

**PONTHIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR CYMUNED PONTHIR**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting  
14<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

1. **Present:** Cllr. R. Davies (Chair), Cllr. S. Bailey, Cllr. Mrs. J. Morgan, Cllr. P. Matthews, Cllr. Mrs J Bold, Cllr. D. Green, Cllr. Huw Bevan (TCBC) 7.45pm to 7.55pm  
**Members of Public Attending:** None  
**Clerk:** Karen Price
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. T. Roberts, Tom Bold, PCSO Nicola Redman.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None
4. **Matters raised by the members of the public present** – No residents present.
5. **Police Report** - PCSO Redman had e-mailed the Clerk stating that there had been no incidents reported since the last Community Council meeting.
6. **Report from Cllr. Huw Bevan, TCBC** – Please see item between 12a and 12b.
7. The minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014 were approved as a true record and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr. Davies and seconded by Cllr. Matthews.
8. **Matters Arising from the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014**
  - a. **Burglaries in Ponthir in November 2014** – PCSO Redman has confirmed that there were not two burglaries on the same day as previously suggested but 1 burglary on 23/11/2014 and an attempted burglary on 24/10/2014. It was noted that possible drug dealing in the Village Hall car park had been reported and although the area had been regularly patrolled police have not identified any person/vehicles conducting this activity.
  - b. **Freedom of Information and Data Protection** – (Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Bailey to finalise the administrative arrangements for the new e-mail accounts.)
  - c. **Letter Headed Paper and Compliment Slips** – (Action: Clerk to arrange for 3 quotes to be obtained)
  - d. **Dog Fouling on Playing Fields/School Fields** – Clerk has spoken to Steve Horseman, TCBC, who will arrange for two signs to be available for collection from the New Inn depot. (Action: Clerk to collect signs)
  - e. **Items to be raised at the Local Council Partnership Meeting** – Cllr. Davies was not able to attend the last meeting but noted that this item had not been included in the minutes. (Action: Cllr. Davies to raise points made at the March meeting.)
  - f. **Overgrown Ditches** – Clerk had forwarded TCBC's response to the resident who had raised this issue and had today received further correspondence from this resident querying TCBC's response. (Action: Clerk to forward this query to TCBC and request a response be sent directly to the resident. Clerk to also make enquiries with Welsh Water)
  - g. **Grant application from Llanfrechfa Village Association** – (Action: Cllr. Davies will be attending a meeting of this group next week and will discuss with their members)
  - h. **Children's Play Area Survey** – Clerk confirmed that she had added a link to the survey on the Community Council's Facebook page.

- i. **Village Entry Signs at the GateWay site** – Clerk has confirmed with Steve Horseman, TCBC that the Ponthir & Torfaen Welcome signs are to remain in their current positions.

## 9. **Finance and Accounts**

- a. Balance of Direct Plus Account as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 = £24,569.07

### b. **Authorisation of Cheques**

- i. R Davies (Travel Expenses - TCBC Meeting 15/11/14) = £6.30
- ii. K Price (Stationery - £2.99, Stamps - £6.20) = £9.19
- iii. Ponthir District Sports Club (Rent for 18 meetings held from April 2014 to December 2014) = £270.00

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

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

- i. Rob Davies (Christmas Tree Lighting Expenses) = £50.00
- ii. TCBC (Advertising Consent) = £166.00
- iii. Ponthir Village Hall (Hall Rental Xmas Tree Lighting Event) = £60.00
- iv. The Gate Llanfrechfa (Hire of The Gate Crashers) = £100.00

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

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

- i. TCBC ( Clerk's Salary) on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014
- ii. SWALEC (Telephone Kiosk) = £5.97

These payments were duly noted.

- e. The content of the Quarterly Bank Reconciliation was approved and duly signed.

- f. Annual Spend against Budget 2014/2015 was reviewed. Council noted that all categories were within budget.

- g. Council approved payment for 9 extra hours worked by the Clerk during November 2014/December 2014. Proposed by Cllr. Morgan and seconded by Cllr. Matthews.

- h. **Bank Account for Play Area Project** – A bank account application form has been received and part completed by the Clerk. Council approved that the signatories on this new account should be the same as the Council's existing bank account. The signatories present duly filled in and signed the required sections. Council agreed that the Clerk should contact the remaining signatory to complete the relevant sections. **(Action: Clerk to arrange completion of the bank account application form and return to bank.)**

## 10. **Implications of the recent Amendments of the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales Guide 2011** – Council noted the following amendments:

- a. Terms of Engagement when appointing an Auditor
- b. Annual Review of Internal Audit – This review feeds into the Annual Governance Statement. The review cannot be undertaken by the Clerk or Internal Auditor and the resulting report must be considered by a full Council Meeting.
- c. Community Councils have no legal power to hold revenue reserves other than for reasonable working capital or earmarked for specific purposes.

- d. It is generally accepted that general (un-earmarked) revenue reserves lie between 3-12 months of gross expenditure.
- e. It was recommended that budget progress reports should be presented at each Council meeting.

