

## **BETWS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The Annual Meeting of the Community Council will be held as a Hybrid Meeting at **Betws RFC** and virtually on **Starleaf** on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 6:30pm.

The meeting will be held on a remote basis in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 and Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Any member of the public who wishes to attend the meeting as a spectator or who has questions to put to the Councillors contact the Clerk in order for this to be able to take place and the correct procedures to be followed.

Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed prior to the meeting by all members due to the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 Election.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Paul Allchurch, Peter Comley, Carwyn James, Lucy Jones, Mike Jones, Karen McMinn-Davies, Andy Megrath, Lynwen Phillips, Jose Picouto, Dave Stacey, Andrew Williams and Maureen Williams.

Clerk: Angela Brown

The outgoing Chair Jose Picouto welcomed all members to the annual meeting giving a brief speech, as there were new members present due to the recent election on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 an introduction was given by each person.

### **1. Election of Chairperson**

It was proposed by Cllr A Williams and seconded by Cllr L Jones that Cllr Stacey be appointed Chairperson for 2022 – 2023.

This was voted on unanimously by those present.

Cllr Stacey accepted the appointment and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Stacey be appointed Chairperson from 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

### **2. Chairperson's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**

This will be posted to the Clerk.

### **3. Appointment of Vice Chairperson.**

It was proposed by Cllr Lynwen Phillips and seconded by Cllr Picouto that Cllr M Jones be appointed as Vice Chairperson.

This was voted on unanimously by those present.

Cllr M Jones accepted the appointment.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr M Jones be appointed Vice Chairperson from 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

#### **4. Apologies for Absence (to be given to the Clerk prior to the meeting)**

None received.

#### **5. Chairperson's report**

The outgoing Chairperson Councillor Jose Picouto read out his report:

##### **Chair's Annual Report 2021/22**

##### **José Picouto Chair Betws Community Council-May 2021/May 2022**

When I took over the role of Chair of Betws Community Council in May 2021 we were still trying to protect ourselves and our families from Covid19 which meant meetings had to be held "virtually" through Teams, Zoom, Starleaf or the like and I was concerned as to whether we could function effectively as a Council given there was so much to do and achieve.

I needn't have worried because apart from a few connectivity problems attendance was good and as we welcomed new Councillors into the fold moral was high, full of expectations and rearing to go.

The first thing to do was to create an ambience of ownership and responsibility for the various projects we had targeted as "must do", so as such in the first instance we created a Recreation Group Committee headed by Councillor Michael Jones responsible for improvements of all parks including maintenance, assisting the current park keepers, organising volunteer groups such as Friends of Betws and grant applications.

Under the tutelage and drive of Councillor M. Jones this has been a huge success because to date in 2021/22 we have secured two grants that will attract more wildlife to the area. A grant of £86,750.00 for Welsh Government Local Places for Nature Fund from the National Heritage Lottery which will boost biodiversity in Betws Park. Also, a grant from Mynydd Y Betws Windfarm is being used to renew some of the broken play equipment within Maesquarre Playground as well as lots of interest from other groups who want to get involved in the re-generation that is planned for Betws parks including Maesquarre Rd and Heol y Felin.

We also formed a Finance Committee headed by Councillor David Stacey whose first task was to update all policies and system of governance aimed at bringing us up to date with current legislation.

The local Primary School headed by Acting Head Teacher Mr. Chris Morgan accepted our invitation to participate in events and projects that will highlight wellbeing and a sense of belonging and being part of village/community life.

The pupils took centre stage alongside members of the public paying their respects to the fallen on Remembrance Day 2021 which was formally attended by Carmarthenshire's Deputy Lord Lieutenant Mrs. Jayne Picouto representing HM the Queen and County Councillor B. Jones as well as Community Councillors A. Price and L. Lewis and members of the local Clergy and local Constabulary.

Sadly, we mourned the passing of two ex-Councillors, namely Mr. M. John and Mrs. J. Gunter whose significant years of service contributed greatly to the overall success of the Community Council.

It was a real pleasure to recognise the hard work Councillor Andrew Williams who has been at the centre of all things "regeneration" by nominating him to attend Buckingham Palace's Garden Party. The nomination was accepted and will be attending hopefully sometime in 2022 Covid permitting.

