

**Minutes of the monthly meeting of Johnston Community Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 in Johnston Institute.**

**Present: Cllrs Neil James, Young, Morgan, Warlow, Rowlands, Wilkins, F. James, Jones, Philpott; Peter Horton (Clerk);**

**Apologies : C'Ilrs Jeffries, Pratt.**

**Also present Gareth Thomas, Headmaster of Johnston School.**

**0086 – Declarations of known Interests**

C'Ilr Rowlands re-stated his ongoing personal and prejudicial interest in the agenda item about the land opposite the Johnston Institute, due to an ongoing unrelated boundary dispute with the other party.

**0087 – To receive the minutes from the November 2019 monthly meeting**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record, and signed by the Chair (proposer C'Ilr Fran James, seconder C'Ilr Jones).

**Matters Arising from the approved minutes**

**0088 - Discussion of school transport for 2020-21 school year**

Correspondence had been received from Kate Evan-Hughes of P.C.C., stating that transport would be via scheduled service buses, and chargeable for any children living within the three mile limit.

C'Ilr Neil James had compared the information in the letter to the latest available W.G. information / guidelines. These referred to the relevant distance as the walking distance along the shortest 'available' route'. A route is 'available' if it can be walked, unaccompanied, by a child of normal abilities. If there is no 'available' route to the school, the L.A. has to provide free transport.

C'Ilr Rowlands mentioned that he had been informed by P.C.C. officers that, according to their legal advice, if there was public transport available along the route in question, then this would negate the requirement to provide free transport.

The Clerk had also received a second message from Ms. Kate Evan-Hughes following the one in which her letter had been sent. The second message was offering a meeting between P.C.C., J.C.C., and school authorities to explore possible ways forward, and referring to possible exemptions for free school meal recipients.

C'Ilr Jones stated that the distinction between pupils receiving free meals and other pupils was simply unacceptable. She also took issue with the numbers of pupils being quoted, which she said would steadily increase year on year.

Mr. Gareth Thomas (Headmaster, Johnston School) addressed the meeting. He commented that consultation on the two year exemption from charging for school transport had not included any reference to the three mile limit within which pupils might thereafter be charged. Because of this, his feeling was that the matter had not been handled in an open and transparent manner. This feeling was strengthened by the fact that he had received no response to queries made by him in relation to this matter until he received a copy of the letter sent to the Clerk today. He also mentioned pupils from Neyland, who apparently stand to get free transport, in part, because of the supposed lack of a safe route to school, as well as the lack of a service bus on the route. He mentioned that W.G. advice was that for a route to be considered safe, there would have to be a pavement along the entire route.

C'llr Rowlands commented that the whole business had been poorly thought out in P.C.C., and apologised for any misleading information conveyed, which he had understood to have been the genuine view of P.C.C.

Mr. Gareth Thomas referred to comments put out in the media suggesting that Johnston parents had 'chosen' to go to Milford School, which was misleading. C'llr Jones referred to the Facebook / Pembrokeshire Herald reports on this subject, which said something similar.

C'llr Jones asked if parents who decided to send their children back to school in Haverfordwest would get their free bus passes back. The clear advice was that this would not happen, as this was no longer the allocated school, and that parents were therefore tied into the current arrangements.

Members confirmed that they wished to engage with the meeting offered by P.C.C. Clerk to request this, to be held in the evening if possible. C'llrs Jones, Wilkins, Philpott and (if possible) Neil James to attend.

Mr. Gareth Thomas mentioned that decisions on where to allocate pupils for the next academic year had been finalised. Members felt that the timing of this decision had probably been deliberate on the part of P.C.C.

C'llr Wilkins expressed the view that parents simply could not be expected to foot this kind of bill, nor walk along the unsafe route to Milford Haven, and that another solution would simply have to be found. It was resolved that the Clerk should write to the W.G. Education Minister and Paul Davies, A.M., raising the matter with them. Copy of the letter to be sent to Kate Evan-Hughes and C'llr Rowlands (proposer C'llr Neil James, seconder C'llr Philpott).

