

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th January 2014 at 7:00pm in The Council Chamber of the War Memorial Institute in Llanwrtyd Wells.

Present: Cllrs: J. Rowlands, P. James, R. Thomas, P. Tonks, P. Lambkin, A. Jones, B. Hodges, T. Van Rees,

Speaker : Mr Ian Harris (P.C.C. Area Manager for the Mid West dealing with issues relating to grass cutting, recycling, graveyard maintenance etc.

Observers : 2

The Chair, Cllr Rowlands, commenced the meeting at 7; pm welcoming the speaker Mr Ian Harris to the meeting.

Mr Harris began by outlining the work to be done on the Abergwesyn bridge to start in May/June. Some concerns were raised about the Man V Horse event which uses Abergwesyn extensively for this event. Mr. Harris said he would take this back and hope to postpone the commencement of the work until after the event which is due to take place on the 14th June.

Green Bring Site

Cllr Van Rees reported to Mr Harris that the Town Council had put forward 5 sites for green waste only to have each one rejected. He also stated that The Trunk Road Agency appeared to be obstructive and uncommunicative regarding this issue. There was frustration with in the Town Council that, despite their efforts, with many letters having been written to various agencies, the issue of having a much needed Green Bring site in Llanwrtyd Wells was no further forward. Cllr Hodges offered to create a map of the sites in order that future meetings could be held to discuss again the viability of each one in turn. This was agreed .Cllr Rowlands had recently suggested the option of using Ratcliffe's site which is big enough for the Green Bring lorry to manoeuvre in and out. This would of course only be available when Ratcliffes was open.

The question was raised as to what happens to the green waste householders put out in orange bags. Mr Harris said that these would go to landfill sites.

Grass Cutting

Cllr Rowlands expressed concern about the frequency of grass cutting throughout the year on Dolwen Field. It was felt that the cutting was left for longer periods of time than required. Mr Harris cited the recent cutbacks causing lack of cutting. Cllr James raised also the issue of grass cutting in the old cemetery. Mr Harris assured us that he was aware of the correspondence from the Town Council and assured Council members that the issues had been dealt with.

Cllr Jones requested cutting back of the trees at the junction of Cefn Gorwedd Road and the main trunk Road out towards Llandoverly.

Other issues

Cllr. Tonks raised the issue of Knotweed along Victoria Road. Mr Harris said there was a policy for dealing with it and gave Council members a contact at Boughrood (Mr B. Price).

Cllr. Rowlands raised the issue of Tidy Towns as money from this fund had supported projects in Llanwrtydl in the past. Mr. Harris explained that funding was now very tight but said he would keep the Council informed if there was any money available in the future.

Cllr. Van Rees raised the issue of road salt and Mr Harris reassured the Council that they had an ample supply. Cllr Van Rees requested that if possible Tirabad should be considered for salting and that it would be greatly appreciated.

Cllr Lambkin thanked Cllr Hodges for arranging Mr Harris's visit and Cllr Rowlands thanked Mr Harris for his input. Mr Harris left the meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs. N. Price, G. Rowlands, L. Haines (retrospectively)

A get well card was signed by all for Cllr G. Rowlands wishing her a speedy recovery after a fall which left her with a broken ankle.

2. **Minutes of the last Meeting held on 18th December 2013.**

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Minutes were approved by Cllr. Hodges and seconded by Cllr. Van Rees.

3. **Finance**

3.1 **Balance Sheet**

The balance sheet for the period 18/12/2013-14/01/2014 was approved as accurate by Cllr. R. Thomas and seconded by Cllr. A. Jones.

3.2 and 3.3 **Budget update and Precept**

The budget update to 31/12/2013 together with a proposed draft budget for 2014/2015 was presented to Council members. The Chair felt that with increasing costs an increase in the precept for 2014/2015 was needed, say from £16000 to £17000.

Each “costed” heading was then considered and as a result several issues were raised:

- It was suggested that enquiries be made to the Chairman of Abergwesyn Hall Committee, Mr D Graukroger , as to how funds were used from the Town Council for management of the the Abergwesyn toilets.
- Cllr Rowlands outlined his thoughts on monies received for camping and the hire of the Pavilion suggesting that this should be ‘ring fenced’ for pavilion expenses and for future developments of Dolwen Field. It was felt that this would reassure event managers in seeing see money from camping being used for this purpose. This was agreed by all.
- Cllr Lambkin queried the need to increase the precept and queried the need to allocate monies to the Gardening Club. It was pointed out that the monies for the Gardening Club helped to maintain the flower beds throughout the town and contributed to the wellbeing of the town and indeed our entry in the Wales in Bloom Annual Event.
- Cllr James proposed raising the precept by £500 rather than £1000. This was seconded by Cllr. T Van Rees.

Cllr Rowlands pointed out that a more accurate picture of annual spending would be forthcoming in March at the time of the end of year accounts..

