

**PONTHIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR CYMUNED PONTHIR**

**Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting  
13<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

1. **Present:** Cllr. R. Davies (Chair), Cllr. S. Bailey, Cllr. P. Matthews, Cllr. D. Green, Cllr. T. Roberts, Cllr. Huw Bevan (TCBC)  
**Youth Representatives:** None.  
**Members of Public Attending:** 22 Ponthir Residents  
**Clerk:** Karen Price
  
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Mrs. J. Bold, Cllr. Mrs. J. Morgan, T. Bold
  
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Davies declared a personal interest in Item 17b as a relative attends this group. Cllr. Matthews declared a personal interest in Item 17c as he was involved in organizing the event which the Sports Club was requesting assistance with. Neither Councillor took part in the item they had declared an interest in.
  
4. Matters raised by members of the public present: None
  
5. **Residents comments regarding Torfaen CBC's decision to create meadowland areas in Ponthir** – Cllr. Davies began by reading out a time line starting from the initial proposal by a TCBC Councillor to encourage pollinators in Torfaen. He also included details of two site visits by TCBC officers with Community Council Members. To date the Community Council have received a total of 9 e-mails from residents against this decision and 2 e-mails and 2 verbal comments supporting this decision.  
A number of the residents present made the following points:
  - a. Why weren't residents consulted?
  - b. One resident stated that the majority of residents in Candwr Park were against this decision and many more residents had written letters of complaint than had been stated.
  - c. There were concerns that this area would become a rubbish dump
  - d. Leaving an area of grass would not attract bees as these areas have to be continually managed and cut more than once a year. A resident read out a statement from DEFRA to support this view.
  - e. The proposal to develop and maintain a community orchard was more expensive than cutting the grass on a regular basis.
  - f. Residents agreed that the Community Council should proceed with arranging the removal of shrubs at the entrance to Candwr Park.
  - g. The majority of the residents present asked that the Community Council write to TCBC Council asking for the regular cutting schedule to be resumed.
  - h. Two residents stated that they were not against the principle to encourage pollinators if it added something to the area but would like to see and discuss a firm proposal first. Until such time they felt the regular cutting schedule should resume.
  - i. One resident asked if the Community Council could find out what the deeds of that area of land stated in terms of Council maintenance when the estate was first built.
  - j. A grass pathway had been cut from the bus shelter to Candwr Park but a resident noted that it undulates and a resident had already fallen when walking along this path.
  - k. The meadowland site near the old County Hall site was a mess and in no way reflected the photographs forwarded by TCBC as examples of meadowland.

- l. There seemed to be a general reduction by TCBC in the maintenance of hedges and weeds

In reply to the above residents' comments the Community Council stated:

- m. It could only comment on the responses received by the Community Council.
- n. It could not assume that because the majority of Candwr Park residents had not contacted the Community Council about TCBC's decision that they were also against the meadowland.
- o. It agreed that the lack of consultation was disappointing.
- p. TCBC was due to review all the meadowland sites in Torfaen.
- q. TCBC were still undertaking a quarterly cleanse of meadowland areas.
- r. TCBC Officers were due to attend our next meeting in September to discuss possible proposals to enhance this site and that residents would be able to attend.
- s. Cllr Davies asked those present what they would find acceptable for this area of land. The majority of those present wanted the resumption of a regular cutting schedule. It was agreed that the Community Council would write, on the resident's behalf, to Dana Eynon, TCBC asking if the cutting schedule could be resumed and confirm that the shrubs can be removed.

Cllr. Bevan made the following points:

- t. He confirmed that the decision for a meadowland had been made by TCBC and stated that not every decision the Council makes is put out to consultation.
- u. TCBC no longer cut hedges during the bird nesting season.
- v. Residents had a number of different means of informing TCBC of any overgrown footpaths including contacting himself and the Community Council.
- w. He was disappointed that those residents present felt they could not support the Community Councils efforts.
- x. He had personally bought a number of packets of wildflower seeds to be used in any proposal that the Community Council agreed upon.

Cllr. Davies asked that this discussion come to an end as the Community Council needed to continue with the remainder of the agenda and suggested that residents arrange a separate meeting with Cllr. Bevan to discuss any issues that they had concerning TCBC.

