

CLYRO COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Meeting held via Zoom
7pm on Tuesday March 9th, 2021

MINUTES

PRESENT: Cllr R Wells (Chairman), Cllr P Bate, Cllr J Morgan, Cllr E Brown, Cllr J Carter, Cllr R Francis and Clerk to the Community Council, D Workman.

APOLOGIES: Cllr V Price, Vice-Chairman Lewis and County Cllr Gibson-Watt

MINUTES: The Minutes for February's meeting will be amended as Cllr Brown noted that Mr R Kirkham should read Mr R Kirkland 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. Co-option of Cllr, an election was not called for by residents so the Community Council will now advertise and encourage applicants to come forward.
2. Play park - update. Chairman Wells showed the meeting photos of the new planting that has been undertaken at the new play park including trees and shrubs. Chairman Wells met with John Watson from Powys to discuss play equipment; it has been decided that a climbing wall will not be included as it proved too costly. There will be two slides (one reused from the old play park), two rope apparatus to enable children to climb up the hill adjacent to the slide and a sit on spring toy. Discussion was held around the idea of the Community Council taking on the responsibility of the new play park on an annual licence agreement with Powys, the proposal is being drafted by Powys and the Community Council will discuss this when this is received and reviewed.
3. Dog fouling – Chairman Wells discussed signage and dog fouling issues with John Watson regarding the new play park. Cllr Brown directed Cllrs to last week's issue of The Brecon and Radnor that had information for residents of Powys signposting them to the Powys County Council website where dog owners who do not pick up dog foul can be reported. It was decided that dog owners should not be demonised personally, Chairman Wells suggested some homemade/children made signage to encourage dog owners to pick up their dog foul.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GIBSON-WATT: See Appendix A

POLICE REPORT: PCSO Jackson emailed warning of telephone scams that are still doing the rounds, if it sounds suspicious it probably is.

CORRESPONDENCE (incl):

1. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report <https://gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales-annual-report-2021-2022> - Chairman Wells pointed out page 44 that relates to Community Councils having to make available to Cllrs £150 for expenses that holding the role may incur. If Cllrs do not want to take the payment, then that is fine but the document states that it should be recorded in writing that the Cllr isn't taking it. It was agreed that the Clerk would produce a form that Cllrs can sign to either claim the payment or decline it. This will be introduced in April 2021 and annually thereafter.
2. Litter & Fly-tipping Prevention Plan for Wales <https://gov.wales/litter-and-fly-tipping-prevention-plan-wales> Cllrs to read Consultation document and consider the response form. Cllrs expressed their views on this problem that is plain to see on the roadside through the village. Cllr Morgan will respond to the consultation.
3. Electoral Reform Newsletter – no action
4. Bus service request from J Bowen – The buses available running through Clyro at this time were discussed and it was decided that the Community Council would ask residents via these minutes for their views on the bus service as it stands.
5. Audit fee scheme 2021/22 – The Clerk explained that the Audit schedule has changed to a three-year cycle so all being well our fees should be less two years out of the three. One year will be a full transaction audit and the other two will be a less in-depth audit. This year we have a full transaction audit. It was noted that the fees/hourly rates for individuals to perform the audit are remarkably high but as the auditors are appointed nationally the Community Council has now control over the rates.

FINANCIAL:

Bank balances: Current £3,444.96 (on 4th February 2021) Reserve £1845.27 (on 29th January 2021). Payments to include BT direct debit (£30), Clerks Salary (£167), HMRC (£121.60). Cllr Brown proposed, and Cllr Morgan seconded.

AOB: Cllr Brown asked when the Community Council will be able to meet in person at the Village hall, the Clerk has not had any guidance on this yet.

Cllr Carter wondered when the Baskerville Arms will be open as before Covid it was closed due to refurbishment. Cllr Brown has spoken to the owner who informed him that the refurbishment has gone well, and they intend to open when Covid regulations allow.

The Clerk explained to the meeting that our defibrillator is now registered on the "Circuit" this is the National Defibrillator Network that allows ambulance services to direct bystanders to the nearest defibrillator to help save lives. The website also allows a "guardian", in Clyro's case the Clerk to log on and record that the defibrillator is in good working order every month.

The meeting was closed at 8.06pm

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Cllr R Wells, Chairman)

Appendix A

CLYRO COMMUNITY COUNCIL 9/3/21 REPORT BY COUNTY CLLR JAMES GIBSON-WATT.

Gwernyfed High School & Community Sports Centre No further news at present.

Clyro C in W Primary School

In last month's report I mentioned that the issue of the missing ALN funding for the school has now been resolved, although not before the Board set up by the county council to manage the school's finances had met and started the consultation process with regard to changes in the staffing structure. However, the amount of extra money the school has received is still a matter for discussion between myself as the local county councillor and officers in the Council. The school is convinced that it has not received adequate ALN funding and from the evidence I have seen I agree with that view. The extra funding was backdated to April 2020, which is not as far back as it should have been and the amount is still not adequate. I remain firmly of the view that the school has been badly treated by Powys CC and re-building the relationship between the school and Council will be a long process.

I will report further when I have more information.

Powys County Council Education Service and Schools Transformation

On the back of the above budgetary issues there is a view among pupils' parents that there is a 'hidden agenda' in County Hall to close Clyro School. I do not believe that to be the case. The Council Cabinet's current approach is to 'pick off' small schools and Clyro School, while small on a national scale, is not small in Powys terms and was rebuilt with state of the art facilities just a few years' ago. The political and practical problems that proposing its closure would present would be formidable. A further report on small school closures is expected to come to the Council's Cabinet soon, focussing on schools in the north of the county.

Planning & Housing Progress on the new houses adjacent to Castle Estate seems to be going well, encouraged by the recent drier weather.

Highways No major issues to report

Test Trace & Protect

Contact tracing levels remain at well over 90%. Powys is still leading the way in Wales on the vaccination programme, although I have had to assist a couple of local residents who appear to have not received their vaccine as soon as they should have done. But in general I think all is going well in Powys, infection rates are falling fast and the numbers of people in hospital with Covid-19 is also reducing steadily.

Powys County Council Budget

I regret to report that my attempts to present an alternative Budget for the County Council to consider, with a 1.9% Council Tax rise and further funding cuts to services such as the Library Service (£150,000) and Arts & Culture services (£63,000) reversed, was not allowed by the Council's Chief Finance Officer, on the grounds of the increased 'risk' she saw in it to the Council's finances. The Alternative Budget was prepared by the four Opposition Groups on the Council, co-ordinated by me as Leader of the Opposition, the first

time a united front was achieved on an alternative budget in my memory. The refusal of the Chief Finance Officer to allow our proposals to be considered at Council produced a very strong reaction from many members, as the alternative was balanced and achievable and, in my view, no riskier than the Cabinet's proposals. So, as usual the Council was presented with a 'take or leave it' Budget to consider, but our efforts did force the Cabinet to reduce its Council Tax increase to 2.9%, instead of the original 3.9% it had previously agreed. The Cabinet's Budget was passed by just a 5 vote majority and the damaging funding cuts to some services remain. I fear for the future of local libraries and arts centres such as Wyeside in Built Wells. The one good thing that has come out of the budget process is that joint working across the Opposition political group divide has been achieved and we are now already presenting a much more effective challenge to the power of the Council's ruling coalition, although some rather obvious attempts to avoid formal scrutiny by the Cabinet and Senior Managers are still very much on display. All is not well in County Hall, virtual or not.

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