

Minutes of the Council meeting of the Manafon Community Council held on Wednesday the 23rd November 2016

Present – Chairman Cllr. J. Davies, Vice Chairman Cllr. H. Lewis, Cllrs. R. Benyon, C. Davies, J. Hall, T. Jerman and Clerk L. Stanton.

90. Welcome

Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

91. Apologies for absence (absence forms to be signed off)

There were none.

92. Declaration of interest

No obvious declarations of interest, any which arose during meeting, would be dealt with under that agenda point.

93. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes were discussed in full, it was unanimously agreed that the minutes were an accurate and correct representation of the meeting therefore resolved by all to accept the minutes, proposed by Cllr. R. Benyon seconded by Cllr. J. Hall

94. Matters arising from minutes / Action Points update

82 / 59. (from August minutes) Mud on the road at Dolryrhoel Rock / Llanwyddelan bridge, this is ongoing and down to STW's contractor and is being monitored by the HGSS Supervisor and the PCC Street Works Inspector.

82 / 67. Clerk to continue to pursue Powys CC in respect of the grass areas in Glan Rhiw not getting cut on the schedule suggested by Powys CC, Cllr. Benyon had recently seen the contractor and asked when last cut was, he was informed 3 weeks ago which was not the case.

83. Adoption of revised Model Code of Conduct advertisement cost; Cllr. Jerman queried why Manafon CC cost was so much higher than another local council, £144 versus £73, Clerk had explores possibility of going vis Powys CC as in previous years but they no longer supported councils in this way, Clerk could not comment on what other Council's had achieved but may have been size of advert, Clerk had negotiated a reduction for ours from £144 to £120 plus VAT, format for MCC advert was the same used in previous years but would explore differences and report at next meeting.

87. Training, see under main agenda - budget outline

95. BT Telephone kiosks @ New Mills and Manafon

Clerk informed Council that there had been no response from the community in respect of views on retention of the 2 kiosks. AON insurance had quoted £160 for each to be covered but had strings attached vis a vis maintenance going forward. After some discussion as to the pros and cons Council resolved that as there was no demand from the community it was cost prohibitive and therefore would not be prudent to take them over. The Clerk was asked to establish what the next steps were from Powys planning or BT for their removal as it likely they would quickly become an eye sore and pose potential health and safety issues if just left in situ.

96. Correspondence Updates / General updates from Clerk

Following on from Public Meetings Superfast Broadband/Mobiles, Clerk had been asked to investigate cost of providing Wi-Fi at Village Hall as beneficial to meetings as well as public, Clerk obtained several indications on pricing, the most cost effective was Fleur Telecom 12 month contract £65 plus VAT initial line install approx. 4 week lead time, 2 weeks if ignore 'cooling off' period, thereafter depends on MBS available, 3 prices, up to 8MBS £30.50 pm including line rental plus VAT; up to 17MBS (if/when available in area) £23.50 pm including line rental plus VAT; almost unlimited MBS £35.50 pm including line rental plus VAT. BT would waive line installation costs if taking an Infinity package costs per month variable with upfront costs so need further investigation if we move forward on it, there are many other providers and once Fibre is up and running the packages will all change anyhow probably. Cllr. Hall advised that the Church paid £23 per month with BT and a fixed contract meant installation was free so we may be able to do something similar. It was resolved that this item would be developed once fibre broadband was available and would be referred to the Village Hall Committee by Councillors (J. Davies, H. Lewis, C. Davies) at their next committee meeting.

- a) Elections update - Clerk had been trying to ascertain costs of elections for budgetary purposes, some conflicting information around and hard to project if we do or don't have any vacancies for Councillors, Clerk will pursue for realistic budget setting January.
- b) Recycling - update on the future of the 5 household recycling centres, with regard to responding to the survey, it was more of an individual response than a collective one, the notice had been on notice board and our web site for some time so the community could respond if so desired. Council had no issues with Powys wanting to restructure facilities to save money but did have concerns about the level of fly tipping and ensuing costs that might be a result of a reduction in waste facilities, equally if fly tipping became prevalent, land owners were responsible if it occurs on their land which was also a concern raised, Clerk to raise points with Powys CC.