As a separate matter, C'llr Rowlands mentioned possible fund-raising for a defibrillator for the school. Matter to be placed on January agenda for discussion. Following the discussion, Members thanked Mr. Gareth Thomas for attending and contributing to the discussion, after which he left the meeting.

#### **0089 – Bus shelter / seat outside NISA Shop**

C'llr Rowlands said that the matter was still in hand with P.C.C.

#### **0090- Close Field Skatepark**

C'llr Rowlands was still pursuing the matter with P.C.C. Due to recent changes in the refuse collection arrangements, officers in P.C.C. had been extremely busy.

However, further discussions were expected after the Christmas holiday.

C'llr Neil James raised concerns over the makeup of the carousel surfacing material, and felt that something better should be considered instead.

C'llr Rowlands said that all these issues could be looked at. He had been assured of some funding towards the new initiatives required, but it was inevitable that some contribution from J.C.C. would be needed.

#### **0091 - Discussion of possible signage for businesses around railway bridge**

Members noted that the signage had now spread to the other side of the bridge, and the situation was worsening. Members understood the need for local businesses to advertise, but felt that the situation might be getting out of hand. The Clerk confirmed that no response had been received to the message sent to the business park owner regarding the matter. It was noted that the matter was scheduled for discussion as an agenda item in January. In the meantime C'llr Rowlands undertook to visit the owner to seek information on his view regarding the matter.

**0092 – Overhanging tree, junction of Church Road / Hall Court.**

C'llr Fran. James mentioned that she was waiting for the current temporary restrictions on Church Road to be removed before taking photographs, as the current situation was not representative of normal conditions.

**0093 - Brambles on footpath to school.**

Members were uncertain of the current situation, as they had not walked along the footpath in the recent dark evenings.

C'llr Rowlands mentioned that this type of issue was arising due to funding pressures in P.C.C. He suggested again engaging with P.C.C. to organise possible service level agreements whereby J.C.C. would pay for the work to be done.

C'llr Neil James commented that P.C.C. had a duty to do this work, and felt that the Authority was trying to wash its hands of things that are its responsibility. He also suggested weed-killing the area twice a year to get rid of the problem altogether.

**0094 - Narrow footpath outside Johnston Farm.**

Work was in hand, and nearing completion. C'llr Morgan had reservations over how much of an improvement would actually be achieved. However, he was pleased to see that at least some improvements were in hand, and acknowledged that there would be a considerable improvement on the previous situation.

The Clerk confirmed that he had measured the pavement width at the narrowest point by the end of the Johnston Farm building, and it was 0.9m.

C'llr Neil James felt that the work had been done 'on the cheap', and that a realignment of the carriageway would have produced a much better result.

**0095 - Discussion of purchase of WW1 commemorative memorial seat**

Matter still in hand with C'llr Spilsbury.

**0096 - Discussion of purchase of new defibrillator for Village Institute.**

The Clerk confirmed that he had twice contacted Cariad since the last meeting, but had not yet received any response. He undertook to chase them up again to check that the defibrillators had been registered on the W.A.S. database.

Discussion of possible further defibrillator for the school to be placed on January agenda for discussion.

**0097 - Discussion of possible action to retain Community Police Forum**

C'llr Rowlands confirmed that he had still heard nothing from anyone in Neyland regarding the matter.

**0098 - Discussion of action to discourage badger activity on sports field**

Matter with C'llr Pratt, who was contacting Sean Tilling of P.C.C. to seek a quotation for the alterations to the gates.

**0099 - Discussion of development of Vine Field**

No change since the November meeting. C'llr Rowlands said that further discussions were anticipated after the Christmas holiday period.

**0100 - Fly tipping, land adjacent to Glebelands Field.**

C'llr Rowlands had chased up the matter with P.C.C., and hoped for a resolution very soon. He had also asked them to remove debris left behind after the recent bonfire at Hillcroft.