Councillor Peter Comley and myself secured a donation of £1900.00 from "Betws in Need" who are a charitable organisation set up years ago with the sole purpose of helping people who are in need in the area. This donation will enable us to purchase two new Defibrillators, one to be placed outside the Primary School and the other outside the Family Centre in Treforis complimenting the one already sited in Betws RFC with another one planned for Tycoch in Maesquarre road. We feel these sites are well positioned sites to help anyone living within the village of Betws.

Looking ahead to the immediate future plans in 2022 the pupils of Betws Primary School will be principal participants in events celebrating the Queen's Jubilee but because of school holidays the dates had to be adjusted to suit their attendance and as such a ceremony will be held on 27th May and conducted by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire, County Councillor and Community Councillor as well as the pupils and Staff and members of the public. The ceremony will consist of the planting of a willow tree with an ER inscription at its base entirely designed by the pupils donated to the Park by my wife and I in honour of our late son Alexander followed by a "Teddy Bears" picnic organised and funded by the school.

Further more, in Heol Y Felin's playing field another ceremony will take place consisting of a more elaborate Jubilee tribute entirely designed by the pupils of Betws Primary School.

As I am coming to the end of my year in office as Chair I would like to thank the Clerk Angela Brown for her assistance and vigilance making sure we all discharge our various duties as well as especial thanks to Vice Chairs L. Phillips and D. Stacey and to all my fellow Councillors for their support and incredibly hard work. A great deal has been achieved already and we should all be proud of that but let us not rest in our laurels and continue to work for and improve the Community we chose to serve.

José Picouto Chair Betws Community Council 2021/22

## 6. Annual Report

### **Betws Community Council Annual Report** **1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

#### **The Council**

The Council comprises of one ward which is represented by 12 Councillors.

Your Councillors are:

Jose Picouto (Chairperson)  
Dave Stacey (Vice Chairperson)  
Betsan Jones  
Lucy Jones  
Lynwen Phillips  
Delyth Richards  
Loreen Lewis  
Andy Megrath  
Mike Jones  
Andrew Williams  
Peter Comley  
Annette Price

The Council employs a part-time Clerk Angela Brown

#### **The Community**

Betws is a community that is near Ammanford in Carmarthenshire nestled between the River Amman on the Northern side and on the Southern side it meets the Western end of the Black Mountain which is known as Betws Mountain.

The meaning of the name Betws is Bede House/Alms House/Prayer House and originates from the word Bed-Hus an Anglo-Saxon word. In Welsh it means Chapel.

The ward is currently served by one County Councillor – Betsan Wyn Jones – Plaid Cymru.

The Community Council was set up in 1980.

The eligible electorate for Betws in 2022 is 1,802.

#### **Council Objectives**

The Councillors for Betws are in the lower tier of local government and are best placed to see the real issues/concerns that arise within communities as they are often the first point of contact.

Betws Community Council has a good working relationship with the County Councillor for the ward.

The local Police Community Support Officer attends the monthly Community Council meetings where concerns can be raised, advice given and a monthly update on the quantity of local crimes are passed to the Council.

## **Council Priorities**

To safely and effectively manage the Heol Y Felin area which is held in Trust on behalf of the residents of Betws. The area comprises of the Playground, Green along with the RFC and the Car Park which is leased to Betws RFC where the Council work together to ensure compliance under the terms of the lease and the original deeds and conveyances.

To safely manage and improve Betws Park and Maesquarre Playground which are asset transfers from Carmarthenshire County Council.

To manage effectively the Council Finances and Budget complying with Governance and Audit requirements.

To represent the Betws electorate in partnership with the local County Councillor.

To work with the community, local groups, organisations, businesses and other stakeholders to ensure improvements can be made within the village to benefit the residents of Betws as a whole.

To comply with the requirements as set out in the Welsh Government Local Council Toolkit to ensure compliance in the running of the Council and its policies and procedures.

To ensure the continuous professional development of both the Proper Officer and Councillors in order to deliver their roles as office holders.

