

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March at 7:00pm in the Council Chambers of the War Memorial Institute in Llanwrtyd Wells.**

**Present: Cllrs ;** J. J. Rowlands, L. Haines, R. Thomas, P. Tonks, T. Van Rees, A. Jones, G. J. Rowlands, P. James, N. Price, B. Hodges, P. Lambkin

**Visiting speaker:** Mr N. Venti (Cambrian Mountains Initiative Project Officer at Countryside Council for Wales )

**Observers:** 2

**In attendance:** Mrs L. E. Ball (Clerk and RFO)

**The meeting commenced at 7:00pm**

The Chair introduced and welcomed Mr Venti to the meeting. Mr Venti outlined the current structure of the organisation and distributed a paper "Cambrian Mountain Initiative-looking to the future which outlined the way forward. He explained the New Community Interest Company (CIC) which will provide a mechanism for the Cambrian Mountain Initiative to develop income streams. He explained that Powys and other county councils would need to put a development plan together for the next six years because they will be expected to drive the funding. All agreed that the intentions of the group were welcome but the common feeling was that as yet the organisation does not have the mechanisms in place to actually "do" anything constructive though they may in the future. Mr Venti acknowledged this.

Cllr Van Rees arrived at 7.20pm. Cllr James raised the issue of having attended several consultation meetings but receiving no feedback from those meetings. He felt that this was not helpful and did nothing to enhance the credibility of the organisation. Mr Venti accepted this as a fault on their part. Cllr Van Rees outlined his concerns with regard to the hill farmers and the "single farm payment", observing that this could see the demise of hill farmers in the area. He questioned where the initiative was going and what it was doing at ground level. He informed Councillors that he would like to set up a meeting of representatives of the "Necklace" Towns highlighted by the organisation and requested that Mr Venti provide him with contact details for all in order to do this. Mr Venti agreed he would provide contact information.

The Chair thanked Mr Venti for his input. Mr Venti left the meeting at 7.45pm.

**1 Apologies for Absences**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Minutes of the Last meeting.**

Minutes of the meeting of February 19<sup>th</sup> were scrutinised. There were no amendments to the minutes. Cllr Thomas proposed the minutes as accurate, seconded by Cllr. James.

**3. Finance**

The Clerk presented the balance sheet for the period 19/02/2014-18/03/2014. They were approved as accurate by Cllr James and seconded by Cllr T. Van Rees. The budget statement up to the 19<sup>th</sup> of March was briefly discussed with the Chair highlighting overspends and underspends. The end of year budget will be discussed more fully at the next meeting.

**4. Councillor Protocol**

The Chair outlined the need for ensuring appropriate procedures are followed when an issue is brought to the attention of an individual Councillor. Cllr Tonks voiced his concerns regarding this matter and the lack of guidelines. After some discussion the overriding advice that emerged was that Councillors are under the jurisdiction of the Mayor in Office and as such have a responsibility to inform him/herself, the Clerk or the Deputy Mayor of any action to be taken. In ideal circumstances the Councillor should make contact with the Clerk who can then refer to the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor. In cases where emergency action might need to be taken, and there is no time to refer the matter to the Clerk or Mayor, then the Councillor should use his or her initiative in dealing with the issue but must then as a matter of urgency inform the Clerk or Mayor of the action that has been taken. Cllr Van Rees urged that common sense prevail. Cllr James explained that it was important that the Council is seen to be working together as a team.

**5. Anti-social Behaviour**

The Clerk read a communication from Mr P Morris of Carmarthenshire County Council regarding fly tipping on the Sugar Loaf. The letter addressed the issues of concern and stated that Carmarthenshire Council are aware of the situation which is being monitored and investigated closely. If any more tipping occurs he asked to be informed as soon as possible.

No other incidents of anti-social behaviour were reported.

## **6. Traffic Calming**

Cllr. J. Rowlands reported that he had spoken again with Mr Dean who informed him that all road signs have been made for both inside and outside the town but the Gateway signs needed to be redone. He assured Cllr J. Rowlands that all signage for the Town would be in place by the end of the financial year..

## **7. Feedback from Councillors**

Cllr Lambkin Informed the meeting that she is currently not receiving e-mails. She will inform all when she is back on line.

### **7.1 WAG**

Cllr Hodges reported to the meeting issues relating to the World Alternative Games:

- Finances; Cllr Hodges reported that if any member would like to see copies of the financial accounts they should approach the WAG Committee. Cllr Hodges to e-mail answers to questions relating to the accounts posed by Cllr J. Rowlands. When these have been received Cllr J. Rowlands will e-mail a copy of the accounts and comments to all Councillors. Cllr James proposed that the Chairman thanks the Committee for their cooperation and explains that the Council's main concern was simply to ensure transparency.  
**Action:** Cllr J. Rowlands to talk to WAG Committee.
- Work is still ongoing with regard securing funding for the Games this year. The committee have approached Powys County Council for funding .Cllr Van Rees reported that a letter had been received from Mr G. Green requesting such funding.
- Prices for events have been finalised and the brochure completed. It is hoped to have some famous faces to open and promote the Games this year.
- Cllr Hodges reported that it was Sport Relief Mile on Sunday and invited members to volunteer. Cllr Hodges is to start the event.

