

Cyngor Cymuned Carreghofa Community Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 27 July 2021 at Llanymynech Village Hall

Present:

Cllr M Connell (Chairman)

Cllr C Backshall

Cllr R Dover

Cllr F James

Cllr C Jones

Cllr R McCluskey

In attendance:

County Cllr Arwel Jones

Mr M Donkin – Clerk to the Council

One member of the public

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. To record declarations of interest in items on the agenda

None

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29 June 2021

Para 4.1. 1 July to read 1 June. With this correction the minutes of the meeting of 29 June were agreed, proposed Cllr Jones, seconded Cllr Dover and signed by the Chairman

4. Matters arising from the notes

4.1 (min ref: 6). The Chairman confirmed that the land off Carreghofa Lane is included in the LDP for possible development.

4.2. (min ref: 9.5) The Clerk confirmed that he had spoken with Mr Limbrey of the Montgomery canal restoration trust and had been told that there were good environmental reasons for leaving the vegetation in situ. The Chairman said that in places the towpath was almost completely overgrown and making progress along the path very difficult. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Canal & Rivers Trust in this matter.

ACTION: Clerk

5. Finance Report

5.1 Financial position

Council noted the financial position as set out in the papers for the meeting.

5.2 First quarter financial statement

Council received the Financial Statement as set out in the Papers for the Meeting. The Clerk pointed out that there was an error in the total budget in the Income section. The figure of £11360 should read £11350. This was due to a typing error and was corrected. He also pointed out that note 6 included a payment to PAYE of £473.80. This should not have been included as the transaction took place after 30 June. The figure in the expenditure column is correct.

The Clerk then invited questions. There were none and the Statement was adopted, proposed Cllr Backshall, seconded Cllr McCluskey and passed unanimously.

5.3 Internal audit report

Council received the internal audit report and the accounting statement to be forwarded to the external auditor in the Papers for the Meeting.

The Clerk went through the points raised by the internal auditor and the recommendations were accepted.

Recommendation 5 referred to the level of reserves held by the Council. The internal auditor recommended that these be reduced to between 3 and 12 months net operating expenditure.

The Clerk pointed out that the Council's reserves had been very comfortable when he had taken up his post in 2014 and that the Council had attempted to reduce reserves by maintaining the Precept at the same level for the past three years and undertaking the outdoor adult gym project at Walls Bridge. The Council could undertake further projects or support local groups if any had projects that could be funded. The Council had considered adding to the outdoor gym project by installing equipment suitable for people with disabilities. The Chairman said that we could also consider more items for the children's section.

Cllr Jones asked whether we could make a considerable reduction in precept or even charge no precept for one year. County Cllr Arwel Jones advised against having no precept. When projects did come along they usually involved a substantial expenditure.

Cllr James suggested hiring a private company to clean the pavements but County Cllr Arwel Jones said that another council had considered this but had to reconsider as the whole project was complicated by risk assessments, traffic regulations and insurance issues.

Cllr Backshall asked if the school might need anything. Cllr Dover, as the Council's representative on the governing body said that he would make enquiries.

Cllr McCluskey suggested that everyone should think about these issues and bring ideas to the next meeting.

ACTION: All

Recommendation 6

The internal auditor had recommended that the risk assessment should be updated to include supplier (procurement) fraud including the adequacy of supplier controls. The Clerk said that he was uncertain of what this meant. Cllr Backshall suggested seeking advice from One Voice Wales.

ACTION: Clerk

The internal audit report was accepted, proposed Cllr McCluskey, seconded Cllr Dover and passed unanimously.

5.4 Approval of payments

The payment to JDH Business Services of £320.40 for carrying out the internal audit was approved.

6 Planning

There were no planning issues to consider this month.

7. Other matters

7.1 Website compliance

The Chairman asked that, before Council began considering this issue it should consider the outcome of the recently published Electoral Arrangements report for Powys.

His concern is that if Carreghofa Community Council is to be merged with Llandysilio in 2022, the Council could be involving itself in considerable expense which might not produce a benefit for the electors.