To work towards incorporating and considering the seven well-being goals as set by the Welsh Government Act 2015 into decisions and any funding applications made by the Council:

1. A more prosperous Wales - The Council donate to local groups primarily throughout the year to ensure they are supported. The *Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)* shows more detail for Betws which is ranked 1026 out of 1909 Lower Super Output Area (LSOAs) in Wales, which places it among the 50% least deprived overall. However, it is ranked as 30-50% most deprived with regards to Employment and Education.  
<https://wimd.gov.wales/isoa/w01000627?lang=en>
2. A resilient Wales - The biodiversity within the ward is being enhanced where possible along with the protection of the flora and fauna such as the Royal Ferns which grow in the area when applying for funding and when planning applications are submitted. The mowing practices and type of planting within Betws Park is being changed to improve biodiversity and pollinators.
3. A Healthier Wales – The Council are working towards installing 3 more defibrillators within the village, at Betws Primary School, the Family Centre and Ty Coch. The two Playgrounds are regularly inspected by a qualified contractor and the Recreation areas are regularly inspected by your local Councillors. An independent annual inspection is carried out in the playgrounds
4. A more equal Wales – The Council works with the Public Rights of Way Department of the County Council, the County Councillor and the local walking group to ensure local footpaths are maintained.

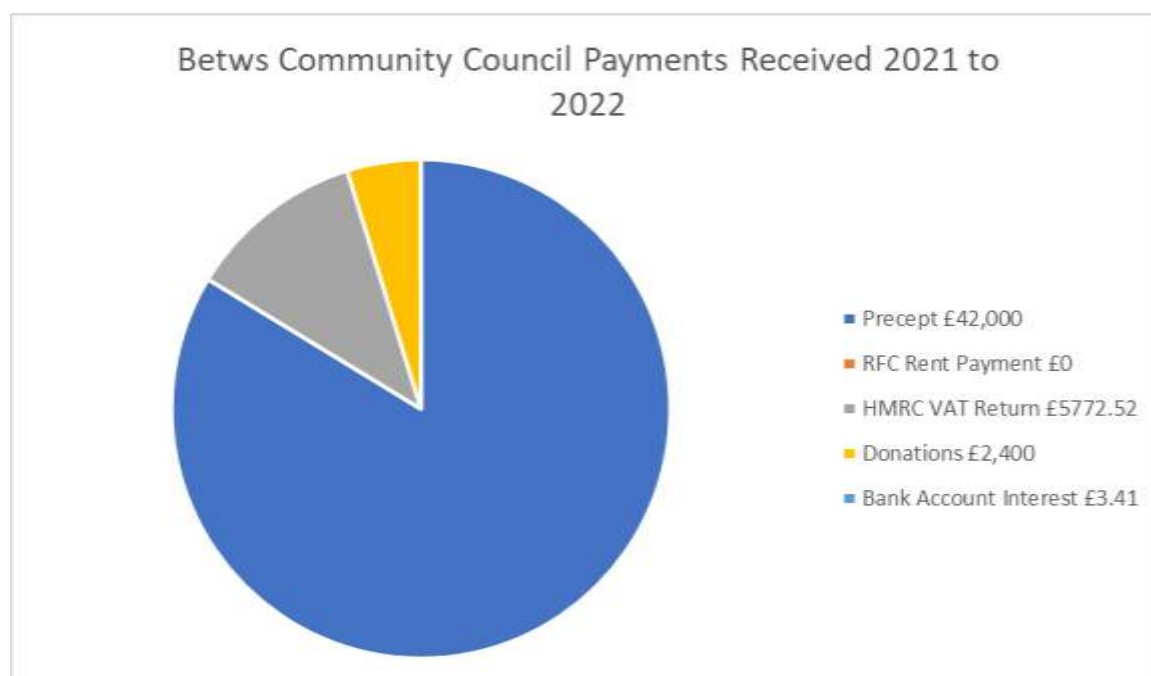
5. A Wales of Cohesive Communities – The Council work with the County Councillor and Safer Routes in Communities to ensure the roads within Betws are safe.
6. A Wales of Vibrant Culture and thriving Welsh language – The Council supports the Eisteddfod and ensures it has bilingual documents where possible.
7. A globally responsible Wales - To enhance biodiversity and minimise effects on climate change within the ward and in Council practices. The Council has in conjunction with Carmarthenshire County Council renewed the street lighting to LED lights, the Councillors have moved to paperless working where possible.

