

PONTHIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL CYNGOR CYMUNED PONTHIR

Minutes of Monthly Meeting Held on 9th April 2014

1. **Present:** Cllr. R. Davies (Chair), Cllr. S. Bailey, Cllr. P. Matthews, Cllr. T Roberts, Cllr. D. Green, PCSO Nicola Poulson & PCSO Laura Murphy.
Cllr. Huw Bevan (TCBC) entered the meeting at 7.30pm.
Youth Representatives: T. Bold, Miss N. Owen, L. Harris
Members of Public Attending: None
Clerk: Karen Price
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Mrs J. Bold
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None
4. **Ponthir Community Council's Youth Representatives**
 - a. Further to last month's council meeting Chair and Cllr. Bold had interviewed both Natasha Owen and Lloyd Harris. Originally, Council had advertised for two Youth Vacancies and had already appointed Tom Bold at March's meeting. Upon advice received from Lyn Cadwallader, One Voice Wales, on whether we could have three Youth Representatives it was agreed to appoint both Natasha and Lloyd. Council welcomed Natasha and Lloyd to their first meeting.
 - b. Tom Bold signed a Youth Representative Acceptance of Office Form. Chair advised Council that Natasha and Lloyd would be attending a few Council Meetings before being asked to sign an Acceptance of Office Form.
5. **Matters Raised By Members of Public Present** – None
6. **Police Report** – PCSO Nicola Poulson introduced herself as our new Police Community Support Officer. PCSO Riccardo Oliver was unable to attend tonight's meeting but it was noted that he would be leaving Gwent Police in June to join the Devon Police Force. Chair hoped that PCSO Oliver would be able to attend a council meeting before he left. Clerk passed on a concern raised by a Ponthir School member of staff concerning the number of youths parking in School Close in the evening. (**Action PCSO Poulson to monitor**)
7. **(Item 8 on Agenda) Torfaen CBC's Proposals for Meadow Land areas in Ponthir -**
During a meeting with TCBC officers (See Item 13e) it was mentioned that the Community Council should have received a letter confirming that two areas of land in Ponthir were to be converted to Meadowland. As no such letter had been received Clerk contacted Dana Eynon, TCBC, who confirmed that although Cllr. Bevan had been sent this information Ponthir Community Council had been missed off the circulation list. Clerk subsequently received an e-mail containing the relevant information which was then circulated to Council. TCBC's proposals are that the land adjacent to the river bank in Barnfield and land to the left hand side as you enter Candwr Park will be converted to Meadowland. In affect this will mean that these two areas will only be cut once a year and no additional wildflower planting will take place. Cllr. Bold had e-mailed her concerns to Clerk prior to this meeting. Council made the

following comments:

- Why hadn't the Community Council been consulted prior to these sites being identified? It was noted that at our March meeting Christina Hahhry, TCBC, had commented that Community Councils had not been consulted on the Wildflower Corridor proposals.
- Residents had not been consulted.
- Where else were they creating these Meadowland areas and had TCBC done this before?
- If other areas had been identified were they in the same type of location and same scale as those in Ponthir.
- Cllr. Bailey noted that if these areas were aimed to increased pollinators, as claimed by TCBC, then the advice from the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust (BBCT) was to increase specific wildflower planting.
- Cllr. Matthews asked for confirmation from TCBC that Japanese Knotweed was not an issue along the river bank.
- Chair noted that the area in Barnfield included an area of land covered in brambles but TCBC's e-mail stated that any such areas would not be suitable for a Meadowland scheme and he therefore queried whether TCBC officers had completed site visits prior to this decision being made.
- These two areas were not appropriate for this scheme.
- Was this proposal being financially led?