**0101 - Car in car park opposite the Institute.**

Members confirmed that the car was still there, although C'llr Rowlands confirmed that he had chased the matter up with P.C.C. He undertook to do so again.

**0102 - Discussion of possible unauthorised scrap merchants in Village**

The Clerk had chased up P.C.C. for an update. No response had been received, but it was not thought that any application had yet been submitted.

**0103 - Johnston in Bloom.**

Preparation of prize certificates still in hand with C'llr Wilkins.

**0104 - Discussion of possible arrangements for Community Christmas lighting**  
Matter to be tabled as an agenda item in May 2020.

**0105 - Discussion of possible fence provision along Cunnigar Lane**

The Clerk confirmed that he had received a message from P.C.C. with a list of local fencing contractors, and declining to engage in discussions about fencing provision in this location.

**0106 – litter and anti-social behaviour outside shop at Glebelands.**

C'llr Rowlands confirmed that he had spoken again to the shop owner, and the matter seemed to have been settled.

**0107 – Path from The Close to St. Peter's Road**

C'llr Warlow mentioned that moss in the lane was creating a problem due to the slippery surface. It was confirmed that the lane was understood to be in P.C.C. ownership. Clerk to report matter to P.C.C. as a safety issue. C'llr Warlow thought that the moss was coming from the adjacent garage roof.

**0108 – Community vegetable beds.**

Matter to be placed on January 2020 agenda for discussion. C'llr Rowlands suggested involving pupils from the school in any project arranged.

**0109 - Discussion of problems due to closure of cycleway boardwalk**

Members had received more complaints about the ongoing closure of the boardwalk, and were concerned at the safety implications for cyclists and pedestrians, due to lack of proper signage and cyclists using footpaths through the Village. It was noted that P.C.C. had responded dismissively to complaints about the situation. It was resolved that the Clerk should write a letter to Sustrans on the issue, with copies to P.C.C. and Paul Davies, A.M. Members were agreed that the matter needed resolving, as the cycleway was the most well-used cycleway in Pembrokeshire.

**0110 - Events to commemorate V.E. Day over weekend of 8th – 10th May 2020**

To be tabled for discussion in January 2020.

### **0111 - B.T. consultation on proposed decommissioning of payphones**

The Clerk confirmed that he had sent in the consultation response. However, it was not anticipated that it would carry much weight, as there were specific criteria that needed to be met for the payphones to be retained, which were not met in the case of the payphones in Johnston.

### **0112 - Discussion of Highway safety issues, Langford Road**

Nothing further to date. The letter from P.C.C. responding to the concerns raised at the November meeting was re-read. In respect of the comments in the letter citing previous speed survey results, C'llr Rowlands commented that higher traffic speeds had anecdotally been noted. Members to await new speed survey results in order to assess the current situation. C'llr Rowlands commented that J.C.C. would need to consider funding any speed-activated signage required.

### **0113 - Discussion of possible use of '2 minute clean' boards**

The Clerk had discussed the matter further with P.C.C. They needed a nominated person to care for each board, and an address at which it could be kept when not out. No Members were available to undertake this. It was agreed that C'llr Philpott would publicise the matter on the Facebook page, and invite volunteers from the local community.

## **Planning**

### **0114 - Applications**

No applications had been received.

### **0115 - Decisions**

**19/0594/PA** - Two storey extension to rear; 17, Hillcroft, JOHNSTON, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 3QB.

## **Correspondence**

**0116** - O.V.W. – Information on producing report on biodiversity – covered in agenda item below.

**0117** - Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority – consultation on draft plan for 2020-25 – noted.

**0118** - O.V.W. – minutes from recent meeting of larger councils – noted.

**0119** - Planed – Invitation to 'promoters' meeting, to be held at 12-30pm, 16th December, at Planed offices, Narberth – noted.

**0120** - W.G. – Consultation on promoting a more equal Wales – noted.

**0121** - P.C.C. – Request for confirmation of requirements for flower beds, 2020 season – Members agreed to have the same arrangement as for 2019. Clerk to make necessary arrangements (proposer C'llr Neil James, seconder C'llr Rowlands).

