

Cyngor Tref Llanwrtyd Town Council – Minutes of Special Meeting

Minutes of a Meeting held on November 16th 2011 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber.

Present - Cllrs Prichard, Newman, B Jones, A Jones, Price, Rowlands, Thomas and Van-Rees.

Representative of the Communication Mast Action Group – Bernice Benton, Andrea Morris, Denley Jones and Steve Lake.

In attendance – Mrs Pat Dryden

Apologies for Absence – Cllrs James and Burton

Cllr Prichard said that members had agreed to meet with representatives of the action group, even though they were aware of the potentially slanderous statements made at the residents meeting on the afternoon of November 4th. Cllr Prichard then handed over to Cllr Van-Rees as he had to leave to attend a meeting re Builth High School.

Cllr Van-Rees said that he appreciated the group's concerns, but wanted to make it perfectly clear that the mast was not being erected on his land, but on land belonging to NR which was adjacent to his land. He said that he had no interest in the mast whatsoever and there would be no gain for him in its siting and erection. Mrs Benton thanked Cllr Van-Rees as this had been in question and was now clear.

Cllr Van-Rees continued that he had received a letter from NR in January as had the TC. He had seen the plans and concluded that the site chosen was the most suitable. The mast will be down on the line and is partially screened by trees, which he felt would minimise the impact of the mast. He had met with Cllr David Price and the Chief Planning Officer and confirmed that an application could be made by PCC to the Welsh Government for a suspension of Delegated Powers. However, WG would be bound to note that masts have been erected without problems in other parts of the county. There would also be the possibility of NR trying to claim costs from PCC if the suspension request failed.

Mrs Morris said that she understood the masts were being erected by EU Directive which she would like to see. She could not find an email address or telephone number for Mark Langman, Route Managing Director for Wales. Cllr Van-Rees suggested an application could be made under the Freedom of Information Act. Mrs Morris continued that the TC should have acted more democratically.

Mrs Benton said there was nothing in the February 2011 minutes about the masts other than a couple of lines under Correspondence. Cllr Van-Rees said the issue was discussed at the February meeting and as far as he was concerned it was a perfectly correct minute.

A discussion ensued about alternatives to the big mast, and the group indicated they would accept the smaller masts if they were offered. The TC would support this and were willing to write to NR to say how they have let residents down and had caused a rift in the community.

6.45pm Cllr Van-Rees left the meeting.

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Cllr Prichard reminded the group that they had 15 more minutes, and Mr Lake commented on the limitation on time.

It was noted that HOWLTA are meeting with NR on November 17th. Mrs Morris said that although the TC has few powers they do have a duty to inform. Cllr Newman said that the January letter clearly states that NR would write to residents, the TC now realise that they did not keep their word. The TC as well as residents all feels let down, members care about the community, of which they are part, and all need to be on the same side.

Cllr A Jones said she thought it would have been more courteous if councillors had been invited to the residents meetings. Mrs Benton said the group feels let down, however she acknowledged that NR had given community councils misleading information. Mrs Benton said she had written to Carla Watts at NR. She continued that NR had placed masts in larger communities first where they would have less impact. There was a discussion about a right to a view.

Mr Jones said he felt NR would erect the mast anyhow, and that this signified the possibility of more traffic on the line. According to NR the mast is to be monopole without a light; however it was acknowledged that the Air Ambulance and MOD will not be happy about this so the plans will most likely need to change.

Cllr Newman said there was a need to be realistic, low energy light bulbs and some medical equipment like MRI scanners also give out harmful emissions. As the group have asked for the backing of the TC it was agreed that the TC would write to NR to ask for them to consider alternative systems, to say how they had let local people down by not keeping their word.

It was questioned why NR had decided to place the masts within the built up community rather than between communities where there are few residential properties. It was suggested that the TC liaise with other community councils. Mrs Morris said she did not want the TC to take over the campaign as it belonged to the group; she was assured there was no intention to do that.

Signed

Date

Pat Dryden
19/11/2011