(Action: Clerk to contact Dana Eynon and Christina Hahhry detailing these concerns and to arrange a site visit)

- 8. (Item 9 on Agenda)** Clerk noted that Item 9d of the minutes of 12th March 2014 should have read 'TCBC (Clerk's Salary) on 20th February 2014' and not 'TCBC (Clerk's December Salary) on 20th January 2014' as stated. Council agreed that subject to this amendment the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2014 were a true record and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr. Roberts and seconded by Cllr. Bailey.
- 9. (Item 10 on Agenda) Matters Arising from the Meeting held on 12th March 2014.**
- Christmas Tree Lighting Event** – Ponthir Village Hall Committee have confirmed the booking for Friday, 5th December 2014.
 - Voting Arrangements for Projects in the Community Council Newsletter** – Further to last month's meeting Clerk had circulated to Council details on a number of suggestion boxes from different companies. Following comments received Clerk ordered 5 suggestion boxes and had brought a sample to the meeting. Council noted that these boxes could be used again in the future. (See Also Item 13g)
 - Report from a meeting with Jacqui Rue, TCBC** – Council noted that the complete paperwork had still not been provided.

7.25pm – Both police officers left the meeting and Clerk left the room whilst the following item was discussed. Cllr. Bailey took the minutes for Item 10.

- 10. (Item 11 on Agenda) Review of Clerk's Hours** – Council noted that the Clerk's hours are in excess of her contractual requirements as a result of additional work being requested by Chair. Clerk's current contract is for 10 hours a week and the previous clerks were on 12 and 15 hours per week respectively. Council agreed that the Clerk should receive payment for the 39 extra hours work that she has undertaken since December 2013. Proposed by Cllr. Roberts and seconded by Cllr. Davies. Council unanimously agreed that the Clerk's hours should be increased to 13 hours per week to take affect from 1st April 2014. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey

and seconded by Cllr. Matthews.

7.30pm – Clerk returned to the meeting and accepted the Council’s proposals. Cllr. Huw Bevan entered the meeting.

11. (Item 7 on Agenda) Report from Cllr. Huw Bevan –The following items were discussed:

- The results of the Torfaen School Crossing Patrol review.
- The recently installed steps leading from the Children’s Play Area onto The Star’s grounds were a concern to both Council and Cllr. Bevan. Both parties had received copies of a resident’s letter to Steve Horseman, TCBC, detailing the resident’s concern about the safety aspects of these steps, particularly as there was no longer a fence and gate between the beer garden and the main road. Council informed Cllr. Bevan that following the Clerk’s initial investigations TCBC had confirmed that their officers had installed these new steps and it was waiting to receive a copy of Steve Horseman’s response to the resident. Both Cllr. Bevan and Council agreed that there should be a gate and fence which would prevent children running from the steps straight onto the road. **(Action: Council to review Steve Horseman’s response when received and a respond accordingly with a copy sent to Cllr. Bevan)**
- A number of burglaries have taken recently taken place in Ponthir whilst the residents were away. **(Action: To be taken up with PCSO’s Oliver and Poulson)**
- Cllr. Bevan confirmed that a review of the black bin collections was currently being undertaken by TCBC but no firm decision had yet been taken.
- Chair asked Cllr. Bevan whether he had received details of the plans to convert two areas in Ponthir to meadowland. Cllr. Bevan confirmed that he had but he had not received any comments from residents concerning these proposals. Chair repeated the Council’s concerns as discussed in Item 7 and informed him that in the short time that the Councillors had been aware of TCBC’s proposals they had spoken to a number of residents in both Candwr Park and Barnfield who had been unaware of these plans and who were unhappy with these proposals.

Cllr. Matthews left the meeting at 7.55pm.

Cllr. Bailey repeated the advice from the BBCT that, in order to increase pollinators, specific wildflower planting had to be undertaken as leaving grassed areas to become meadowland areas was not a huge benefit. Cllr. Bevan confirmed that no other areas had been designated as meadowland in Llanyrafon South.

