Councillors present: Mr P Watkins (Chair)  
Mrs C Hubbard (Vice chair)  
Mr P Collins  
Mr T Fawcitt  
Mr P Fox  
Mr A Griffiths  
Mr G Parker  
Mr I Standing  
Mr A Whiteley

**Public Meeting**

**Nursey Provision in Portskewett**
A Sudbrook resident attended the meeting in order to enquire what the Community Council were doing with regard to nursery provision in the Portskewett/Sudbrook area, following the closure of Bluebelle Nursery last summer.

Councillor Hubbard explained that it is Monmouthshire County Council who has the responsibility for nursery provision, not the community council. She explained that the head teacher of Archbishop Rowan Williams School in Portskewett is working closely with Monmouthshire County Council to insure nursery provision in the future, but this will take time.

Councillor Hubbard reiterated that the Community Council are fully supporting the proposal for nursery provision in Portskewett.

**Development of the Old Shipyard, Sudbrook**
The council were asked by a Sudbrook resident whether they were in favour of the planned development of the Old Shipyard in Sudbrook. He informed the council that work has been undertaken by the owner of the site to start clearing it.

The chairman reminded the resident that the planning application for the development had already been passed by Monmouthshire County Council, and therefore the work being carried out was permitted.

He explained that the community council had objected to the proposed development when the planning application was submitted, and had recommended to Monmouthshire County Council that the application be refused. The application had subsequently been approved by Monmouthshire County Council.

**Closure of Sudbrook Bridge**
Concerns were raised by Sudbrook residents attending the meeting with regard to the closures that had been taking place on the Sudbrook Bridge. The main area of concern was with regard to the safety of the population in Sudbrook, in terms of access for emergency services, should they be required whilst the bridge is closed.

Reports were made of the bridge being closed with limited notice to residents, and poor signage in place. The residents asked why the footpath over the bridge had to be closed in addition to the road.
The County Councillor responded that Network Rail was carrying out repair work on the bridge as a result of the damage to it following a recent incident. Monmouthshire County Council had informed Network Rail of the requirements of closure, prior to the work being carried out, and Network Rail had not met those requirements. As a result of this Monmouthshire County Council has stopped Network Rail from closing the bridge again until those requirements have been met.

The County Councillor explained that in response to the recent incident, where the bridge was closed for several hours, an emergency road is being put in place running along the coastal route, from Black Rock to Sudbrook. This will be strictly for the use of the emergency services only. Network Rail will not be allowed to close the bridge, except in an emergency situation, until the emergency route is in place.

In the longer term Monmouthshire County Council will look to work with the developers of the Sudbrook Paper Mill Site, to establish a more permanent access route into Sudbrook via the Pill.

PC Norville, who was in attendance, informed the meeting that Mr David Matthews, based at Police Headquarters in Cwmbran, is the police representative who deals with road closures should there be an issue in the future.

1. **SIGN THE ATTENDANCE BOOK**

The Attendance Book was duly signed.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Nurcombe.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no interests to declare.

4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was proposed by Councillor Fawcitt and seconded by Councillor Griffiths and agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

a. **Community Defibrillators**

The council was informed by Councillor Watkins that the sign at Sudbrook Pumping Station was now in place.

b. **Overgrown Hedges Crick Road**

Mr Evans from Monmouthshire County Council asked the clerk to inform him of the Landowner’s name and address in order that he could write to ask them to cut the trees back.

Councillor Parker agreed to give the clerk the necessary information. **Action GP and BY**

c. **New Rubbish Bins**

The clerk confirmed that 2 replacement bins had been delivered and were now with the caretaker. He had identified a need for one of them to be installed at the Pumping Station in Sudbrook. He is prioritising where the second one is most needed.
d. **Listing of Wall in Sudbrook**
Monmouthshire County Council informed the clerk that getting an item listed falls under the remit of CADW, and passed on their contact details.

The clerk had contacted CADW to establish what the procedure would be, and was informed that they would require a full, detailed history along with photographic evidence in order to establish why the site should be preserved.