The following was agreed by Council:

- f. Cllr. Bailey and Cllr. Davies to undertake an Annual Review of Internal Audit and present a report to Council.
- g. Clerk to add this review to the Diary of Procedures to coincide with the review of Council Policies
- h. In view of the low number of transactions that are made, Clerk to continue with current practice of presenting a quarterly budget report at Council meetings but will also circulate a monthly report by e-mail.

**(Action: As Clerk is undertaking a review of policies ready for February’s meeting the Annual Review is to be undertaken now. Clerk to include in Diary of Procedures)**

## 11. Grant Applications

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

### **The Local Government Act 1972 s 142**

Organisation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Torfaen CAB	£100.00	Cllr. Bold	Cllr. Matthews

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

### **The Local Government Act 1972 s 145**

Organisation	Amount	Proposed	Seconded
Torfaen Young People’s Music & Arts Trust Fund	£100.00	Cllr. Bailey	Cllr. Davies

- c. Clerk informed Council that she had received a query from the new Chair of the Friends of Ponthir School. There had been a recent changeover in the committee members and the audit of their accounts for the financial year ending August 2014 is not yet completed. Council agreed that as a completed audit was part of the grant criteria this would need to be enclosed with any grant application but that once done the Council would consider an application from them. **(Action: Clerk to contact the Chair)**

7.45pm – Cllr. Huw Bevan entered the meeting

## 12. Reports and Updates

- a. **Update on Candwr Park Meadowland Proposals** – Community Councillors and Cllr. Huw Bevan had met with TCBC officers to offer suggestions as an alternative to the meadowland area at Candwr Park. Without these proposals TCBC would not return the area at Candwr Park to the previous cutting schedule. The proposals submitted included:
  - a. Wildflower planting by the Community Council at the entrance to Barnfield
  - b. TCBC to classifying the grass verge from The Gate pub to the entrance to Ponthir Village as meadowland to be cut once per year. This verge was already on an annual cutting schedule but the timing of the cut was unspecified. By classifying as meadowland this verge will now be cut annually at the end of the growing season.

- c. The creation of a community garden by Ponthir Village Hall Committee in the grounds of Ponthir Village Hall
- d. The creation of habitats such as bird and bat boxes and bug hotels by the Community Council with the local school and nursery children.

TCBC have approved that the previous grass cutting schedule at Candwr Park can be resumed subject to the above changes being implemented. Cllr. Davies has informed Mr. Erikson, who has passed on his thanks to both the Community Council and Cllr. Huw Bevan. Clerk is now waiting to meet with Lauren Gregory, TCBC. Cllr. Bevan confirmed that the Village Hall have submitted plans for planting at the Village Hall entrance. **(Action: Clerk to arrange meeting with Lauren Gregory, TCBC)**

Cllr. Davies enabled Cllr. Bevan to provide a report.

#### **6. Report from Cllr. Huw Bevan, TCBC**

- a. Cllr. Bailey noted that Cllr. Bevan had today forwarded details of Fixed Penalty Notices served in the Llanyafon South Ward but that none had been issued in Ponthir/Llanfrechfa. Cllr. Bevan informed Council that the contract for a company to serve these notices had been up for renewal. When the tender had been initially advertised TCBC had not been happy with the costings provided and had restarted the tendering process.
- b. Cllr. Bevan had recently received complaints from residents concerning dog fouling along the public footpath running from the bus stop at the junction of Hafod Road to Hafod Close and this has been reported to TCBC.

7.55pm - Cllr. Bevan left the meeting.

The meeting resume with Agenda Item 12b

#### **12. Reports and Updates**

- b. **Update on Children's Play Area** – Cllr. Bailey reported that he and the Clerk had met with Kelvin Edwards, TCBC, but to further discussions we needed to contact Lauren Gregory, Project Officer TCBC. Clerk has spoken to Steve Horseman, TCBC, and e-mailed Lauren to request a meeting. It was noted that Lauren has been involved in a similar project in Cwmbran which has received Lottery Funding. Cllr. Bailey discussed the offer of the wooden swing from Cwmcarn Drive. Kelvin's recommendation was that, due to the expected life span of wooden play equipment, this offer should be declined. **(Action: Clerk to follow up the meeting with Lauren and inform Play Wales that the swing is to be declined)**
- c. **Afon Llwyd Update** – Cllr. Bailey provided an update from the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January and the following points from this meeting were noted:
  - i. Network Rail's current policy to remove crossings was discussed and whether any funding could be gained from this. Cllr. Bailey noted that there are three crossings along this route located in Afon Gardens, Station Road and Tram Lane, Llanfrechfa. Cllr. Bailey was concerned that, whilst the Station Road crossing would be replaced by an underpass, if the crossing at Tram Lane was closed then Llanfrechfa residents would be unable to gain direct access to any proposed cycle route. He recommended that the Community Council should oppose any proposals by Network Rail to close the crossing point at Tram Lane. Council agreed with this view.
  - ii. There was a recap on the discussions with landowners. Welsh Water is to be contacted within the next month.
  - iii. Discussion on which parts could be considered under Safe Routes for Junior School Children bearing in mind that the route will not be lit and is remote.

- iv. The potential usage of the route for Comprehensive School Pupils needs to be established.
- v. Further funding opportunities to be researched.
- vi. As the removal of Japanese Knotweed will become a legal requirement in the near future, a strategy for dealing with any Knotweed along the route will be needed. Newport CC and TCBC to be contacted.
- vii. Mr Palmer will be contacting TCBC to enquire about access onto the Llantarnam Abbey land and to request a site meeting on the section of the route that will be constrained by the river and railway above Tram Lane, Llanfrechfa.
- viii. The next meeting is due to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

**(Action: Cllr. Bailey to e-mail maps to Clerk to circulate to Councillors)**

- d. **Gateway Update** – Clerk reported that letters had been sent to those residents whose properties back onto this site requesting their permission to allow TCBC to cut back any brambles growing out from the hedging on site. Residents had until 16<sup>th</sup> January to respond with no response being an indication that they were happy for any work to be undertaken. Clerk has today received an E-mail from Mr & Mrs Trotman who have indicated that they will be planting new saplings within their section of hedging. Council welcomed this additional planting. **(Action: Clerk to inform TCBC)**
- e. **Newsletter Update** – Council agreed that the next edition of the newsletter will be published once the meeting has been held with Lauren Gregory to enable an update on the Children’s Play Area Project to be included.

13. Clerk confirmed that the diary procedures for December had been completed and January’s procedures to review the Council’s policies were underway. A report of this review will be included in February’s agenda.

14. **Gwent Best Kept Village Competition 2015**– Clerk informed Council that she has contacted GAVO to confirm whether or not this competition is being run this year but is waiting for a reply. Council discussed the possibility of employing a village handyman from March to October to assist with tasks such as planting and maintaining village planters, general weeding, cutting back brambles from footpaths etc. Council noted that other local Town and Community Councils may operate similar schemes and that the Clerk should make enquiries with these Councils. **(Action: Cllr. Bold to call in at GAVO offices in Newport to enquire if competition is being run. Clerk to contact Usk Town Council and Henllys Community Council to enquire on the arrangements they have in place which would include possible job description/scope of work, number of hours worked, whether they employ some directly or contract a company to undertake any work)**

15. **Arrangements for the installation of this year’s Christmas Tree Lights and the supply of a Christmas Tree**

Council agreed that arrangements should be made for the grass to be cut well before the event as it was too long and very wet at last month’s event and that a PA system needed to be arranged which would enable the children singing outside to be heard. Clerk confirmed that she was still attempting to contact Commercial Christmas to remove the lights. Council approved the following arrangements for this year’s event:

- a. The date of the event will be Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015.
- b. Ponthir Village Hall to be the venue.
- c. The Gatecrashers band to be booked.

- d. Clerk to seek three quotations from local companies to supply, install and remove a Christmas Tree (up to 20ft) as well as store, test, install and take down the Christmas Tree Lights. The contract will be awarded for a period of 3 years.

**(Action: Clerk to book Village Hall and arrange quotations for the tree and lights. Cllr. Davies to book The GateCrashers. Once the lights have been removed the Clerk is to contact TCBC and request removal of this year's tree.)**

#### **16. Correspondence Received**

- a. Ageing Well in Wales
  - b. Letter from British Weights and Measurement Association – OVW
  - c. Planning Committee on 16th December, Third Party Speaking Rights – TCBC
  - d. Resident's Response re Play Area Project
  - e. Cynefin Place Coordinates Tredegar and Llandrindod Wells – OVW
  - f. Letter of Thanks for Community Grant – I-Am Youth Ministry
  - g. Christmas Cards from Blaenavon TC and Pontypool CC
  - h. Response from TCBC re Safety of junction of Hafod Road/Caerleon Road
  - i. Trees in Wales Towns and Cities – Natural Resources Wales
  - j. Letter of Thanks for Community Grant – Ponthir Playgroup
  - k. Letter of Thanks for Community Grant – All Creatures Great & Small
  - l. Christmas Card from Age Connects Torfaen
  - m. Public Notice - Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council Meeting 7th January 2015
  - n. Imperial War Museums and Welsh Government First World War Partnership Days
  - o. Minutes of the Local Council Partnership Meeting held on 16th December 2014.
  - p. Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2015-2016 – Welsh Government
  - q. Invitation to attend Holocaust Memorial Day Service - Tuesday, 27 January 2015
- The content of the above correspondence was noted.

#### **17. Consultations**

- a. Draft National Transport Plan 2015 – OVW
  - b. Revised Cemetery Rules and Regulations – TCBC
- Council noted the contents of the above two consultations and had no observations to make.

**18.** Cllr. Morgan informed the Council that it was her intention, in the near future, to stand down as a Community Councillor. **(Action: Clerk to contact Lyn Pask, TCBC, to confirm procedure to be followed)**

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

The next Meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 11th February 2015 at 7.00pm at Ponthir District Sports Club.

Meeting Closed at 8.55pm

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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