Cllr. Bevan left the meeting at 8.05pm

12. Finance and Accounts

a. Balance of Direct Plus Account as at 31st March 2014 = £24,885.14

b. Authorisation of Cheques

- i. K Price (Stationery £5.35, Suggestion Boxes £124.15) = £129.50
- ii. Cllr. Rob Davies (Travel Expenses to WWI Seminar) = £45.00

The above payments were approved. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Green.

c. To Approve Invoices already Paid

- i. One Voice Wales (Training Session 20th February 2014) = £60.00
- ii. SWALEC (Telephone Kiosk) = £5.97

The above invoices were approved. Proposed by Cllr. Roberts and seconded by Cllr. Davies.

d. **To Note Standing Order Payments**

i. TCBC (Clerk's Salary) on 20th March 2014.

The above payment was noted.

e. The bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2014 was received and contents approved.

f. **2014/2015 Budget** - The contents of the 2013/2014 Budget to Expenditure were noted. In order to finalize the 2014/2015 Budget. Council noted the revised figures used by TCBC for the Community Council Precept and the amount of VAT to be reclaimed. It was also noted that a number of orders had been placed but the invoices for these have yet to be received resulting in a higher opening balance than had originally been calculated. In view of Item 11 it was agreed to increase staff costs to reflect both the payment for additional hours worked and the increase in Clerk's hours from April 2014 by transferring funds from the unallocated budget. Council agreed that the budget for the Torfaen Youth Work Programme would be reviewed in November 2014. The Council had budgeted for this scheme in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and so if not used by the end of this financial year it agreed that it would not continue to fund this project for a third year. Council agreed to move the heading of Llanfrechhfa Noticeboard from Major Projects to Community Improvements. The following revised budget for 2014/2015 was therefore agreed:

<u>Office Expenditure</u>	<u>Budget</u>	
Room Rental	£1,200.00	
Stationery and Postage	£500.00	
IT and Office Equipment	£200.00	
Telephone	£120.00	
<u>Sub Total</u>		£2,020.00
<u>Other Costs</u>		
Staff Costs	£7,300.00	
Chair's Allowance	£150.00	
Subscriptions	£250.00	
Insurance	£600.00	
Publicity (Including Newsletter)	£1,200.00	
Community Event Catering	£500.00	
Internal Audit Fees	£300.00	
External Audit Fees	£200.00	
Travel Expenses	£250.00	
Training	£480.00	
Grants and Donations	£6,000.00	
<u>Sub Total</u>		£17,230.00
<u>Future Programmes</u>		
Contribution to War Memorial	£100.00	
Christmas Decorations	£1,600.00	
Best Kept Village	£500.00	
Community Improvements (New Planters, Maintenance of Street Furniture, Gateway Proposals, Llanfrechhfa Noticeboard)	£4,250.00	
<u>Sub Total</u>		£6,450.00
General Contingency Fund	£2,500.00	
<u>Sub Total</u>		£2,500.00
<u>Total</u>		£28,200.00

Major Projects Under Consideration		
Equipment for Children's Play Area		
Additional Christmas Lights		
Foodie Project		
War Memorial for Ponthir		
Major Project Budget	£5,000.00	
TCBC Youth Programme	£3,035.00	
Sub Total		£8,035.00
Total		£36,235.00
Funded By:		
Actual Balance Brought Forward	£24,780.14	
2014/15 Precept	£15,435.00	
VAT Refund	£867.94	
Total		£41,083.08
Unallocated Budget		£4,848.08