**(Action: Clerk to write to TCBC stating that residents present at this meeting had asked for the reinstatement of the regular cutting schedule, highlighting the problem with the grass pathway, confirming that the ornamental shrubs can be removed and asking what maintenance arrangements were detailed in the original deeds when the estate was built. A copy of this and any response will be sent to Mr E. who will then circulate to the rest of the residents present.)**

The majority of residents left the meeting at 7.50pm.

**6. A report from Cllr. Huw Bevan – The following items were reported:**

- a. There had been a report of drug dealing in the Village Hall Car Park and Gwent Police had increased patrols. (See also Item 7b)
- b. Cllr. Bevan and Mr Bubela had met with the developer of Byways, Caerleon Road, Ponthir who has submitted a planning application (See Item 10b). The Hall Committee has written to TCBC as it favours an access from the front of the property onto Caerleon Road rather than the access proposed in the planning application.
- c. A speed indicator device had been deployed on Caerleon Road.

Residents present made the following observations:

- d. Why is the camera van deployed on a Sunday morning rather than during the school run and later in the evening?
- e. A number of drivers are using mobile phones whilst travelling through Ponthir.

- f. Vehicles are not stopping when there is a red light at the pedestrian crossing.  
Residents were advised when possible to make a note of the vehicles registration numbers and report to the police. **(Action: Clerk to advise PCSO of residents' concerns)**

**7. A report from Gwent Police** – Clerk read out an e-mail report from PCSO Poulson.

- a. It stated that there were no crimes to report since our last meeting in July 2014.  
b. All ward officers have been made aware of the report of drug dealing in Ponthir and patrols have been increased. (See also Item 6a) A local resident has also reported this problem and they, together with Mr Bubela, have been given the PCSO's contact numbers to enable them to report any future suspicious activity.  
c. Another resident has reported drug use in the lane off Candwr Road. However the vehicle had left prior to the police arriving and there was no evidence of drug use in the area.

**8.** The minutes of the Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 were approved as a true record and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Davies.

**9. Matters Arising from the Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

- a. **Community Council Credit Card** – **(Action: Clerk gathering information)**  
b. **Community Council's Facebook Page** – **(Action: Clerk and Tom Bold to set up)**  
c. **Gwent Best Kept Village Competition** – Cllr. Bevan reported that there was some doubt as to whether this competition would be continuing due to financial issues within the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations.  
8.20pm Cllr. Bevan left the meeting.  
d. **The New Model Financial Regulations** – **(Action: Clerk to review these and present to Council for consideration when completed)**  
e. **Freedom of Information and Data Protection** – Clerk confirmed that the privacy and data protection statement had been added to the Council's website. **(Action: Clerk and Cllr. Bailey to arrange new e-mail accounts using gov.uk)**  
f. **Community Planning** – **(Action: Cllr. Bold and Clerk to look into)**  
g. **Youth Council** – **(Action: Item for September's Agenda)**  
h. **Local Council Partnership Committee Meetings** – Clerk has informed Nikki Marsh, TCBC, that Cllr. Davies will be attending future meetings.  
i. **A report form the site visit with TCBC Officers to discuss proposed meadowland areas in Ponthir** – Clerk has taken a series of photographs of the meadowland areas last week. As discussions were still ongoing with TCBC officers the confirmation of what work would be undertaken at the sites has not been sought.  
j. **To order letter headed paper and compliment slips** – To date two quotes have been obtained but this won't be progressed until any new e-mail address is confirmed (See Item 9e)  
8.30pm - A number of residents left the meeting.

**10. Planning**

- a. Council noted that planning application 14/P/00189 The Willows, Lamb Lane, Ponthir was not received by Ponthir CC prior to TCBC's approval.  
b. 14/P/00369 Existing bungalow extended with new floor added & new access at Byways, Caerleon Road, Ponthir, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP18 1GX – The following observations were made:  
i. There were no observations regarding the proposed extension to the existing bungalow.  
ii. The proposed access is dependent upon permission for a right of access being granted by Ponthir Village Hall Committee but from indications received from the Hall Committee this will not be forthcoming.

