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COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT LLANOVER VILLAGE HALL & BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 17th FEBRUARY 2025 @ 19.45**

**Present**: Community Councillors Lewis Carter, Andy Barnes, Peter Daniel and Janet Robins.

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

**Apologies**: Community Councillors Nigel Morrey, Owen Dodd and 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, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Carter, commenced the meeting by asking the members present whether they had any declarations of ‘interest’ to make, which includes previous declarations already made. No declarations from the members were forthcoming. | Clerk | |
| 3 | **Vice Chairman’s Remarks.**  Councillor Carter welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked those Councillors who had attended the Community Centre’s stakeholders meeting last week. | Clerk | |
| 4 | **Minutes.**  Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2025.The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Barnes, seconded by Councillor Daniel, and carried by a majority vote. | Clerk | |
| 5 | **Matters Arising.**   1. Item 5 (i) – Defib batteries for the units at Llanover Village Hall / Goytre Wharf / Capel Ed / The Secret Garden / The Star Inn. The Clerk advised that the batteries have now been replaced. 2. Item 5 (ii) – St Bartholomew’s path lighting. The work is still to be scheduled. The Clerk is continuing to chase. 3. Item 6 (i) – The out of order street light in ‘Highfield Square’ has been repaired. 4. Item (iii) – Sink hole in Goytre Park – The Clerk confirmed that the sink hole has now been filled. It was left with its surrounding barriers in place in case of settlement, but these have now been removed. 5. Item 7 (e) – The Council’s annual insurance has been renewed. The Employer’s Liability Certificate has been posted on the web site, the Goytre noticeboard and the workplace stockroom door. |  | |
| 6 | **Maintenance.** (including items previously reported, but not yet addressed).   1. Councillor Carter asked whether it would be possible to organise another sweep of the footpath along the A4042 through Llanover. Clerk to contact Jonathan Wassal at MCC to request. | Clerk | |
| 7 | **Finance.**   1. Payments made since the January meeting.  **£**      1. Review of accounts / cashflow as at 31st January. The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the January 2025 cashflow.   There were no comments or observations.   1. 2025/26 budget – Latest updates. Following the December meeting, the Clerk has updated the budget to produce the latest version (v7) – see below. As usual, any changes from v6 are shown in block yellow.   As recommended at last month’s meeting, an additional £350 (plus VAT) has been included under professional fees to cover the potential cost of an insurance revaluation of the Olde Pounde Shop & Public Conveniences.     1. Appointment of Internal Auditors (EH Accountancy Abergavenny) The company have indicated their willingness to act as our internal auditors again for 2024/25. Their fee will be £300 plus VAT (2023/24 - £275 plus VAT). Councillors agreed to their appointment, and this was formally proposed by Councillor Daniel, 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 £190 (last year £188). Renewal of our membership was approved by Councillors and then formally proposed by Councillor Robins, seconded by Councillor Daniel, and carried unanimously. Renewal of Ton Land lease, due 1st April The current 12-month lease is due to expire on 31st March. The current rental agreement is £47.25 per month (£567 a year). The Clerk had suggested an increase to £48.50 (equal to a 2.64% increase). However, the Chair has previously indicated to Council that he thought a figure of £50 per month (a 5.8% increase) was more appropriate. After a short debate it was agreed that given the small amounts involved, an increase to £50 per month was not unreasonable, and this was formally proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Robins, and carried unanimously.   The Clerk noted that the current tenant had overpaid by £1 (paying £142 instead of £141.75 per quarter), and for good order, he would arrange for this to be repaid over the next few days.   1. Renewal of dog bin waste emptying contract for 2025/26 due 1st April Merlin Environmental have provided us with a contract for the collection of the waste bins for 2025/2026. As previously advised, and included in the budget forecast above, the price is £7.35 + VAT per bin per empty. Renewal of the contract on the terms stated (with the Clerk to sign on behalf of the Council), was proposed by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Barnes, and carried unanimously. 2. Proposal to Execute a Deed on behalf of the Council over the Olde Pounde Shop The lease on the Olde Pounde Shop has been signed by the tenant, and now needs to be executed on behalf of the Community Council. Under section 23 of our Standing Orders – Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds, the CC must first pass a resolution to do this. Any two councillors can then sign on our behalf, with the Clerk of the Council (as Proper Officer), witnessing their signatures. A formal resolution to execute the deed was proposed by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Barnes, and carried unanimously. The Deed was then signed by Councillors Daniel and Barnes, with the Clerk signing as witness to both signatures. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| 8 | **Planning**   1. To accept the responses of the Planning Committee meeting held on 15th January. The following application was considered:  * DM/2024/01549 - Twyn Cecil, Llan Lane, Penperlleni, Goytre, Monmouthshire, NP15 1QD - Proposed dwelling and associated works: amended design to extant planning permissions ref DC/2013/00703 and DM/2021/00323.  The meeting concluded with no issues, or concerns, being raised regarding the proposal.   Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting was proposed by Councillor Robins, seconded by Councillor Daniel and carried unanimously.   1. Any other updates.  Last week the height of the fence under previously considered application DM/2024/01223 – (Retrospective at 80 Newtown Road) was discussed, as it was thought that the fence height had been reduced, but not to the agreed 1.2m from the pavement, as allowed. The Clerk has visited the site and it does not appear that the fence has yet been reduced in height. However, the owners have three months from the original ‘order’. Councillors to monitor. 2. A meeting of the planning committee is to be arranged to consider application (DM/2025/00160) – regarding Studio C, Treowen House, Llanover Business Centre, A4042 T Llanover To Pencroesoped, Llanover, Monmouthshire, NP7 9HA. Councillor Barnes advised that he will schedule a planning meeting for Monday 3rd March, as the comments are due no later than Tuesday 4th. | Clerk  Cllr. Barnes |

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| 9 | **County Council update - County Councillor Jan Butler.**  There was nothing to report in the absence of Councillor Butler. |  |
| 10 | **Goytre Community Centre** A stakeholder meeting was held last Wednesday to consider the critical state of the centre’s finances, which, if no action is taken, would see the centre insolvent by May, potentially leaving the trustees personally liable for any debts. During the meeting MCC agreed to fund the centre with £1000 to stave off the immediate crisis, and which would, based on current financial predications, provide sufficient cashflow until towards the end of the year. Nevertheless, the Trustees voted to call for a residents meeting (as per section 17 of the Trust deed), to consider whether to discontinue the use of the property (this will require a vote of 75% of all those attending the meeting). As the meeting requires 14 days’ notice, details will be posted no later than tomorrow on the village FB pages, social media and noticeboards, with a proposed meeting date of Tuesday 4th March. |  |
| 11 | **Green Corridor Project - update** The online survey closed on 17th Jan with the results fed back to the County Council Lead on Biodiversity. Councillor Carter has provided some additional feedback from the residents in Rhyd-y-Meirch and Jane Clark at MCC has confirmed that this will be incorporated into the design.  Planting has to be completed by the end of March 2025. The MCC team is currently in the process of handing over individual site planting, but with some further procurement still to take place. Therefore, at this time, it’s impossible to provide a precise date for when our work is to take place, but Jane will advise us as soon as a date is known. |  |

