

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PORTSKEWETT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

HELD VIA REMOTE ACCESS

TUESDAY 19th JANUARY 2021

Councillors Present:

Mrs C Carne (Chair), Miss L Dymock, Mr S Essery, Mr A Griffiths, Mr P Nurcombe, Mr G Parker, Mr I Standing. County Cllr P. Fox also attended the meeting.

1. **PUBLIC MEETING**

Due to the Government restrictions in respect of COVID19 the meeting was held by remote access and no members of the public had requested to participate. No issues had been raised with the clerk by members of the public prior to the meeting.

2. **SIGN THE ATTENDANCE BOOK**

Due to the remote nature of the meeting it was not possible to sign the Attendance Book.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Archer and Cllr Fawcitt.

4. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Parker declared an interest in agenda item 18, Sudbrook allotments, as he is the landlord.

5. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

- a. The Chair moved that the minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record, proposed by Cllr Nurcombe, seconded by Cllr Parker, agreed by all present. **Action: Cllr Carne to sign minutes, Clerk to publish on website.**

6. **CLERK'S REPORT**

The clerk's report for January had been circulated prior to the meeting for members' consideration.

With regard to obtaining the detail of the grounds maintenance contract, Cllr Fox suggested the clerk write to Nigel Leaworthy; copying in himself and Mark Cleaver.

The Chair moved that the report be accepted, proposed by Cllr Dymock, seconded by Cllr Parker and agreed by all present. **Action: Cllr Carne to sign report.**

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

Cllr Carne reported that the school are continuing with blended learning, in very difficult times.

There is a proposal from Monmouthshire County Council to increase the number of primary school places in the area, ARW school would increase from 210 places to 280 places. Notification of the consultation, commencing 18th January 2021 and ending 2nd March 2021, had been received.

Action: Clerk to agenda in February.

The next meeting of OVW Newport/Monmouthshire Area Committee will be held on 21st January 2021. Cllr Essery will attend.

8. **DISCUSSION WITH COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

County Cllr Fox informed the meeting the drains on Main Road had been cleaned today to help prevent further flooding given the weather forecast. Matt Jeffs from MCC visited the Quest and confirmed work is required to the bund to further improve flood prevention. A resident has offered surplus soil, which can be used. Cllr Fox had informed residents, concerned about the flooding before Christmas, that preventative measures would be carried out. AJ Tensile have offered heavy duty fabric for use in improving the bund. **Action: Clerk to contact Ross Price to establish what work is planned, and respond to resident's letter to the community council.**

Cllr Fox reported that local hospitals are currently coping with the Covid situation but any surge will overwhelm them. Most Covid cases are now the new variant which is affecting more younger people. There are concerns that vaccines are not being deployed quickly enough. The Abergavenny vaccination centre is only open 2 days a week due to the supply. 3 additional centres are opening this week. In Monmouthshire as a whole there are under 200 cases per 100,000, the average for Wales being 400 cases per 100,000. Caldicot is currently the worst area in Monmouthshire with 300 cases per 100,000. Track and trace is working well with 94% of people being contacted.

9.. **NEW CORRESPONDANCE AND MATTERS RAISED**

a. **Pensions Regulator**

Employers are required to re-enrol with the Pensions regulator every three years. The clerk had completed the re-enrolment for the Council and submitted the required re-declaration.

b. **Consultation on Review of Monmouthshire Electoral Arrangements**

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales had published draft proposals. The period for representation commenced on 17th December 2020 and ends on 10th March 2021.

There is currently 1 member for Portskewett. With the housing developments planned, in the future the 1500 residents per member limit may be exceeded. Further review will take place at some point and Portskewett may become a 2 member ward.

The Chair moved that no response need be submitted, proposed by Cllr Dymock, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all present.

c. **Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033**

The Growth and Spatial Options Non-Statutory Consultation and Engagement process in respect of the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 commenced on 4th January 2021 and ends on 1st February 2021.

The paper sets out several growth and spatial options, and identifies the preferred option of MCC. The main towns in the county have already exceeded their development potential, and growth is restricted in some areas by natural barriers. The preferred option proposes development is spread across the whole county.