- iii. Notwithstanding the above point, it was considered that the location of the proposed access would be to the detriment of Highway Safety due to its proximity to the junction from Caerleon Road to the entrance of the Village Hall car park.
  - iv. The Community Council has received copies of correspondence from the Village Hall Committee to TCBC regarding this application and noted the comments on the proposed access. It has reviewed the planning history of this site including planning application 05/P/13347(E). Council agreed that the planning inspector's findings in that application, for the refusal of a new access to the front of the property onto Caerleon Road, are still applicable.
  - v. It was noted that there were originally two Tree Preservation Orders on this site. Council understands from the TCBC Tree Preservation Officer that one of those trees, a willow, has died and has since been removed with an order due to be issued for the planting of a replacement tree. It would ask that the Tree Preservation Order on the remaining oak tree is adhered to.
- c. 14/P/00367 Replacement smoking shelter at Star Inn, Caerleon Road, Ponthir, Newport, NP181GZ – Council noted whilst the applicant currently endeavors to keep the grounds clean there was no bin included in this application. It was felt that such a bin should be included and that it should be emptied regularly.

## **11. Finance and Accounts**

- a. Balance of Direct Plus Account as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014 = £23,517.37
- b. Council noted the external auditors report and the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2014 was approved. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts.
- c. A direct debit mandate form for future SWALEC bills was approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr. Roberts and seconded by Cllr. Green.
- d. **Authorisation of Cheques**
  - i. K Price (Stationery £5.00, Ink £17.50, Gift Vouchers – Logo Competition £50.00 ) = £72.50
  - ii. Information Commissioners Registration = £35.00

Both of the above cheques were approved for payment. Proposed by Cllr. Roberts and seconded by Cllr. Green.

Clerk informed Council that an invoice had been received from the Village Hall relating to the hiring of the hall for the Christmas Tree Lighting Event. Council agreed that it should be paid and would be included on September's agenda for formal approval.

### **e. To Approve Cheques already Paid**

- i. One Voice Wales (FOI Training) = £30.00
- ii. Torfaen CBC (NI Contributions) = £29.90

Both of the above cheques were approved. Proposed by Cllr. Davies and seconded by Cllr. Roberts.

### **f. To Note Standing Order Payments**

- i. TCBC ( Clerk's Salary) on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2014
- The above payment was noted.

## **12. Updates:**

- a. **The Community Council Newsletter** – The next issue will be delayed to enable an article to be included about the Candwr Park meadowland. Cllr. Davies confirmed that there will also

be articles from a number of local organisations. (**Action: Cllr. Davies to e-mail councilors a copy of the meadowland article prior to publication**)

- b. **The Community Council Website** – Clerk reported a total of 187 hits in July which is an increase from the previous month. Most of the hits occur after the agenda and minutes are published. This month's increase may also be due in part to the issue surrounding the Candwr Park meadowland.
- c. **The Playground Project** – Following a site meeting, with a representative from Groundwork Caerphilly, Cllr. Bailey circulated a report to councillors and the following points were noted:
- i. Permission was needed from TCBC to undertake any work
  - ii. It was agreed to conduct a survey from users of the park to find out what equipment was used and what type of new equipment users would like to see installed.
  - iii. Cllr. Bailey has had an offer of free paint to repaint equipment.
  - iv. Equipment that appears to be broken can be either repaired or removed depending on survey.
  - v. The Community Council could operate closely with the school and create wild life habitats within the park. This would have the added benefit of improving the chances of additional funding.
  - vi. The current seating is limited and in a poor state of repair. Additional seating/picnic tables could be introduced.
  - vii. Mr & Mrs Drew's daughters have met with Cllr. Davies and would like to install a bench(es) in the park in memory of their parents.
  - viii. The Community Council has set aside an initial budget of £5,000 and Groundwork Caerphilly could assist in obtaining match funding.

