

# **BETWS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The monthly meeting of Betws Community Council was held virtually on Starleaf on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> March 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), Mike Jones, Delyth Richards, Andrew Williams, Lynwen Phillips, Dave Stacey, Loreen Lewis, Peter Comley, Jose Picouto, Andy Megrath and Lucy Jones.

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. Apologies**

Councillor Annette Price – appointment.

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

County Councillor B Jones declared an interest in item No 4 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.

Cllr M Jones declared an interest in item No 13(l).

## **3. To Confirm and Sign the Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

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

## **4. Quotations for the new contract for the 2 Playgrounds within Betws which commence from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2024 to be discussed and decided on who the contracts will be awarded to.**

After further discussion the Chair proposed that the Community Council remain with the current contractor. This was seconded by Cllr Megrath voted and agreed by all present.

**RESOLVED** Clerk to inform the successful and unsuccessful contractors.

## **5. Draft Information & Data Protection Policy**

This is a working document; one area needs further clarification and there are some formatting issues. It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to adopt the Policy by all present. The Clerk to liaise with Cllr Stacey with regards to changes made prior uploading to the website.

## 6. Clerk Annual Leave Request

The Clerk requested annual leave for week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 this was the final week of annual leave for the 2020/2021 leave year. It was agreed that the Clerk take annual leave.

## 7. Operation London Bridge and Operation Forth Bridge (death of the Monarch or Consort)

A discussion ensued regarding this Cllr Lewis informed members that Betws Community Council join with Ammanford for services as it is the same vicar who covers both Betws and Ammanford. Councillor Picouto agreed with Cllr Lewis that Betws Community Council would join with Ammanford when this occurs. This was put to the vote and everybody agreed.

## 8. Risk Assessment

Some minor wording errors regarding backing up were identified by Cllr Stacey which needed to be rectified. Once changed all members agreed and **RESOLVED** that the revised/updated Risk Assessment be adopted for 2021/2022.

## 9. Committees

A discussion ensued regarding committees it was decided that Planning did not need its own committee and would remain on the main monthly meeting agenda. Cllr Megrath was interested in learning more about the planning process. **RESOLVED** that the Clerk to give him information regarding possible training in this area and documents to read. Cllr Lewis informed member that Carmarthenshire County Council undertake this training.

It was decided that there was a need for an Events Committee, Public Rights of Way Committee and a Recreation Grounds Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair and Vice Chair would be on each committee as well as another 3 Councillors.

Councillors to contact the Clerk with regards to the Committee Meetings as Agenda's and minute taking will be required rather than reporting back verbally to the main monthly meeting.

Events Committee to be: Chair and Vice Chair, Cllr Lewis, Cllr M Jones and Cllr Williams.

Public Rights of Way Committee to be: Chair and Vice Chair, Cllr Williams, Cllr Megrath and Cllr Stacey.

Recreation Ground Committee to be: Chair and Vice Chair, Cllr Williams, Cllr M Jones and Cllr Phillips.

Discussion about changes to the outside agencies with the Twinning being deferred and Cllr Price to be LHB contact.

Cllr L Jones reported from the OVW meeting that there will be changes that will be coming next year where Annual reports will be required to be compiled by each Community Council for their short- and long-term plans and what had been achieved during the previous year.

## **10. Dyfed Powys Police**

Crime Figures for Betws were not received for February 2021. The Clerk had emailed the local PCSO but had no response.

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

Cllr Comley gave feedback regarding incidents of Criminal Damage and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) mainly at Betws RFC but the youths spilled out onto Heol Y Felin Green area which involved the Police and Ambulance attending to youths with one being taken to hospital. DPP have agreed to patrol the area more often however due to shift patterns/annual leave sometimes they are not available to do this.

CCTV has identified those involved and was given to the Police however they are taking no further action. This lack of action from policing is concerning.

In Heol Y Felin Playground there is an issue of older children riding around the area on bikes when smaller children are present this has been captured on CCTV some of the children are not known not to live locally.

Cllr L Jones stated that this type of ASB seems to be happening in numerous areas including in Swansea Marina. A discussion ensued as it has been a difficult year for everyone especially children of all ages with Cllr Megrath stating that despite this youths causing criminal damage is not acceptable. It was suggested that the RFC secretary contact the Headteacher of the local schools to give his concerns about the ASB that is occurring locally. The County Councillor would bring the issue up at the next PACT meeting which will be held at 14:00 on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Suggestions that letters/emails to be sent to the Police & Crime Commissioner, Schools and Off Licences.

