



GARW VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CYNGOR CYMUNED CWM GARW

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at the Bettws Life Centre Monday 14th July 2014

Members Present:-

Councillor G Davies (Chairman)

Councillors: C G Andrews; F Hughes; H Griffiths; W J Hillier; T Jenkins; M Jones; J Szeligiewicz; M Thomas and G Walters.

Police: None

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and was chaired by Councillor G Davies.

No. ***Minute***

49/15 ***Apologies for Absence***

The Members ***resolved*** to note the apologies received from Cllrs S Maclaren, D T Griffiths and Mrs D Griffiths.

50/15 ***Declarations of Interest***

Cllrs M Jones and M Thomas – all BCBC matters

51/15 ***Police Matters***

PCSO Andrew Wallen (Llangeinor) attended the meeting. The PCSOs representing the other wards had sent their apologies and statistics for the other three wards.

PCSO Wallen informed the Council about the NATO Summit and that it shouldn't affect the Garw Valley. PCSO Wallen is going to forward information to the Clerk regarding instances with off-road bikes and the community engagement work that PCSO Hamilton has done. The Clerk is to disseminate this information to the Members.

PCSO Wallen asked the Members to inform the local residents that there has been a recent spate in thefts of garden furniture and that the furniture should be locked away at night.

The Council brought to the attention the damaged coping stones on the steps leading from the Co-op shop to Pontycymmer Square. The Police had not previously been notified of this.

The Council thanked the PCSO.

52/15 ***Minutes of the June 2014 Full Council Meeting***

Resolved: that the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 16th June 2014 are a true record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes

53/15 ***Matters arising from the June 2014 Minutes***

None

54/15 *Presentation form Mr Dean Protheroe (Blaengarw and Pontycymmer Playschemes)*

Mr Protheroe thanked the Council for their donation to the Play4Life playschemes. Mr Protheroe stated that they have been a great success and operate for 10 weeks of the year. The playscheme is the third best attended in the Bridgend Borough.

The question was posed about teaming up with the Centres in Llangeinor and Bettws so that all children throughout the valley could attend trips and other opportunities. Mr Protheroe provided the Members with contact details.

Mr Protheroe raised the possibility of the Community Council providing financial support to the running of a youth club in Pontycymmer and is prepared to come back to a Council meeting to discuss this option.

55/15 *Question and answer session with Mr John Clarke, Streetscene, BCBC*

Mr Clarke introduced himself and explained that his role is being responsible for bins, street cleaning, public conveniences and Tidy Towns for BCBC.

The Strand Park, Blaengarw - The Council raised its concerns regarding the state of the park and the safety of the steps there. Mr Clarke informed the Council that the park is a Planning Improvement Area (PIA). Mr Clarke is to inform the Parks Department who is responsible for the area of the safety concerns.

Llangeinor urinal – Mr Clarke informed the Council that all but two urinals throughout the borough have been closed. The one remaining one in Maesteg is closing in the summer and the only remaining one is the one on Llangeinor Square. Mr Clarke stated that the reason for the closures is they are not very well used, in a poor state of repair and a focus for unsavoury behaviour.

Mr Clarke provided costings of £10,000 minimum (without services) to put the Llangeinor urinal it to a fit state and that on-going maintenance costs would be £1,500 per annum. In addition, Mr Clarke provided an estimate of £20,000 to put the toilets on the opposite side of the road into a serviceable condition and an annual maintenance cost of £1,500.

The Council asked if there would be any help from BCBC and Mr Clarke stated that due to the extreme pressures on funding, no funding would be available. Mr Clarke's budget has been cut by 20% this year. BCBC do have an ongoing review of public conveniences and one of the recommendations that Mr Clarke is going to make to the Cabinet is that the Town and Community Councils should administer a comfort scheme for local shops and businesses to make available their toilets to the public in return for a payment. This scheme ran previously for eight years offering £500 to local businesses but this has been withdrawn by BCBC. Some Councillors raised their concerns that these businesses are not open all the time.