Action : Clerk to write to Mr Graukroger re; Abergwesyn Hall funds

4. **Anti-social Behaviour and Vandalism**

Cllr Rowlands read out a letter received by a member of the public outlining an incident of anti-social behaviour which had occurred outside his house causing alarm and distress to his young family to such a degree that the police were called. Names of offenders were given to the police at the time of the incident. Heated discussion then ensued as to how to proceed as a Council with suggestions that the “Behave or be Banned” Policy be applied to the offenders immediately and that a Code of Conduct be sent to Licensees within Llanwrtyd outlining their responsibilities as landlords. Cllr Van Rees felt very strongly that PC Darby be contacted by e-mail as a matter of urgency to inform her of the complaint. The conclusion of the discussion was that Cllr Rowlands and Cllr James meet as soon as possible with PC J Darby regarding the incident to discuss a way forward. It was agreed that the complainant be kept informed at all times of any actions to be taken.

No other issue of anti-social behaviour was brought to the table.

Action: Cllr Rowlands to make contact with PC Darby to set up a meeting with himself and Cllr James.

5. **Traffic Calming**

The clerk reported that she had made contact with the Senior Road Safety Officer Mrs S Morris regarding the difficulty of exiting from the garage. The Road Safety Team were unable to support the issue of putting up a mirror as there is little evidence that this would improve the situation. It was suggested that the Council contact Mr D. Williams regarding the possibility of “caution” signage before the garage on both sides of the trunk road .

The clerk reported that she had received a map from Powys County Council showing the lights along the Cefn Gorwedd road that were causing concern. It was noted that two were faulty and two had been permanently switched off. A request has been made for the one at the entrance to Dolwen Field to be switched on for the safety of users of the pavilion at night.

Action :

Clerk to revisit garage re; proposal to put up mirror as a private concern.

Clerk to write to Dean Williams outlining issue and ask for advice on signage.

6 .Feedback from Councillors.

6.1 Bromsgrove Hall

Cllr Van Rees reported that there had been little change in the issue regarding Bromsgrove Hall since the turmoil at County Council. The issue still needs sorting out. Meanwhile the Town Council were concerned that as yet they have not paid the Revenue Grant which Cllr Van Rees usually requests. Cllr Van Rees assured Council members that Ysgol Dolafon was not suffering financially as a result of this unresolved issue. Cllr Rowlands proposed we keep this grant until such time as the issue is resolved at County level. Cllr James seconded this proposal suggesting it may aid progress in getting the matter resolved .

6.2 World Alternative Games

Cllr Hodges reported on the WAG meeting recently held.

- Brochures were in the process of being translated into Welsh – they would be available soon and would be in the same format as last time (an A4 glossy brochure outlining events and venues of the games).
- Sponsors are still needed and the committee are continuing to explore opportunities.
- Capitol Radio Cardiff could possibly help with marketing the event. A member of the committee is to meet with Capitol Radio.
- Audited accounts are available at Company House where they are registered. These are the same accounts presented to the Council in December but they contain little detailed information. Councillors are invited to talk to the WAG committee if more information is required.

Cllr Lambkin said that it could reflect badly on the town if more detailed accounts are not available. It was suggested that the Mayor and Cllr. Lambkin accept the invitation to attend a meeting with members of the WAG committee. This was agreed.

Action Cllr Rowlands to make contact with the WAG committee.to arrange for a meeting.

6.3 Other Issues

Cllr Rowlands reminded Council members of the date of the next PACT surgery as 1st February as originally planned.

Cllr Jones reported events surrounding the development of the “Snack Attack” property. The owners have not sought planning permission and are now required to apply for such within the next fortnight. In the meantime the owner has to apply to regularise what he has already done. Concern was expressed that there appeared to be little consistency in the Planning Department’s approach as previous attempts to alter shop frontages along the high street had been subject to strict regulations because they were Victorian and considered of historical value. This has not happened on this occasion.

7.Planning

No planning issues were brought to the table.

8.Twinning

Cllr Rowlands reported that he had attended the recent Twinning meeting. The Twinning Committee are in the process of deciding dates for the exchange in the summer, possibly towards the end of July.

Cllr Rowlands had asked Mr Bryn.Davies if he would be able to lead this year’s Brian Watkins Memorial walk and Mr Davies had responded that he would be pleased to do it. All Council members were happy for this to happen .It was suggested that monies raised from this year’s walk could go to the Twinning Association. Mrs Margaret Watkins had approved this proposal.

The clerk reported that the £200.00 cheque had been re-issued to the Twinning Association.

9.Services

9.1 Green Bring Site

This issue had been discussed in the meeting with Mr I Harris at the beginning of the meeting.

9.2 Riverside Toilets

Information was shared regarding annual repairs and maintenance costs incurred by PCC amounting to about £1200. These had been provided by Mr A. Knox since the special meeting on the 7th January. Cllr Tonks requested a copy of these as did Cllr Jones.

Information was also given regarding the premium for insurance on the toilet block which was calculated by our insurance company using the information supplied by PCC (i.e. £2,400 per square metre) Assuming the building to be insured for £50,000, the contents for £5,000 and the fitments included as part of the building the quote was £106 per annum attached to the Council's original insurance policy.

A few suggestions were made about the way forward. Cllr Tonks suggested that any management committee formed set themselves up as a charitable trust to exempt them from rates. Cllr Van Rees emphasised the importance of the Town Council ensuring that any management committee formed should have the necessary and adequate insurance cover. Cllr James suggested investigating costs that might be involved in installing slot doors for payment. Cllr Hodges offered her services as a risk assessor as she is currently undergoing risk assessment training and would be qualified to carry out any such assessment. Cllr Rowlands reported that at a Thursday Club function before Christmas attendees had applauded the news that there was a good chance that the public toilets will be kept open.

It was suggested that the Chair make contact with event organisers to request them to arrange a meeting. It was agreed that Cllr Rowlands, Cllr Van Rees and Cllr Hodges represent the Council at the meeting.

Action . Cllr Rowlands to make contact with event organisers.

10. Open Spaces

10.1 Dolwen fields/ Play Area

10.1.1 LWParc

It was reported that work had recommenced after the Christmas break and was now well underway. The project is likely to be finished within the next couple of weeks. Cllr Rowlands encouraged other members of the Council to go and have a look at how it is shaping up.

10.1.2 Pavilion Management Group

A positive response to the second questionnaire was recorded. The PMG is now working on a proposal to have for a new path made around the perimeter of Dolwen Field for use by walkers, runners/joggers and cyclists. Possibilities for installing outdoor exercise equipment and lighting are also to be investigated should costs allow, Sports Wales is a potential donor. The Queen Elizabeth Trust was mentioned as another possible source of funding.

10.2 Town Green and Square

10.2.1 Nectar Trees

The clerk reported that Cllr Rowlands and Mr C Dodds had planted 6 fruit trees behind the pavilion site and Cllr Lambkin reported that three fruit trees had been planted in Abergwesyn Hall grounds. Cllr Rowlands thanked the clerk for pursuing this initiative.

10.2.2 Riverbank Update

Cllr Tonks provided Council members with an update on the feasibility study being undertaken to investigate possible improvements to the appearance of the river bank. A draft report from the consultants had been discussed by the Gardening Club Committee. The Committee had certain reservations but were now waiting for the final report. Cllr Rowlands suggested bringing the final recommendations to the March meeting once comments from other interested parties had been received. The Chair thanked Cllr Tonks for his report.

11. Correspondence

Item 3.3 From Powys County Council re; Village Hall Annual Grant Scheme (form to fill in with contact details etc.).

Item 3.3 From Powys County Council re; Precept for 2014/2015 (form to fill in).

Item 5 Letter and map regarding lighting on Cefn Gorwedd Road.

Item 6.3 G-mail from Susie Abson re; "Snack Attack" property.

Item 11.1 g-mail via Cllr Lambkin from David Gaukroger regarding the Old Vicarage at Abergwesyn.

Action : Clerk to write to Susie Abson re: Vicarage

Item 11.2 Letter from Edwina Hart regarding letters sent about the Wales Tourism Initiative.

Action: Clerk to send e-mail to National Resources Wales expressing continued concern about the future of the Cambrian Tourist Initiative

Clerk to write to Mr Peter Davies inviting him to March council Meeting

Item 11.3 Christmas greeting card from Cesky Krumlov.

Item 11.4 Notification of Feed in Tariff charges from electricity company SSE.

Item 11.5 Questionnaire for Council to fill in from Sweden regarding "Sustainable Land Use Development".

Action; Cllr Hodges to complete questionnaire on behalf of the Council.

Item 11.6 Pack from Powys County Council –consultation.

Item 11.7 A message was received via Cllr Lambkin from Mrs Steph Power from Abergwesyn thanking those concerned with sorting out the flooding problem above Allt yr Hebog

12. Miscellaneous

Cllr Rowlands informed members of the coffee morning in Victoria Hall on the 1st March to be organised by the Heritage and Arts Centre at which children from Ysgol Dolafon will perform in Welsh costume.

He also reminded members of the "raffle prizes" still in his possession from the opening of the pavilion..Cllr Van Rees proposed that they be distributed to other groups as needs arise at the discretion of the Chair.

Cllr James sought clarification of the damping grant for public toilets that communities had taken over. He was informed that the damping grants were historical. The grant available on an annual basis from PCC for the "take over" of the Riverside Public toilets would be £1,500.

Cllr Jones raised the issue of the gas supply in Llanwrtyd Wells which is LPG gas. The original agreement to maintain costs alongside charges for natural gas was for 25years. Cllr Jones thought this term was coming to an end and suggested we find out if Llanwrtyd is now paying more for gas than it should. Cllr James seconded by saying that Llanwrtyd had a right to have the same tariff for LPG as natural gas.

Action

Clerk to investigate with support from Cllr Jones.

Cllr Van Rees outlined proposals for the improvements to the War Memorial Institute. Architect plans had been approved by Cy Griffiths of PC Built Heritage. Cllr Van Rees raised the matter of the Trusteeship possibly being handed over to the Town Council. Plans are to convert the first floor into apartments while converting the bottom floor for use by the Town Council and other organisations for meetings etc.

Cllr Lambkin queried whether the repair of the sign for Hafren Wells was being done.

Action:

Clerk to make contact with C. Dodds to repair.