

MERLINS BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Extraordinary General Meeting, 27th October 2021 at 7pm, online via the Zoom videoconferencing platform

Present: Cllrs. John Cole, Alison Palmer, Mary Owen, Janice Morgan, Queenie Thomas, Paul Davies, Nick Stamp, Hilliard Studley, Lisa O'Sullivan; Peter Horton (Clerk). There was also one member of the public present as an observer.

The Chairman welcomed C'llrs Jan. Morgan and Queenie Thomas to their first meeting as reinstated Members.

Apologies

None.

Declaration of known interests

None.

Discussion of arrangements for filling open council vacancies by co-option, including consideration of current applications

Members initially set out their individual views on co-option of new members onto the Council, as follows :

C'llr John Cole felt that vacancies should be filled at the earliest opportunity, and eligible candidates co-opted accordingly.

C'llr Paul Davies felt that at this stage of the Council cycle, with only a few months remaining, it was not the right time to co-opt on new members. He also felt it important that new candidates should be interviewed, or otherwise assessed as to their reasons for wishing to join the Council, and felt that the Council should resolve its internal issues before co-opting on new members.

C'llr Jan. Morgan felt that if there were candidates willing to join the Council, then the opportunity to co-opt them should be taken.

C'llr Mary Owen reiterated the comments made by C'llr Jan. Morgan, and felt that co-option would help in producing a strong team of like-minded individuals, who could then move forward and act unitedly for the benefit of the community.

C'llr Lisa O'Sullivan expressed the view that new Members should not be co-opted until the Council had sorted out its internal problems, as it would not be fair to bring people into the Council with the current climate prevailing.

C'llr Alison Palmer was of the view that the Council should have filled the vacancies a long time ago. She was in favour of accepting eligible candidates who applied. She felt that new Members could leave of their own choice if they did not like the ambience of the Council.

C'llr Nick Stamp felt it was not a suitable time to co-opt, given the relatively short time remaining until the next election. He was not in agreement that new Members should be co-opted merely because they had applied, but felt that more scrutiny of candidates should be carried out before co-opting them.

C'llr Hilliard Studley supported the views expressed by C'llr Nick Stamp.

C'llr Queenie Thomas said that she would like the opportunity to meet candidates and get to know them before co-opting them, and was not in favour of co-option at the current time.

Following this, Members considered the open vacancies for co-option for each candidate in turn, as follows, with a recorded vote being requested by C’Ilr John Cole:

Mrs. Michelle Lewis (proposal to co-opt, proposed by C’Ilr Mary Owen, seconded by C’Ilr Jan. Morgan). C’Ilrs Mary Owen, Jan. Morgan, John Cole and Alison Palmer voted in favour; C’Ilrs Paul Davies, Lisa O’Sullivan, Nick Stamp, Hilliard Studley and Queenie Thomas voted against. Resolution therefore not passed.

Mr. Ian Lewis – (proposal to co-opt, proposed by C’Ilr John Cole, seconded by C’Ilr Mary Owen). C’Ilrs John Cole, Mary Owen, Jan. Morgan and Alison Palmer voted in favour; C’Ilrs Paul Davies, Lisa O’Sullivan, Nick Stamp, Hilliard Studley and Queenie Thomas voted against. Resolution therefore not passed.

Mrs. Veronica James – (proposal to co-opt, proposed by C’Ilr Jan. Morgan, seconded by C’Ilr John Cole). C’Ilrs Jan. Morgan, John Cole, Alison Palmer and Mary Owen voted in favour; C’Ilrs Paul Davies, Lisa O’Sullivan, Nick Stamp, Hilliard Studley and Queenie Thomas voted against. Resolution therefore not passed.

Following the vote, there was some discussion on the matter of how previous co-options had been handled. C’Ilr John Cole suggested that previous co-options had simply been carried out by vote, with no interviews, application forms, etc. However, C’Ilr Nick Stamp wished it to be recorded that he had been interviewed by Members at Avallenau before his co-option. C’Ilr Lisa O’Sullivan said that she had submitted a detailed letter to support her application to join the Council. However, C’Ilr Mary Owen mentioned that in her own case, she had simply been co-opted on by vote, with no further input by Members. It was recognised by Members that there had not been a consistent approach on previous occasions, and that there was no specific requirement or protocol to be followed.

Discussion of arrangements for Remembrance Day service

C’Ilr Lisa O’Sullivan had approached the bugler, who had expressed a willingness to attend again this year. Telephone number for him to be passed to the Clerk for future use.

C’Ilr John Cole confirmed that the wreaths had already been delivered.

Flowers for war memorial – Members were in agreement for the cost of wreaths and flowers to be covered by M.B.C.C. (proposer C’Ilr John Cole, seconder C’Ilr Jan. Morgan). The Clerk asked if possible for the receipts obtained to be made out in the name of the Community Council, to enable VAT to be reclaimed.

Discussion of arrangements for Schoolchildren competition to design

Christmas cards

Members were in agreement for an arrangement to be made again this year for the schoolchildren to be invited to design pictures for a Christmas card, with the winning design(s) to be printed up and distributed in the Community (proposer C’Ilr John Cole, seconder C’Ilr Paul Davies).

C’Ilr Jan. Morgan undertook to contact the school and invite them to get the competition under way in the school. C’Ilr Mary Owen undertook to obtain a cost for printing from Cleddau Press. Members agreed to hand-deliver the cards as for last year.

C'Ilr Lisa O'Sullivan proposed that a newsletter be prepared and placed in the envelopes along with the Christmas cards. This was seconded by C'Ilr Hilliard Studley. However, the resolution was not passed, as the majority of Members felt that there was insufficient time to organise this in the available timescale.

Discussion of arrangements for Christmas Carol Concert

Members agreed to proceed with organisation of a Christmas carol concert, to be held at the Welfare Hall at 6-15pm on Wednesday 8th December, and with refreshments being provided by M.B.C.C. at cost (proposer C'Ilr John Cole, seconder C'Ilr Mary Owen). Members were informed that the new Minister of Emmanuel Mission Church, Daniel Brett, had agreed to conduct this as his predecessor had done. C'Ilr Alison Palmer undertook to speak with him again to confirm arrangements.

C'Ilr Lisa O'Sullivan asked whether a Covid-19 risk assessment should be carried out for the event. C'Ilr John Cole said that this was not needed, as the hall was only licensed for 200 people.

Regarding Christmas tree provision in the Community, Members agreed to ask C'Ilr John Cole to provide these on the same basis as previous years (proposer C'Ilr Queenie Thomas, seconder C'Ilr Jan. Morgan). All Members were in favour, apart from C'Ilr Hilliard Studley, who abstained from the vote. [NOTE – C'Ilr John Cole declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter of discussion of the Christmas tree provision, and left the meeting room during discussion and voting on the matter].

The meeting was closed at 8-20pm.