

**PONTHIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR CYMUNED PONTIR**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting
8th April 2015**

1. **Present:** Cllr. R. Davies (Chair), Cllr. S. Bailey, Cllr. D. Green, Cllr. T. Roberts, Cllr. P. Matthews, David Reynolds (PCSO), Cllr. Huw Bevan(TCBC)
Members of Public Attending: 3 residents present from 7.00pm to 7.10pm
Clerk: Karen Price
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Mrs J Bold, PCSO Nicola Redman.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None.
4. **Matters raised by the members of the public present** –The residents present had attended to hear if there were any further comments on the planning applications 15/P/00101 & 102. Clerk confirmed that the Councils observations had been sent to TCBC. The residents had previously been told by TCBC that an officer will make the decision on these applications but they will contact TCBC again to confirm this.
5. **Police Report** – Chair welcomed PCSO David Reynolds and the following were noted:
 - a. A burglary at a property in Candwr Park
 - b. A number of anti-social behaviour incidents
 - c. A report of a suspicious person in Station RoadOne of the residents present reported that she had observed a number of suspicious packages left on the road around the Court Farm Reservoir. (**Action: PCSO Reynolds to pass resident’s concerns on to the relevant department**)
6. **Report from Cllr. Huw Bevan (TCBC)** – Cllr. Bevan reported that he had attended a meeting with Gwent Police to discuss a number of traffic issues raised by residents. Cllr. Davies had also attended this meeting and had reported back to Council at March’s meeting. Cllr. Bevan stated that Ponthir resident, Dr Grossi had met with Inspector Morgan to discuss the same issues but he was unaware of the outcome of this meeting.

7.10pm – Cllr. Bevan, PCSO Reynolds and all the residents left the meeting.
7. **Casual Vacancy for a Ponthir Community Councillor** – Clerk reported that following the advertising of this vacancy 10 electors of this community had called for an election. The following procedure will now be followed:
 - a. 15th April 2015 – TCBC will issue a notice advertising for candidate nominations.
 - b. 23rd April 2015 – Closing date for receipt of nominations
 - c. 21st May 2015 – Date of Election (if required)Council noted that the following situations could arise:
 - d. No candidates – Community Council can then co-opt a new Community Councillor.
 - e. One candidate – That candidate will automatically become a Community Councillor
 - f. More than one candidate – An election will be held. TCBC have advised the Clerk that the costs of administering any election would be passed onto the Community Council and could be in the region of £2K to £2.5K. This may have implications on the Community Councils budget for 2015-16. (**See Item 11e**)

The Community Council would not know how many candidates had been nominated until after 23rd April and it is a possibility that candidates would not necessarily reside within our community area.

8. Council approved the minutes of the 11th March 2015 as a true record and they were duly signed. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts.
9. **Matters Arising from the Minutes held on the 11th March 2015**
- a. **Youth Representaive Role Specification – (Action: Clerk to draw up in time for next newsletter)**
 - b. **Freedom of Information and Data Protection –** Clerk confirmed that the Community Council’s new e-mail address has been set up as well as new e-mail addresses for the Community Councillors. **(Action: Cllr. Bailey to produce information on how the Councillors access their e-mails. Clerk will forward this information to each Councillor together with their individual e-mail address and password, amend website etc. where the previous e-mail address appears, advise contacts of the new address and arrange for quotes for letter headed paper and compliment slips)**
 - c. **Letter Headed Paper and Compliment Slips – See Item 9b**
 - d. **Dog Fouling on Playing Fields/School Fields –** Clerk has now received two notices from TCBC. One will be given to the Sports Club and the second to Ponthir School.
 - e. **Items to be raised at the Local Council Partnership Meeting –** Cllr. Davies was unable to attend this meeting.
 - f. **Litter in the hedging/grass verges along Caerleon Road between Edgehill, and Ponthir–** Steve Horseman, TCBC, has stated that these sections of Caerleon Road will only be cleaned once a year in the Autumn. The reason given is that traffic lights/barriers have to be installed on the road as a safety measure for the workmen and Steve doesn’t have the budget for the extra costs involved to carry out this work more than once a year.
 - g. **Portable Appliance Testing –** Cllr. Matthews confirmed that the current guidelines stated that a competent person should carry out a visual inspection every two years and a qualified electrician should undertake a full inspection every four years. Council agreed that the Clerk should undertake the visual inspection this year.
 - h. **Report from the meeting held at Gwent Police Headquarters on 23rd February –** Council noted that PC Joanna Skinner had forwarded details of the data presented at the meeting which the Community Council can publicise. **(Action: Clerk to add report to website and Facebook page)**