The Public Health White Paper was mentioned but Mr Clarke stated that the outcome of this is not likely to be before the next elections.

Mr Clarke said that if the urinal was closed, there would be a sitting out area made on Llangeinor Square. Mr Clarke requested that the Council make a timely decision on this matter.

Lluest Memorial Dram – Mr Clarke informed the Council that maintenance work can be done under the Tidy Towns scheme as under the terms of funding for the scheme from the Welsh Government it is classed as an environmental improvement and therefore have the authority to work on land not owned by BCBC. The Council had previously been informed that if they went on and did any work to the site, they would be deemed to be trespassing.

Mr Clarke stated that he could provide the labour for the tidying up of the Memorial but there were three issues to be addressed:

- i. Tidy Towns cannot keep cutting the grass
- ii. Black membrane and stones could be put down instead of the grass
- iii. The wooden plinth around the Memorial needs replacing

Tidy Towns does not have a budget for the capital element of the work and the Community Council would need to pay for this.

Steps leading off Llangeinor Square leading to Glyn y Glowr – these steps are effectively in no-man's land. Mr Clarke confirmed that Tidy Towns will take over the responsibility of these steps.

Sitting out area in Lluest (by telephone box) – Mr Clarke confirmed that this area can be taken on by Tidy Towns.

The Council thanked Mr Clarke for attending and he informed the Council that the cuts in spending being made by BCBC are savage.

56/15 Clerk's Report

1. Review of banking arrangements - The Clerk had included on the Agenda the need to review the banking arrangements as community councils are now able to make internet bank payments since the repeal of s150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972. Currently the Clerk is able to input and authorise internet bank payments which puts her in a vulnerable position. There is a clear need to put in place controls for dual authority. Unfortunately, HSBC do not provide this facility.

The Clerk has spoken to other Community Councils and had positive feedback on the Unity Trust Bank. The Clerk spoke to a representative at that bank and obtained information which is enclosed. Further details about this bank can be found at www.unity.co.uk

Unity Trust Bank also pays a higher rate of interest than HSBC. The Clerk recommends that the Council switches banks from HSBC to the Unity Trust Bank.

Unity Trust Bank also has the option of a pre-paid card which the warden could use when he needs petty cash to purchase consumables.

The Clerk will need 2 Members to be willing to be authorised persons to approve the payments.

2. Nominations to positions/committees – The Clerk discussed this matter with One Voice Wales (OVW) to clarify whether a person has to be present to be nominated to a position or committee. The advice the Clerk received was that the person being nominated does not have to be present, however, prior to the meeting where he/she knew that nominations and elections were going to be made, he/she should have given their permission to either the Clerk or Chairman that if they were nominated, they

would be willing to accept. The Clerk suggests that a Standing Order to this effect is made for the avoidance of doubt in the future.

3. Terms of reference for committees– Following a recent meeting of the Finance Committee, it has become evident that there are no terms of reference for the committees that have been appointed. Therefore, there are no clear terms or guidelines on whether the committees can make decisions.

In addition, the Council has operated a Villages Account for the four wards for a number of years. In future, committees for each of the four wards will need to be established and have clear terms of reference on how this money can be spent. Currently, the wards are spending money out of their budgets without proper resolutions/approvals being made. There is no clear audit trail and therefore, the Council could be accused of making unlawful payments.

4. Work experience student – the warden has requested that the work experience student attends a brushcutting/trimmer course (see Warden’s Report dated 2/7/14). The course is 2 days and is run by Bridgend College at a cost of £200. The Clerk has asked NRW if this cost can be met out of the Plant! scheme.

In addition, the work experience student has enquired whether the Council is willing to pay him one or two days a week as he needs the money to support himself for the next college year. The rest of the days he will do unpaid. The national minimum wage is £5.03/hour for 18 – 20 year olds and £6.31/hour for 21 years and older.

