

CLYRO COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
Meeting held via Zoom  
7pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Cllr R Wells (Chairman), Vice-Chairman Lewis, Cllr J Morgan, Cllr E Brown, Cllr R Francis and Clerk to the Community Council, D Workman.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** County Councillor J Gibson-Watt, S Groves (Clyro School Headteacher) and M Fforde (Chair of Clyro School Governors)

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr V Price, Cllr J Carter, Cllr D Hood and PCSO Jackson

**MINUTES:** The Minutes for the previous meeting and the 2020 AGM were both accepted as a true record and will be signed by Chairman Wells.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST:** None

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL ASSETS:** Chairman Wells has checked all assets, and all is in order.

**MATTERS ARISING:**

1. Clyro School – Funding crisis – Chairman Wells introduced Sarah Groves, Clyro School Head Teacher and Mari Fforde, Chair of Governors to the Community Council and invited them to describe the situation that Clyro School is in at this time. Mari gave the meeting a timeline of events that have led to the school/Governors having their financial responsibility being removed from them. They feel that Powys have handled the situation insensitively and unfairly. The numbers on roll are set to rise next year and usually Powys would allow deficits to run for one year as next year naturally the numbers rise so funding increases. The Head explained that to move down to three classes would be detrimental to the children and therefore they have not made changes to staffing to address the financial deficit. Mari requested that the Community Council write to officers at Powys CC telling them about the new houses that are being built that will bring new families to Clyro. Cllrs all agreed that a letter would be sent.

Vice-Chairman Lewis who is the Community Council School Governor gave his view of the poor way that he, the Board of Governors, and the staff of the school have been treated during this process including the timing of the announcement occurring just before the Christmas break. This came to a head at the meeting just prior to Christmas at which the Powys Education Officer imposed the special action and resulted in him resigning from the Board of Governors at the meeting. County Cllr Gibson-Watt also added that he will be writing to the officers at Powys CC to put Clyro's case forward, as he says if they have imposed these rules on Clyro then they will have to do the same to other schools who are in deficit. Cllr Brown asked that Vice Chairman Lewis reconsider his post on the Board of Governors, Chairman Wells also added to this explaining that the Community Council

needs a representative on the Board of Governors and Vice Chairman Lewis has the knowledge and experience. Vice Chairman Lewis agreed to re-join if the school agreed. Chairman Wells will write to the school and request the reinstatement of Vice Chairman Lewis. Cllr Brown left the meeting at 8pm to attend another meeting.

2. Housing development – Foundations are going in, all moving in the right direction.
3. New Play Park – No update.
4. Haygarth – Equality Impact Assessment – Cllr Morgan explained that the assessment does explain more details, but it says that stakeholders are happy with the triage system, this Cllr Morgan feels is not an accurate picture of patients' views. Chairman Wells added that the assessment does not answer the raised questions about the hurdles that patients feel that they must get over to see a Doctor. Cllr Morgan will keep an eye on this item.
5. Precept – A discussion was held around the amount that the Community Council would ask for this year. Cllr Morgan does not envisage the need for extra budget this year so proposed that the precept be kept the same as last year. Cllr Francis seconded this, and all Cllrs agreed.

**GOVERNORS REPORT:** Vice Chairman Lewis reported that the school is closed to all but on average 4 pupils a day who are accessing the key workers school system. Online learning continues to be provided for all other pupils.

**REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GIBSON-WATT:** See Appendix A

**POLICE REPORT:** PCSO Jackson emailed a scam alert that is going around regarding an Amazon payment, asking for payment. PCSO Jackson has leafleted Castle Estate warning residents about various scams that are doing the rounds.

**CORRESPONDENCE** *(incl):*

1. Countryside Code review online survey to complete - [https://defragroup.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9sosQ0YlnPyfv3T](https://defragroup.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9sosQ0YlnPyfv3T)
2. Dental Provision Crisis in Powys – online survey to complete – <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/T3QSW7P>

**FINANCIAL:**

Bank balances: Current £3,484.89 (on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020) Reserve £1845.24 (on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020). Payments to include BT direct debit (£30), Clerks Salary (£167.20), HMRC (£121.60) and Audit Wales (£293.25). Vice-Chairman Lewis proposed, and Cllr Francis seconded.

