

MERLINS BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 11th January 2023 at 6-30pm, at the Pembrokeshire College, Haverfordwest, and online via the Zoom videoconferencing platform

Present: Cllrs. Ian Lewis, Alison Palmer, Mike Dare, John Cole, Jan Morgan, Michelle Lewis; Peter Horton (Clerk).

Apologies: C'llrs Veronica James, Kate Bevan, Craig Reeves,

Declaration of known interests

C'llr John Cole noted a personal and prejudicial interest in any discussion concerning the Welfare Committee.

Approval of minutes of December 2022 monthly meeting

These were approved by Members, and retained by the Clerk for signature following the meeting (proposer C'llr Ian Lewis, seconder C'llr Jan Morgan).

Matters arising

Remembrance Day. Members asked the Clerk to arrange to send a letter of thanks to the bugler for his attendance in November. Members felt that an additional donation to the Royal British Legion would be appropriate, as had been the practice in previous years. Approval of payment dealt with in 'Accounts' below.

Plans

There were no plans for consideration this month.

Correspondence

1) P.C.C. – Request for precept for 2023/24 – dealt with in 'Accounts' below.

Accounts

Payments

John Cole (various)	:	£985-80
Royal British Legion (donation)	:	£ 75-00

The above payments were approved by Members (proposer C'llr Jan Morgan, seconder C'llr Alison Palmer).

Precept for 2023/24

Members set the precept at £17500. Draft budget to be amended to incorporate an overall Events category at £4000. Clerk to circulate the final budget to all Members. (proposer C'llr John Cole, seconder C'llr Michelle Lewis).

Discussion of Clerk's pay, conditions and hours of work

Members approved an arrangement whereby two weeks of the Clerk's annual leave were converted to pay at the appropriate rate, and this backdated to April 2022 (proposer C'llr Jan Morgan, seconder C'llr Ian Lewis). Staff appraisal to be placed on the February agenda for discussion, with C'llrs Alison Palmer and Jan Morgan to discuss this in advance.

Arrangements for internal audit of 2022/23 accounts

Internal auditor for 2021/22 to be re-appointed (proposer C'llr John Cole, seconder C'llr Jan Morgan).

County Councillor's report

C'Illr John Cole reported that he had attended a seminar about the 'long course weekend' scheme, which encouraged sporting events. It promoted events which could potentially bring revenue into the County, and was comparable to the Ironman event. Members were interested in looking into this more, with a view to possibly seeking to bring an event to Merlin's Bridge.

Discussion of co-option of new councillors

C'Illr Jan Morgan had yet to visit the person in Woodlands Park who had recently expressed an interest in possibly joining the Council, but expected to do so shortly. Pending the current vacancies being filled, advertisement to be kept open, though given the level of membership at present, Members were relaxed about the need to fill the vacancies urgently.

Discussion of arrangements to celebrate coronation of King Charles III

Members focussed their attention on a plan to organise a 'Party in the Park' to celebrate the coronation, with a possible start time of 11am, and finish time of 9pm. Some details of possible items to be included were discussed, such as bouncy castle, stalls, tea party, music, face painting, Mike Dare's band, competitions with link to the nature of the event, horse and carriage, big screen to broadcast the coronation, etc. Monthly agenda item to be arranged to enable continued discussion as necessary, though the organisation was formally recognised as being under the remit of the Welfare Committee.

Clerk to research possibilities for commemorative memorabilia, such as a bookmark, coin, or similar, for local schoolchildren, for discussion at the February meeting.

Discussion of individual member explanations of councillor roles

The Chairman, vice-Chairman, Clerk and County Councillor roles were discussed and explained in some detail, for the information of new Members and all present.

Discussion of protocols for use of Whatsapp group

C'Illr Michelle Lewis had circulated some guiding principles to Members for consideration. Clerk to re-send these to all Members, for agreement either informally by email / Whatsapp, or for further discussion in the February meeting, as necessary.

Discussion / explanation of protocols governing discussions and decisions in community council meetings

The Clerk explained the basic principles / protocols governing decision-making in the Council, and referred Members to the Community Council Standing Orders for any further information required.

Discussion of project for vehicle activated signage

The Clerk confirmed that he had been in discussion with P.C.C. regarding the signage. The officer had confirmed her willingness to recommend replacement of the existing sign with a new one suitable for the reduced speed limit, this to be included in a signage list to be submitted to the Welsh Government. In the event that the sign outside the Rugby Club could not be included on this list, or had been replaced by other means, she undertook to seek to include a sign for the Lower Pembroke Road on the list instead. Members were content to await developments in the meantime.

Discussion of possible appointments of community representatives to Welfare Committee

Deferred until the normal discussion in the A.G.M.

Discussion of ways to enhance co-operation between the community council and the Welfare Committee

Members felt the arrangement was generally working well at present, and did not feel that any amendments were desirable or necessary.

Any necessary discussion of environmental / dog-fouling issues

C’Ilr Jan Morgan had been approached by a local dog walker who was upset by the amount of dog-fouling around the community. He had referred to a similar problem that had been experienced in Lower Fishguard. In that case, local schoolchildren had been invited to create posters for display around the locality. As a result, the problem had almost disappeared. The headmistress of St. Mark’s School had been open to the suggestion of involving the schoolchildren there in a similar initiative for Merlin’s Bridge. Members were supportive of the idea, and C’Ilr Jan Morgan undertook to pursue this with the school. She suggested that this could be in the form of pictures, poems, etc. Once under way, Members could then monitor the situation, to try and assess the level of improvement.

As another possibility, C’Ilr John Cole suggested the possibility of using environmentally friendly luminous paint to highlight the problem. He also suggested seeking to put extra bins around the community, such as by the garages at St Thomas’ Ave, at Greenhill Park, and at Woodlands Park. Clerk to make enquiries with P.C.C. about how to proceed with this.

Discussion of possible support for Homewatch scheme in community

C’Ilr Jan Morgan reported that some elderly residents had been concerned over recent Facebook postings referring to some reports of a hooded youth attempting to get into someone’s house. Caution was urged over how such postings were handled, due to the possible disquieting effect they could have locally.

Clerk to seek advice / attendance from the local Neighbourhood Policing Team, & issue a meeting invitation to them, for appropriate advice / resources to be discussed.

Any other business

Noticeboard signage. C’Ilr Jan Morgan was still working to obtain the final letters needed to be able to complete the noticeboard signage.

Frame. C’Ilr John Morgan was keen to discuss ways to improve co-operation between MBCC and Frame. Matter to be placed on February meeting agenda for discussion.

Next meeting

Wednesday 8th February 2023, at 6-30pm, in person at the Pembrokeshire College, and online using the Zoom platform.

The meeting was closed at 8-30pm.