5. Question and answer session with Mr John Clarke of Streetscene, BCBC (for information only as included as an Agenda item) – the purpose of Mr Clarke attending the meeting is to discuss the following:
 - i. Llangeinor urinal
 - ii. Lluest Memorial upkeep
 - iii. Steps leading off Llangeinor Square
 - iv. Lluest – area by the telephone box

Please note, The Strand Park, Blaengarw has been identified as the responsibility of the Parks Department and the Clerk has made a request for Cllr Pugh to refer this matter. In addition, Cllr Marlene Thomas has previously agreed with Mr Clarke that Streetscene will attend to the triangular area at the entrance to Lluest.

6. WW1 Commemorative bench - the Clerk has received two suggestions:
 - i. Bryngarw Park
 - ii. Next to the Cenotaph in Pontycymmer
7. Purchase of the Local Council Administration 9th edition Book by Charles Arnold-Baker - this book costs £69 to SLCC members (£85.50 to non-members) and is a complete statement of the law relating to parish and community councils. When the Clerk took up the post, she was given the fifth edition of this book which is out of date now as new legislation has come into force. The Clerk is requesting that the Council purchases this so that she has an up-to-date reference resource and to ensure that the Council operates within the law.
8. Warden’s Reports – the Clerk has sent out two reports since the last Full Council Meeting. The Clerk included that since the Agenda had been set the Warden had found an empty syringe wrapper outside the Portaloo in the Parc Calon Lan car park.

9. Easement application on land off Pwll Carn Terrace, Blaengarw – the Clerk informed the Council in the June meeting that the Land Registry has advised that this is being referred to the Tribunal. The Clerk has been in contact with BCBC and they are withdrawing their objection due to the legal advice they've received and aerial photography. The Council now needs to decide whether to go to Tribunal or to withdraw their objection.
10. Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) – the terms of the Clerk's pension allows her to pay AVCs into the pension scheme. The Clerk has taken up this option due to the tax relief offered to her. There is nil cost effect to the Council.
11. Annual leave – the Clerk will be unavailable from 28th July to 18th August.

In addition to the above items, the Clerk gave a presentation expressing her views on various issues.

A motion was passed that a Finance and Resources Committee should be established with appropriate terms of reference. The Clerk has been requested to provide model terms of reference ahead of the next meeting.

Resolved: the "formation and terms of reference for the Finance and Resources Committee and any other such committees" shall be included on the Agenda for the September Full Council Meeting.

57/15 Finance and Accounts

This item was moved up the Agenda for prudence as the Council had just discussed financial matters.

1. The Clerk presented accounts for approval totalling £8,881.84
Resolved: that the accounts were approved for payment
2. Members ***resolved*** to note the Receipts and Payments Account prepared for the period 01/04/14 to 07/07/14.

58/15 To review and discuss changing the Council's current banking arrangements

This matter was deferred for discussion and decision to the September 2014 Full Council Meeting.

59/15 To discuss the purchase of the Local Council Administration book

Resolved: the Council is to purchase this book at a cost of £69.00

60/15 To discuss the easement application on land of Pwll Carn Terrace

Cllr Thomas declared an interest in this item and took no part in the proceedings.

Resolved: the Council is to withdraw its objection to the easement application. The Clerk is to inform the necessary parties.

1. The warden had requested that the work experience student attends a strimmer course at Bridgend College. The cost of the course is £200. The Clerk said that she'd made enquiries with the Plant! scheme whether this cost could be met out of the Plant! budget but is waiting to hear back.

Resolved: the Council is not willing to meet the cost of the course due to the student only working for a short-term for the Council. If the Plant! scheme agrees to cover the cost, the student is able to attend the course.

2. Request for paid employment – the student had requested the Clerk to enquire whether the Council would be willing to pay him for one or two days a week (working a four day week).

Resolved: the Council is not able to fulfil this request and the work experience is done on a voluntary basis.

