bob Evans at St Bartholomew’s has obtained a quote of £1795, and the Clerk has obtained a quote from our supplier of £768 + £153 VAT, giving a total of £921.60, (with the VAT element being reclaimable). It is not known if any of the lights will still work once the circuit is energised. However, replacements are not prohibitively expensive at £75 per light. Obviously, none of the work has been included in this year’s budget, so we could delay until 2025/2026, or, spend the money now and recoup the costs next year. In either case we could add a further c£1000 maintenance costs to the budget under item 7 below. It was agreed that the contract should be awarded to our own electrical supplier with the lights being replaced with more modern LED units if found to be either non-working, or of the old inefficient halogen type. This was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Butler and carried unanimously. It was requested by councillors that the work be undertaken as soon as possible.
4. RAAC survey (OPS & Public Conveniences)We have received an email from Welsh Government via One Voice Wales, asking us to confirm whether we own / manage any buildings with RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete). Given their age and type of construction, it seems unlikely that either building would contain this material. However, the Clerk has contacted our property surveyors (Linnels) for their advice. They recommended that we contact Thorpe Building Consultants and the Clerk subsequently sent through photographs of each property. They have confirmed that, given each building’s block and timber construction, neither will contain RAAC. They will provide a confirmatory letter on this for a fee of £650+ VAT. However, given the age of the building (pre-dating RAAC) and known type of construction, councillors felt that the obtaining of a confirmatory letter would be an unnecessary expense, and that no further action was necessary on our part.
 | ClerkClerkClerkClerk |
| 7 | **Finance.**1. Payments made since the November meeting. **£**

1. Review of accounts / cashflow as at 30th November.The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the November 2024 cashflow.

There was no comment or observation.1. 2025/26 budget – Latest updates & setting of 2025/26 Precept.The Clerk presented the latest draft Budget (v5) for consideration. The changes from v4 (discussed at the November meeting), includes the finalisation of the village maintenance costs which are confirmed to rise by 3.6% from £4,035 to £4,180. Previously, we had budgeted £4,236 (an increase of 5%, so this ‘saves’ us a modest £56 plus VAT). Overall, the proposed budget now shows a projected end of year ‘surplus’ of £793.

The budget was reviewed again by council, and it was agreed that the current projected surplus (of £793) would be sufficient to cover the additional costs being incurred this year at St Bartholomew’s (under item 6(iii) above). However, it was agreed that a further provision of £1,000 should be made under village maintenance to carry out additional leaf cleaning, or other relevant activities to reduce the risk of flooding. However, once VAT is added to this, the projected surplus will reduce to £593 (because of £200 of VAT). The village maintenance contract is to be discussed in more detail under item 9 below. In the meantime, Councillor Butler will ask for a schedule of the current maintenance regime, so that we can identify where additional cleaning may be beneficial. It was then recommended we increase the precept (to run a broadly balanced budget), to £49,000. This was formally proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Carter and carried unanimously. The Clerk will update the budget projection shown above, and notify MCC of our precept requirements. 1. Adoption of the new 2024 Financial Regulations (NALC & OVW).As was discussed at the November meeting, new regulations have been prepared by the National Association of Local Councils, together with One Voice Wales, and forwarded to us for adoption. The Clerk re-distributed the regulations following November’s meeting, with suggested additions shown in block green, and deletions shown by a double strike-through. The items shown in block purple are those areas where T & CCs have the ability to amend, as they feel appropriate (usually financial limits). Having had the opportunity to further review the regulations ‘off-line’, the members agreed the amendments/ additions/deletions as previously presented, and a formal proposal to adopt the regulations was made by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Daniel and carried unanimously.
2. Tender for maintenance of St Bartholomew’s graveyard.