13. Reports and Updates

- a. **Chair's Report** – Chair informed Council that he had attended a conference 'Conserving and Maintaining Welsh War Memorials' on 27th March 2014. The only funding available for new memorials is from the Heritage Lottery Funding. Council was informed that Chair had received an offer of funding from the family of two residents.
- b. **Community Council Logo Competition** – Chair reported that he had given a presentation on the history of Ponthir to Years 3, 4, 5, and 6 at Ponthir School. Pupils in these years have until Friday to submit their designs for a new Community Council Logo.
- c. **Best Kept Village** – Council noted with disappointment the lack of response from other local groups to join with the Community Council to form a Best Kept Village Working Party. Two responses were received: one from All Saints Church and another from Ponthir WI. An initial meeting was arranged for 1st April. The representative from All Saints Church was unable to attend and on the evening only Cllr. Matthews, Cllr. Bold and Tom Bold attended. Another meeting is to be arranged for the beginning of May. Cllr. Bold had in the meantime forwarded a number of suggestions for the Council to consider. Her first suggestion was that the wooden planter opposite Lamb Lane could be repaired and the wooden planter, near the Ponthir Noticeboard, could be moved to the other side of the bench opposite Lamb Lane. Additionally, the stone planter, also at the Ponthir Noticeboard, could be moved to the entrance of School Close where there are already two stone planters. As this would leave the area around the Ponthir Noticeboard without any planters Cllr. Bold has suggested that the Community Council buys three large wooden trough planters to be arranged on the pavement, in front of the bollards, where it meets the car park for Park Stores. Cllr. Bold has already researched the costs of such planters and circulated this information to the Council via the Clerk. Council agreed that the Clerk should check with TCBC beforehand to confirm that new planters can be placed in the new positions and to arrange for TCBC staff to move existing planters to new locations. Providing that these arrangements can be made Council agreed that using the budget already allocated for the Best Kept Village three new planters could be purchased (Highways Act 1980 s. 96). Although posters had been placed at various locations

throughout Ponthir advertising Ponthir's entry into this competition Cllr. Bold had also suggested contacting Ponthir Village Hall to ask if a banner could be placed on their fence notifying residents of this competition. Wording for any banner would enable it to be used in future years. Council agreed if the Village Hall Committee agreed then a banner could be purchased (Power of Wellbeing) (**Action: Clerk to contact TCBC and liaise with Cllr. Bold re planters. Cllr. Matthews to contact Ponthir Village Hall re banner. Chair to look into the costs of banners.**)

- d. **(Item g on Agenda) Gateway Project** – Cllr. Roberts reported that TCBC had agreed to design and build a planter, undertake three lots of planting for the first year and cut the grass in this area on a more frequent basis than the normal 10 day cycle with the Community Council only paying TCBC for the first year. For subsequent years it will be for the Community Council to maintain this planter and the area of grass around it. The Community Council will not be able to offset any maintenance costs by asking third parties if they wish to pay to advertise in this area. Cllr. Roberts is awaiting the paperwork for this contract. Council approved for this work to proceed. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Green. Cllr. Roberts asked Council to consider the wording to be placed on the planter.

8.35pm - Cllr. Matthews returned to the meeting.

- e. **(Item d on Agenda) Report from a meeting arranged with TCBC Neighbourhood Services Officers** – This meeting was attended by Chair. Cllr. Bold, Tom Bold, Clerk, Steve Horseman, Waste and Street Scene Operations Manager, and Andrew Villars, Group Leader Highways. Council noted that following last month's meeting, attended by Christina Hahhry, Head of Neighbourhood Services, all the bus shelters had been cleaned. Mr Villars covered the need for the Community Council to carry out a General Risk Assessment, should it want to make its own arrangements to clean the bus shelters, with a copy sent to TCBC. In addition to this a dynamic risk assessment would have to be undertaken on the day any work was to be carried out to take into account weather conditions etc. A print out from the Health and Safety Executive Web Site was provided for the Council's information. Steve Horseman stated that the regular grass cutting and litter picking by TCBC was to continue for this year. This is normally a 10 day cycle but it is affected by Bank Holidays. Weed spraying is done once a year and is due to be done shortly. If the Community Council is to undertake a community litter pick TCBC will need to know in advance and risk assessments must be completed as above. Given notice, TCBC will provide black bags and pick up any rubbish collected on the following working day. The Council can purchase litter pickers, gloves and tabards via TCBC and as these are usually in stock they can be made available very quickly. Chair asked what arrangements could be put in place if the Community Council were to consider making arrangements to cut the grass and litter pick in Ponthir on a more regular basis. Mr Horseman stated that the Community Council would have to employ TCBC staff currently employed to do these jobs under the same terms and conditions of TCBC employment.
- f. **(Item e on Agenda) Community Council Website** – Cllr. Bailey confirmed that he was in the process of linking the wordpress document that had been created to the domain name. The Councillor's photographs had been loaded and it was hoped to have the new logo on the website in time for the launch in the next issue of the newsletter. Photographs of the area will also be added. The initial website would be produced in English with arrangements for a Welsh translation to be undertaken. Lloyd offered to assist with the translation. (**Action: Cllr. Bailey to produce an article on the website for the newsletter**)