1. Garw Valley Angling Association – request for financial assistance to restock the river. Please note, this Association has been actively trying to sue that the Council claiming that it has polluted the river as a result of the forestry works.

Resolved: this item is left on the table

2. Y Bont – thanking for donation
3. Ogwr Talking Newspaper – thanking for donation. Posters have also been provided for the Council to display.

Items 2 and 3 are noted

4. Royal British Legion- invitation for Chairman to the Poppy Appeal Band Concert on 25/10/14

Resolved: the Chairman accepts the invitation to represent the Community Council.

5. Mr Liley – informing that NRW have agreed to pay his costs for dealing with the landslide affecting GVCC's land.
6. NRW – informing that the group of illegal riders spotted on 8/6/14 were in fact the Legal Forest Riders who were riding without permission. NRW has immediately withdrawn their permission to use the Garw forestry until illegal use has been reduced.
7. Clerk to Police – requesting that the Braichycymmer/Pontyrhyl area is patrolled on a Sunday from 11.30am onwards to combat the ongoing problem with off-road motorbikes.
8. Police – informing that they patrolled the above area on Sunday 22nd June and there were no incidents despite the good weather.
9. Clerk to Police – requesting that the picnic area by Pontycymmer Lake is patrolled in the evening due to the vandalism and anti-social behaviour when the weather is nice.
10. Clerk to BCBC (Highways) – informing that the GVCC will have no further involvement with the tree in Shwt.
11. Clerk to BCBC (Highways) – requesting a reply to the email regarding a parking problem in Bettws
12. Clerk to Cllr Jones – requesting that a referral is made to have the hedgerows cut on the access road into Bettws.
13. BCBC (Rights of Way) – requesting that Footpath 91 (Bryn Cottages to Station Row) is cleared.
14. Clerk to Cllr Pugh – requesting a Members Referral is made regarding the condition of The Strand Park. Mr John Clarke, Streetscene at BCBC has confirmed that it is the responsibility of the Parks Department at BCBC.

15. Janice Gregory AM – informing that the Welsh Government does not initiate road projects unless a major through route is involved. BCBC would need to bid for an improvement scheme but it would unlikely to be successful in the near future.
16. Clerk to Welsh Government – enclosing the Council’s comments on the Welsh Government’s Public Health White Paper re: provision of public toilets.
17. Clerk to Richard Price Centre/Bettws Life Centre/Halo – enquiring if summer playschemes are due to take place. Halo, Richard Price Centre and the Bettws Life Centre have all confirmed that the playschemes are going ahead and the Clerk has forwarded a cheque to the organisations.
18. Clerk to Senghenydd Heritage Society – enquiring whether the pavier has been corrected. The new pavier was laid on 30/6/14. The Clerk has requested a photograph of it.
19. C Murr – request for a tree to be placed in Parc Calon Lan. The Clerk has informed Mr/Ms Murray that no more trees or benches will be placed there.
Items 5 to 19 are noted
20. Mr Ray Smiles – asking if the Council will consider and agree to the Breathing Spaces land into a village green.
Resolved: the Clerk is to write to Mr Smiles informing him that the Council does not have the control of this area of land at the moment. It is currently underlet to Blaengarw Play Development Group Ltd.
21. Clerk to Reach – stating that the Council is disgusted that money is being spent on an event such as this when front-line services are being cut back. BCBC have responded stating that they are obliged to provide information on how RDP funding is spent.
Cllr M Jones wishes to distance himself from the comments made by the Council and will be attending the event on 15th July.
22. Mrs Trigg – requesting that the steps behind Llangeinor Square are cleaned. The warden will inspect and assess the work required.
23. Ombudsman – enclosing Annual Report 2013/14
24. Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine – the Clerk sent in an article about the new steps in Pontycymmer, the MTB Trails, the Miners Lamp and the new path in Bettws. The article made the front page!
25. Cllr H Griffiths – requests for the following pathways to be cut back:
 1. Gwaun Bant to Lower Adare Street, Pontycymmer
 2. The Avenue to Upper Adare Street, Pontycymmer
 3. Beside Pontycymmer Cemetery to the mountain (just before the farm)