### **7.2 Other Issues**

Cllr Haines reported that she had spoken to a local resident regarding parking close to the garage. Whilst the resident is happy to move the vehicle back as far as is possible she is reluctant to move it out of sight due to the possibility of damage.

## **8 Mayor/ Deputy Mayor**

Cllr J. Rowlands reminded Councillors that in two months' time the issue of electing a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor would need to be addressed. He asked all Councillors to give due consideration to the matter.

## **9.Planning**

No planning applications were brought to the meeting.

Snack Attack: The Clerk reported that she had initially spoken to Ms D. Hurley(CPS-Development Officer) She reported that no planning application had been received despite her giving the owners two weeks to do so and would follow this up. Should work start that appears to need planning permission an enforcement order can be applied.

The Clerk read a letter received from Ms Hurley via g-mail outlining the current position with regard this property in which she noted that. "Conversion of the ground floor from commercial use to residential accommodation would require planning consent". Cllr Price had also spoken to officers at Powys County Council and reported that officers are endeavouring to arrange another site meeting with the owner but as yet have been unsuccessful in doing so. Cllr Price noted that despite the windows being boarded up the owners had done nothing yet to infringe planning regulations. Officers are aware of the situation. Cllr Price proposed that the Town Council continues to monitor the situation.

Action: Clerk to keep in touch with Planning Department

## **10. Twinning**

Cllr J. Rowlands reported that the visit to Meriel is to go ahead from 20-23<sup>rd</sup> June. He and his wife were considering attending. Council members were happy for him to attend on behalf of the Council. He requested that Councillors consider what could be taken to Meriel as a gift.

## **11.Services**

### **11.1 Green Bring Site**

Cllr Van Rees reported that he would now make contact with Mr Harris, who had been away, regarding communication with the Welsh Trunk Road Agency as to the suitability of the site at Cwrt-y Cadno.

### **11.2 Riverside Toilets**

The Clerk outlined her visit to Welshpool Council where she had spoken to the Clerk Mr. R Robinson about their take-over of the Public Toilets.

The key messages were:

- Negotiate with PCC to ensure the Toilets are in good condition before hand over.

- Set up a company to run the toilets (if it has a revenue of less than £6000 they will not pay rates).
- Consider a contingency fund for repairs
- Consider the safety of disabled users (they need access to support should an emergency arise)
- Monitor all service charges carefully and negotiate with providers for best deal.
- Consider signage outlining who owns property and opening and closing times.
- Contingency fund needed for future refurbishments.
- Ensure all documents are available and policies in place before taking over- electrical testing etc.
- Consider sensor lighting

The Clerk outlined the position of Llandovery toilets. They are managed by a private company who are contracted by Carmarthenshire Council.

The issue of the Abergwesyn Grant was raised and the Clerk outlined the response from Mr. Gaukroger regarding this issue. Cllr Van Rees suggested that the Council write to the Abergwesyn Committee and ask for a copy of their accounts.

## **12. Open Spaces**

### **12.1 Dolwen Field/Play area.**

The Clerk outlined the position regarding the completion of the children's play area and the AFLW grant. The last claim to AFLW has been submitted and we have retained half the monies from the final invoice from Mr Stevenson to be paid on completion of the project. The Clerk would like it minuted that Mr Dobbins at ALFW has been very supportive of the process from beginning to end.

### **12.2 Grass Cutting –Tenders and Quotes**

The Clerk reported that she had received a quote from Mr A. Croker regarding the cutting of the Town Green and the river bank and children's play area in Dolwen Field, also a quote from Powys County Council for the continued ground maintenance of Dolwen Field.

With regard the first quote Councillors felt it important that we have evidence of public liability insurance and accident policy. Cllr Price proposed we accept the quote for the Town Green on this basis, that Mr.Croker would be solely responsible for any work carried out and that the Council would not be liable for any personal injury or accident to a member of the public. Cllr James seconded this proposal.

After much debate regarding the quote from PCC it was felt that the Council should write to Powys outlining our concerns about last year's contract and request a quote for the grass to be cut three times a month rather than on the 7-10 days as outlined in the letter, as last year they had not always adhered to this with result that a large amount of dead grass remained lying on the field..

Cllr Price proposed that we accept Powys County Council as the contractor, subject to the above being satisfactorily resolved, as they have the relevant machinery to cut such a large area and have the necessary safeguarding policies in place. Cllr Hodges seconded this proposal.

The issue of maintaining the area behind the Pavilion was raised as it has become overgrown. Cllr Haines questioned when it had last been cut and asked that consideration be made of any wildlife habitats that may now be in existence on this site.

