

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PORTSKEWETT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD AT ARW SCHOOL, PORTSKEWETT
TUESDAY 15th OCTOBER 2019

Councillors present: Mr P Nurcombe (Chair)
 Mrs C Carne
 Mr T Fawcitt
 Mr A Griffiths
 Mrs C Hubbard
 Mr I Standing

1. **PUBLIC MEETING**

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

2. **SIGN THE ATTENDANCE BOOK**

The Attendance Book was duly signed.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Parker, Councillor Fox and Councillor Essery.

4. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no interests to declare.

5. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was proposed by Councillor Fawcitt and seconded by Councillor Carne and agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

6. **CLERK'S REPORT**

The clerk's report for October had been circulated prior to the meeting for the councillor's consideration.

The report was accepted by the meeting and the Chairman duly signed the report.

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

- a. The Council's representative on the governing body of ARW School reported that a new Head Teacher had been appointed and was expected to take up post in January 2020.
- b. Councillor Carne had attended a meeting of the Dog Fouling Awareness Group. She informed the meeting that there was concern that Portskewett Community Council do not have specific dog fouling bins.

8. **DISCUSSION WITH COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

The County Councillor was not present.

9. **NEW CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. **Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) Draft Countryside Access Improvement Plan**

It was agreed that the clerk should put up the poster supplied.

Action BY

- b. **Monmouthshire County Council Climate Emergency Action Plan**

Members agreed that they were happy with the plan.

Planning Applications Approved by Monmouthshire County Council

No planning applications were approved by Monmouthshire County Council this month.

Planning Applications Refused by Monmouthshire County Council

No planning applications have been refused by Monmouthshire County Council this month.

10. **FINANCE**

a. **Pink Paper**

The pink paper for October was circulated prior to the meeting for the councillors' consideration and was duly authorised by the Chairman.

The following payments were proposed by Councillor Carne and seconded by Councillor Standing and unanimously agreed by members present:

Salaries	£1,153.07
Torfaen CBC – Pension contributions	£ 213.15
HMRC – NIC and PAYE	£ 97.15
Society of Local Council Clerks - Website Accessibility Webinars	£ 72.00
Wales Audit Office - External Audit 2018/19	£ 189.05

A transfer of £3,000 from the Unity deposit account to the Unity current account was also approved in readiness for November payments. **Action BY**

b. **Grant Application from St Marys Church, Portskewett**

A grant application had been received requesting the sum of £500 for 2020/21 towards grounds maintenance of the churchyard.

The clerk had circulated to members a statement from the National Association of Local Councils, which sought to clarify the position with regards to a council's ability to make payments to a religious body.

The powers in the 1894 Act prohibit councils' involvement in property relating to the affairs of the church; however it is questionable whether subsequent legislation may override the original prohibition.

Until such time as a court determines the extent of any prohibition from the 1894 Act, a Council considering making a payment in these circumstances is advised to consider whether it is prudent to take a course of action that it cannot be certain is legally valid.

It was proposed by Councillor Nurcombe and seconded by Councillor Standing that a grant should not be awarded. This was unanimously agreed by members present. **Action BY**

c. **Playdale quotation for additional support for Swing Pod at Richard's Quest**

In light of a comment in the playground inspection report a quotation had been obtained for additional support for the Swing Pod at Richard's Quest. The quote was for the sum of £342 inclusive of VAT, but excluding fitting.

Members agreed that as the issue had been reported as a minor concern in the RoSPA inspection report, and the equipment was inspected on a weekly basis, it was not necessary to take any action at this time.

It was proposed by Councillor Nurcombe and seconded by Councillor Fawcitt that the additional supports should not be acquired. This was unanimously agreed by members present.

d. **Quarterly Report on Bank Reconciliations**

Councillor Standing informed members that he had carried out the quarterly check on bank reconciliations on 7th October 2019. This covered the second quarter of the financial year 2019/20. Councillor Standing confirmed that all entries were present and correct.

Councillor Standing reminded the members that there were still two outstanding cheques on the Lloyds Bank current account that had not cleared through from the previous year. The clerk updated the meeting that the caretaker was meeting with Barclays bank on 16th October 2019 to resolve the issue.

e. Budget Monitoring Report for the 3 months to June 2019

The quarterly budget monitoring report for the six months ended 30th September 2019 was circulated to members prior to the meeting for their consideration.

Members had no questions for the clerk. The report was duly accepted by the meeting.

f. Purchase of Office Chair

The Council had not provided an office chair for the clerk when she took up the position. For the last 10 years she had managed with a second hand one passed onto her, which had now failed.

It was proposed by Councillor Standing and seconded by Councillor Nurcombe that a budget of £100 be allocated to acquire a chair. This was agreed by members present. **Action BY**

g. Budget Virements

The clerk presented a schedule of budget adjustments for approval, that were required to take account of variances on some budgets.

It was proposed by Councillor Carne and seconded by Councillor Fawcitt that the budget virements be approved. This was agreed by members present. **Action BY**

11. **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE AUDIT REVIEW COMMITTEE**

- a. Following the external auditors' recommendation that appropriate Terms of Reference should be agreed as soon as possible, the clerk had circulated a draft for members' consideration prior to the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Fawcitt and seconded by Councillor Nurcombe that the Terms of Reference be adopted. This was agreed by members present.