The Clerk has requested that Cllr R Jenkins checks who is responsible for the upkeep of these areas and is waiting to hear back.
26. One Voice Wales – informing that invitations for Birthday Honours nominations are open.
27. One Voice Wales – enclosing the presentation on the Devolution of Services Training attend by Cllr H Griffiths and the Clerk.
28. Ms Gemma Adams (Gav’s Memorial Fun Day) – the Clerk had been in contact with the family prior to the Fun Day. Ms Adams informed the Clerk that £2,487.00 was raised for the two charities.
Items 21 to 28 are noted.

The following items of correspondence were received after the Minutes had been issued and were provided for information purposes only. They will be included for discussion in the September 2014 Full Council Meeting:

1. Home Start Charity – request for financial assistance

2. Huw Irranca-Davies MP – enclosing a copy of the official Hansard parliamentary record for 26/6/14
3. St Brides Minor Community Council – invitation for the Chairman and Consort to attend an evening of song, tunes and readings on 1/8/14.
4. One Voice Wales – enclosing the Minutes of the AGM held on 22/7/13
5. One Voice Wales – informing of the AGM being held on 21/7/14.

63/15 **Planning Matters**

BETTWS

Applications

P/14/402/FUL – application for 8 dwellings and landscaping/parking on land adjacent to Heol Persondy (affecting Footpath 9) – *no objections*

Decisions

None

LLANGEINOR

Applications

P/14/426/FUL – application for a shower room extension, convert living room into bedroom and provide ramped access at 49 Craiglas – *no objections*

Decisions

None

PONTYCYMMER

Applications

P/14/404/FUL – application to replace wooden window with UPVC window at 5 Oxford Street – *no objections*

Decisions

None

BLAENGARW

Applications

None

Decisions

None

64/15 **To discuss the purchase of a bench to commemorate World War One**

There was a discussion about the placing of a bench either in Bryngarw Park or near the Cenotaph in Pontycymmer. The matter was put to a vote. Cllr T Jenkins voted in favour of

purchasing a bench whilst Cllrs G Davies, C G Andrews, F Hughes, H Griffiths, M Jones, J Szeligiewicz, M Thomas and G Walters all voted against the purchase of a bench.

Resolved: the Council will not purchase a bench.

65/15 To discuss the taking over of the Llangeinor urinal

Mr John Clarke from Streetscene, BCBC had spoken earlier at the Meeting outlining the costs involved – see Minute 55/15.

The Council voted on whether they wanted to take over the running of the urinal and all Members present voted unanimously in favour of not taking over this facility.

Resolved: the Council will not take over the running of the urinal from BCBC.

66/15 To discuss the provision of a public toilet at Parc Calon Lan

The Council discussed the costs involved and the recent incidents of vandalism.

Resolved: No public toilet is to be provided at Parc Calon Lan. The Portaloo is also to be returned to the provider (the Clerk is to make the necessary arrangements).

67/15 To approve the 2013/14 Annual Return (post-audit)

The Clerk had provided each Member with a letter from BDO LLP stating that they intend to issue an unqualified Audit Report and that there were no issues arising.

Resolved: the Council approved the Annual Return and the Chairman duly signed Section 3.

68/15 Items for the September Meeting

1. Update on The Strand Park, Blaengarw (JS)
2. Holding Council Meetings in the Community Centre, Blaengarw on a rotational basis (MT)

Cllr C G Andrews submitted his apologies for the September 2014 Full Council Meeting.

69/15 Date of the next Meeting

Resolved: That the Council will next meet at 7pm on Monday 15th September 2014 at the Garw Valley Leisure Centre, Pontycymmer

With business concluded the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.40pm

Chairman _____ Date _____