**AOB:** Vice Chairman Lewis advised that the school have a defibrillator and are looking to have it mounted on an external wall. They are looking for some help to pay for this. Cllrs requested that Vice Chairman Lewis get more information on costings.

Western Power are replacing the telegraph pole on the Village Green, Chairman Wells agreed to this as it is a necessary work.

Chairman Wells explained that the Community Council had received a letter regarding the felling of Cherry trees in front of the Village Hall. These are within the Conservation Area so approval should have been sought from the Powys planning department. Chairman Wells spoke to the Village Hall Committee who said that the trees were planted by the WI 25 years ago and the roots had started to push the wall out under the hedge. The wall would cost £20,000 to replace so it was decided that before it gets to that point the trees needed to be removed. The Committee were not aware that permission should have been gained before removal but are contacting planning to advise.

Chairman Wells will be attending the Town and Community Council meeting with Powys County Council, if there is an opportunity to ask questions regarding the Clyro School financial position then he will.

Chairman Wells read a letter from Cllr Hood offering his resignation after 30 years of being a Councillor for Clyro. Chairman Wells expressed thanks from the Community Council and on behalf of the residents of Clyro who Cllr Hood has represented for an exceptionally long period, it can sometimes be a thankless job and to commit time and energy for 30 years is quite an accomplishment. Thank you, Councillor Hood!

The meeting was closed at 8.48pm

**Members of the public are invited to attend council meetings and to contribute at the end of business. Minutes and agenda available on request. Also displayed on website [www.clyro.org](http://www.clyro.org)**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Cllr R Wells, Chairman)

## Appendix A

### **CLYRO COMMUNITY COUNCIL 12/1/21 REPORT BY COUNTY CLLR JAMES GIBSON-WATT.**

#### **Gwernyfed High School & Community Sports Centre**

No further news at present. The school and all others in Powys will probably remain closed until after the February half term holiday, other than those kept open to provide care for the children of key workers and the vulnerable, unless Covid-19 infection rates fall significantly across Wales.

#### **Clyro C in W Primary School**

As the Community Council is aware, Powys County Council has taken the highly-unusual decision to remove delegated financial powers from the school's Governing Body. I cannot recall this happening previously in my time as a county councillor, although I can think of a few schools where this should have happened before. Clyro School is not one of them. There are a number of schools in Powys whose budget deficit positions are worse than Clyro's (see the text of an email I sent to Interim Chief Education Officer and others attached). Yet these schools have not been subjected to the same sanction as Clyro. This raises the issue of equity and in my view a clear sign that the school has been 'picked on'. In its recent inspection of Powys CC's Education Service the schools' inspectorate Estyn criticised the council for not taking action against schools that are running persistent large budget deficits. Clyro was an easy target to show Estyn that 'something is being done'.

The source of the problem for the whole Powys schools system is the chronic underfunding of the delegated schools funding formula. But it's the formula we have and having said the above, the school's deficit does need to be dealt with. The simplest way to do that would be to find enough extra pupils to take its roll above 91. It's currently at 81 (I think). But that is not easy to do quickly, so my efforts will now be to try to get the delegated financial powers back to the governing body and hopefully facilitate future meetings between the school and the Education Service to find a way through this difficulty. Key to that will be to secure the ALN funding the school has been deprived of in the last couple of years, which the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will explain at the meeting.

#### **Powys County Council Education Service and Schools Transformation**

The Council has continued with the project to remodel the schools network in Powys, despite the Council moving to business-critical activities only during the pandemic period. Further proposals are expected to be presented to the Council's Cabinet shortly, including presumably those for the future location of Gwernyfed High School.

#### **Planning & Housing**

Progress on the new houses adjacent to Castle Estate seems to be OK. Early problems over warning signage etc appear to have been resolved satisfactorily.

### **Highways**

There has been an improvement in the removal of debris and weeds from highways gutters and storm drains and gritting has taken place as normal through the recent cold spell. In general the minor roads and in particular storm water ditches are in better condition than for some years now in this area of the county, although some still need attention.

### **Test Trace & Protect**

Despite the increasing levels of Covid-19 infection in Powys the TTP system is working well, with contact tracing levels at well over 90%. The mass vaccination programme is now also underway across the county.

Please stay safe and Happy New Year to us all!

Contact: 01497 820434 or 07971048737 or [cllrjgw@powys.gov.uk](mailto:cllrjgw@powys.gov.uk)