

**PONTHIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR CYMUNED PONTHIR**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting
11th November 2015**

1. **Present:** Cllr. S. Bailey (Chair), Cllr. Mrs J. Bold, Cllr. L. Adams, Cath Cleaves (TCBC) and Neil Jones (TCBC).
Members of Public Attending: None
Clerk: Karen Price
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. P. Matthews, PCSO Nicola Redman
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None
4. **Torfaen County Borough Council' Corporate Plan 3 and Budget** – Neil Jones and Cath Cleaves gave a presentation on the background behind the proposed savings measures to address a projected £26million shortfall in TCBC's budget over the next three years. The following points were noted:
 - a. For the next 3 years there will need to be an annual 10% reduction in TCBC's budget
 - b. All services (excluding schools) have submitted proposals to address a 10% budget reduction, with social care needing to address a 2% reduction.
 - c. Council tax only makes up 14% of TCBC's income.
 - d. Final budget decisions need to be concluded by March 2016.
 - e. There will be a mixture of engagement events and drop in sessions during November together with links on TCBC's website and Facebook page to enable residents to provide their views before any final decisions are made.
5. **Community Council Vacancies** – Council noted there had not been a request from 10 electors to call an election and it can now proceed to co-opt residents that express an interest in becoming a Community Councillor. It was agreed that the closing date for applications would be 18th December 2015. (**Action: Clerk to place notices in the noticeboards, on the website and Facebook page**)
6. **Matters raised by the members of the public present** – None
7. **Police**
 - a. **Report** – None received.
 - b. **Meeting with Gwent Police and members of Llanfechfa Village Association (LVA)**

Cllr. Bailey and Clerk had attended this meeting in October to discuss traffic concerns raised by Lower Llanfrechfa residents. The following points were noted:

 - i. Residents feel the current 40mph speed limit is too high. This section of road has the highest speed limit travelling from the Turnpike Roundabout to the other side of Caerleon with all other sections being 30 or 20mph. TCBC are due to complete a borough wide speed limit review by the end of November.
 - ii. Vehicles travelling in excess of the current speed limit are also an issue. Sgt. Steve Parsons appreciated resident's concerns but noted that it was important to obtain accurate data on the vehicles actual speed. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk would formally request that the speed of vehicles travelling through Lower Llanfrechfa be monitored. Gwent Police have actioned this request.
 - iii. Cllr. Bailey informed the LVA that a number of Ponthir residents, including himself and the Clerk, had volunteered to take part in a Community Speedwatch scheme for Ponthir. PCSO Nicola Redman, who was present at the meeting, is organising this scheme. Pairs of volunteers will monitor and record the speed of vehicles travelling through Ponthir with speeding vehicles details forwarded to Gwent Police who will then take any necessary action. Gwent Police will provide equipment and training. Cllr. Bailey informed PCSO Redman that the landlord of The Ponthir House is willing to store the equipment. It was

agreed that when this scheme is up and running Cllr. Bailey and the Clerk would undertake a monitoring session in Lower Llanfrechfa which Llanfrechfa residents could observe.

8. The minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 14th October 2015 were approved as a true record and duly signed. Proposed Cllr. Bold and seconded Cllr. Adams.

9. **Matters Arising form the Meeting held on 14th October 2015**

- a. **Installation of the Community Library in the Telephone Kiosk, Tram Lane – (Action: Cllr. Bold to follow up)**
- b. **The sourcing a new Internal Auditor** – Clerk confirmed that she will be meeting with a prospective auditor next week. (Action: Clerk to provide update at next meeting)
- c. **Change of Bank Signatories** –The Council’s bankers have informed the Clerk that, due to a change in their procedures, some additional paperwork is required in addition to the forms already submitted. (Action: Cllr. Adams and Cllr. Matthews to complete additional forms)
- d. **Best Kept Village** – Council agreed that:
 - i. The wildflower bed requires maintenance
 - ii. Hedging and brambles need cutting back away from the wildflower bed.
 - iii. Brambles by the river bridge need cutting back from the pavement
 - iv. Cllr. Matthews and Cllr. Bold to produce a schedule of work for other areas of improvement.
 - v. Next year, rather than purchase a new bench to replace the bench in Tram Lane, Llanfrechfa, that the bench near Brechfa Cottage, Caerleon Road, which does not appear to be used, should be removed and used as a replacement.