Various communications received on recycling, Clerk will add to notice boards and web site, mainly to do with removal of cans and plastic bags from community recycling sites, Christmas period collections.

- c) Several requests received for donations – Marie Curie, Eisteddfod, British Red Cross and the CAB, it was resolved to carry over to January meeting for budget purposes and AGM for deciding on causes to be supported under Section 137 permitted expenditure.
- d) Police Precept consultation for 2017/2018 available online ends 4/12/2016 was circulated to members to participate.
- e) Suspension of 'Right to buy', details placed on notice board and web site, discussed in depth, response of the Council is to support the suspension, they are not building as it is, what has happened to the money generated from right to buy scheme previously, doesn't appear to have been utilised to build more affordable housing for people.
- f) Memorials, RBL Poppy appeal members expressed gratitude to Mrs Glenis Benyon for raising £169.91 locally which was up on last year; the District total raised was £2796.44. Cllr. Hall stated that the 2 wreaths for the Memorial were suitable for reusing again at this year's remembrance service.

97. Planning Applications/Updates

No planning updates and no new applications received no further update on proposed development adjacent to Trem Hirnant.

98. Highways matters

Clerks had to remind highways department yet again of outstanding issues, responses had been received and were thus:-

“The progress on the highway matters raised in your previous correspondence email are;

1/ The village sign and 30 mph sign have been fixed .

2/Pot holes at cross lane and up the Glyn were repaired on the 1/11/16

3/Drains below Bronheulog have been cleared.

Still outstanding;

*1/Mud on the road at ** Dolryddelan bridge, this is ongoing and down to STW's contractor and is being monitored by the HGSS Supervisor and the PCC Street Works Inspector*

2/Investigation into the blocked culvert next to the Pantyfrydd sign is still to be arranged and Aled will Action this when resources come available”

(note that we were informed (1) that the speed signage into Manafon from Berriew side had been replaced, clearly they had not so Clerk escalated this point again and received an assurance it would be rectified), ** interpreted to mean Dolryrhoel Rock / Llanwyddelan bridge rock armour work was completed 31/10.

A copy of updated log will be put on website shortly.

New issues – Concerns about the amount of mud left on remaining roads by STW works, as works not entirely complete will defer to next meeting as may be remedied after completion.

99. Reports from meetings / training attended

Cllrs. H. Lewis & R. Benyon attended the recent meeting in Welshpool convened by Glyn Davis MP subject being the restructuring of Powys constituency boundaries.

Public meeting 10th November, attendance very low, very little interest from local community, some interest from residents of Tregynon, a number of councillors attended from other communities including CC. Joy Shearer and Cllr. J. Williams from Meifod, and Cllr. P. Marsh from Betws Cedewain. It was clear that we can only lobby with a degree of public support, however, we will work to the action plan outlined in the minutes of the public meeting but it has to be recognised that we will have limited influence.

100. Financial update from Clerk including expenditure YTD, budget comparison, budget outline 2017/2018, precept, payroll update and payments.

Clerk gave overview of accounts year to date: Expenditure YTD (includes outstanding payments) £920.29 excl. VAT, Bank reconciliation – Current account balance as at 15/11 (last statement) £4237.68, High interest account as at statement date 5/10 £1898.90, total £6136.58, VAT refunds due YTD of £40.17 (reclaimed at end of each financial year), outstanding cheques and payment totalling £170, budget accruals £3217.59 (majority of costs go out in the last quarter), final precept of £1200 payment due from Powys CC January 2017. Forecast against budget – forecast overspend of £765.88 due to higher audit costs, additional Clerks hours, advertisement cost, training cost, travel expenses.

Pension – Clerk confirmed that MCC had an amended staging date from the Pensions Regulator to the 5th December 2016 and she would complete the declaration of compliance on that date (deadline 1st May 2017) and attend to required letter.

