

Cyngor Cymuned Carreghafa Community Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 24th February 2015
at Llanymynech Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. M Clare (Chair)
Cllr. Col D Thornycroft (Vice-Chair),
Cllr. C Backshall,
Cllr D. Borthwick
Cllr. F. James,
Cllr. C Jones
Cllr. R McCluskey
Cllr B Richardson
Cllr A Jones – County Councillor

In attendance: Mr. M Donkin – Clerk to the Council
1 member of the public

1. All councillors present	Apologies for Absence:
2. To record Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda: None	
3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd February 2015: The minutes were accepted as a correct record and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.	
4. Matters arising from the minutes that are not on the agenda: Cllr Backshall referred to the paragraph on the inquorate meeting of 27 th January. He asked that it be noted that four councillors had sent apologies and that because there was urgent business the meeting was rescheduled one week later for 3 rd February. 4.2. <u>Purchase of Defibrillator</u> Cllr Backshall said that he had seen the Landlord of the Dolphin Inn and a site for the defibrillator had been agreed. An electrician has been contacted and we are now awaiting the electrical work to be completed after which the defibrillator will be commissioned. Cllr Backshall said this may take some time. 9.5. <u>DEFRA Petition</u> The Clerk confirmed that he had signed the DEFRA on-line petition on behalf of the Council. 10.2. <u>Full Electoral Register</u> The Clerk confirmed that he had sent for a copy of the electoral register but it had not yet arrived.	
5. Discussion on the Local Delivery of Services The Chairman said that there were two elements to be discussed, the White Paper and a decision on whether Carreghafa Community Council should express an interest in becoming part of a cluster of local authorities. He emphasised that this was an important process He had read the ‘Young Person’s	

Guide' and the Summary of the White Paper. The Welsh Assembly has recognised that the current arrangements are not sustainable in the long term for the following reasons:-

- inefficiency
 - effectively
 -
 - councillors available
- There is a high degree of
It is not possible to manage
Cost levels are very high
There are not enough good

The White paper seeks to harmonise and create a more manageable operative structure which will be uniform across Wales. There are currently 735 community councils in Wales and there is a need to generate clusters to reduce numbers.

The closing date for feedback on the White Paper is 24th April 2015 and following this a draft bill will be produced to go before the Welsh Assembly after the next election in 2016.

There is a choice of joining a cluster or remaining a stand-alone council and he thought that there would be pressure to join a cluster. Cllr Arwel Jones said that Powys County Council is not suggesting that community councils must be in a cluster.

The Chairman then opened the discussion and asked all councillors to give their views.

Cllr Backshall felt that the issue of the White Paper and local delivery of services were separate matters. A bill arising from the White Paper will not be published until after the next Welsh Assembly election. The earliest legislation would come before the Assembly in the Autumn of 2016 and would be unlikely to take effect before the elections to community councils in 2017. The target date for completion of any re-organisation is 2022.

The Chairman said that the Council does have to decide at this meeting whether to express an interest in being part of a cluster. He felt that Carreghofa would be better placed in the Llanfyllin cluster than going with Welshpool.

Cllr Richardson was concerned that Carreghofa is a small community. He felt that much of what the Council wanted to achieve has already been done or is nearing completion. He wondered how much influence the Council would be able to exert in a cluster and felt that it was too early to commit to any one particular approach.

Cllr Jones thought that clustering was a good idea but agreed that joining a cluster led by a town council would result in a loss of influence and concentration of local affairs. She felt that the Council should look at the possibility of forming a cluster with other similar rural community councils.

Cllr Borthwick said that he supported Cllr Jones' position

Cllr McCluskey said that the crux was in maintaining a local identity. Carreghofa would not have the same weight of influence in a large cluster and might lose its identity.

Cllr James agreed with Cllrs Jones, Borthwick and McCluskey. She asked about the possibility of a rural cluster being formed. Cllr Arwel Jones said that, locally, there were 24 councils considering clustering. It had been suggested that a group of 8 councils would be the ideal size for a cluster which certainly left open the possibility of a 3rd cluster alongside Welshpool and Llanfyllin. Cllr James said

that she would be in favour of joining a rural cluster.

Cllr Thornycroft said that it was very early to be making a decision. There is no list of services likely to be devolved and such a list will not be available until late March at the earliest. He said that any decision should be guided by two principles:-

- be driven by the benefits available to this council. The Council's decision should
- with like councils. He felt that there are dangers in joining with a cluster centred on a town council which would have very different priorities. Carreghofa should try to cluster

He pointed out that, at this stage, any expression of interest would not be binding therefore it would be wrong to say that we will not join but that we should look positively for a rural grouping.

Cllr Backshall said that we need to stay interested but cannot, at this time, be bound to any particular decision. He was worried that the burden of devolvement would fall upon Carreghofa's precept payers.

The Chairman asked Cllr Arwel Jones if there was anything to stop Carreghofa becoming a lead council. Cllr Jones said that there was not.

The following proposal was then put:-

That Carreghofa Community Council express an interest in joining a cluster based on Llanfyllin but that it is made clear that this decision in no way binds the Council to joining the cluster in the event that some other arrangement is eventually felt to be more in the Council's interest.