**(Action: Clerk to contact TCBC to seek permission in principle to undertake work in the park and also to confirm TCBC's policy re memorial benches. Cllr. Bailey and Clerk to produce a survey form)**

- d. **John Carpenter's intention to retire and the future of the village shop** – At a previous meeting the possibility of a community shop was discussed. Cllr. Green and Clerk subsequently visited Penhow Community Shop. This is run by a committee which had initial support from the Plunkett Foundation. There are approx. 50 volunteers who help with the day to day running, working a 2-3 hour shift every 2 weeks. The local community council is not involved in the running of this shop. Council noted that location wise Ponthir was better served than Penhow e.g. The Farm Shop, The Spar and Sainsbury's in Caerleon, Llanyafon Shops, Cwmbran Town Centre and questioned whether such a shop in Ponthir would be used as much as that in Penhow. It is also unclear as to what Mr Carpenter's intentions for the shop are and it was therefore agreed that the Council would not take this any further.
- e. **An update following the meeting earlier in the year with Jacqui Rue, TCBC** – Last year TCBC spoke to all Torfaen community councils about the possibility of transferring the freeholds of any community centre that TCBC held to the community council of that particular area. Ponthir Village Hall is one such centre and the Community Council subsequently met with Jacky Rue, TCBC, to obtain further information. Cllr. Davies has tried on a number of occasions to discuss TCBC's proposal with the Village Hall Committee, who currently lease the hall and grounds, but to date they have declined to meet with Community Council Members. Council expressed disappointment that the Hall Committee seemed unwilling to meet with Council Members and therefore agreed that it was not in a position to continue in talks with TCBC. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts.  
**(Action: Clerk to inform Jacky Rue, TCBC)**
- f. **The recently installed gate in the Children's Play Area** – A resident had recently contacted the Clerk concerned that users of the park were leaving the new gate open. Clerk spoke to Steve Horseman, TCBC, on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> August and asked if a spring could be

installed enabling the gate to shut and not be left open. Clerk also spoke to Steve about the wire to be installed on the fence, as reported in our July meeting, and he is chasing this up.

- g. **Work to be done to the Village Benches** – Clerk reported that she had e-mailed the officer concerned again and copied the head of that department. Initially the wet weather after Easter had delayed this work but the TCBC officer had stated work would be completed on a number of occasions, the last time being by the week ending 18th July. This work was still outstanding and Clerk had informed Steve Horseman during the site visit on 8<sup>th</sup> August. Steve promised to follow this up.

9.15pm - The remaining two residents left the meeting.

### **13. Afon Llwyd Greenway**

- a. **Supporting the possible extension of this route** – Following Mr Palmer’s presentation in June Council agreed to send letters of support to both Torfaen CBC and Newport CC. Cllr. Roberts volunteered to be the Community Council’s main representative for this project with Cllr. Bailey assisting if Cllr. Robert’s was unavailable. **(Action: Clerk to inform Mr Palmer)**
- b. **The Campaign for Safer Streets – Sustrans (E-mail)** – This e-mail was noted and Chair confirmed that he had responded.

14. **The display of shrubs created by a resident in the Longbridge garage area** – Clerk had been notified of a residents work in creating a display of shrubs for residents in the flats in Longbridge to enjoy. Photographs of the residents work were circulated. Council agreed that it was great to see this community spirit. **(Action: Clerk to send a letter to resident congratulating him on his hard work. Chair to include an article in future newsletter.)**

15. **A report from a meeting of the Llanfrechfa Village Association (LVA) and to consider installation of a community library in the Telephone Kiosk, Tram Lane** – Cllr. Davies attended this meeting at which the installation of a community library within the telephone kiosk was discussed. LVA has already obtained an initial design and quote and would require a letter of authorization from the Community Council. Council agreed that as the LVA was coordinating this project it would be appropriate for the Council to award a grant to the LVA, subject to the necessary application form being completed, enabling them to continue with this project. It was noted that the installation of this library would mean the removal of the noticeboard within the kiosk and it was agreed that the Clerk look at obtaining a larger freestanding noticeboard to replace the existing one in Tram Lane. **(Action: Clerk and Chair to meet with Village Association. Clerk to research the costs of a larger noticeboard.)**

16. **Community Council’s diary procedures for July/September 2014** - Clerk confirmed that all the diary procedures were in hand.