- g. **(Item f on Agenda) Community Council Newsletter** – Chair reported that the next issue would be distributed in May and would include articles on the Youth Representatives, TCBC proposals for the Meadowland areas, the new logo, Llanfrechfa Village Association, Best Kept Village Competition, Diary Dates and voting slips for the Community Council projects.

14. Community Council's diary procedures for March 2014/April 2014 – Clerk confirmed that the review of the Council's Asset Register and Annual Welsh Language Report were underway and an alternative insurance quote has been sort. The paperwork for the Annual Return had been completed and Clerk reported that she would be contacting the Internal Auditor to undertake his Audit after the Easter Holidays. There are no other outstanding diary procedures.

15. Correspondence Recieved

- a. Public Appointments Opportunity – One Voice Wales (E-mail)
 - b. Homes for Wales Update - 7 March - One Voice Wales (E-mail)
 - c. Cwmbran Community Council Newsletter
 - d. Consultation document on the proposed closure of Pontnewynydd Primary School, Pontypool – Torfaen CBC
 - e. Confirmation of booking for the Christmas Tree Lighting Event on 5th December – Ponthir Village Hall Committee
 - f. Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council – Notice of meeting 19th March 2014
 - g. Confirmation of membership renewal – One Voice Wales
 - h. Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council – AGM 2nd April 2014
 - i. Invitation for Chair to attend an Evening of Music - Caerleon Comprehensive (E-mail)
 - j. Donation Request - Talking Books Wales (E-mail)
 - k. Invitation to attend Cwmbran Primary Schools Eco Quiz 2014 - Cumbran CC (E-mail)
 - l. Land and Asset Transfer Shared Learning Seminar – Wales Audit Office (E-mail)
 - m. Comprehensive Merger – Susan Tamplin (E-mail)
 - n. Members to the Information Communications & Technologies Sector Panel – One Voice Wales (E-mail)
 - o. A Ponthir resident's letter concerning the children's play area.
- The content of the above correspondence was noted.

16. To consider a suggestion by Cllr. Matthews to install an additional noticeboard in Ponthir – Cllr. Matthews stated that whilst he felt that the current Community Council had done more to connect with residents than in previous years he didn't see many people reading the noticeboard outside Park Stores. He therefore asked the Council to consider installing an additional noticeboard in Ponthir. A number of Councillors commented that the current Ponthir Noticeboard was read by residents and that the Community Council was already increasing its circulation via the newsletter and with the launch of the new website. Council agreed to defer this discussion for 6 months. **(Action: Clerk to diarise for November's Agenda)**

17. Ponthir Community Council's Standing Orders – Prior to this meeting Clerk had circulated a proposed updated set of Standing Orders to all Councillors. The only comment raised by any Councillor related to Freedom of Information Policies and Data Protection Polices mentioned within the Standing Orders. Following this comment Clerk was

undertaking a review of these policies which would then be brought to the Council for consideration at a future meeting. Council accepted the Clerk's recommendation and agreed to approve the Standing Orders. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts

18. To consider a resident's suggestion for planting trees in Ponthir. – Item deferred until next meeting.

19. The next Meeting of the Council will be the Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2014 at 7pm followed by the Monthly Meeting at 7.30pm at Ponthir District Sports Club. Natasha gave her apologies as she would be unable to attend the next meeting due to exam commitments.

Meeting Closed at 9.30pm

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