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| 12 | **Tender for maintenance of St Bartholomew’s graveyard (closed session)**  The tender to maintain the graveyard at St Bartholomew’s closed at midnight on 31st January. Four tenders were received (although two after the deadline). As a result of the initial low submissions, the planned meeting between Councillors Morrey, Carter and Daniel was not required.  Details of the four tenders and the Clerk’s assessment were discussed in closed session due to the commercial sensitivities involved.  Having carefully reviewed all the proposals, Councillors agreed with the overall assessment, and as a result, recommended the acceptance of the quote from Mr. Gary Duggan at a cost of £2240. The Clerk to revisit the budget forecast for next year to accommodate this contract, and will bring revised figures to the March meeting. The contract is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory risk assessment, with the Clerk to liaise with Mr Duggan to compile this. The appointment of Mr Duggan was then formally proposed by Councillor Carter seconded by Councillor Barnes and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 13 | **Goytre recreation Park – update**  The adult exercise equipment has now been installed. The Clerk is awaiting the invoice from MCC to cover the costs (with £5,000 allocated within the 2024/25 budget for this). Councillor Robins asked whether it would be possible to lower the units, especially the bike and rower, as their height meant it was difficult for people to climb on them to use. Clerk to contact Johnathan Wassal at MCC. | Clerk |
| 14 | **Llanover Village - updates**   1. Installation of dog bins – update. Councillor Carter has taken soundings from the residents of Rhyd-y-Meirch (RYM). Five were in favour, two were broadly in favour but would prefer the bins sited elsewhere, and nine were against. Other locations considered include the canal tow path (but the C&RT are against), the Llanover day nursery and footpath behind RYM, (but both of these are on Estate land, which is not in favour). Councillor Carter will continue discussions with Llanover Estates, but for the time being it does not appear that there is a ‘demand’ for the bins. 2. Friends of St Bartholomew’s – update.   Councillor Carter has identified 2 or 3 people who have expressed an interest in taking part in an organised day (rather than a regular meeting). He is also exploring whether any grants might be available from Keep Wales Tidy for bulbs etc. The Clerk advised that he could approach the Community Council who would be able to fund a relatively small-scale planting scheme.   1. Llanover bus stops – lease proposal from Llanover Estates We have been approached by Llanover Estates regarding the three covered bus stops in the village. Apparently all three are owned by the Trustees and shown on their registered title (we believed that one was owned by ourselves. As this appears not to be the case, it can now be removed from our insurance). The Estates have asked whether it would it be appropriate for either the Community Council or Monmouthshire County Council to take a lease or licence on all 3, and be responsible for their cleaning and public liability insurance (on the basis that they are all are public / community facilities, even if privately owned). Apparently, they have done this with similar facilities in Caerphilly.   The Clerk has already spoken with MCC, and it would not be a problem to add the cleaning of the bus stops to the responsibilities of the village maintenance team (which we pay for).  Overall, however, there was no appetite amongst Councillors for the Community Council to take on the ownership and ongoing maintenance of the structures. However, a proposal to add the three covered bus stops to our cleaning schedule (via MCC), for Llanover was proposed by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Carter and carried unanimously. Clerk to request via Johnathan Wassal at MCC.  Separately, Councillor Carter has advised the Clerk that the residents survey is not being progressed for the time being. | Cllr. Carter  Cllr. Carter  Clerk |
| 15 | **Donation Requests.**  Abergavenny Eisteddfod 2025  We have been approached by the committee which organises the annual Abergavenny Youngsters Eisteddfod. This invites competitors from all the schools in and around the Abergavenny Area. Their aim is to give youngsters the opportunity to showcase their talents and encourage them to develop their success in Music, Dance, Recitation, Art, Literature and Photography.  All winners receive a monetary prize, a medal or a certificate depending on the competition. The winning School Choir receives a shield and a money prize for the school. In order to keep this Welsh tradition going, both in English and Welsh for the schools, we are asked if we would consider financially supporting the event, with any donation being gratefully appreciated.  Councillors were unaware of this particular Eisteddfod, and Councillor Daniel confirmed that there were no plans for Goytre Fawr Primary to attend (they will be attending the Urdd in the summer).  It was therefore agreed that we should politely decline as we would be supporting the school at the national event. This was then proposed by Councillor Barnes, seconded by Councillor Daniel and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 16 | **Village Committees’ Reports – questions based on previously distributed updates.**   * Goytre Village Hall.   + Unfortunately, the free food hall has had to shut down due to Hygiene issues.   + Bookings are still good.   + The Arthur Morris Lounge outside wall has now been repaired.   + The Committee is looking to update both the hall and club as well as the audio system. * Llanover Village Hall.   + Special 100th anniversary village is being organised for 12th July. Fete committee established.   + Bookings and financial position remain healthy.   + A joint VE/VJ celebration is being planned for 10th May.   + Lottery grant application for damp issue repair and hall decoration underway.   Repairs to outdoor porch lighting and leaks authorised.   * Goytre School Governors.   + Michael Gough the Head Teacher has announced he is to retire at the end of this academic year. Interviews will be held next term to select a new Head Teacher.   + The school is keen to be involved in this year’s Urdd Eisteddfod activity.   + Standards are still good.   + The school has 182 children with an average daily attendance of 95%.   Finances are being managed well, but the school will be in deficit, although within the target set.   * Goytre Community Centre. * Updated during the main meeting |  |
| * Other Reports.   + Town & Community Councils Budget Engagement. The Clerk joined this event by teleconference on Tuesday 11th February.   In 2025/26 MCC will receive an increase in core funding from WG of 2.6% (£5.1M). However, delivery of the same services as 2024/25 will cost an extra £23.7M. Potential cost savings and increased revenue streams have been identified, but even with an increase in council tax of 7.8% (£5.9M), this will still leave a funding gap of £2.86M. Constructive discussions are taking place with WG, but it seems unlikely they will cover all of this.  Next steps include a 4-week budgetary consultation exercise with residents, with the final cabinet meeting on 5th March and the setting of the 2025/26 budget and council tax on 6th March. |  |
| 17 | **Communications.**   1. GFCC Facebook page – latest posts / responses. There was nothing specific to report. However, it was suggested that we might wish to post some pictures / details of the new park equipment on our Facebook page. 2. Upgrade to web site. As councillors are aware, our web site has now been upgraded to ‘Spanglefish 3’ – the latest software package of our web providers. It now has a direct web site address (so no longer diverts from the legacy site held with M247). It has a smarter design, with a useful upcoming events schedule on the right hand side, and a rolling banner, showcasing the local scenery.   The new system is more mobile friendly and includes added security for users (an SSL 'secure sockets layer' certificate), guaranteeing the authenticity of our website, and encrypting communication between computers. |  |
| 18 | **Advertising – Usk & Raglan Diary Contributions March/April 2025.** The closing date for contributions will be the end of March. Currently there are no articles for consideration. |  |
| 19 | **Date of next meeting and close.**  The next meeting is to be held on **Monday 24th March 2025** at **19.45,** atLlanover Village Hall, and by teleconference using: <https://meet.jit.si/GoetreFawrCommunityCouncil> | All/  Clerk |

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