CADW informed the clerk that they had carried out a survey of the area some years ago, and the wall had not been identified at that time as an item of interest. They also informed the clerk that listing does not prevent demolition, if it is deemed the only way forward.

The Chairman had informed the residents, who made the initial enquiry, of CADW’s response and he was awaiting their response to see if they wanted to pursue the matter further. **Action PW**

e. **Parking issues outside the Old School in Sudbrook**
An email had been received from a Sudbrook resident raising their concerns regarding a dangerous situation which has arisen as a result of people parking on the road outside the Old School development in Sudbrook. Due to the parked cars other vehicles are driving on the wrong side of the road to pass the parked vehicles, and visibility is poor due to the bend.

Councillor Parker reminded the meeting that 2 parking spaces per household were provided as part of the development of the site. However it is not known whether the parked cars belong to those householders or others.

The clerk was asked to bring the issue to the attention of the local police representative and ask him to make some enquiries.

PC Norville reported that he had attended the area, and had found that the vehicles were parked legally. He agreed that if the cars were parked in a certain way visibility was poor, however the parked cars formed a natural obstruction to moving vehicles, and drivers should be taking appropriate care as a result.

f. **Network Rail Issues in Sudbrook**
Concerns were raised once again with regard to the safety of the wall running through Sudbrook, which is owned by Network Rail.

The clerk had received a response from Network Rail which stated that an inspection had been carried out, and that with regard to the vegetation growing in the wall, it is not seen as a priority compared with keeping the railway lines clear and operational, and therefore no work would be carried out. However the hole in the wall is regarded as a safety issue and it will be programmed in for repair.

The councillors felt that the vegetation growing in the wall is a safety issue as it is undermining the wall, and asked the clerk to report the issue to Monmouthshire County Council as Network Rail have declined to undertake the work.

The clerk had received no response from Monmouthshire County Council and the County Councillor advised to bring it to the attention of Mark Davies and Paul Keeble. **Action BY**
g. **Pedestrian Safety on Black Rock Road**
Following the recent meetings that had been held regarding this issue Monmouthshire County Council had agreed to install road signs advising vehicles of pedestrians using the road, in an attempt to calm the traffic. The clerk was asked to contact Mr Andrew Mason to obtain an update as to when the signs were likely to be installed.

Mr Mason informed the clerk that there were no funds available in the current financial year, and the work would be allocated a priority in the new financial year.

The chairman reported that he had carried out a site inspection, and he believes that, until signs can be put in place, it would help if visibility was improved by reducing the height of the hedge. He agreed to talk to the landowners to see if this could be facilitated.

**Action PW**

h. **Conifer Hedge at 1 Sunnycroft, Portskewett**
The council had previously written to the owner of this property regarding the overgrown hedge, and some work was undertaken earlier in the year to cut it back. However the hedge has become so large it comes well out over the pavement making it difficult to pass for pedestrians and especially people with pushchairs or prams.

The clerk was asked to advise Monmouthshire County Council of the situation in order that they pursue it further.

The clerk received confirmation that Monmouthshire County Council had served notice.

i. **Sudbrook Emergency Road**
Following the recent event where a low loader had become stranded on Sudbrook Bridge, blocking the road for a number of hours, Monmouthshire County Council agreed to install an emergency access road from Black Rock to Sudbrook. Concerns were raised that there were no signs yet of this work being undertaken.
The clerk was asked to contact Mr Roger Hoggins to establish when the work was due to commence.

Councillor Fox reported that site inspections had been carried out, and new barriers would be installed imminently at either end of the route. Some work would be required to bring the route up to an acceptable standard for use by emergency vehicles.

j. **Sudbrook Paper Mill Development**
A demolition company, O’Briens, commenced work at the site recently and Harrow Estates had informed one of the councillors that a draft letter from O’Briens would be sent to the residents in Sudbrook. Nothing has been received yet.
The clerk was asked to contact Mr Dan Evans at Harrow Estates to make him aware of this.

