

# **BETWS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The monthly meeting of Betws Community Council was held virtually on Skype on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting was held on a remote basis in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. Betsan Jones (Chairperson), Andrew Williams, Delyth Richards, Mike Jones, Peter Comley, Andrew Megrath, Loreen Lewis, Lynwen Phillips, Dave Stacey and Jose Picouto.

County Councillor: Betsan Jones

Clerk - Miss Angela Brown

The Chair informed members to ensure that they muted their microphones until they were invited to speak and to also use the raise your hand facility when wanting to speak. Some members asked for clarification on how this was done and this was explained to them.

## **1. New Community Councillors**

The Chair welcomed the 4 new Councillors who in turn each read out and signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

## **2. Apologies**

Cllr L Jones – personal commitments and had emailed the Clerk and Cllr Price – ill health whose apologies had not been received by the Clerk but were passed on by Cllr Lewis.

## **3. Declaration by Members of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

County Councillor B Jones declared an interest in item No 6 due to her being both a Community and County Councillor and the areas are owned by Carmarthenshire County Council and leased by Betws Community Council.

## **4. To Confirm and Sign the Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Correction required as on Vacancy 1 there was 1 Abstension and this had not been entered.

Councillor Picouto proposed and Councillor Lewis seconded and resolved that the minutes of the previous Council meeting be accepted as a true record.

## **5. Virtual Meeting Platforms were discussed as Skype is being phased out. Other platforms include Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Starleaf which is used by One Voice Wales for their virtual training.**

A discussion ensued Cllr Stacey informed members that he uses Microsoft Teams in the education sector for open evenings and guests. Cllr Picouto also concurred with Cllr Stacey and uses MT as he is a Governor for the local Primary School. Cllr Phillips informed that the Fire Service use MT (M&WW) and Starleaf (SW) and their Data Protection Officer has checked their level of security and is happy with both. The paid for version of Zoom seems secure the free

version had some data breaches. Carmarthenshire County Council and the Senedd use Zoom. The Chair informed members that she uses Microsoft Teams and Starleaf. Starleaf seems to be a simplified version of MT and she informed members of her experience using it. The cost of Starleaf is £100 per annum.

It was Proposed by Cllr Phillips and Seconded by Cllr Megrath that the new virtual platform for Betws Community Council would be Starleaf.

The Chair asked for a vote and all members present voted for this. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk contact Starleaf and set this up for future meetings and pay the £100 fee.

**6. Quotations for the new contracts which commence from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2024 to be discussed and decided on who the contracts will be awarded to regarding the 3 Recreation Grounds and 2 Playgrounds within Betws.**

The Clerk informed members that due to the normal tender process not taking place due to the coronavirus lockdown whereby the quotations have been received by email not post. Also, that there is no face-to-face meeting only these virtual ones taking place. The Clerk suggested that a proposal is made regarding suspending standing orders (paragraph 18) for this item on the Agenda only.

The Chair proposed that the Standing Orders be suspended for item 6 only and asked for members to vote. All members voted for the Standing Orders to be suspended for this item only.

The Clerk informed members of the quotations received for the 3 x Recreation Grounds with 7 requests being made however only 2 quotations being received due to the other requestors declining to quote for various reasons. The 2 quotations were discussed and compared with Cllr M Jones informing members that as part of his career he analysed tenders for 30 years and gave members his opinion of both tenders.

Cllr Picouto proposed that the 3-year contract be given to Wrenvale. This was seconded by Cllr Phillips. A vote was taken and all members voted for Wrenvale to be given the new 3-year contract. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk inform the Successful and Unsuccessful contractors of their decision.

The Clerk informed members of the quotations received for the 2 x Playgrounds with 3 requests being made and 3 quotations being received. The 3 quotations were discussed and compared with concerns being given over the difference of once a month checks versus the current fortnightly checks being made in Maesquarre playground especially as a number of the play equipment (Dragon, Dolphin Seesaw and the Castle/Vivario unit) being near end of life with the Dragon having about 1 year left and the others 2 years as advised by the current contractor last year at a site meeting in June. One quotation received was cheaper than the other two however the Community Council do not have to go with the cheapest quote. Until grant funding is obtained to renew equipment the current contractor is ensuring the equipment is maintained for safe use and carries out regular repairs in order to achieve this. The contractor removed 2 x benches last year as they had become unsafe and were not able to be repaired. Cllr Lewis raised concerns over the cheaper contractor as the Community Council have used the company previously.