### **17. Grant applications – See Also Item 3**

- a. The following grant was approved using the appropriate power:

#### **The Local Government Act (Misc Prov) 1976 s19**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
Ponthir Football Club	£500.00	Cllr. Roberts	Cllr. Bailey

b. The following grant was approved using the appropriate power:

**The Local Government Act (Misc Prov) 1976 s19**

Organisation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Ponthir Friends for Life Community Hub	£150.00	Cllr. Bailey	Cllr. Roberts

c. The following grant was approved using the appropriate powers

**The Local Government Act 1972 Section 145**

Organisation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Ponthir District Sports Club	£300.00	Cllr. Roberts	Cllr. Bailey

d. The following grant was approved using the appropriate power:

**The Local Government & Rating Act 1997 Section 26-29**

Organisation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Torfaen Community Transport	£200.00	Cllr. Bailey	Cllr. Green

e. The following grant were approved using the appropriate powers:

**The Local Government Act (Misc Prov) 1976 s19**

Organisation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Ponthir Brownies	£200.00	Cllr. Green	Cllr. Roberts

f. Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) - Gwent Best Kept Village Competition – Following receipt of this request Clerk had e-mailed GAVO as there were concerns that the Community Council was being asked for a donation after entering this competition. Council agreed that no decision could be taken until a response had been received.

## **18. Correspondence Received**

- a. Individual Electoral Registration – TCBC
- b. Armed Forces Day 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014 - Cwmbran CC
- c. Planning Aid Wales - AGM
- d. WW1 centenary services – Pontypool CC
- e. Tackle Rural Fuel Poverty – OVW
- f. HMRC – Real Time Information Return
- g. Invitation for Chair to attend Civic Service 19<sup>th</sup> July – Blaenavon Town Council
- h. Invitation for Chair to attend Civic Service 22<sup>nd</sup> June – Torfaen CBC
- i. Welsh Government Nature Fund – OVW
- j. Invitation for Chair to attend Poet of Pontypool Presentation Evening – Pontypool CC
- k. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – Wastewater Upgrade Scheme – Hafod Road, Ponthir
- l. Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- m. Aneurin Bevan CHC Review of Unscheduled Care Services
- n. Green Growth Wales – OVW
- o. Wales Green Energy Awards - OVW
- p. Complaints Handling for Front Line Staff - e Learning Training package – OVW
- q. Code of Practice on Workforce Matters – OVW

- r. Invitation for Chair to attend the Mayor's Charity Movie Premier Screening Night – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014
  - s. The State of Coalfield Areas – OVW
  - t. Invitation for Nominations - Birthday Honours 2015 - OVW
  - u. Newsletter from Gwent Police – OVW
  - v. Invitation for the Chair to attend the official Opening of the Curry Lounge 14<sup>th</sup> July – Mayor of Torfaen
  - w. Lights Out 4th August 2014 – TCBC
  - x. E-mail from a resident concerning the future of the village shop
  - y. E-mails from residents concerning the meadowland proposals in Candwr Park.
  - z. Overgrown Public Rights of Way at rear of Ponthir Health Centre, Ponthir Community – Residents e-mail
  - aa. E-mail from a resident concerning non delivery of Community Newsletter
  - bb. Removal of surplus secondary school places in the south of Torfaen - Availability of Objection Report - TCBC (E-mail)
  - cc. Pontnewynydd Primary School, Pontypool - Availability of Objection Report – TCBC
  - dd. Homes for Wales Update - 11 July
  - ee. Fly-tipping Action Wales update
  - ff. Torfaen Ideas: People: Places bid - Gathering interested parties for stakeholder mapping
  - gg. Mayor's Charity Golf Day – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014
  - hh. Mayor's Day at the Races – Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014
  - ii. The Ombudsman's Casebook - Issue 17 - OVW
  - jj. Invitation for Chair to attend WWI Centenary Commemoration Service on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August - TCBC
  - kk. People's Postcode Trust - Small Grants – OVW
  - ll. Funding Update – OVW
  - mm. The Patients Voice News Bulletin - Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council
  - nn. Be Independent – Torfaen Local Service Board
  - oo. Play For Wales summer newsletter
  - pp. Nato Summit Briefing and Presentation - Gwent Police
- The content of the above correspondence was noted.

## **19. Consultations**

- a. Improving the availability of allotments and community gardens – No Comment
- b. Reforming Local Government White Paper - No Comment

## **20. Date of the Next Meeting**

To confirm that the next Meeting of the Council will be held on **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 7.00pm at Ponthir District Sports Club.**

Meeting Closed at 9.50pm

This document is available on our website [www.ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk)

A copy of this document could be made available in Welsh. Please contact us on the telephone number or e-mail below/Mae dogfen yma yn ar gael mewn gwefan ni [www.ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk)

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