

BETWS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The Recreation Ground Committee meeting of Betws Community Council was held virtually on Starleaf on Friday the 26th March 2021 at 13.00 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, Mike Jones, Parks and Play contractor for Betws Playgrounds Eamonn Davies, Jose Picouto and Lynwen Phillips.

Clerk - Miss Angela Brown

1. Apologies

None

2. Declaration by Members of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

County Councillor B Jones declared an interest 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.

3. To discuss the equipment options for Maesquarre Playground with the contractor Eamonn Davies.

Eamonn Davies gave members information regarding his background and experience within this sector. He also gave the history about the equipment that is currently installed in Maesquarre Playground. He informed members that the life expectancy of playground equipment is 20 years.

The Chair informed members that she Cllr Phillips had met with Eamonn a week ago on site to discuss on the ground the options regarding equipment, gained his advice on the other issues such as drainage etc that need addressing. Eamonn Davies gave a catalogue which he had marked with suggestions and they were to see what it was they wanted and where so that he could then put a costing to its purchase and installation. This work is required in order to put the information onto any grant funding applications that will be applied for.

Cllr Phillips gave a run-down of the Community Engagement responses from Summer 2020. That the main request was for a baby/toddler area, seating for children (rainbow colours) and adults, wheelchair friendly equipment – roundabout, picnic benches, paths, other equipment was discussed that would replace the dragon such as balancing beams, climbing ropes and rope walks etc similar to what is in Ammanford park and the poor drainage at site too. Eamonn stated that this unit would be about 15 metres long he gave estimated costs as an idea and he would look into the actual costs to include installation.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Phillips will send out a table with the information after the meeting to all who attended.

Quotes will be obtained for the drainage issue once an agreement has been reached with CCC as there is a culvert below the area that could be used for the clear water to soakaway/run to.

A discussion ensued regarding the various pieces of equipment ideas and approximate cost were given by the contractor. Cllr Phillips suggested that as much as possible vandal proof equipment be sourced where possible and for the materials used to be as long lived as possible.

Heol Y Felin Playground was also discussed as there are minor touch up issues required there which the contractor ABC area and the 'N' on the Compass. The Compass is costly to repair at around £800-900 and only has a 3-4 year life expectancy and in his opinion was not a good use of money. However, the contractor will repair the ABC area for no charge for the community council when he attends to do his fortnightly checks and they only need to pay for any of the parts he needs to obtain to replace. A new bench will also be required at site as the memorial bench is failing. He suggested having play panels by the gate and on the side fencing as extra equipment in Heol Y Felin when funds are available which cost about £600-700.

Cllr Phillips asked if there was anyway of raising money for the upkeep of Heol Y Felin. The Clerk informed her that the RFC rent money paid towards approximately just under a third of its annual running cost between the playground contractor and ground maintenance contract.

A site visit with CCC/Contractor/Committee may be required. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr B Jones will arrange this as she was already in contact with CCC regarding the issue.

The Pod Swing has also been re-installed by CCC after they had gained funding to get it repaired. The Clerk had been liaising with them in order to achieve this.

The Chair asked the meeting to collate item 3 and 4.

4. To discuss the Grant funding requirements for Maesquarre Playground.

There is S106 money for Maesquarre £6,869.71 and a further £2,000 from CCC for maintenance at Maesquarre. There is also £2,000 for maintenance at Betws Park. Presently there will be no requirement to access any of the savings held in reserves by the Community Council.

The Windfarm Grant window will be opening in September therefore all the ground work for any ideas needs to be done now, plans drawn up, costings/quotes acquired. Other Grants are also available for some of the smaller projects in the various recreation areas within Betws.

The priority areas are both Maesquarre and Betws Park with Heol Y Felin only needing a bench and some minor repairs.

The Community Council need to look at the Recreation Grounds as a Whole as all these assets benefit the community and are looked after by Betws Community Council. If works need doing then it should be prioritised, plans made, costings/quotes obtained, gain funding and complete the task.

This Committee will produce the minutes from this meeting and they will be discussed in the next monthly meeting on 14th April 2021.

It was Proposed by Cllr Phillips that Eamonn quote to fix the Alphabet at Heol Y Felin.

Eamonn stated that “I’ll do it for nothing BCC to pay to cover the cost of the materials and I’ll do it for free”.

It was Proposed by the Chair that Cllr Phillips collate the items that have been marked in the catalogue and place in a prioritised order. Eamonn to quotes for the equipment and installation and any other groundwork/drainage that is required for Maesquarre Playground.

Cllr Williams proposed that Maesquarre Playground is brought up to standard and he will approach local businesses for support. Plaques for all to see can be placed at each area where help has been provided to promote how the local businesses support their local community.

Cllr M Jones asked how much match funding would be required per application? And proposed that grants be applied for in September for the various projects as prioritised.

All present agreed and voted that the above proposals be implemented.

5. Betws Park issues with dog owners who allow their dogs to be off the lead and causing problems with other park users, not picking up their dog excrement and anti-social behaviour of the dog owners and youths within the park.

The Chair stated that a number of complaints had been received regarding various issues within the parks being caused by dog owners who are not acting responsibly when exercising their pets within the park. The dog warden will be sent to the park. All dogs should be kept on leads which is not happening and causes anti-social behaviour when the loose dogs interrupt other community members enjoyment of the park. Flower beds are being trampled on, loose dogs are attacking other dogs on leads/loose with arguments occurring between the owners, dog excrement is not being picked up or if it is the bags are just being left and not placed in one of the available bins. There is a new double bin near the old tennis court area as well as at the main entrance of the park. Youths and other groups of people have also been causing issues within the park by leaving their litter including bottles of alcohol within the formal areas of the park and near the Victorian Summer House.

A discussion ensued regarding the various experiences and reports that have been made about the issue. The clerk had received 2 emails from residents regarding the above issues.

The contractor stated that he had installed a loose dog area in Llanelli. Posts and 3mm gauge fencing 1.25m high with two gates and special bins for dog excrement inside.

It was proposed that the Contractor quote for this work as dogs can be left loose in this area provided, they are socialised and trained and all dogs must be kept on a lead in other areas of Betws Park. This was another suggestion that had come out of the Community Survey. The area beyond the old Tennis Court was discussed with it stopping just to the right of the path that leads to the footbridge over the river. There would be a gate at the footbridge to enter/exit and another near the tennis court path which is at the bottom of the bank on the Pentwyn Road side. Bins would be placed at each entry/exit point.

All present agreed and voted that the above proposal be implemented.

The contractor suggested that signs are placed around the park every 25 metres regarding dog fouling, keeping dogs on leads apart from in the secure area and to say that the park is monitored and fines will be imposed. Once a few owners get fined, this gets publicised and it should deter others.

There is a dog poop image that can be sprayed onto tarmac to help remind owners to pick up after their pets.

The Chair would contact the dog warden for an update on Monday 29th March 2021.

It was discussed that picnic benches and more seating could be placed within the park. Another idea for the old tennis court area would be to place equipment in for fitness for adults with a few individual pieces of equipment. Funding would need to be gained and the Contractor stated that Sports Grants are available. Heritage Local Fruit trees could be sourced and place possibly along the river bank side of the park once the trees with ash die back have been felled to replace. There are funding avenues that can be gained for this.

The majority of the above proposals will need funding in order to be realised and some of the plans may take some time to organise.

6. Planning Applications – PL/01391 and PL/01403.

The members present had no objections with regards to the 2 planning applications one in Ffordd Y Glowyr and the other on Betws Road for rear extensions.

RESOLVED the Clerk inform the planning department at CCC.

The meeting Closed at 14:25.