**0122** - Wales Audit Office – confirmation of Sec. 137 grant limits for 2020 – noted.

**0123** - Zurich – Insurance renewal reminder – discussed in agenda item 0133 below.

**0124** - P.C.C. – general information on Ash dieback – to be tabled for discussion as an agenda item in January.

**0125** - Paul Davies, A.M. – November newsletter – noted.

**0126** - W.G. – Information on Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – noted.

**0127** - Darren Thomas – response to letter raising concerns about traffic problems, Langford Road – discussed in item 0112 above.

**0128** - P.C.C. – Response to letter about school transport – discussed in item 0088 above.

## **Accounts**

### **0129 - Payments**

Clerk (salary October – December 2019)	:	£1129-90
H.M.R.C. (P.A.Y.E. tax)	:	£ 272-23
Clerk (mileage / postage, June – December, including court attendance in Swansea)	:	£ 149-60
Zurich (insurance premium, including additional for sports pavilion)	:	£1169-88
David Banfield (bus shelter cleaning)	:	£ 60-00

The above payments were approved by Members (proposer C'llr Philpott, seconder C'llr Neil James).

### **0130 - Discussion of Risk assessment actions (including discussion of any remedial works needed to St. Peter's Road bus shelter)**

C'llr Philpott had not seen Sonny Clancy, but had met his son, and asked him to ask his father if he would be willing to provide a quotation. She was still waiting for this, and undertook to chase it up, hopefully later in the week.

Regarding measures to deal with the drop behind the bus shelter, Members noted that they were still waiting for the T.R.A. engineers to visit the site to carry out detailed design work, at which time it was anticipated that a site meeting would be held to look at possibilities to deal with the matter.

### **0131 - Discussion of requirement to report on progress towards producing a plan to encourage biodiversity**

Members noted that the first report should be published by the end of December. C'llr Nail James undertook to draft up a report over the Christmas holiday period. Clerk to forward to C'llr Neil James all available information in relation to this.

### **0132 - Discussion of Independent Remuneration Panel Members' allowances for 2020/21**

Members made the following decisions regarding allowances for which a decision of the Council was required :

**Determination 44** (to give £500 each to up to five Members in respect of specific duties) – not agreed.

**Determination 45** (to pay mileage expenses to Members for approved duties) – agreed to retain the right to pay this where required.

**Determination 46** (to reimburse the cost of overnight stays where required to carry out approved duties) – agreed to retain the right to pay this where required.

**Determination 47** (to pay financial loss compensation to each of their members, where such loss has actually occurred, for attending approved duties) – agreed to retain the right to pay this where required.

**Determination 49** (to provide a Civic Head payment to the Chair of the council up to a maximum of £1,500) – agreed to reserve the right to pay this.

**Determination 50** (to provide a Deputy Civic Head payment to the vice-Chair of the council up to a maximum of £500) – agreed to reserve the right to pay this.

It was noted that these determinations mirrored those agreed last year, and were approved by Members (proposer C'llr Wilkins, seconder C'llr Young).

C'llr Rowlands asked for it to be placed on the minute record that it was unfair that many people would benefit from applying for these allowances, but were unwilling to apply for them out of embarrassment. He felt it should be taken out of the hands of community councils to allocate these allowances.

### **0133 - Discussion of insurance renewal details, especially pavilion**

It was agreed for the insurance to be renewed as per the renewal documentation, with the additional premium required to cover the wooden pavilion being added when received (proposer C'Ilr Philpott, seconder C'Ilr Neil James).

### **0134 - Discussion of possible dates for Chairman's dinner**

Matter to be tabled for discussion in January.

### **0135 - Discussion of any problems with rubbish collection arrangements**

Members discussed some initial problems experienced with the new arrangements. C'Ilr Warlow noted that they would not take wet cardboard, but the bags were not suitable for keeping the cardboard dry. She had had to place this in the grey bag instead, after the cardboard had been left behind.