(Action: Clerk to write to residents of Barnfield, whose properties back onto the Gateway site to seek approval for brambles to be cut back, which Cllr. Bailey will hand deliver. Clerk to write to the resident in School Close re the verge at the entrance of School Close. Clerk to then arrange for maintenance work to be carried out)

- e. **Budget Forecasts** – Clerk noted that there would be a small adjustment to the Chair’s Allowance in respect of the leaving gift for Cllr. Tony Roberts. Council approved this adjustment.
- f. **Future Grant Procedures** – At October’s meeting Council had agreed that, as from 2016/17, there should be a closing date for grant applications. Clerk had subsequently circulated proposals for this change. The following considerations/proposals were noted:
 - i. Of the grant’s awarded in 2014-15, 12 out of 20 applications were made by October 2014, 5 during Nov-Dec and 3 during Jan - Feb.
 - ii. Clerk proposed a closing date of 31st October. This would give organisations 7 months to complete an application.
 - iii. Moving to a system where all the grants are decided at the same time will mean that during the first year some organsiations would present the same financial records two years in succession as their end of financial year may be after any proposed closing date agreed.
 - iv. Where organisations ask for financial assistance for an event that does not coincide with the Annual Award date Council should not be in a position of awarding grants after the event but instead have in place a system for awarding emergency requests.

Council agreed the following:

- i. The title of the grants would change to ‘Ponthir Community Council Annual Grant’
- ii. As from 2016/2017 the closing date for grant applications will be 31st October.
- iii. Application and Criteria Forms to be amended.
- iv. Website to be amended in March 2016 and the new forms included.
- v. With application forms being made available online and no longer being automatically sent out to organisations, posters will be placed in the noticeboards in March 2016 advising all local groups of these changes. Clerk is already advising this year’s applicants that in future years application forms will no longer be sent out automatically.

- vi. Once the closing date has passed forms will be removed from the website and a phrase posted to notify groups that the grant process has closed for that year. At the same time Clerk will undertake an annual review of the grant forms.
- vii. Any emergency grants awarded will be deducted from the Annual Grant Budget.

(Action: Clerk to amend grant application forms and criteria which will be circulated for approval before being published)

g. Arrangements for Ponthir Christmas Tree Lighting Event on 4th December 2015

- i. Council agreed a budget of £50.00 for the Clerk to purchase mince pies, sweets and nibbles for this event.
- ii. The Gatecrashers have verbally confirmed their attendance
- iii. Clerk has produced a running order for the event. TCBC have confirmed that there are no Welsh translation costs for a leaflet of less than 100 words. Council agreed that the Clerk should arrange for a bilingual A5 running order leaflet to be produced.
- iv. Clerk has spoken to Ponthir C in W School and they will forward a song sheet.

(Action: Cllr. Bold to follow up Gatecrashers written confirmation. Clerk to buy mince pies etc, to arrange translation and printing of running order with copies delivered to Ponthir School and to print copies of the song sheet)

h. Ponthir Play Area Project – The following update was received:

- i. Following last month's meeting another contractor had contacted the Clerk. A site meeting was held and a quote has been received today.
- ii. One of the contractors previously approached had contacted the Clerk again. They had been unable to supply a quote before the initial closing date due to a change in personnel and have asked to have another meeting with the Clerk. A site meeting has been arranged for 13th November.
- iii. Lauren Gregory, TCBC, has provided details of another contractor who the Clerk has now contacted.
- iv. Clerk has applied for a grant from the Co-op Bank and is the process of applying for a grant from Tesco, the closing date of which is 30th November 2015. Clerk has forwarded a land owner permission form for completion by TCBC, which must be included with the application. **(Action: Clerk to chase this up)**

Council agreed that the contents of any quotes received would be kept sealed and only opened, during a council meeting after the required number of quotes have been received.

i. Disability Access into Ponthir District Sports Club — Item Deferred until December's Meeting.

10. Finance and Accounts

a. Balance of Direct Plus Account as at 31st October 2015 = £24,219.14

b. Authorisation of Cheques

- i. K Price (Travel Expenses LCPC Meeting 13th Oct) = £5.85
- ii. Ponthir District Sports Club (Room Hire 30th March – 9th September) = £135.00

Council approved the above payments. Proposed Cllr. Bold and seconded by Cllr. Bailey.

c. To Note Standing Order/Direct Debit Payments

- i. TCBC (Clerk's Salary) on 20th October 2015.
- ii. Barclaycard (Postage £5.67 & leaving gift in recognition of Cllr. Tony Robert's long service as a Community Councillor £29.00) = £34.67

Council noted the above payments.

d. Precept 2016/2017 - Council noted the following:

- i. The total precept is calculated using the figure charged for a Band D property. The Band D figure forms the basis for all other property band charges i.e. Bands below Band D pay less and those above pay more.

- ii. The current annual precept payment for our community area, based on a Band D property, is £22.40.
- iii. 87% of the properties in our area are within Bands D to G.
- iv. Council agreed a rise of 2.5% which, based on the figures provided by TCBC in 2015/16, for the number of properties in our community area, would provide the Community Council with a total 2016/17 precept of £17,472.56. For a Band D property this will see an annual rise of 56p to £22.96. The highest increase would be seen for properties in Band I with an annual rise of £1.30 to £53.57.