Betws Park – Cllr B Jones stated that a large branch had fallen, the Clerk had been contacted and the contractor removed it, otherwise all was ok with no other issues reported. Cllr Picouto reported that dog poop bags are being left in the park and not placed in the bins. Also, that on 2 occasions the previous week and the week before owners were irresponsibly letting their dogs run free in the park when the sign says to keep them on leads. Children/Youths were also riding their bikes on the tarmac.

Maesquarre Playground – Cllr Phillips had informed the Clerk of her concerns with the condition of the Dolphin Ride and emailed photographs. The Clerk contacted the contractor giving the concerns about the equipment. The contractor attended and the Dolphin ride was no longer safe/fit for purpose and was removed from site.

The Bins in all areas seem to be filling up quickly which is to be expected in the current circumstances. Clerk to be contacted in order to inform contractor when this occurs. Cllrs L Jones and Cllr Megrath commented that the County Council bin at Ffordd Y Glowyr seems to also be rammed full by Friday night. County Councillor B Jones stated that the bins are emptied every Wednesday. The bins in Heol Y Felin are emptied on a Monday and Friday. Cllr L Phillips stated that the frog bin was full on Saturday but the standard bin that is also there was not. Maybe a

consideration subject to funding get another 'frog type bin' there and place the standard bin as an extra in Betws Park.

The Clerk stated that a lot of Community Councils have this issue with dogs not on leads, litter etc. A suggestion that a either an area in the park becomes dog free (hard to enforce same as owners keeping dogs on leads) or make a fenced area specifically for dogs to be able to run loose, how that works with more than one loose dog or if one is aggressive towards others but hopefully if this facility is provided it will be used sensibly. All other areas of the park dogs MUST be kept on a lead.

## 12. Correspondence

- a. The Clerk informed members that with regard to the query from a resident regarding whether more trees will be planted in Betws Park after removal due to Ash Die Back disease. The advice given by both the Tree Survey Company and CCC Arboriculturist is to wait 2 – 3 years and see what seedling trees emerge now that the ash trees have been felled. The area will initially fill with scrub (brambles etc) however when the young trees emerge over time a decision can be made on which are the best situated and type to keep to grow on in the bank and which to remove. Another option lower down/in the park or along the river bank when the ash trees there are felled which is required later this year is to gain funding to plant a native welsh heritage fruit forest. A local nursery stocks various local/heritage tree.

This was **NOTED** by members.

- b. The Clerk informed members that a Geocaching request had been received regarding placing (Covid safe) geocaches within Betws Park. It is part of a school project. There are also 33 geocaches on the local cycle path. Geocaching is a modern form of treasure hunting/hide and seek. Councillor Stacey was happy to support this and it was proposed by Cllr L Jones and Seconded by Cllr Megrath that the geocaches be allowed to be placed in Betws Park. **RESOLVED** the Clerk to inform the requestor of the decision.
- c. The Clerk informed members that the complaint that was made by one Councillor about 2 other Councillors has not been upheld and will not be investigated. The Ombudsman has stated that the complainant needs to be reminded of their obligation set out in paragraph 4(b) of the Code of Conduct with regards to the comments made. Also, suggestions that some Councillors may need training on how to use the virtual platforms correctly especially with regards to muting microphones when not actively participating, good practice around recordings (and how to leave the meeting it is evident that some Councillors are unable to do this promptly). Copies of the decision not to investigate both complaints have also been sent to Carmarthenshire County Councils Monitoring Officer, The Clerk for Betws Community Council and the Councillors who were complained about.
- d. The Clerk informed members that the Census for 2021 is required by law to be completed by each household and empty property, failure to complete could result in a fine. FAQ's regarding the census have been placed onto the website and emails sent to members.

This was **NOTED** by members

- e. The Clerk informed members that on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021 that it will be a NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers Day. Communities and others throughout Wales are being

encouraged to play a leading role in a unique day of celebration and commemoration of those that work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week without any thought of their own safety.

They are being asked to do this by agreeing to raise a unique flag at 10am.