C'Ilr Young felt there would be an inevitable increase in fly-tipping due to the new arrangements. Members were generally in agreement with this.

C'Ilr Morgan mentioned the two-weekly collection of the purple bags for hygiene waste. He felt that due to the type of material, these should be collected weekly. Clerk to write to P.C.C. to raise concerns over the inadequacy of bags to keep out the rain, and request weekly collection of the purple bags (proposer C'Ilr Morgan, seconder C'Ilr Rowlands).

### **0136 - Discussion of problems with cars at end of Brickhurst Park**

C'Ilr Neil James noted that three vehicles had been left on this land for over a month, One was taxed and had a valid MoT certificate. The others were registered as S.O.R.N., and appeared to have been dumped. One was KE55 HRD (Red Iveco van); the other NL57 RCU (red Vauxhall). Clerk to contact P.C.C. to request removal of these vehicles (proposer C'Ilr Neil James, seconder C'Ilr Fran. James).

C'Ilr Rowlands suggested trying to register the land in the name of the Community Council. However, Members believed it to already be in private ownership.

### **0137 - Discussion of possible request for yellow lines in Hall Court**

C'Ilr Fran. James said that many residents there had said they would like to see parking restrictions in this location. C'Ilr Rowlands undertook to raise the issue with Darren Thomas in P.C.C., and request a site meeting to look at the matter.

### **0138 - Discussion of possible recycling area for Village**

Members thought that any recycling area formed would degenerate into a general dumping ground, though the idea was good in theory. Matter left in abeyance.

### **0139 - Discussion of problems with lighting on footbridge, Langford Road**

C'Ilr Jones mentioned that a new brighter light had been placed on the opposite side of the road. As a result the situation was considerably improved, even though there was still no lighting on the actual footbridge, and further improvements were needed. C'Ilr Rowlands suggested this as a possible item for inclusion on an agenda for discussion with P.C.C. at a site meeting. He suggested that Members forward emails to him with items of concern for discussion in a site meeting to be planned.

**0140 - Discussion of possible one-way system, Glebelands**

C’Ilr Fran. James had been asked about the possibility of arranging this on several occasions. C’Ilr Neil James noted that similar requests in relation to The Close had foundered due to lack of local support. C’Ilr Rowlands had been informed that due to current inconsiderate parking practices, there could be problems getting emergency vehicles around there in an emergency.

Members voted to ask P.C.C. to look at the possibility of introducing a one-way system around the estate (proposer C’Ilr Neil James, seconder C’Ilr Morgan). Clerk to contact P.C.C. to raise the issue.

**0141 - Discussion of Community Land Trusts**

C’Ilr Rowlands felt that, as J.C.C. had 13 acres of land, this was something that would be worth exploring, possibly in conjunction with Planed. He commented that, if it would be possible to develop some of the land for community housing, it would be a good idea to look at it.

C’Ilr Neil James thought the only possible location for housing would be on the site of the pavilions. He thought any such suggestion would create uproar in the Community, and he would be personally against it. It was agreed that J.C.C. should think about possible ways of developing the land use, though since the quarry had moved its boundaries, some areas were no longer suitable for development.

[NOTE – at this point members of the public were asked to leave the room, as the remaining agenda items were to be held in private session].

**0142 - Discussion of gratuity / pension arrangements for Clerk**

Clerk explained the rationale of his request to Members.

Members agreed for the Clerk to seek advice from the W.A.O. regarding the legitimacy of any such arrangement (proposer C’Ilr Neil James, seconder C’Ilr Rowlands). Clerk to put this in hand. Matter to be tabled for discussion in January.

[NOTE – at this point C’Ilr Rowlands left the meeting].

**0143 - Discussion of situation regarding land opposite Johnston Institute**

The Clerk updated Members on the current situation. Further communication was awaited from the Council solicitor regarding the matter.

**0144 - Any other business**

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 9-10pm.

Next scheduled meeting – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....