Cllr Griffiths raised concerns that the villages here have already experienced large developments, without the infrastructure being provided to support that. Cllr Dymock responded that there has been large growth in all areas of the county. Cllr Parker suggested that as the smaller communities have already been developed there is a need for a new village/town to be established providing the required amenities too.

The Chair moved that Cllr Dymock brief members following the online meeting being held on 21st January 2021, a response will then be determined for submission by 1st February 2021, proposed by Cllr Nurcombe, seconded by Cllr Parker, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to submit response.**

Discussion moved to the Section 106 Plan required. **Action: Clerk to agenda in February.**

d. **Wales Air Ambulance Charity Emergency Appeal**

A request for a financial assistance had been received from Wales Air Ambulance Charity. The Chair moved that they be asked to complete a grant application form for consideration in the new financial year, proposed by Cllr Nurcombe, seconded by Cllr Dymock, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to send a Grant Application form for completion.**

County Cllr Fox left the meeting at this point to attend to other business.

e. **Welsh Government Keep Wales Safe Campaign**

Correspondence had been received asking the council to support the campaign by promoting awareness via the website, social media etc.

The Chair moved the council support the campaign, proposed by Cllr Nurcombe, seconded by Cllr Essery, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to respond accordingly.**

f. **NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers day 5th July 2021**

The 5th July 2021 has been chosen as a unique day of celebration and commemoration of those that work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without any thought of their own safety.

The programme for the day is:

- To raise a unique flag at 10am
- Participate in a two minute silence at 11am
- The Nation's toast at 1pm
- Afternoon tea at 4pm
- Ringing of church bells 71 times, each ring representing a year of the NHS, at 8pm

Any funds raised from the day will be used to support NHS Charities Together and the National Care Association.

The Chair moved the council participate in the event, proposed by Cllr Griffiths, seconded by Cllr Dymock, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to respond accordingly and make enquiries regarding the church bell.**

g. Flood Defences Main Road, Portskewett

Following heavy rainfall areas of Main Road were flooded on 23rd December 2020. Correspondence had been received from a resident asking when the proposed work on flood defences by MCC would be completed, and what progress had been made to date. This item was considered under agenda item 8.

Planning Applications Approved by Monmouthshire County Council

00914 Cliff House, Camp Road, Sudbrook Proposed alterations to existing dwelling, including partial demolition & construction of single & two storey extensions, with associated external works.

Planning Applications Refused by Monmouthshire County Council

No applications were refused this month.

10. **FINANCE**

a. Pink Paper January

The pink paper for January was circulated prior to the meeting for the councillors' consideration.

The chair moved that the following payments be approved, proposed by Cllr Nurcombe, seconded by Cllr Parker, agreed by all present.

Salaries	£1,201.65
Torfaen CBC – Pension contributions	£ 225.04
HMRC – NIC and PAYE	£ 113.85
Mr G Parker – batteries for Christmas lights	£ 35.07
Audit Wales – external audit 2019/20	£ 213.40
Monmouthshire County Council – 6 boxes of dog bags	£ 250.20
Miss L Dymock – Reimbursement Zoom December	£ 28.78

Action: Cllr Carne, Cllr Nurcombe and Cllr Parker to sign. Clerk to set up payments.

Balances held: Current Account £9,632.45 and Deposit Account £9,552.32.

The Oak Grove Solar Farm funding of £5,000 had been received in December, and 5 payments of £1,000 were made to the agreed recipients.

The clerk had reported the December salary payment had been overpaid by £60 due to an input error which had not been picked up during the authorisation process. The Council financial records were all correct. The amount would be recovered from the January salary payment.

b. External Audit Report for the year ended 31st March 2020

The external auditors report had been received and it confirmed there were no matters which required the issuing of a separate issues arising report. The notice of conclusion of audit had been published on the website and displayed in the notice boards as required, and confirmation sent to the external auditors as requested.

The Chair moved the report be accepted, proposed by Cllr Nurcombe, seconded by Cllr Griffiths, agreed by all present.

- c. Approval and Acceptance of the Annual Return for 2019/20
The audited Annual Return had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair moved the return be approved and accepted, proposed by Cllr Griffiths, seconded by Cllr Parker, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to publish on website.**
- d. Quarterly Report on Bank Reconciliations
Cllr Standing had carried out the quarterly check on bank reconciliations. He confirmed that all records were correct.
- e. Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report for the 9 months to 31st December 2020
The report had been circulated prior to the meeting for members' consideration. The clerk suggested two budget virements, to be considered separately, there were no other matters to bring to members' attention. The Chair moved that the report be approved, proposed by Cllr Nurcombe, seconded by Cllr Dymock, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to publish on website.**
- f. Budget Virements
Two budget virements were suggested by the clerk:
 - £250 be transferred from the Website Accessibility Regulations budget to the Website Domain and Hosting budget.
 - £296 be transferred from the Maintenance of Play Areas budget to the Council Insurance budget.
 The Chair moved that the virements be approved, proposed by Cllr Dymock, seconded by Cllr Parker, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to update the council budget.**

11. **WEBSITE**

a. Website Updates

Cllr Archer put forward the following proposals at the December meeting:

- a councillor section should be established, giving background information on, and contact details for, each councillor; including a photograph.
- each councillor to have a council email address rather than use their personal ones.
- declarations of interest should be included as a list rather than as a table for ease of reading.
- the accessibility statement should reflect that statements provided by third party organisations are not included within the approach to accessibility across the rest of the site.
- the ward section be removed as the visitors section contains the relevant information.
- the overview in the main section be updated to include basic information on the wards, number of councillors etc.
- review of photographs on the website so that labels for the photographs can be agreed.
- links to the social media feeds be added to the website.
- uploading a version of the two walk leaflets.

Councillors agreed they would continue to use their existing email addresses in preference to having an additional one for council business.

The Chair moved that the proposals be accepted with the exception of each councillor having a council email address, proposed by Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Essery, agreed by all present. **Action: website group to take proposals forward.**

12. **PLACE PLAN**

This item was deferred to February as Cllr Archer was not present.

13. **NETWORK RAIL LAND, SUDBROOK**

a. Update on licence

The clerk had spoken to Claire Hickman, who is no longer dealing with the issue having transferred to a new department. She had not been replaced so there had been no progress with the licence. The first consultation had concluded but there was no information on progress with the second consultation. The clerk was reminded that no access to the land was allowed until the licence was in place. Ms Hickman offered to follow up on the licence and pass on any update.

- b. Reconsider the licence
Cllr Fawcitt and Cllr Parker had recently visited the site and found it extremely overgrown. The vegetation was causing the wall to be undermined in places. Given the limited use allowed under the licence and the work required to clear the area and make it safe, the question was asked whether the council should pursue the licence.
Following discussion on potential use of the area and liabilities it would place on the council the Chair moved that the council should not obtain the community licence, proposed by Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Essery, agreed by all present.

- c. Public Consultation
There would be no need for public consultation due to the decision made under agenda item 13b.

14. **COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

- a. The clerk informed members that the electoral registrations office had received no call for an election in respect of the vacancy, the council can now move forward with the co-option process.
- b. The Chair moved that the clerk advertise the vacancy for co-option in the usual manner, proposed by Cllr Dymock, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to publish notice of vacancy and agenda in February to consider applications.**

15. **REQUIREMENT FOR NO SMOKING SIGNS IN PLAYGROUNDS**

New legislation (Public Health (Wales) Act 2017) comes into operation on 1st March 2021, which makes it illegal to smoke in hospital grounds, school grounds and public playgrounds. Welsh Government's requirements include the need to install signage in all local children's public playgrounds, as follows:

- a. A least one sign must be displayed in each public playground.
- b. For playgrounds with a boundary, the sign must be in a prominent position at or near the main entrance (if there is more than one main entrance, then each of them).
- c. For playgrounds without a boundary, a sign must be placed in a prominent position near the playground.
- d. 'No Smoking' signs in public playgrounds must:
- Contain a legible graphic representation of a burning cigarette enclosed in a circle with a bar across the circle which crosses the cigarette symbol; and
 - For public playgrounds within clearly marked boundaries, "It is against the law to smoke in this playground/Mae ysmygu yn y maes chwarae hwn yn erbyn y gyfraith"
 - For public playgrounds not within clearly marked boundaries, "It is against the law to smoke within 5 metres of this play equipment/Mae ysmygu o fewn 5 metr i'r cyfarpar chwarae hwn yn erbyn y gyfraith"
- e. There are no specific requirements on the size, design or colour of the smoke-free playgrounds signs. WG has designed a template sign which may be used when producing the signs – a copy of this is attached.
- f. Play areas are deemed to include skate parks.

MCC have offered to obtain signs on behalf of all organisations requiring them. The Chair moved that 3 estimates should be obtained for consideration at the February meeting, proposed by Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Griffiths, agreed by all present.

16. **HISTORY FROM A PORTSKEWETT RESIDENT**

The clerk had circulated the document prior to the meeting for members' consideration. It was agreed that the format of the document would need updating before publication. Cllr Parker suggested photographs of the relevant places be added to enhance the story.

Mr Weaver had confirmed that the author and their family had given permission for the document to be published on the council website.

The Chair moved the document be published on the website, proposed by Cllr Dymock, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to update document and publish on website.**

17. **ADDITIONAL PICNIC BENCHES AT RICHARD’S QUEST**

The use of the play area had increased significantly and it was suggested that more picnic benches should be provided. The clerk confirmed that three picnic benches previously funded at Sudbrook Play Park had cost £1,422. As the anticipated cost would be below £10,000 and above £1,000, in accordance with financial regulation 11.1g, the clerk should obtain 3 quotations.

The Chair moved that the clerk obtain 3 quotations to be considered at the February meeting, proposed by Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Dymock, agreed by all present. **Action: Clerk to obtain 3 quotes and agenda in February.**

18. **SUDBROOK ALLOTMENTS**

Cllr Archer had been approached by residents who have allotments in Sudbrook. The allotments had been dug up to lay services to the housing development at the Old Shipyard. Allotment holders complained advance notice was too short to allow them time to remove their produce and following completion of the work topsoil hadn’t been restored to the original level.

The council was informed that notice had been given 18 months prior to the work, and again 6 months prior to the work commencing. Top soil had been provided and tenants informed that more would be available if required. Compensation had been given in the form of reduced rent by the landlord, and garden centre vouchers from the developer.

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

Enquiries from the Council Facebook Page

The enquiries had been circulated to members prior to the meeting for their information. The clerk had submitted a highways pro-forma to MCC covering the issues raised in respect of Crick Road. The clerk had contacted Roger Hoggins to clarify the type of crossing that should be in place on the Crick Road. Due to the COVID19 situation response times are up to 28 days.

23rd March 2021 has been marked as a Memorial Day, on 1st anniversary of the national lockdown. A resident had asked whether the Council could arrange an appropriate act to mark the day in the villages. It was suggested that the trees on the village green be lit up with yellow lights, and that a display of yellow flowers be made for the cenotaph. **Action: Clerk to agenda in February.**

A resident had raised concerns that the Portskewett and Sudbrook Recreation Hall and Playing Fields was neglected and hardly used, and asked whether any funding would be available from the housing developments to refurbish the hall.

The Recreation Hall is normally well used and is currently closed due to the COVID19 pandemic. The Recreation Hall Committee have taken advantage of the closure to have the Hall refurbished. Once the government restrictions allow the hall should recommence full use.

Cllr Dymock offered to approach the Recreation Hall Committee with an offer of support, by informing the community, via the council website, of the refurbishment to the hall and publicising regular activities held, to show what a valuable asset it is to the community.

Due to the time no further items could be received. They will be added to the February agenda.

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

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and gave the date and time of the next meeting as **Tuesday 16th February 2021, via remote access.** The meeting was declared closed at 9.35 pm.

*Mrs Beverley Young
Clerk to the Council*