To participate in a 2-minute silence at 11 am.

The Nation's Toast at 1pm.

Afternoon Tea at 4pm.

The ringing of church bells 73 times with each ring representing the 73 years of the NHS at 8pm.

Local communities can take part should they wish as a 'tribute' to the Heroes of the NHS, Social Care and those that work so tirelessly on the frontline.

It was **NOTED** by members and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk place the information on to the website and place the information in the Betws News section of the SW Guardian.

### 13. Payments

a) Clerks Income Tax/NI/Pension	£ 323.79
b) Clerks Salary and Allowances	£ 1180.59
c) Postage Costs	£ 5.38
d) Action Surveillance Heol Y Felin CCTV	£ 96.00
e) OVW Cllr training for January 2021 Cllr B Jones	£ 15.00
f) OVW Cllr training for February 2021 Cllrs Phillips, M Jones(free) and Megrath	£ 30.00
g) Betws Park Information Board repair Wrenvale	£ 840.00
h) Betws Park Double bin installation Parks&Play	£ 658.80
i) Starleaf	£ 144.00
j) ALCC Annual Membership	£ 40.00

#### Donation Requests

Members discussed the requests with votes being made as follows:

- k) Dinefwr Bowls – no donation to be paid voted by all with 1 abstention – clerk to inform
- l) Cruse Bereavement Care, West Wales - £100 donation to be paid – proposed by Cllr Picouto and seconded by Cllr Phillips.
- m) CCC Chair's Appeal – no donation to be paid – proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr L Jones.

**RESOLVED** that the above be paid.

### 14. County Councillor Report

- a) On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 a meeting of the whole council was attended regarding the setting of the budget and tax for the new year. Council tax to be increased by 3.45%.
- b) On 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 there was a full council meeting with the leader Emlyn Dole giving an update on the Covid vaccination programme with a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the population having had their

first vaccination. There is a large drive through open 7 days a week for Groups 7,8 & 9 at the United Counties Showground with 7 lanes.

- c) Glass Collection at kerbside will begin again from 2022.
- d) Attended the OVW free Finance Module 6 which was advanced training.

## 15. Planning Applications

Street naming and numbering at 'Clos Ty Coch'  
SNN/01240 New Street naming and numbering of 4 dwellings at land at former Ty Coch Country Club, Maesquarre Road, Ammanford, SA18 2HQ.

There was a discussion regarding other properties nearby which are separate to the Clos. All members voted and all agreed that they had no objections to name and numbering of the 4 dwellings. **RESOLVED** Clerk to inform planning.

16. The Clerk informed members that Vague Agenda items that don't specify exact business such as Any Other Business (AOB), Correspondence and Matters Arising are dangerous and should be avoided, because the council cannot make unexpected decisions. Each agenda item should make it clear about what you as a Councillor are expected to do and be precise about the subject under discussion. It is unlawful to make a decision on an item that has not been placed on the agenda.

If a Councillor want to have an item on the Agenda then they need to contact the Clerk to discuss by the end of the month before the next meeting (e.g. by 28/2/2021 for the meeting in 10/3/2021).

This was **NOTED** by members.

## 17. Document Retention and Disposal Policy to be discussed and adopted

A discussion ensued whereby Cllr Stacey picked on a few changes that were required.

All members voted to adopt the policy.

**RESOLVED** the Clerk to make the changes and upload the policy to the website in due course.

## 18. Community Questionnaire Results

Cllr Phillips had been collating the questionnaire and had compiled a spreadsheet for Betws Park and Maesquarre Playground. She has more to collate.

Q? relating to the Tennis Court :

1. Remain as a Tennis Court area
2. Outdoor Gym/Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)
3. Picnic area/seating area/ area for young children

Q3. Betws Park

1. More bins/bins emptied more often
2. No dogs allowed/area for dogs off the lead/more signage

3. Picnic area
4. Clean paths and re-surface, improve access for wheelchairs and buggies
5. Café
6. Market Stalls to Betws Park

Q? Maesquarre Playground

1. Regular maintenance/fix items
2. Picnic table/ seating
3. Baby/toddler equipment
4. Softer flooring
5. Paths between areas
6. Disabled friendly equipment/areas

The meeting Closed at 20:55. The Clerk left the meeting at 21:05 after everybody had left.