Cllr Backshall suggested an alternative interpretation of the paper which is that the reorganisation is about seats on the County Council and that, for this purpose only, Carreghofa and Llandysilio would be combined. County Cllr Arwel Jones said that the main purpose of the exercise is to reduce the number of county councillors and undertook to find out which of the two scenarios was correct. The Chairman asked if this could be done within 7 days so that the project could proceed.

ACTION: County Cllr Arwel Jones

The meeting then went on to consider Cllr Backshall's paper.

Cllr Backshall gave a summary of her paper. It is important that the Council updates its website as it is currently not compliant with WCAG regulations. The three companies for consideration (Aubergine, NetWise and TEEC) all offer comparable services and the Council would not be tied in to a long term contract with any of them. Aubergine is the largest company and is very robust but does not offer an email service; TEEC additionally offers access to the County Council's planning portal. She pointed out that NetWise will not transfer content from our existing website; Aubergine and TEEC will do so but will not pick up pdf type documents.

Cllr McCluskey said that all three were clear and easy to follow and he liked the planning link offered by TEEC. He queried, given the location of Carreghofa, whether the Council would need a link to both Powys County Council and Shropshire County Council planning websites. He felt that Aubergine was not right for Carreghofa and had no preference between NetWise and TEEC but would be more likely to support TEEC because of its planning link feature.

The Chairman felt that all three were very similar. He had considered the number of councils that were using each company and related this to the staff numbers of each company. He also noted that TEEC's package had been designed by the company's MD who was also a councillor and, therefore, surmised that he might well take a more active interest in providing follow up.

Cllr James said that she was in favour of TEEC because of the planning feature.

Cllr Jones said that she would be happy with either NetWise or TEEC and Cllr Dover elected to support TEEC.

It was, therefore, agreed that TEEC be approached to provide the service for Carreghofa Community Council.

Cllr Backshall confirmed that the preference matched hers.

Cllr Backshall proposed that she now gets in touch with TEEC to move the project on. She would also check as to the possibility of linking both to the Powys and Shropshire planning portals.

ACTION: Cllr Backshall

7.2 Community award

The Chairman reported that the engraver had finished the award plaques but then found a spelling mistake on one which could not be corrected. He did not have a similar base and so it has been agreed that the two plaques will be of different design. They should have been ready for this meeting but will now be presented at the September meeting.

7.3 Memorial bench at Walls Bridge

This is still ongoing due to the absence of Cllr Pownall. Cllr McCluskey suggested that, in addition to restoring the bench, the Council could replace the picnic table with a new one. It was suggested that two tables be purchased as this was the original number. Cllr Backshall suggested that recycled plastic tables be used as they are more robust. This type is currently used at Chirk castle and Cllr Backshall undertook to find out where they could be purchased from and the cost.

Cllr McCluskey thought that the leg on the memorial bench was rotten and might need replacement. He said that he would look at it to confirm its state.

ACTION: Cllrs McCluskey and Backshall

7.4 Footpaths

The Clerk confirmed that he has invited Calum Carr, the Rights of Way & Access Officer to attend the September meeting. Mr Carr is keen to know what issues the Council wish to discuss with him and, in this respect, the Clerk has sent Cllr Backshall's original paper to him. If there are other matters that councillors would like to raise please inform the clerk.

ACTION: All

7.5 Flooding

Council received the note in the papers for the meeting. County Cllr Arwel Jones said that the National Flooding Forum is conducting a consultation on flooding and is particularly interested in the experiences of people within the Vyrnwy catchment area. It is hoped that the consultation will lead to better management of the water levels at the Vyrnwy dam. Cllr James mentioned that fact that flooding was a particular problem between Wern and Newbridge. Councillors asked for contact details of the NFF and County Cllr Arwel Jones undertook to circulate these.

County Cllr Arwel Jones has asked for the following to be put on the agenda.