It was proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Stacey that the Clerk look into the costs and ask the contractor who proposed the once a month check to quote for fortnightly inspections.

Due to the Health and Safety concerns raised by Cllr Phillips due to the age and condition of the equipment at Maesquarre Playground.

A vote was taken with all except 1 Abstention voting for more information being sought prior to members making a decision at the next meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

## 7. Dyfed Powys Police

List of Crimes for Betws received from PCSO 8039 Arwyn Rees:

### **JANUARY 2021**

- 1 x Harassment
- 1 x Malicious Communication
- 1 x Theft of vehicle

## 8. Feedback from the weekly walks for the 3 recreation areas:

Cllr B Jones informed members, that apart from an issue with some youths and their bikes which she reported to the police asking for patrols to be made as they were blocking the park entrance with their bikes, there were no issues. Cllr B Jones also informed members that she had received positive comments and no negative comments regarding the second felling of ash trees suffering with ash die back disease that had been carried out on the Pentwyn Road side of Betws Park. The damaged chain link fencing around the old tennis courts was also removed and the surface of the court was cleaned up to ensure the surface was safe.

Cllr Phillips stated that she had checked Maesquarre Playground a week ago with all being well there apart from some litter being present.

Cllr Price was not present however Cllr B Jones stated that she had checked Heol Y Felin Playground and Green and that there were no issues with Cllr Phillips attending the area a week and a half ago with no issues being evident.

## 9. Correspondence

- a. The Clerk informed members that the Memorial Bench that the Community Council had agreed to being placed in Heol Y Felin Green had been ordered from a local company SLPW and when ready a local contractor would install it.

This was **NOTED** by members.

- b. The Clerk informed members that some Councillors had taken up One Voice Wales' training opportunity some of the training is free and some is paid for. The Clerk has also applied for a Bursary which means that the Community Council only pay 50% of the training fee.

Cllr B Jones had completed a Free Course on 16/12/2020 Understanding the Law, £15 using up some of the Bursary for the Code of Conduct Course on 26/1/2021 and a Free Course on 27/1/2021 Local Council as an Employer.

Cllr Phillips had completed the Code of Conduct Course on 4/2/2021 costing £15 and using up some of the Bursary.

This was **NOTED** by members.

- c. The Clerk informed members of a Litter and Fly Tipping Prevention Plan for Wales consultation document that needed to be commented on by 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021. County Councillor B Jones proposed to complete the Survey and answer the questions within the document as she receives complaints from the residents regarding Fly tipping etc which have occurred in areas such as Waun Ddwfn Road, Betws Mountain, opposite Pentwyn Road and more recently in Ffordd Y Glowyr.

This was **NOTED** by members.

- d. The Clerk informed members of the thank you letter from Wales Air Ambulance for the donation that had recently been made.

This was **NOTED** by members.

- e. The Clerk informed members that the Ombudsman had decided not to investigate the complaint he had received from a member about another. However, 2 further complaints had been received by the Ombudsman a few days after his decision on the original complaint had been made. This cannot be discussed further as it is in the hands of the Ombudsman.

This was **NOTED** by members.

- f. The Clerk informed members of the progress of the investigation into Point 7.4 from the monthly meeting on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021:

The Clerk had sought advice from OVW/SLCC, CCC's Monitoring Officer regarding an alleged Personal Data Breach which has been reported and recorded with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) (under the Data Protection Act 2018 and (GDPR) General Data Protection Principles). The ICO can impose fines and disciplinary measures for any unauthorised disclosure of personal data.

There has been an alleged Breach in the Code of Conduct under the 7+3 Principles of Public Life aka The Nolan Report (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership + a Duty to Uphold the Law, Proper Stewardship of the Council's Resources and Equality and Respect for Others. ("Standards of Conduct in Local Government in England, Scotland and Wales").

It is your personal responsibility to ensure that you understand your obligations under the Code and act in a way which shows that you are committed to meeting the high standards of conduct that are expected of you as a member.