Proposed by Cllr Thornycroft; Seconded by Cllr James. Passed by 5 votes for to 1 against with 2 abstentions.

6. To receive reports from Committees and Working Groups:

6.1: Border Area Working Group.

The written report from the Group was noted. Cllr Thornycroft added that a reply had been received from CADW stating that the boundary stone is not listed or classed as an ancient monument. We are still waiting for a reply from the Powys C C Planning Department. Cllr Arwel Jones said that he would follow this up.

ACTION; Clerk to forward original letter to Cllr Arwel Jones.

Cllr Thornycroft said that the Highways Agency is getting clearance for the lighting and he felt that we could go ahead with Phase 2 i.e. the resurfacing of the car park and farm access.

Cllr Richardson raised the matter of cars for sale being parked on the area. This has been an ongoing problem for some time. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the highways department to express the Council's concern and ask for delegated powers to put removal notices on the offending vehicles.

ACTION: Clerk to write to Powys C C Highways Department.

Cllr Clare asked about a definitive title for the project. Cllr Thornycroft said that it is the 'Gateway to Wales' Project.

6.2: Highways and Byways

The written report from the Group was noted. Cllr Clare reported that he had spoken to local residents likely to be effected and they were opposed to having a bus shelter erected. They pointed out that there was already a telephone box, power pole and bus stop. Cllr Clare felt that it would be inappropriate to go ahead in the face of local opposition and an alternative site should be found.

Cllr Backshall said that if a new site was too far away negotiations on the siting of a new bus stop would have to take place.

ACTION: Cllr Clare to pursue other options.

Cllr Richardson pointed out that the problem of potholes has not been dealt with and the situation continues to deteriorate.

Cllr Clare said that a reply from Powys C C had been received on the matter of a request for a traffic order to make the road markings outside the school enforceable. It pointed out that a blanket order is being considered by PCC with no cost to the Community and the road markings may then be enforced.

6.3: Web-site

The written report from the Group was noted. Cllr Clare handed out information allowing councillors to access the web-site and asked for feedback. As soon as the web company receives payment the site can go live.

7. Finance Report

The Finance Officer's report was accepted.

The Council agreed (Proposed Cllr James; Seconded Cllr Backshall; All in favour) that a Project Bank Account be opened and £10,000 should be placed in it for the Border Gateway Project and a further £4,500 for the Bus Shelter.

The Council now has 4 accounts as follows:-

- Current Account
- Deposit Account
- Pensions Account
- Project Account.

The Council (Proposed Cllr Backshall; Seconded Cllr Jones; All in favour) authorised the following payments:-

- Clerks salary (February 2015) - £160.64
- HMRC - re PAYE on clerk's salary - £36.16
- Membership of One Voice Wales - £85.00 (311 dwellings)
- Payment to Gloversure - web-site construction - £555.60

Cllr Jones said that the Village Hall Committee has submitted a revenue grant application and needs to know the amount of the Precept for the next financial year. Cllr Clare said that this will not be known until late March.

The Chairman informed the Council that a matter of concern had arisen in that there are no bank statements or cheque book available for the interim period between Mrs Stanistreet's resignation and Mr Donkin's appointment. This information can be got from HSBC and a full year statement will be

put to the March meeting.

8. To receive reports from meetings from outside bodies.

8.1. One Voice Wales

The written report from Cllr Backshall was noted

8.2. National Grid

The written report from the Group was noted Cllr Clare said that details of areas in the report can be viewed on the web-site.

9. Correspondence

The correspondence listed in the papers to the meeting was noted.

Further items were brought to the attention of the meeting as follows:-

- A letter from One Voice Wales
-- They have upgraded their web-site and local councils will be able to link to it. The Clerk was asked to set up a username and password.
- Letter from Leighton Andrews
commenting on the White Paper's defence of senior management. He points out that the combined annual salaries for top executives in Powys is £27 million.

10. Other Matters

10.1 Co-option of a member

Mr Michael Connell, a member of the public attending the meeting was asked to leave the meeting for this item.

The Chairman apprised the meeting that Mr Connell has recently moved into the village from Scotland. In Scotland he was a member of his local community council and would like to be involved with Carreghofa. The Chairman has had some conversations with Mr Connell and feels that he has a lot of experience and skills that would be of benefit to the Council.

The Council currently has its full quota of councillors but it would be a pity not to take advantage of someone who is keen to be involved and has experience in local government.

Cllr Thornycroft said that there will be a great deal of work in the near future with the White Paper and associated matters and suggested that Mr Connell could assist with this.

It was agreed that Mr Connell be co-opted to the Council as a member with no voting rights.

Mr Connell was then invited to return to the meeting.

10.2 Invitation to join a meeting of Llanymynech Parish Council.

A late invitation to join a meeting of Llanymynech Parish council on Thursday 26th February has been received. Cllrs Backshall, Borthwick and James agreed to go on behalf of the Council.

11. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 31st March 2015 at Llanymynech Village Hall, 7.00pm.
(Papers and reports for the meeting to the Clerk by 24th March please)
ACTION: All to note