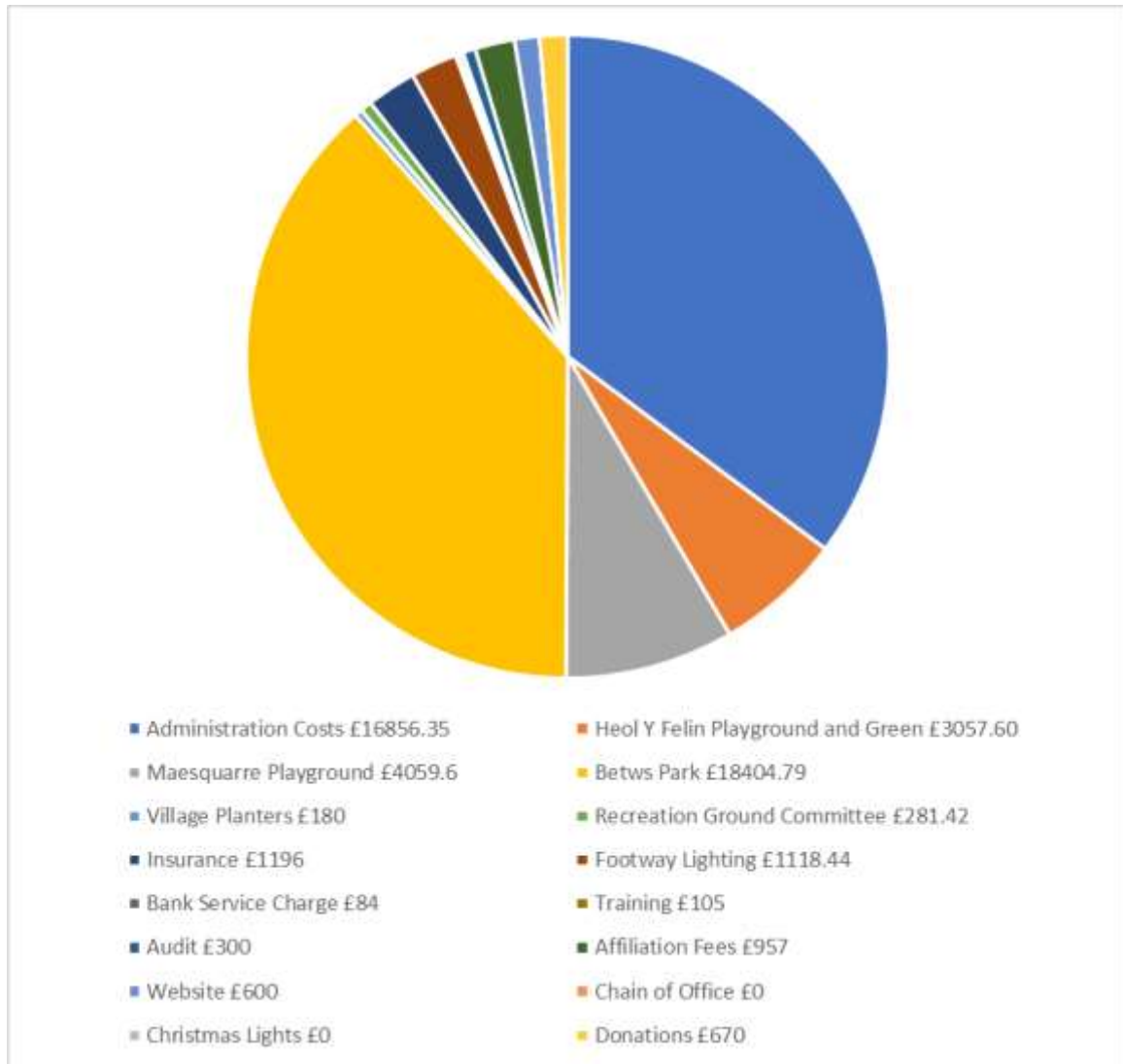
## **Finance**

The Precept for 2022/2023 is £47,000 and apart from that the Council gain income from the rent paid by Betws RFC under the Terms of their Lease at £1,000 per annum. This payment goes towards the upkeep of the Heol Y Felin area which is held in Trust. The precept amount currently does not meet the expenditure for the Council due to the Asset Transfers that have been taken on during this term of office. The precept will need to be increased annually in order to meet the expenditure for management of the areas and to build up a sinking fund in order to replace the equipment and any other costs which become evident in the maintenance of the recreation areas.