Under our financial regulations, the CC is obliged to periodically review its long-standing contracts, to ensure that they represent good value for money and continue to deliver services to the required standard. The maintenance contract for St Bartholomew’s has been in place for a number of years (including with the previous Llanover CC), and hence now falls under this category. Therefore, early in the new year the Clerk proposes to advertise a tender process, which will include the contract specification (previously distributed to councillors). It is suggested the closing date for applications be 31st January 2025. The recommended process was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Robins and carried unanimously.  | ClerkClerkClerk |
| 8 | **MCC engagement re potential development of Trem Yr Ysgol as part of the proposed Replacement Local Development Plan**On Monday 2nd December, MCC held a public engagement event at Goytre Village Hall, to outline the proposals for a potential development of Trem Yr Ysgol as part of the proposed new RLDP. The event was well attended by MCC, with plans on display and booklets available to take away. Explanations for the dismissal of a number of the local candidate sites were available. These included the protection of nature, a lack of pavements and poor pedestrian access over the railway bridge. Councillor Butler advised that the plan has still to be confirmed by Welsh Government (this won’t take place until the middle of next year), and a rejection of any element of the plan (including any of the other Monmouthshire sites), means that the whole proposed RLDP falls. |  |
| 9 &10 | **Flooding – preparedness and maintenance of drains / water coursesCounty Council update – County Councillor Jan Butler.**The recent flooding caused by storm Berthas highlighted the need for everyone to have better preparedness for possible future similar events. Unfortunately, three properties in Long House Barn (LHB) were flooded. Councillor Butler advised that the flooding team have been very supportive, and have already inspected the LHB culvert. It is running well now, but the team are to inspect to check for obstructions, and will send a cleaning machine if required. Councillor Butler has recently seen a water map of the village, which shows the areas of high water table e.g. Parklands. Much of the problem in Goytre is caused by the clay soils on which the village is built. Tarmacked driveways don’t help, but are apparently, not a significant problem, and low garden walls can act as dams, preventing water flow.The long-term solution is to install more gulleys and drains and to improve the maintenance of those already there. The Clerk also raised this issue, citing two roadside ditches and drains along Croes-y-pant Lane, which have not been cleared for several years. This leads to the run off from the fields cascading across the roads, and into already overloaded systems (Berthon Brook). It was thought that we could better signpost who people should contact in case of flooding. For example, MCC Highways can supply sandbags in an emergency (domestic) situation, but do not hold a large stock for general supply. It was thought that the provision of telephone numbers, for example, MCC / NRW / Canal & River Trust etc, might be useful.Councillor Butler advised that there will be a discussion at MCC on Thursday, and asked that Councillors make her aware of any issues they know of, and she will ask them to be addressed.  | Cllr Butler/All Cllrs/ |
| 11 | **Green Corridor Project.** Jane Clarke at MCC has confirmed the good news that St Bartholomew’s North Churchyard has been included in this year’s funding. On a wider note, she has created a leaflet to send to the public, as part of the further planned engagement. Jane also confirmed there is now just one remaining change required to the online survey. Clerk to monitor and bring back to council once we are ready to go. | Clerk |
| 12 | **Trydani – Charge Place Wales (CPW) – Interest shown and next steps.**Councillor Carter acknowledged that he had promoted the scheme again on Facebook, but, despite this, it had drawn very little interest, and we have had no ‘volunteers’ to become the co-ordinator (on whose shoulders the success of the scheme is likely to rest). It was agreed therefore, that we formally step back from this project, as it clearly does not have sufficient support to make it a success. This was proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Daniel, and carried unanimously. The Clerk to formally advise Cyrene at Trydani. | Clerk |
| 13 | **Goytre Recreation Park - update.** Our request for the additional pieces of adult exercise equipment were passed to MCC and they have been ordered. Installation of the last piece of children’s equipment (the swingo), has now been completed. The rectification of the ‘sink hole’ remains outstanding. It is planned to install the adult equipment along the fence by the Village Hall, but councillors felt this would be a hazard to people playing football on the field, and it was suggested that the fence alongside The Haven, may be a better location. The Clerk to write to Johnathan Wassal at MCC | Clerk |
| 14 | **Llanover Village.**1. Installation of dog bins – update.Councillor Carter has identified a number of candidate sites and has sent a list to the Estate, and is waiting for a response.
2. Residents Survey – update.With everything else that is going on, this is to be paused until the New Year.
3. Friends of St Bartholomew’s – update.

