

# **BETWS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The monthly meeting of Betws Community Council was held as a Hybrid Meeting at **Betws RFC** and virtually on **Starleaf** on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 7.00pm.

The meeting was 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 should contact the Clerk in order for this to be able to take place and the correct procedure to be followed.

**PRESENT:** Cllr Dave Stacey (Chairperson), Cllrs Mike Jones, José Picouto, Andy Megrath, Peter Comley, Andrew Williams, Paul Allchurch, Carwyn James, Maureen Williams, Lynwen Phillips with Karen McMinn-Davies attending virtually.

County Councillor: Betsan Jones

Clerk: Miss Angela Brown

Member of the Public Present: No one present

## **1. Public Questions/Representations**

No one present

## **2. Apologies**

Councillor Lucy Jones and PCSO 8039 Arwyn Rees

## **3. Dyfed Powys Police Monthly Crime Figures for Betws**

A total 5 crimes for May in Betws broken down as follows:

### **May 2022**

Assault – 1

Harassment – 4

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

Councillor James declared an interest in point 8b on the agenda as he is a member of Capel Newydd.

Councillor Comley declared an interest in point 11 on the agenda as he is the Secretary and Member of Betws Rugby Club.

## **5. To confirm and Sign the Minutes of the Annual Meeting Held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Councillor Megrath proposed and Councillor James seconded and resolved that the minutes of the Council's annual meeting be accepted as a true record.

All members voted unanimously on this.

## **6. To confirm and Sign the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting Held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Councillor M Jones proposed and Councillor A Williams seconded and resolved that the minutes of the Council's monthly meeting be accepted as a true record.

All members voted unanimously on this.

The next steps from the meeting were revisited.

## **7. County Councillor Report**

The County Councillor congratulated the councillors who returned and welcomed the new councillors giving a brief outline of what she does including sign posting people on where to go to obtain the correct help, advice and give concerns etc, she also informed members on how she helps the community council. She hopes that all the councillors will work together for the good of the community.

She informed members that she was on the Education and Children, Scrutiny Committee, is Vice Chair on the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and is also on the Standards Committee at Carmarthenshire County Council.

The damaged fencing above the Scotch Pine/picnic area has been fixed by the public rights of way maintenance department.

The new Betws Mountain viewing panel has been placed however Cllr Picouto had informed the clerk who contacted County Councillor Jones to let her know that part of the metal frame was broken and flapping in the wind, this issue has been reported to County Council.

With reference to agenda point 13, County Councillor Jones updated members on the status of the new bins that are needed on the footpath and that she has chased this again after being told they would be flagged after the recent bank holiday with no bins being installed to date.

She informed members that the highways department had informed her that the road markings and signage for the Traffic Regulation Order for Heol Y Felin/Colonel Road will be in place by 4<sup>th</sup> July.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> May she informed members that she had spent a lovely morning in the park for the Jubilee Celebrations with Betws Primary school children, Deputy Lord Lieutenant Jayne Picouto and many other people for the placing of painted pebbles around the tree that they recently planted. Afterwards the children had a lovely picnic in the park.

Cllr Picouto informed members that it was great to see the primary school integrating with the community council and that it was the first time that the school had come together with the community and they had responded positively. Local tradespeople and businesses attended and a plaque will also be displayed. Cllr Megrath said it was good to see engagement.

County Councillor Jones passed on a request from a member of the community to the Community Council to consider a memorial bench being placed within Betws Park in memory of the late Community Councillor June Gunter. A location within the park was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr A Williams that the bench be allowed to be sited within the park. All present voted for the proposal.

County Councillor Jones will ask the requestor to contact the clerk in order to exchange details on where to purchase the recycled plastic bench from.

Cllr Comley informed members that the benches that had previously been agreed upon to be re-sited due to anti-social behaviour will be relocated soon within the park.

Councillor M Williams asked Council about the recent discussions regarding providing more defibrillators after 2 recent incidents within the village. She asked how would the people be informed of their location? How will they know how to use one? How will residents be given information about them? A discussion ensued with Cllr Comley explaining the process of registration of defibrillators, how to access by phoning 999 and a code is given for the nearest registered defibrillator. Training will be organised for residents and members who would like to receive first aid/defibrillator training. This training has been held previously in Betws RFC and will be organised again once the new defibrillators have been installed around the village which will be fully accessible to the public. Cllr McMinn-Davies informed members that she had recently received First Aid refresher training with her employer and informed members that the defibrillators are easy to use.

At 19:35 County Councillor B Jones left the meeting.