The other income comes via grant funding and donations when given to the Council.

The Running costs for the Community Council are as follows:





The Community Council should hold in its useable reserves 3 – 12 months expenditure also grant funding received, donations given for specific items, money given under the Asset Transfer process and any Section 106 money received as well as fund to replace any of the fixed assets held under the terms of the leases from Carmarthenshire County Council for Betws Park and Maesquarre Playground.

In its unusable reserves it should have money for previous Clerks pensions (amount unknown) and an amount to cover legal fees for the ongoing issues with the Heol Y Felin land held in Trust and a fund to cover the cost of replacing equipment at Heol Y Felin Playground and any other maintenance that may be required.

### **Achievements during the 2017 – 2022 term of office**

1. Betws Park taken over as an Asset Transfer from CCC
2. Maesquarre Playground taken over as an Asset Transfer from CCC June 2019
3. Safer Routes in Communities implemented in conjunction with Carmarthenshire County Council:
  - a) A pavement between Parc Penrhiw and Treforis on the north-east side of Betws Road has been installed for the safety of walkers from those areas of the village.

- b) Vertical measures/road humps have been placed on either side of Betws County Primary School (one by Coopers Arms and one by St David's Church) on Betws Road to improve safety.
  - c) Improved crossing points have been implemented at 2 locations on Park Street and on either side of Foundry Road (A474) however more safety measures are needed.
  - d) Cycle storage has been placed within Betws Primary School, Ysgol Gymraeg, Margaret Street, Ammanford and a raised plateau and tactile crossing outside Ammanford Infant School, Walters
4. Local Places for Nature Butterfly Garden grant in Betws Park 2020
  5. New waiting restrictions on Heol Y Felin/Colonel Road agreed with Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Dept. and waiting to be implemented.
  6. New bin in Betws Park
  7. New Life Buoy Cabinet installed in conjunction with Carmarthenshire Water Safety Partnership and TRJ
  8. Graffiti removed by 2 local businesses Griffiths Bros and South Wales Pressure Washing Ltd from the historic Victorian Summer House and other areas within Betws Park.
  9. Volunteer group for Betws Park set back up to improve the park.
  10. A Community Survey was conducted during 2020.
  11. Mynydd Y Betws Windfarm Grant for some new playground equipment in Maesquarre Playground 2021
  12. Betws Park National Heritage Lottery and Welsh Govt Local Places for Nature Grant 2022
  13. Clerk completed ILCA training 2020? Need to check date and Clerk commenced CILCA training March 2022 as part of her continuous professional development.
  14. Councillors have received training via One Voice Wales to assist them in carrying out their roles during their term of office.
  15. Website upgraded.
  16. Section 6 Biodiversity of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty for the village was drawn up as per regulations in 2019 and will be reviewed at least every 3 years.
  17. New LED lighting replaced on the street lighting within Betws to help reduce their carbon footprint which was installed by Carmarthenshire County Council and the cost is being repaid annually until 2028/2029.
  18. Paperless system introduced for the Councillors no longer posting out agenda and papers.
  19. Council took part in a Pilot Project run by the Welsh Government in conjunction with One Voice Wales to ensure that the Council has the correct policies and procedures in place – work is in progress to ensure full compliance.
  20. Trees with the disease Ash Die Back felled in Betws Park and Heol Y Felin with the programme of work still ongoing in Betws Park.
  21. Donations given to local causes including the Food bank.
  22. Coronavirus – Virtual meetings set up so that Council business could continue, Welsh Gov legislation implemented with regard to this and hybrid meetings (face to face only meetings cannot be held without giving

the option for virtual attendance and it is each person's choice on how they attend).

23. Defibrillators – proposed extra 3 within the village at Betws Primary School and the Family Centre and a 3<sup>rd</sup> at Ty Coch when the RFC get their new defibrillator from the RFU.
24. Donations received from Dr John Dorian Evans for a memorial bench in Maesquarre Playground to commemorate the lives lost in the mines at Betws, £1900 donation from Betws In Need for 2 Defibrillators and £100 for the CCTV from Endurance Arena Fibre, Heol Y Felin.