Councillor Carter is to follow this up at the Christmas Carol Concert.  | Cllr. Carter |
| 15 | **Donation Requests.**1. Urdd Gobaith Cymru Fund for All Appeal – multiples of £220.We have received a request (previously forwarded to council members), from the fund organisers, whose aim is to give all children in Wales experiences outside of the classroom at one of the Urdd’s 2025 summer camps. They are looking to give this opportunity to 1000 children. A donation of £220 will contribute to a holiday for one child, including transport, food and accommodation for 5 days at one of their residential centres. We have no specific powers to make such a donation, but could use s137. Paul Egan at OVW thought it would not be a problem to use s137, even though the recipient child may not live within our boundary. However, councillors felt that we had already provided significant support to the Urdd this year, with two donations to enable Goytre Fawr Primary to attend. In addition, the annual donations budget is already overspent, and therefore, it was agreed we should politely decline their request. This was proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Daniel and carried unanimously.
2. Ronald McDonald House Charities UK (no amount specified).We have received a ‘Round Robin’ from the above charity. In October 2022, their corporate fundraiser for Wales, (Harbin Jordan), gave a presentation to us. However, council decided not to make a donation on that occasion. Councillors again decided that they did wish to support with a donation, and this was

proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Carter and carried unanimously. Clerk to advise the charity. | ClerkClerk |
| 16 | **Village Committees’ Reports – questions based on previously distributed updates.*** Goytre Village Hall.
	+ Good level of bookings going into the New Year.
	+ Looking to update the hall early next year.
	+ The repairs to the outside wall to begin soon.
	+ Financial records positive.
	+ Looking for grants to improve audio system.
* Goytre Fawr School.
	+ Meeting held 4th December.
	+ Ninety five percent of children attending regularly.
	+ Standards very good.
	+ Struggling financially.
	+ After-school care being well run, together with morning breakfast.
	+ The school choir was well received at the wellbeing cafe last Monday.
* Llanover Village Hall.
	+ No report submitted.
* Goytre School Governors.
	+ No report submitted.
* Goytre Community Centre.
	+ New Leasehold agreement with MCC - Committee has agreed in principle.
	+ Use of Old School Kitchen as a coffee shop. Building control team have visited and provided advice.
	+ Have received funding for improvements to sink area and a rapid dishwasher.
	+ Have applied for funding for Audio Visual equipment via Levelling up fund and GAVO.
	+ WiFi is available throughout building. Community Council is invited back for its meetings.
	+ Leisure classes have resumed with Floristry on Friday mornings. Drawing to begin on Thursday 9th January.
	+ Materials for the garden are arriving and being assembled ready for the growing season. To be publicised in the New Year.
	+ The Centre website is live. They are moving towards an online booking system.
	+ The Centre continues to work on a raft of policy documents which will be put on the website.
	+ Work continues on the business plan which should be ready in the New Year.
	+ Fundraising - Coffee, Carols and Mince pies on Wednesday 18th December 10:30 till 12:30. Everyone welcome. Children from Goytre Primary will be singing during the event. Free of charge. Donations of mince pies and raffle prizes will be gratefully received.
* Other Reports.
	+ There are no other reports.

The Clerk asked whether councillors felt it was useful to continue with this format of reporting, or whether it would be more efficient for councillors to raise issues as and when they arose. However, the feeling of the meeting was that the current approach was useful, recognising that due to the timings of meetings, there would occasionally be months where there was no updated report to submit.  |  |
| 17 | **Communications.**1. GFCC Facebook page – latest posts / responses.There was nothing specific to report. Councillor Carter is still looking to see if the old Facebook site can be deleted.
2. The Clerk has received a letter of thanks from Wales Air Ambulance for our donation of £300, which he has circulated to the members.
 | Cllr. Carter |
| 18 | **Dates of Council Meetings – May 2025 to May 2026.**The Clerk proposed the following dates of meetings to take us through to the 2026 ASM.The dates were proposed byCouncillor Daniel seconded by Councillor Morrey and carried unanimously. Clerk to re-circulate. | Clerk |
| 19 | **Advertising – Usk & Raglan Diary Contributions March/April 2025.**There were no articles to include at the present time.  | Clerk  |
| 20 | **Date of next meeting and close.**The next meeting is to be held on **Monday 13th January 2025** at **19.45,** atLlanover Village Hall, and by teleconference using: <https://meet.jit.si/GoetreFawrCommunityCouncil>The Clerk confirmed the remaining meeting dates for Quarter 1 2025, which are:* February 17th (Councillor Morrey gave his apologies)
* March 24th
 | All/Clerk |

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