12. **STAFF APPRAISALS**

- a. The Chairman informed the meeting that the staff appraisals had been carried out. He tabled his reports at the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Fawcitt and seconded by Councillor Carne that the reports be accepted. This was agreed by members present.

The clerk had raised the issue of IT support for such times when a failure in equipment resulted in not being able to carry out the required work. Councillor Griffiths informed the meeting that he had experience of a company based on the Severn Bridge Industrial Estate, and it was agreed that he should forward their contact details to the clerk. **Action AG**

13. **ANNUAL PAY INCREASE**

- a. It was agreed that the clerk should be awarded an increase of 1 spine point to SCP23. As the pay scales are not yet available for 2020/21, in order to produce the budget for 2020/21 it was agreed the clerk should use the 2019/20 rate plus an additional 3%. **Action BY**
- b. The caretaker is paid according to minimum wage legislation. As any change to minimum wage rate will not be known until 1st April 2020, in order to produce the budget for 2020/21 it was agreed the clerk should use the rate proposed by the Low Pay Commission in their consultation document for April 2020 of £8.67, plus an additional 3%. **Action BY**

14. **COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

- a. Two applications had been received in respect of the Councillor Vacancy, which had been circulated to Councillors for their consideration prior to the meeting. It was agreed that both applicants should be interviewed.

Interviews will be held on Tuesday 22nd October at 7.00pm and 7.30pm, the venue will be 26 Main Road, Portskewett. The clerk was asked to notify the candidates. **Action BY**

The interview panel will be made up of: Councillor Nurcombe, Councillor Standing and Councillor Carne.

The appeal committee will be made up of: Councillor Fawcitt, Councillor Griffiths and Councillor Hubbard.

15. **WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY REGULATIONS**

- a. The clerk had taken part in webinar training sessions on the implications of the new regulations for Councils. A briefing paper had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The clerk reiterated the contents of the paper with particular regard to the deadline for compliance, and the advice that a committee should be established to drive the project through.

The clerk was asked to establish what the cost would be of employing a third party with the expertise to assess the compliance of the Council website, and to contact other councils in the area to determine what actions they are taking. **Action BY**

16. **REMEMBRANCE DAY**

- a. It was proposed by Councillor Nurcombe and seconded by Councillor Fawcitt that Councillor Griffiths should order the Council wreath for the remembrance service. This was agreed by members present. **Action AG**

17. **ITEMS OF LOCAL CONCERN (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

- a. **Police Report**

The report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting for their consideration. It was duly noted and there were no questions.

- b. **Lamp Post Poppies for Remembrance Day**

The clerk was asked to arrange with Councillor Parker for him to put up the lamp post poppies in readiness for Remembrance Day.

- c. **Trees on Severn Bridge Industrial Estate**

A resident had raised concerns with regard to the work being carried out on the trees on the Severn Bridge Industrial Estate. It is understood that the trees were being pollarded for safety reasons.

The issue was duly noted.

- d. **Traffic Calming Measures/Speed Bump – Roadway at Ifton Hill**

A resident from Leechpool had provided the information that MCC would be installing traffic calming measures, probably a speed bump, at the bottom of Ifton Hill as a result of traffic issues. The resident had been advised by MCC to bring the speeding problem on the road from Portskewett to Parkwall, via Ifton Hill, to the attention of the Community Council and other relevant parties. This was duly noted.

- e. **Aneurin Bevan CHC Annual Review**

A questionnaire had been received asking for the Council's views on key health priorities, to inform the CHC Operational Plan 2020/21.

f. VE Day Celebrations

One Voice Wales had forwarded information from the Armed Forces Charity detailing the planned activities to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in 2020. Members agreed that the website link should be added to the Council website.

g. Manor Way Sign

Councillor Griffiths reported that the Street name sign on Manor Way is badly faded and needs replacing.

h. Poppy Display

It was agreed that the knitted poppy display made in 2018 should be displayed again for Remembrance day on the churchyard railings.

i. Bandstand on the Village Green

Following earlier proposals by members to consider installing a bandstand on the village green, the Chairman proposed that information should be obtained on the likely cost.

j. Village Stocks

It was suggested that consideration should be given to installing a replica of the village stocks on the village green. The clerk will establish whether it would be possible.

k. Damaged Bollard

The meeting was informed that one of the bollards had been damaged on the crossing point at the top entrance to Severn Bridge Industrial Estate.

l. Meeting Venue

The Chairman will obtain the view of the County Councillor with regard to the use of ARW School as a meeting venue.

m. Portskewett and Sudbrook Recreation Hall

The Chairman had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Recreation Hall on 23rd September 2019, as the Council's representative. He received an apology for the comments made at the previous meeting, and the Council were thanked for the grant awarded to the Recreation Hall.

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

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and gave the date and time of the next meeting as **Tuesday 19th November at ARW School, Portskewett**, the meeting was then declared closed at 8.50pm.