## 8. Payments/Donation Requests –

### a. Clerk Salary and Allowances and Invoices to be paid (see document below)

Payments Made in June 2022			
MEETING/BACS REFERENCE	PAYEE	DETAILS	AMOUNT
8/6/2022 point 8a	Angela Brown	Clerks Salary/Allowances and office expenses.  Section 112 Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)	(as per Clerk Salary and Payroll schedule)

8/6/2022 point 8a	HMRC	Payroll payments. Section 112 Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)	(as per Clerk Salary and Payroll schedule)
8/6/2022 point 8a	Nest Pension paid by Direct Debit	Payroll Pension payments. Section 112 Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)	(as per Clerk Salary and Payroll schedule)
8/6/2022 point 8a & 14b	Paramount Plants and Gardens	Betws Park Nature Project Funding from the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature and National Lottery Heritage Grant Funding	£3,217.00
8/6/2022 point 8a & 14b	Barcham Trees	Betws Park Nature Project Funding from the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature and National Lottery Heritage Grant Funding	£1,775.79
8/6/2022 point 8a & 14b	Trees Direct	Betws Park Nature Project Funding from the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature and National Lottery Heritage Grant Funding	£2,250.00
8/6/2022 point 8a & 14b	Boston Seeds	Betws Park Nature Project Funding from the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature and National Lottery Heritage Grant Funding	£2,206.50
8/6/2022 point 14b	Wilko – locks to close the park gates whilst improvement works are being	Betws Park Nature Project Funding from the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature	£24.00

	done – Cllr A Williams	and National Lottery Heritage Grant Funding	
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## 8b. Donation Requests

Donation request from Capel Newydd and St David’s Church for the annual payment towards the upkeep of the village graveyards.

The Clerk informed members that the last payment to both St Davids Church and Capel Newydd for their Cemeteries and Christmas Lights was 8 January 2020. The Cemeteries are given £200 each and Capel Newydd Christmas Lights have a £25 and St Davids Church Christmas Lights have £50.

The power which enables the Community Council to pay towards the upkeep of the cemeteries comes from the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and Local Government Act 1972 s.214 (6).

The power which enables the Community Council to pay towards the Christmas Lighting at the Church and Chapel comes from s.137(1) and (3) Local Government Act 1972.

A discussion ensued and it was proposed by Cllr M Jones that the Clerk pay the overdue donations for 2021 this was seconded by Cllr A Williams with all 11 members voting for with 1 abstention by Cllr James as he had declared an interest.

Cllr James informed members that previously when he had held office diary notes were made for certain payments for the year which were ratified by Council. Cllr Phillips suggested putting it on the agenda for the December meeting when 2022’s payments would be discussed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the clerk pay the missed donations to both Capel Newydd and St David’s Church for the cemeteries and Christmas lighting.

## 8c. Payments Received

None.

## 8d. Donation Received

None.

## 9. Planning Applications

- a) **PL/04073 – Penllech Fach, Cwmfelin Road SA18 2SG** – extension to agricultural building – No objections
- b) **PL/04003 – Cwmfelin, Cwmfelin Road SA18 2SN** – Non-material amendment to PL/02857 (Amendment of plans to remove Bat Mitigation from the barn attic in response to NRW advice at bat license submission) Previous application **PL/02857** Barn conversion to provide ancillary accommodation (annex) & extension of garden curtilage and PL/02264. – No objections providing guidelines followed. The clerk informed members that this was a delegated decision made by CCC planning department and it had now been closed.
- c) **PL/04004 - Cwmfelin, Cwmfelin Road SA18 2SN** - Discharge of Conditions 5 and 6 on PL/02857 (Plan numbers 1679-01E and 1679-02) Plan number

1679-01E with boundary treatments indicated and Plan number 1679-02 archaeological photographic record as provided to Dyfed Archaeological Trust on 5.5.22. – No objections

- d) PL/04138 – Plots adjacent to 90 Colonel Road, Betws. SA18 2HP -**  
Removal of Condition (1 on E/39376) – to extend the 3-year permitted time beyond 9/12/2025 – No objections

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk contact Carmarthenshire County Councils planning department inform of the decisions made.

## 10. Correspondence

- a) Hedgehog Highway Project** – to consider the request to take part in this project.

This was discussed by members and it was felt that it should be published on social media platforms within the village so that individuals can decide if they would like to take part. They have a Facebook page: Hedgehogs R Us

This was **NOTED** by members.

- b) Thank you letter from Local Government Partnerships / Welsh Government regarding the Task and Finish Group and taking part in the recent pilot to test a finance & governance toolkit for community and town councils.**

This was **NOTED** by members.

- c) Email received and forwarded to Councillors from Carmarthenshire County Council regarding Code of Conduct training for Town and Community Councils.**

The Clerk informed members that the new members had been booked onto One Voice Wales Code of Conduct training. Other returning Councillors had received Code of Conduct training during 2021 with 2 others and the Clerk receiving training which was delivered by Carmarthenshire County Council during mid-2019.