For Your Information: <https://www.ombudsman.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Code-of-Conduct-Community-Councils-August-2016-ENGLISH.pdf>

<http://www.onevoicewales.org.uk/OVWWeb/UserFiles/Files/Good%20Practice%20General/Good%20Councillors%20Guide%202017.PDF>

see pages 12,13,14

not disclose confidential information; not bring your office or authority into disrepute; not use your position improperly to secure personal advantage or disadvantage for anyone; not make vexatious, malicious or frivolous complaints against other members or employees of your council;

Also, there is an alleged Breach of the Level 4 Coronavirus Legislation for Wales whereby a Councillor was seen entering a member of the public's home by a resident. This Councillor is not, as far as I am aware in a 'support bubble' with this household. The Remuneration Panel for Wales report states "Community Councillors are in fact elected members with statutory responsibilities". You are not volunteers, as Community Councillors you hold Public Office.

For your information:

<https://gov.wales/leaving-your-home-and-seeing-other-people-alert-level-4>

<https://gov.wales/visiting-people-private-homes-alert-level-4>

As Councillors you need to be mindful of the potential of breaching personal data, breaching the Code of Conduct or allowing privileged information to be misused, but more importantly never allow personal likes/dislikes to interfere with the Council's democratic processes.

The alleged breach concerns information divulged in relation to a list of candidates proposed for Co-option between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Under normal procedure the candidate information would not have been made public, unless they had attended the meeting, until after today's meeting once the minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> January meeting had been confirmed as being a true record and uploaded to the website by the end of the week. All this points to a Councillor or Councillors divulging personal candidate information as the documents that I had emailed/posted you. If any of you have passed on personal information accidentally or otherwise it is classed as a personal data breach, please be aware of this for the future.

This was **NOTED** by members.

## 10. Payments

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| a) Clerks Income Tax/NI/Pension             | £ 264.38 |
| b) Clerks Salary and Allowances             | £ 997.02 |
| c) Postage Costs                            | £ 5.38   |
| d) Orchardweb                               | £ 235.00 |
| e) Annual Electricity for Heol Y Felin CCTV | £ 40.00  |
| f) SLCC Annual Membership                   | £ 166.00 |
| g) WT Rees Landscapers                      | £2280.00 |
| h) Carmarthenshire Tree Surgery             | £2250.00 |
| i) RS Arb                                   | £3060.00 |
| j) WT Rees Landscapers                      | £3840.00 |

**RESOLVED** that the above be paid.

## 11. County Councillor Report

a)

County Councillor B Jones had made enquiries regarding Cllr Price's concerns over the kerb being lowered in Colonel Road and possible flooding occurring in the future.

She informed members that Planning permission had been granted for No 34 Colonel Road on 9/11/2020. She had contacted Highways and the last occurrence of flooding and damage was 18 months ago with Storm Dennis. The drains were cleared and the damaged footway was repaired after this. Highways informed County Councillor B Jones that unfortunately flooding would more than likely become an annual occurrence as the storms are caused by climate change. During the latest 2 named storms there were no excessive flooding in this area of concern.

b)

Members were informed of the budget consultations which had taken place the week beginning 8/1/2021. The increase in the Community Charge will not be more than 4.89%. The final decision will be made by full council 3/3/2021.

c)

Members were informed that there were cuts being made in all departments in CCC and that they were doing a good job under the circumstances with the coronavirus pandemic. Many employees have moved departments in order to meet the changing needs of the service given.

d)

The Leader of the Council Emlyn Dole had informed County Councillors in the meeting earlier today that almost 500,000 vaccines had been administered in Wales. The current infection rate is 139/10,000 in Carmarthenshire.

Cllr Picouto informed members that there had been issues with surgeries in the area (Llandeilo, Ammanford/Llandybie) not getting their quota of vaccines that are required. County Councillor B Jones informed members that the vaccination rollout is co-ordinated by Hywel Dda Healthboard and she will pass on the comments received.

## 12. Planning

Planning appeal notification received from Carmarthenshire County Council **APP M6825/A20/3265883** was discussed regarding application **PL/00153** objections were sent by the Clerk previously when the planning application was originally submitted.

**PL/00475** – Granted, **PL/00938** – Consultation, **PL/00237** – prior approval not required.

This was **NOTED** by members

## 13. To Adopt the OVW Model Local Resolution Protocol

This was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr M Jones and seconded by Cllr Megrath that the OVW Model Local Resolution Protocol be adopted by Betws Community Council.

This was put to a vote and all members present voted for adopting the above protocol.

The Chair thanked everyone and again welcomed the 4 new Councillors saying that it was a nice meeting with no unpleasantness.

The meeting Closed at 20:30. The Clerk left the meeting at 20:35 after everybody had left.