### **Future planning for the next term 2022 – 2027 and beyond.**

1. Christmas Lights for the village and Recreation Grounds
2. New larger notice boards - one to be placed at Heol Y Felin as it is Community Land (facing the RFC or Playground) so that more information for the Community can be placed upon the boards as part of RFC being the Community Hub and discharging its duties for Community Groups.
3. Heol Y Felin Green to consider more seating and goal posts.
4. Picnic Benches for various sites around the village where appropriate such as viewing area at top of Waun Ddwfn Road, the land above the Maesquarre Development owned by TRJ who would add a second picnic bench if the Community Council placed one at site.

Councillor A Williams proposed to approve the annual report and publish on the community council website this was seconded by Councillor Megrath.

This was voted on unanimously by those present.

### **7. Appointment of members to Committees.**

<b><u>BETWS COMMUNITY COUNCIL 2022/2023</u></b>	
<b>CHAIR</b>	Cllr Dave Stacey
<b>VICE-CHAIR</b>	Cllr Mike Jones
<b><u>COMMITTEES</u></b>	
<b>18-May-22</b>	A committee must have a minimum of 3 Cllrs plus the Chair or Vice Chair who can be Ex-officio members of committees and sub-committees. Ex-officio is a Latin term meaning by virtue of office or position. Ex-officio members of committees, therefore, are persons who are members by virtue of the position that they hold. N.B. A committee cannot comprise of all Councillors as would be Full Council and not a committee.
<b>Finance and Staffing</b>	Chair and Vice Chair, Cllrs. Dave Stacey, Lucy Jones, Lynwen Phillips and Carwyn James

<b>Recreation Grounds and Open Spaces</b> Betws Park, Heol Y Felin and Maesquarre Playgrounds	Chair and Vice Chair, Cllrs. Mike Jones, Andrew Williams, Lynwen Phillips and Paul Allchurch
<b>Events</b>	Chair and Vice Chair, Cllrs. Jose Picouto, Andy Megrath, Paul Allchurch and Karen McMinn-Davies

**8. Appointment of representatives to serve on outside bodies.**

**REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

<b>BETWS FAMILY CENTRE</b>	Karen McMinn-Davies (dual hatted role as is Treasurer)
<b>CAB</b>	Paul Allchurch
<b>ONE VOICE WALES</b>	Dave Stacey
<b>SCHOOL GOVERNOR</b>	Maureen Williams
<b>BETWS RFC CHECKS AS PER LEASE</b>	Karen McMinn-Davies and Lynwen Phillips
<b>AMMAN VALLEY GROUP</b>	deferred
<b>A'FORD TWINNING ASSOC.</b>	deferred
<b>LOCAL HEALTH BOARD</b>	deferred

**9. 3 x Signatories for the Council bank accounts to be agreed.** (one being the Chair and one the lead for the Finance Committee plus one other. Clerk/RFO is also a signatory).

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors Stacey, L Jones and Picouto would be the new signatories and that Councillor McMinn-Davies will periodically check the

Council Finances as per Financial Regulations. The relevant application forms will be completed in due course, the Clerk will arrange for this to be actioned.

**10. To consider Training Plan for Councillors and Proper Officer (Clerk/RFO) to be published by 5 November 2022 as per requirements of Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.**

The layout of the draft training plan was discussed and suggestions made to modify. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk make the changes.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 4 new Councillors would attend OVW Code of Conduct Training. The Clerk will contact them with the available dates.

**11. Declaration of Interest required from each Councillor as it needs publishing within 28 days of commencement of office and be placed on the website.**

After discussion and explanations, it was **RESOLVED** that members would email the Clerk with their Declaration of Interests, nil responses are also required. Should member find during the course of a meeting that they have an interest they need to declare then they are to do so at that time.

The Clerk informed members that a power point presentation giving guidance for members to consider whether or not they have any interests to declare was sent for their perusal in preparation for this meeting to ensure understanding.

**12. Public Questions Representations**

No members of the public were present.

**Meeting closed at 19:41.**