10. **Planning**

- a. Application 15/P/00124 - Proposed conversion of existing garage and internal alterations at 1, Gilwern Farm Close, Ponthir, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP18 1QW – No Observations
- b. Application 15/P/00097 - Details of all reserved matters, including layout, landscape, scale and appearance, relating to an Outline Planning Consent (application reference 12/P/00348) for construction of a Specialist & Critical Care Centre at the Llanfrechfa Grange Hospital site – No Observations.
- c. 14/P/00448 at Seren Fach Nursery – Clerk reported that in the TCBC Planning Minutes for 10th February 2015 a statement had been made by Seren Fach’s agent stating that members of the Community Council had signed a petition against this application. Having checked the petition the Clerk confirmed that this was not the case. In order to correct TCBC’s records there will be an agenda item on TCBC’s next planning agenda. **(Action: Clerk to check the agenda when it is published)**

11. **Finance and Accounts**

- a. Balance of Direct Plus Account as at 30th March 2015 = £21,703.26

b. **To Approve Cheques already Paid**

- i. Ponthir District Sports Club (Rent January 2015 to March 2015) = £75.00

The above cheque was approved. Proposed by Cllr. Davies and seconded by Cllr. Roberts.

c. **To Note Standing Order/Direct Debit Payments**

- i. TCBC (Clerk's Salary) on 20th March 2015

- ii. Barclaycard (Village Planters £315.96, Stationery £20.99) on 9th April 2015 = £336.95

The above payments were noted and approved by Council.

- d. Council approved the quarterly bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2015 and it was duly signed by Cllr. Matthews.

- e. Clerk presented the Council with an updated budget forecast for 2015/2016 and the following points were noted:

- i. The balance brought forward was higher than originally forecast in November. This was due to invoices not being received before the end of the 2014/15 financial year.
- ii. Details of the Council's insurance premium for next year had been received. Clerk was expecting delivery of the new noticeboard shortly and proposed the Insurance Budget be increased to £420.00 to allow for any increase this may have on the premium.
- iii. An invoice for the installation of the Christmas Tree Lights had been received today. Clerk had initially proposed that the Christmas Decoration Budget be increased to £785.00 to take into this invoice into account. However, the invoice received includes a fee for the storage of the lights when the Clerk has already asked for the lights to be returned. Clerk will query invoice before payment. **(Action: Clerk to contact Commercial Christmas)**
- iv. Clerk proposed the Best Kept Village Budget to be increased to £2,316.00 as the invoice for the four new planters was received in April.
- v. Clerk proposed the Community Improvement Budget be increased to £3,011.00 to take into account the new noticeboard ordered.
- vi. As previously agreed Clerk has written to TCBC to confirm that the Community Council will no longer match fund the Youth Contract Scheme, as this budget had not been used over the last two years. As a result the 2015/2016 Play Area Project Budget is now £12,035.00.
- vii. As mentioned in Item 7 the Community Council may be faced with the administration costs for an election. This had not been factored in when the budget when originally discussed in November 2014. Council agreed that no action would be taken at present but the budget would be reviewed when TCBC confirmed whether or not there would be an election and any adjustments would be made at this time.

Council approved all the Clerk's proposals. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts.

- f. **The Opening of a Second Bank Account** – The purpose of this account was to ring fence the funds for the play area project and would have provided a clear audit trail if donations, grants etc. were received for this project. Chair informed Council that a letter has been received from the Council's bankers stating that the application had not met one of their account opening criteria. This did not affect our existing account. Council agreed to look into this again after a new Councillor has been elected/appointed and when the issue of grant funds available was looked at in more detail. **See Item 14a**

12. **Annual Review of Internal Audit** – Cllr. Bailey has conducted a review of internal audit and produced a 'Statement of Internal Control' which was circulated to all Councillors. Council approved this report and it was duly signed by the Chair. Proposed by Cllr. Roberts and seconded by Cllr. Matthews.

13. **Review of Community Council's Insurance Policy for 2015/2016** – Clerk has reviewed the new schedule. It was noted that:

- a. The new noticeboard is yet to be received and included on the policy.
- b. The new planters have been added and the two barrel planters (located at the bus stop opposite Lamb Lane) will be taken off the schedule when they have been removed

(Action: Clerk to contact Insurance Company to make amendments)

14. **Reports and Updates**

a. **Meeting with TCBC Officers Steve Horseman and Lauren Gregory** – Cllr. Bailey and Clerk met with these officers and the following discussions took place:

i. **Children's Play Area** – Copies of the Play Wales proposed design were given to Lauren. Council noted the following points:

- TCBC are not keen on the natural play ideas as suggested within the Play Wales design. Lauren would produce 3 schemes for the £12K budget allocated which she would then forward to the Community Council and we would then seek resident's views on the preferred option. Lauren was asked to base her proposals on additional equipment for children aged 7- 10 years of age and to include additional seating/picnic tables.
- There is a possibility of a second hand slide to replace the slide removed at the end of the year. This has already been offered to a group in Fairwater but if they don't want it then Cllr. Bailey asked that TCBC consider installing it in the Ponthir Play Area.
- There was no objection to the Community Council arranging for existing equipment to be painted
- Steve stated that in his opinion it was extremely unlikely that the Community Council would be able to apply for grant funding and recommended that a Friends Group be set up comprising of local resident's in order to apply for any available grants.

(Action: Lauren to provide 3 possible schemes for the funds available, to forward an example of a Friends Group constitution, to make enquiries re the slide offered to the Fairwater Group. Clerk to make enquiries re: funding available to Community Councils. Cllr. Matthews to make additional enquiries re play equipment)

ii. **Gateway site/Wildflower Planting** – Council noted:

- The wildflower planting had been agreed to allow the grass cutting schedule to be resumed at the entrance to Candwr Park.
- Steve confirmed that the design and size of any flower bed was up to the Community Council and it would have to make these arrangements itself but he would be able to provide the wildflower seeds. Any bed needed to be prepared as soon as possible as the seeds need to be sown this month. Cllr. Davies stated that he may be able to obtain a rotavator by this weekend.
- Barnfield residents whose properties back onto this area had been consulted on the possibility of cutting back any trees/brambles on this site. One resident had made their own arrangements for the maintenance for the hedge behind their own property. Another resident wished for the trees/brambles behind their property to remain. Steve advised that TCBC's policy was only to cut back trees/hedging during September to March but that a possible way forward would be to have discussions with this resident and agree a maintenance programme going forward from September.

Council agreed Cllr. Davies should look into obtaining a rotavator with members of the Community Council willing to make up a working party to prepare a flower bed and that the flower bed would be located behind the daffodils with the remaining grassed area to be cut by a Handyman in addition to the TCBC workmen. **(Action: Cllr. Davies to obtain a rotavator and arrange a time for working party to prepare a flower bed. Clerk to contact Steve Horseman re: seeds. Cllr. Bailey to contact the Barnfield resident later in the year re future maintenance of the trees/brambles)**

iii. **Village Handyman** – In view of the previous point Council agreed that at this stage to proceed with obtaining the services of a Handyman to initially maintain the Gateway Site at Barnfield for this year but which could include additional maintenance jobs as and when required. (Action: Clerk to clarify our Financial Regulations in relation to obtaining quotes for this work)

b. **Best Kept Village** – Llanfrechfa Village Association has confirmed it wishes to enter this competition itself. (Action: Clerk to enquire whether the LVA wishes to maintain the planters in Tram Lane, to add post to Facebook page asking for community volunteers and to contact GAVO re application forms. Cllr. Matthews to remove and dispose of the barrel planters at the bus stop opposite Lamb Lane so that the new planters can be installed)

c. **Afon Llwyd Greenway** – No Update

d. **Christmas Tree Lighting Event 2015** – Council noted the booking confirmation from Ponthir Village Hall but that the Clerk had not received confirmation from The Gatecrashers nor had she received any response to her enquiries asking for quotes to supply and install this year's Christmas Tree. (Action: Cllr. Bailey to contact Colin Richardson re installation of Tree etc)

e. **Community Council Newsletter** – Cllr. Davies confirmed that he is awaiting the three schemes from Lauren Gregory re the Children's Play Area so they can be included in the next edition which would enable all residents see the proposals. (Action: Cllr. Matthews to obtain dates for community events being held over the Summer and into the Autumn)

f. **Llanfrechfa Community Library** – Clerk confirmed that she has written to a local company asking for a quote but no response has been received.

8.55pm – Cllr. Green left the meeting.

15. **Community Council's diary procedures for April/May 2015** – Clerk confirmed that the majority of these procedures involved the preparation of the Annual Audit. These forms had been received from our External Auditors this week and the Clerk had begun to prepare the papers for our Internal Auditor. (Action: Clerk to contact Internal Auditor)

16. **Grant Request from the Friends of Ponthir School** – Clerk confirmed that a letter has been sent to this organisation asking for further information. No response has been received.

17. **Welsh Language Report 2014/2015** – Council approved the Welsh Language Report 2014/2015. (Action: Clerk to send report to Welsh Language Commissioner)

18. **Consultations**

a. Council Tax Exemptions for Long-Term Empty Homes – No Observations

b. Council Tax Exemptions for Second Homes in Wales – No Observations

c. Reforming Local Government Power to Local People White Paper – Council agreed responses to Sections 4 & 5 concerning Community Councils and Local Assets.

d. Code of Practice on Workforce Matters – Completion of Annual Monitoring Return – Council agreed that as it had not awarded any contracts that came under this survey's remit the Clerk should submit a response stating this.

19. **Correspondence Received**

a. The Experiences of Welsh Language Users - Welsh Language Commissioner

b. Come on Board Invitation – Natural Resources Wales

c. Invitation for Chair to attend Pontypool CC's Eisteddfod

d. Resource Efficient Wales - Advice and information on energy, waste and water

e. Wales in Bloom 2015 Competition

- f. Town and Community Councils across Wales given new advice to help residents in fuel poverty – OVW
- g. April Training Sessions – OVW
- h. Invitation to attend SCCC Public Exhibition – Aneurin Bevan Health Authority
- i. New campaign to find the UK’s lost playing fields - Fields in Trust
- j. Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales Vacancy
- k. The new National Plant Monitoring Scheme
- l. Invitation for Chair to attend Cwmban Community Council's Annual Eco Quiz 2015
- m. Play For Wales Briefing – Spring 2015
- n. Invitation for Chair to attend a display to celebrate ‘The Bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo’ – Pontypool Museum
- o. Invitation to apply for membership of Eastern Valleys Local Access Forum – TCBC
- p. Motions for One Voice Wales 2015 Annual Conference / AGM
- q. Get their voices heard - Active Travel Survey for young people
- r. Seminar with Julian Dobson, author of the book ‘How to save our town centres’
- s. White Paper Reforming Local Government Consultation Event
- t. Query over the future of Park Stores – M O’Donovan
- u. The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales Stage 2
- v. Local Government Byelaws (Wales) Act 2012 – Coming into force
- w. Assets of Community Value – OVW

The content of the above correspondence was noted.

20. **Resident’s Comments Received Today** – Clerk informed Council that she had received a telephone call from a Ponthir resident who had raised the following issues:
- a. The amount of rubbish accumulating near the container on the Sports Field.
 - b. The amount of rubbish along the verge between Llanfrechfa and Ponthir.
 - c. The public footpath leading from All Saints Church yard running along the boundary of All Creatures Great & Small was flooded and impassible.

Whilst speaking to the resident the Clerk had explained TCBC’s position (**See Item 9f**) concerning the litter between Llanfrechfa & Ponthir and this afternoon had passed on the resident’s concerns about the amount of rubbish near the container to the Chairman of the Sports Club. (**Action: Cllr. Bailey to take a look at the footpath and report back to Clerk. Clerk to then make initial enquiries with All Creatures before contacting TCBC**)

21. The date of the next Meeting of the Council will be the Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 13th May 2015 at 7.00pm followed by the Monthly Meeting at 7.30pm at Ponthir District Sports Club.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

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