**Actions:** The Clerk to write to Mr Croker outlining the terms and conditions and accepting his quote for the Town Green. Cllr J. Rowlands to meet with him at Dolwen Field when work on the play area has been completed to discuss what needs to be done at Dolwen Field and to ask him for a new quote.

### **12.3 Running Path**

Five letters and specifications inviting tenders for this work were sent at the end of February with March 19<sup>th</sup> as the closing date. One quote has been received.

**Action:** . Cllr Price to follow up with the other four.

## **13. Town Square and Green**

Cllr. James reported that the light on the fountain in the square has now been repaired by Mr. D. Morris and submitted his invoice for payment. The Chairman thanked Cllr James for his swift action in getting the job done.

### **13.1 Riverbank Feasibility Study**

A summary of the final draft of the feasibility study had been sent to all Councillors before the meeting and Cllr. J. Rowlands invited comments about the study.

Cllr Price emphasised the issue with ownership and noted that there would be substantial maintenance costs.

Cllr. J. Rowlands said that he had written to Mr I. Harris to ask him whom he should approach to ask what responsibilities PCC had for the river bank .Cllr Jones raised the problem of management and liability and felt it would be a very costly project. Cllr James raised the issue of river dredging stating that when this was done the debris was placed along that bank. The general consensus was that it was a nice scheme and would improve the look of the river bank but that many questions and concerns still needed resolving.

Ms J. Walsby , Chairman of the Gardening Club, was invited to summarised their position.

- It was felt it would improve the look of the river from the Town Green
- It could make it more usable
- She suggested a grass path rather than the recommended cinder path for sustainability.
- The same concerns regarding ownership and liability had been raised by the Gardening Club
- The Club were not in a position to offer any funding for the project and therefore funding would need to be sought
- A bat survey would be needed
- Mr H. Davies was amenable to having the trees in the copse trimmed.
- Natural Resources Wales could possibly be approached to tidy up the area and she would pursue this issue.

Cllr J. Rowlands requested that if the Gardening Club wished to pursue the project that the Council be kept informed of developments..

#### **14. Correspondence**

Cllr. Tonks asked the Clerk if she had written to a local resident regarding a blocked drain in Alexander Road. The Clerk responded that the matter had been referred to the Chair for discussion at the meeting. After further discussion it was felt that the member of the public concerned should make contact with her neighbour with regard to the running water and blockage. It was emphasised that it would have been better for this issue to have been first discussed between the neighbours before being brought to the Council. Cllr Tonks offered to relay this information to the person concerned.

**Action:** Cllr Tonks to speak to resident

**The following correspondence had been received:**

**Item 5** G-mail from Paul Morris environmental enforcement manager re; Sugar loaf Car Park.

Item 11.2 G-mail from Llandovery re; public toilets

Item 12.2 Grounds maintenance quote from PCC for grass cutting.

Item 15.0 Letter from PCC confirming mandatory /discretionary Rate Relief for Victoria Hall.15.

#### **15.Miscellaneous**

Cllr J. Rowlands reminded Councillors that the next PACT surgery would be on the 12<sup>th</sup> April

**Action:** The Clerk to do posters and place them in Town.

Cllr Jones enquired about the procedure and costs of a private group hiring the camping facilities on Dolwen Field. Cllr J. Rowlands outlined the charges and requested that the Clerk send a booking form to Cllr Jones.

**Action:** Clerk to send Cllr Jones the relevant booking forms.

Cllr G. Rowlands thanked members for their kind wishes after her recent injury. Members welcomed her back.

Cllr Price reported that there was a new infestation of moles and badgers in the Cemetery on Dol-y-Coed Road and proposed that the Council inform Mr I Harris

**Action:** Clerk to make contact with Mr I Harris with the view to remedying the problem.

Cllr Hodges raised the issue of erecting a flag pole and Welsh flag somewhere on the Town Square. She offered to investigate costs. Members agreed.

**Action:** Cllr Hodges to investigate the feasibility of a flag pole.

Cllr Lambkin enquired whether membership to One Voice Wales had been renewed. The Clerk assured her that this had been done. She also requested an update on the inquiries made regarding the cost and supply of gas to the Town. The Clerk reported that contact had been made with British Gas .The response was that residents of Llanwrtyd Wells were paying the same unit price as ordinary gas at £4.48 per kilowatt. British Gas could not give comparison prices with LPG gas as they no longer give that service. The Clerk was assured that this is a long standing and ongoing arrangement and is not likely to change in the near future.

Cllr. J. Rowlands requested an update on the request for a new Post box. The Clerk's original letter had been sent to Llandrindod Main Office where it had then been redirected to Shrewsbury. As no response had been forthcoming from Shrewsbury the Clerk has rewritten the letter direct to a Mr J. Francis at Shrewsbury with the hope of a swift response.

The meeting closed at 9:50pm

Signed .....

Date.....

Date of next Meeting: Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April