This was **NOTED** by members.

- d) Email received and forwarded to Councillors regarding Shared Prosperity Fund for Carmarthenshire.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

A discussion ensued regarding levelling up and the Chair will complete the survey via a link within the email by 12pm 13 June 2022. [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Consultation \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus)

This was **NOTED** by members.

**e) Email received and forwarded to Councillors regarding Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire**

A discussion ensued and any member who wishes to get involved can contact them directly as the details are within the email.

This was **NOTED** by members.

**f) Proposal for 'act of kindness' area within Betws Park – Cllr A Williams**

Cllr A Williams informed members of a request he'd received from a member of the public whilst he was in Betws Park to be allowed to put painted stones in the fairy glen area of the park amongst the trees which has fairy doors and windows on some of the trees. Stones are painted and left as gifts for anyone to take home. This is part of a network and the creativity of painting the stones and leaving them as gifts helps to improve mental health, anxiety, isolation and she is developing her own social network of support within the Betws/Ammanford area.

She has a small social media following. Cllr A Williams informed members that he had explained the ongoing refurbishment of Betws park and her activities would fit with the ethos of this.

*The garden itself would consist of some small signage indicating the garden's presence and reminding people not to litter and indicate where bins are available. We would aim to keep the acts of kindness within a small area but it is hopeful that it would extend to hiding places all over the park. I am happy to maintain the garden but will be recruiting others as time goes forward to ensure it is maintained appropriately.*

**What are outdoor 'Acts of Kindness' ?**

*The idea of 'act of kindness' originated in America and was based around the 'kindness rock project' By Megan Murphy. This was where individuals would write inspirational quotes or design small works of art on rocks and hide them for people to find. They would have a link written on them to a social media group where people could share their finds, discuss them and draw inspiration from others work. Their motto 'one message , delivered at the right moment, can change someone's entire day ,outlook, life' is apt for its intention. This idea has gained in popularity over the years and has flourished with thousands of groups being developed  
Painting stones for mental health placed in woodland area of park and free for anyone to take. Children seem to be enjoying these finds and it also helps those who are painting the stones and leaving them as gifts.*

A discussion ensued with the decision being made that the requestor would need to provide a Risk Assessment as it will be a regular occurrence.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr A Williams would contact the requestor and ask for a Risk Assessment to be sent to the clerk.

Further discussion regarding a fitness group attending the park it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr McMinn-Davies to ask organiser to provide a Risk Assessment for their regular activities in the park.

Dog control issues within the park were discussed due to the increase in loose dogs within the park. Any incidents should be reported to the police so that they can be recorded as evidence of issues occurring.

#### **11. Exempt Report: Proposals to resolve the issues for the land held in Trust for the people of Betws which include Betws RFC.**

The Clerk gave a brief update regarding the matter informing that the next steps from the last meeting had been implemented.

#### **12. To consider a request from the clerk for new/additional computer equipment.**

The clerk requested a new mouse and a second screen for the laptop. A discussion ensued with members who regularly work using computers informing others that split screen working works better.

It was proposed by Cllr Picouto and seconded by Cllr Phillips that the clerk purchase the items.

All members voted unanimously on this.

It was **RESOLVED** the clerk purchase the items.

#### **13. Footpath from Colonel Road to Maesquarre Road ground conditions/maintenance required and 'pick up your dog mess' signs need renewing – Cllr James**

Cllr James informed members from the first wicket gate on the footpath from Maesquarre to Colonel Road that it gets very muddy and dangerous in wet weather also that about 100 yards from the second wicket gate this area also gets very muddy. There is also a lot of overgrowth along the footpath. 'Pick up your dog mess' signs also need renewing.

Cllr A Williams who is part of the local walking group informed members that there are only a few rangers covering the whole of Carmarthenshire and they are inundated with work. He informed members they would probably trash the overgrowth within 2 months, it takes approximately 1.5 years to get gates fixed. With regards to improving the surface he suggested that a group of volunteers get together as it could take the Rangers 2 years.

Waungron/Treforis path is also overgrown.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr A Williams would email the rangers regarding the above issues and Cllr James would also email. The clerk will inform the County Councillor of the issue too.