(Action: Clerk to inform TCBC when the formal request is received in December)

11. Grants - The following grants were approved using the appropriate power:

- a. Torfaen Young Peoples Music and Arts Trust Fund – Decision deferred until completed paperwork received.

b. The Local Government Act (Misc. Prov) 1976 Section 19

Organsiation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Longbridge Thursday Coffee Morning Club	£100.00	Cllr. Bold	Cllr. Bailey

c. The Local Government Act (Misc. Prov) 1976 Section 19

Organsiation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Llanfrechfa Village Association	£200.00	Cllr. Bold	Cllr. Bailey

12. Planning Application - 15/P/00628 Proposed: To separate B&B annex from Stokes Farm to create new residential dwelling with a new access onto Stokes Drive, the existing access on Candwr Lane to serve Stokes Farm at Stokes Farm, Stokes Drive, Ponthir, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP18 1PG – No Observations

13. Reports and Updates

- a. **Afon Lwyd Working Group** – Cllr. Bailey informed the Council that:
 - i. An additional meeting is to be held with Newport High School Old Boys rugby club.
 - ii. The recent grant application to the Welsh Government was unsuccessful.
 - iii. TCBC views to be sought regarding a section of the proposed route.

(Action: Update to be included in the next Community Newsletter. Clerk to write to TCBC)

- b. **Poor Mobile Phone Signals in Ponthir** – Clerk had previously written to a number of mobile phone providers concerning poor phone signals in Ponthir. The responses received indicated that no complaints had been received from residents. We have now received correspondence from a Ponthir resident who had previously complained to one of the same companies contacted by the Clerk. Council agreed that it should be encouraging residents to contact their mobile providers if they are experiencing poor phone signals in Ponthir. **(Action: Clerk to include an article in the next Community Newsletter. Cllr. Bailey to circulate a link to a website which provides maps showing the strength of mobile phone signals)**

14. Clerk confirmed that the diary procedures for November/December 2015 had been completed.

15. Consultations

- a. Draft Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill – No Observations
- b. Green Paper: Welsh Government seeking views on healthcare services in Wales – No Observations
- c. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Stage 2 Improvement Plan 2014/15 – No Observations

16. Correspondence Received

- a. World Pancreatic Cancer Day – Service of Hope – TCBC
- b. Groundwork Funding Opportunity through Tesco Carrier Bag Levy – OVW

- c. Grow Wild Community Project Funding – OVW
- d. Reports/Updates from the Local Council Partnership Committee – TCBC
- e. Preparing for Public Services Boards’ Conference 2015 – OVW
- f. Ponthir Christmas Fayre – Carol Phillips
- g. Our Health, Our Health Service Consultation Events - Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council
- h. GrantNet Service
- i. Well-being of Future Generations Act – TCBC
- j. Play sufficiency in Wales – Play Wales
- k. Planning training workshop – Planning Aid
- l. Winter Art 2015 – Pontypool Museum
- m. Response to a number of questions arising from the Gwent Valleys Area Committee meeting 9th July
- n. The Ombudsman's Casebook - Issue 22
- o. Community and Town Council News 2015 – Welsh Government
- p. Invitation to the Croesyceiliog and Llanyafon Community Council Annual Grant Awards Presentation Evening.
- q. Ponthir Baptist Church Christmas Carol Service 10th December 2015
- r. Thank You letters from Ponthir Football Club, Ponthir Retired Peoples Club and Torfaen Community Transport.
- s. Invitations to attend Winter Art 2015 Exhibition – Torfaen Museum Trust
- t. Want to protect and improve the places where people walk in your local area? – OVW
- u. Guidance on Pensions – OVW
- v. Review of Revenue Grant Funding to Community and Town Councils – OVW

The content of the above correspondence was noted.

Item 16q - Cllr. Adams agreed to attend the Ponthir Baptist Church Christmas Carol Service.
(Action: Clerk to inform Ponthir Baptist Church that Cllr. Adams will undertake a reading and to confirm the arrangements for this service)

Item 16t – (Action: Clerk to forward the contact details of the local Ramblers Cymru footpath officer to Cllr. Bailey)

17. Issues Reported by the Clerk to TCBC

- a. Dog Fouling along the footpath connecting Hafod Close to Caerleon Road.
- b. Broken glass in the Candwr Park bus shelter and on the footpath at the junction of Station Road/Caerleon Road – Clerk noted that this has been dealt with.
- c. Cllr. Bold noted, with disappointment, that once again, as in the summer, some of the new plants had been removed from one of the village planters. This time it was from one of the planters at the Lamb Lane bus stop. Cllr. Bold has now planted additional plants.

18. The next Meeting of the Council will be held on **Wednesday 9th December 2015 at 7.00pm at Ponthir District Sports Club.**

Meeting Closed at 9.00pm

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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 Mae copi or ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Cysylltwch a ni ar y rhif ffôn neu drwy e-bost isod.

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