Mr Evans informed the clerk that a newsletter had been delivered to the majority of residents, and he was aware that not all had received it. He would ensure that all residents received any further communications. He also offered to give monthly updates to the council to keep them informed of progress.

k. **Sudbrook Railway Bridge**
Following recent events a metal safety fence has been installed adjacent to the bridge where part of the wall had been knocked down.
The clerk was asked to contact Network Rail to establish whether the metal fence is temporary and the stone wall will be reinstated, or if the metal fence will be permanent, to ask that the pile of stone from the wall be removed from the site as it is a Health and Safety risk.

Mr Giles from Network Rail informed the clerk that the metal fence was a temporary safety measure and the wall would be rebuilt, using the stone at the site. The stone would therefore remain until the work was carried out.

6. **FUN DAY 2017**

   a. **To Receive an Update on the 2017 Fun Day**

      The clerk had submitted a first draft of the Events Safety Advisory Group document to Monmouthshire County Council for consideration. Not all information was currently available to complete the form, but would be updated as and when it becomes available. No response has been received yet.

      Councillor Parker agreed to provide a risk assessment for the event, including an assessment of fire risk, along with an emergency plan and a site plan. The clerk will forward these on to Monmouthshire County Council by 1st March 2017.

      The clerk had not written to local organisations inviting them to attend, as the Events Safety Advisory Group had advised that this should be left until they had the opportunity to consider the document submitted.

7. **100 YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE**

   a. **To consider whether to light a beacon on November 11th 2018 as part of the national event commemorating and remembering the end of WWI**

      The clerk had received notification of an event being held in remembrance of the end of WWI. A chain of 1,000 beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories at 7pm on the 11th November 2018. The council have the opportunity to take part by lighting a beacon.

      Councillors unanimously agreed that they wished to take part, and the clerk was asked to inform the event co-ordinator accordingly. 

      It was agreed that the beacon would be lit on Sudbrook Camp near the old church, using the steel basket which had been used on a previous occasion.

8. **ACQUISITION OF LAPTOP AND DONGLE(S)**

   a. **To consider and approve purchasing a laptop and dongle(s) for use at council meetings**

      Following the recent move by Monmouthshire County Council to “go paperless” a suggestion had been made that the community council should acquire a laptop to facilitate looking up documents at council meetings, rather than printing them for meetings.

      Discussions took place as to whether a projector would also be advantageous, to enable all present at the meeting to view what would be on the computer screen.
After some consideration had been given as to whether the cost would outweigh the benefits, it was agreed to monitor the situation for a few months, to establish how much use could be made of the equipment, before making a final decision.

9. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE 9 MONTHS TO DECEMBER 2016**

The budget monitoring report had been circulated with the papers prior to the meeting. There was nothing further that required bringing to the attention of the councillors.

Councillor Standing enquired as to whether anyone knew when the funds would be received in respect of the Sudbrook Solar Farm.

Councillor Parker declared an interest in this item and removed himself from further discussions.

The clerk informed the council that she had received a telephone call from a representative of Canadian Solar asking for the council’s bank details in order that a transfer could be made. She had informed them, as in a previous email, that the council would not be able to give out their bank details and that a cheque would be required. The representative had no knowledge of this and was going to look into it. The clerk had received no further response.

The meeting was informed that work had commenced on the solar generation project, located at Oak Grove Farm, Crick. The question was asked as to whether there would be a community benefit fund established from this project also. The community council have received no communication from the developers at all. Councillor Fox was asked to follow this up.

10. **REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVE ON ARW SCHOOL AND OTHER BODIES**

The council was informed that the parent governor at the school had been approached by parents enquiring about nursery provision for their children. The governor had responded that it is Monmouthshire County Council who has the responsibility for nursery provision, and that the head teacher of the school is working closely with Monmouthshire County Council to insures nursery provision in the future, but this will take time.

Councillor Fox added that Monmouthshire County Council have carried out a Monmouthshire-wide survey regarding nursery provision requirements across the area. He believes there is a need for nursery provision in the Portskewett/Sudbrook area, however as spare places have been identified in Caldicot, it makes it difficult to pursue.

11. **DISCUSSION WITH COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Councillor Fox reported that a requirement has been identified to make £4 million of efficiency savings. Work is currently being undertaken to identify where the savings can be made.

He explained that Monmouthshire receives significantly less funding per household than neighbouring councils, so is already disadvantaged when trying to identify further savings.

Monmouthshire is a large, rural area with sparsity issues, which result in increased costs in providing services. No account is taken of rurality or sparsity when funds are allocated to county councils.
12. **NEW CORRESPONDENCE**

a. **To consider Planning Application Ref: DC/2016/01443 and make recommendation**

The planning application relates to 40 Main Road, Portskewett. It sought approval for change of use from D1 (day nursery) to C3 (dwelling).

The councillors had no objections to the application and it was recommended for approval. The clerk was asked to respond accordingly.  

**Action BY**

Planning Applications Approved by Monmouthshire County Council

Planning Applications Refused by Monmouthshire County Council

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Police Report**

PC Norville attended the meeting and presented the council with the police report for December 2016.

There were no crimes reported during December, and following one report of anti-social behaviour where officers attended, a person was arrested.

There were no reports of traffic accidents; however PC Norville had been contacted by a Sudbrook resident with regard to parking issues in Sudbrook. PC Norville has spoken to the resident concerned and to other local residents, but although he is monitoring the situation, he has yet to find an occurrence of illegal parking. He is applying the common sense approach to the issue and trying to reinforce the lawful position re parking by delivering information leaflets to residents.

**Community Council Website**

The clerk informed the meeting that work had been carried out on the website to bring it up to date with current requirements. The work is still ongoing, and the clerk asked the councillors to let her know how much more information relating to the community they would like to see included.

The clerk also asked for advice regarding the position of a bilingual requirement for the website. The clerk has looked at other community council websites in the area and they are all in English.

Councillor Fox responded that although there is a requirement for County Councils to be bilingual, he does not believe the same applies currently to community councils. Available guidance makes reference to the usage of Welsh by the population of an area, and as Monmouthshire is generally regarded as an English speaking area, the requirement for Welsh would not be deemed to apply.

If in the future the community council was approached by residents from the area seeking information in Welsh, they would do their best to meet the request.

**Donation to Portskewett and Sudbrook Good Companions**

The clerk had received a letter from the chairman of the good companions club thanking the council for their donation.
Tenovus Cancer Care
The clerk had received a request from Tenovus Cancer Care asking the community council for financial support. Councillors noted the request.

Venue for the April Council Meeting
The clerk reminded the council that a venue had not been finalised for the April meeting, as Sudbrook Church was not expected to be available. Councillor Hubbard informed the meeting that there may also be an issue with access to the school in March as she will be away.

Councillor Hubbard agreed to try and make alternative arrangements for the school to be opened up for both meetings, and she will let the clerk know as soon as possible. **Action CH**

Cornfield Project Fun Run
The Cornfield Project had approached the council with a request to borrow the council tent for their fun run on 30th April 2017. It was unanimously agreed that they could.

The councillors were also asked whether they would be available to help as marshalls at the event again this year. Councillor Hubbard will let the Cornfield Project know who is available. **Action CH**

14. **FINANCE**

   a. The pink paper for December was circulated prior to the meeting for the councillors’ consideration. The chairman duly authorised the paper.

   b. The clerk presented the following payments for authorisation at the meeting:

      - Mrs B Young – Clerks Salary £ 448.32
      - Mrs B Young – Clerks Allowance and Expenses £ 70.33
      - Torfaen Pension Fund – Clerks Pension Contributions £ 93.45
      - Mr M Weaver – Caretaker’s Wages £ 432.00

      They were proposed by Councillor Fawcitt and seconded by Councillor Hubbard.

15. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and gave the date and time of the next meeting as **Tuesday 21st February at ARW School, Portskewett**, the meeting was then declared closed at 9.05pm.