**14. Feedback from Committees (all minutes of the Committee Meetings can be viewed on the Community Council Website where the Full Council Meeting minutes are also available).**

**a) Recreation Ground Committee – weekly checks for Maesquarre Playground and Heol Y Felin to decide who will action these checks?**

The Clerk informed members of an issue with Heol Y Felin playground whereby the surface is shrinking away from the edge of the area. The clerk explained that she had spoken with the contractor who maintains the areas for the Council and that the surface was poorly installed. Three options on how to resolve the issue were discussed that had been suggested by the contractor and it was **RESOLVED** that the clerk obtain costs for each of the options and report back. The clerk informed members of some of the locations at playgrounds where one of the types of surfaces has been installed namely Llyn Llech Owain, Hendy and Tumble.

There is also a handle missing on a piece of play equipment at Maesquarre playground needs replacing it has more than likely been stolen as the contractor informed the clerk that it is used by people with home gyms.

Cllrs Phillips and M Jones will meet the contractor on site to discuss.

The weekly checks will be conducted by Cllr Peter Comley at Heol Y Felin playground and green area and by Cllr Stacey for Maesquarre playground area. Cllr Stacey will liaise with other councillors who live nearby to check on a rota basis.

It was **RESOLVED** that the clerk send the management document to both Councillors which they can use to carry out the checks of the and to inform the clerk if any issues arise with the play equipment outside of the fortnightly checks actioned by the contractor. The Councillors are to email the clerk with their weekly report for health and safety/insurance purposes.

**b) Maesquarre Playground Project – update – Cllr Phillips**

Cllr Phillips gave a brief background into the project for the new members and then informed members that the project is ongoing with another piece of equipment being taken out the day before and the new piece being installed. The flooring is still to be done. The dragon is due to be removed with the new agility trail taking its place. Cllr M Jones and herself had been on site with the contractor to agree the siting of the 2 benches this is ongoing work.

Cllr Phillips informed members that some soil debris from the removal of equipment had been left on the grass.

Also, that the top gate on the Maesquarre side was slow to close and remained open by 10cm. It was **RESOLVED** the clerk inform the contractor and get costings for repair.

Councillor Phillips sought approval from Council and proposed to apply for another grant from the windfarm this opened at the beginning of June and closes at the end of June. This had previously been discussed along with future phases of Maesquarre playground improvements. She proposed that this would be for benches at the viewing point above Ffordd Y Glowyr and that TRJ would match fund to provide benches for the area. A discussion ensued regarding Christmas lights and the need to put 15-20% funding towards any grant application presently there was not match funding for this.

The above was seconded by Cllr A Williams that Cllr Phillips apply for a grant from the windfarm for the benches.

All members voted unanimously on this.

Cllr Phillips left the meeting at 21:00.

#### **c) Betws Park Project – update Cllr M Jones**

Cllr M Jones informed members that the start date had been given for the Betws Park project after a meeting on Tuesday 7 June which was Monday 13 June. The clerk had been informed and had organised the notices and publication into the SW Guardian yesterday regarding the park being closed during weekdays from 07:30 – 17:00 whilst the work was carried out. Cllr A Williams had purchased 3 x locks for the gates. The contractor would control entry via the main gate for other contractors to enter to maintain the park.

Heras fencing will be placed around the tennis court area. Cllr M Jones informed that 6-wheeler lorries will be going down the main walkway and there is concern that damage may occur. Cllr Comley stated that they were 28tonnes and could they use the smaller 4-wheeler lorries. Cllr M Jones said he would monitor. Any damage made would need to be made good by the company. The project involving the heavy machinery should be complete within 8 weeks. Then it will be planting of the various trees and plants within the area. It has been agreed by TRJ that the trees will be delivered to their yard not Betws Park and they will move them to the park and help with the planting. It was **RESOLVED** the clerk change the delivery address with the suppliers.

Cllr M Jones stated that a variation on the finish had been made from pea gravel to stone dust.

The fencing costs have come in over budget by £1,600 and he will speak with the grant funder as the contingency of £5k will need to be used.

Cllr McMinn-Davies left the meeting at 21:05.

#### **d) Finance Committee – update.**

Cllr Stacey gave an update that the next meeting would be on 21 June.

He asked members to ensure they send the clerk within the next few days their declaration of interest as requested in the last meeting.

He discussed future items of intent for members to begin to consider:

- a) Publicising the work of the Council – July meeting
- b) Long term/forward planning for the Council – September meeting

Cllr Picouto gave his apologies in advance for the July meeting.

A discussion ensued between members regarding the above points and committee meetings with Cllr Stacey informing members that each committee will meet quarterly on a rotational plan.

Cllr Comley informed members of a meeting that he will be having with the probation service for work to be done at the RFC and did Council want any work to be done within any of their areas?

The clerk informed that the railings at Betws Park need rubbing down and re-painting. Cllr Comley informed members that Council would need to supply materials, that the group are well supervised and also do good work. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Comley would speak with the probation service regarding the park railings and report back to council at the next meeting.

**The meeting Closed at 21:18**