ACTION: County Cllr Arwel Jones

8. Amenities

8.1 Walls Bridge playground and football field

The Chairman reported that there were no outstanding issues with Walls Bridge playground. Cllr McCluskey said that he thought a tree on the roadside which had been cut back was dead. He said that he would inspect the trees following the meeting.

ACTION: Cllr McCluskey

Cllr Dover drew attention to the fact that vegetation on the B4398 between Carreghofa Lane and the Primary School had overgrown and was obstructing the footpath. The Chairman said that we could arrange for this to be cut back which was done last year, but the field will not be cut until the growing season is over. Cllr Jones said that Mr Ian Smith had done this previously and she undertook to ask him to trim the fence line along the path.

ACTION: Cllr Jones

9. Highways and byways

9.1 Road Repairs and Potholes

Cllr Jones said that some repairs had been done on Carreghofa Lane but there was still more to be done.

Cllr James reported that still nothing had been done on Pen-y-Foel and that growth from the hedgerows was encroaching onto the roadway. She felt that it needed cutting.

9.2 Dolphin car park

County Cllr Arwel Jones gave a resume of the information contained in the papers for the meeting. He confirmed that the hire of a jet packer would be £2500 per day but had agreed with the Highways department that they would provide an estimate for an 'old fashioned' repair of topping and sealing.

9.3 Signs on the pavement at A483 crossroads

The Chairman read out a letter from a resident which confirmed that although some action has been taken, the problems continue. The car wash sails have been moved off the path, improving sight lines but the 'A' boards remain a problem as, from the height of a driver sitting in a car, they block the sightlines when emerging on to the A483. The Chairman said that he had raised this matter at the meeting with Powys County Council. He said that he would answer the resident's letter after consultation with Powys C.C.

Post-meeting note:

The 'A' frames have been moved back (away from the road) and the Village Pantry sign has had its legs shortened, improving visibility

The Chairman contacted the resident who had submitted the letter to advise him of the new position and the Chairman confirmed that the situation would be monitored.

Cllr McCluskey said that the other side of the matter is that the Council should be supporting small businesses and they needed to advertise. He wondered whether finger posts, which would be of sufficient height to avoid obstructing sightlines, could be used instead but County Cllr Arwel Jones thought that permission would not be forthcoming from the Trunk Road Agent and while one does wish to support local businesses they could not be allowed to obstruct the pavements.

10. To receive reports on meetings from outside bodies

10.1 Burial Board

No meeting has been held since the last report

10.2 Powys CC and Town and Community Councils meeting

The Chairman had circulated notes of the meeting held on 19th July and these were reproduced in the papers for the meeting.

10.3 Village Hall

Cllr Jones reported that the Village Hall was nearly back to normal activity.

10.4 CHC meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 28 July

11. Correspondence

11.1 Correspondence for decision

There was no correspondence for decision

11.2 Correspondence to note

Council noted the correspondence sent out by the Clerk since the last meeting and itemised in the papers for the meeting.

12. Any Other Business

12. 1. The Chairman asked the member of the public if she wished to raise any points. She referred to the problem of speeding cars on the B4398 through Wern. There were no pavements and although there is a 30mph limit this is generally disregarded. She felt that a flashing sign as has been installed elsewhere e.g. Trefonen might help.

The Chairman/Clerk explained that the matter had been raised with 'Go-Safe' Motoring (an arm of Dyfed Powys Police) who are looking to start a survey in September from New Bridge to the junction with the A483.

Cllr McCluskey said that the problem of speeding was particularly acute on the A483 and seems to be getting worse with many of the offenders being heavy goods vehicles. Additionally, vehicle transporters pulling up to offload cars could be causing an obstruction for an hour or more.

County Cllr Arwel Jones said that he would raise the matter with the Trunk Road Agent.

ACTION: County Cllr Arwel Jones

13. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 28 September 2021 at 7.00pm

ACTION: All to note.

Approved by Council as a correct record:-

Proposed: _____

Seconded: _____

Signed: _____ Chairman

Date: _____