Payroll – Clerk additional hours for signing off in November submitted per spread sheet and were approved by all signed by Chairman, YTD up to and including 23rd Nov it amounts to 28 hours, projections for remainder of FY is expected to be around 48 hours. The Clerk offered a suggestion/proposal on a revised payroll agreement going forward and to be considered in time for budget approval. The present contract for the Clerk was inadequate for both the Clerk and Council as the monthly hours contracted were insufficient to get the job done and this resulted in the hourly rate being excessive when compared to the normal pay spines for Clerk's.

One area to be mindful of is the minimum wage and hours worked/remuneration and must ensure this is adhered to by law. The SLCC stipulate that the very minimum hours a Clerk can be paid is 17.5 per month but in reality a Council with one meeting per month the workload hours that constitutes is a minimum 26 hours per month. Currently the Clerk maintains a spreadsheet with any excess hours to be claimed which are advised to Council at each meeting and providing approved are signed off by Chair accordingly and appended to the minutes accordingly.

The solution going forward was to revamp the contract of employment to increase hours and reduce the hourly rate to an annual salary more in line with the National pay spine for Clerks. Council was also to bear in mind that the Clerk had full responsibility for updating and maintaining the web site and if this went externally then we could potentially expect to pay well in excess of £500-£750 per annum for such a facility.

Payments – 3 payments to be approved, Clerk total £170.00 breakdown as follows:

RBL Poppy Appeal - £20 Postage - £6.00 Advertisement County Times £144.00

It was resolved to approve all payments and cheques duly signed, note the RBL Poppy Appeal was signed off before the meeting due to submission date, expenditure approved AGM May, cheques signed by 2 x authorised signatories.

101. Budget proposals 2017/2018 financial year including precept

Clerk provided Council with an outline budget proposal for 2017/2018 ready for discussion/finalisation at the next meeting in January, any adjustments as they arise during the discussion will be incorporated, budget would have to be discussed and approved at the meeting 4th January 2017 in time for precept request to go in.

Initial discussions were related mainly to remuneration for Clerk, election costs, training costs and precept as the main expenditure items.

Outline proposals related to the Clerk's salary, 3 options submitted to Council with a brief explanation from the Clerk along with copies of supporting documents from SLCC, NALC, all for consideration before setting budget at January meeting.

Election costs, in terms of budget setting it was agreed to set at £1600 unless Clerk's investigations throw up a very different figure.

Training may need to be increased as elections may produce new Councillor's in which case some training will be required, given the above the indicative precept figure for 2017/2018 should be increased to £5,500 in the budget proposal for now.

Precept – there is a statutory deadline for approval of the precept at a full council meeting not later than 28th February each year however, most billing authorities ask for the precept to be notified in

January, Powys is usually before or around the 20th, there is no provision for the precept to be increased once notified. It is not lawful to set a precept unless a budget has been set and approved at a full council meeting. This is because the precept is not an arbitrarily figure set by the Council, but is the balancing figure (referred to in legislation as the 'council tax requirement') after taking into account estimated expenditure, other estimated income and any amounts proposed to be taken to or from reserves. If there is the possibility of new services or projects being taken on in next or subsequent years then it is too late once the budget has been approved and the precept set. Although the precept is in law a balancing figure the RFO must be able to advise members on both the absolute amount of the precept that the draft budget will require and the band B & D equivalent for 2017/2018 which is £179.88.

102. Agenda items next meeting

Welcome

Apologies for absence (absence forms to be signed off)

Declaration of interest

Minutes of the last meeting

Matters arising from minutes (advertisement costs, election costs, kiosks, grass cutting, recycling, highways)

Action Points update

Correspondence Updates / General updates from Clerk

Planning Applications/Updates

Highways matters

Reports from meetings / training attended

Budget 2017/2018

Precept 2017/2018

Financial update from Clerk – expenditure YTD, budget comparison, pension & payroll updates, payments due

Agenda items next meeting

Confirmation of date of next meeting/s:

Forward dates for meetings: OVW – 2017 - 24th January; 19th April; 14th June

Manafon CC - 2017 - 4th January; 8th February, 8th March subsequent dates for 2017 are the first Wednesday each month, May / June may be subject to change.

Meeting closed at 2235 and Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance