

MERLINS BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 6-30pm, in person at the Pembrokeshire College, Haverfordwest, and online via the Zoom videoconferencing platform

Present: Cllrs. Ian Lewis (Chairman), Michelle Lewis, Mike Dare, John Cole; Peter Horton (Clerk).

Apologies: C'llrs Alison Palmer, Veronica James.

Declaration of known interests

C'llr John Cole declared a personal and prejudicial interest in any Welfare Committee-related issues that might arise.

Approval of minutes of minutes of October 2023 monthly meeting

These were approved by Members, and retained by the Clerk for signature following the meeting (proposer C'llr John Cole, seconder C'llr Michelle Lewis).

Matters arising

Defibrillator cabinet. C'llr John Cole reported that this had now been replaced, and that the new cabinet was fitted with a heating element. The public access defibrillator could be accessed by calling 999 and obtaining the access code. This code had also been logged on the national public access defibrillator database by the Clerk.

Plans

Planning consultations received

23/0625/PA - Remove existing conservatory and replace with Two storey rear extension; Site Address: 72, Tudor Gardens, MERLINS BRIDGE, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 1LB – No comments.

23/0704/PA - Retrospective application to retain Portacabin for use as Office; Site Address: Merlins Autos, Magdalene Street, MERLINS BRIDGE, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 1JJ – No comments.

Correspondence

- 1) Boundary Commission – notification of consultation on forthcoming review of town and community council boundaries in Pembrokeshire – Following discussion, Clerk to respond to say that Members were content with the way the council functions and did not wish to recommend any changes.

Accounts

Payments. There were no routine payments for approval this month [NOTE – three one-off donations separately approved for payment in agenda item on 'Discussion / update on arrangements for seasonal community activities' below].

County Councillor's report

Parking charges, County Hall. C'llr John Cole had raised a question regarding these charges, but with no success in getting them removed. However, he had now logged a further request, seeking to restrict the period of parking charges.

Council tax. C'llr John Cole reported that early indications suggested a likely increase in council tax for 2024/25 of around 7.5%.

Discussion of co-option of new councillors

One resident was in attendance who was potentially interested in joining the council. C'llr Mike Dare also mentioned one further person known to him who might be interested. It was understood that C'llr Veronica James was also in contact with a further individual who might be interested. Matters were left in abeyance pending any formal applications that might be forthcoming.

Any necessary discussion of environmental / dog-fouling issues in community, including discussion of possible additional locations for community flower beds

Dog-fouling. C'llr John Cole mentioned that he had challenged someone dropping dog-fouling bags on the corner of St. Thomas' Avenue, and the problem had subsequently stopped. Members recognised that the overall problem was bound to continue, but could be discouraged by vigilance, and measures being taken.

Littering. C'llr John Cole suggested the possibility of a local litter-picking group. No discussion was held on this, but C'llr Michelle Lewis undertook to put a post on the community Facebook page encouraging people to use litter bins, and drawing attention to the benefits of doing this.

New flower bed locations. Members agreed to request four new additional flower bed locations, following the success of the ones provided for 2023. These were at the following locations: (1) On Pembroke Road, on verge outside Welfare Hall fence; (2) Just before corner of Haroldston Close in St Issell's Avenue, on RHS travelling away from Pembroke Road, alongside the new bus shelter; (3) On lower side corner of junction of St. Issell's Avenue and Pembroke Road, to mirror the bed on the opposite side of the junction; and (4) on the Milford Road, LHS travelling away from the Merlin's Bridge roundabout, opposite the Old Hakin Road junction, between the pavement and the cenotaph war memorial. Clerk to submit this request to P.C.C. for consideration / implementation.

Discussion of any responses received from local residents on community priorities

C'llr Michelle Lewis had received around 50 responses to the posting placed on Facebook, inviting residents to submit suggestions for things they would like to have considered for action in the community. The main ones suggested were:

- Path provision around the Welfare field. C'llr John Cole mentioned that there was already a granite path underneath, that had become overgrown.
- More children's events in the community. C'llr John Cole mentioned the need for someone who was Police C.R.B. checked in order to run such events.
- Establishment of a Gardening Club. C'llr John Cole suggested that it would need someone experienced to run such a club.
- Children's equipment in the playpark to be mended and updated.
- Establishment of a community Lunch Group. C'llr John Cole mentioned that he knew of someone who might potentially be willing to run something of this nature, and would pursue this. C'llr Mike Dare also mentioned various initiatives that he was involved with of a similar nature, as well as various one-off events planned in the run up to the festive season. He undertook to send details of all the planned events to the Clerk for circulation / forwarding to C'llr Michelle Lewis, to be advertised on the Facebook page.
- Planting of a sensory garden.
- Planting of fruit trees.

- Organisation of a Halloween walk-through the village. Members briefly considered the possibility of an annual lantern walk.
- Poster to be placed in the school for parents to know of these ideas, and be thus in a position to volunteer.

C’Ilr Michelle Lewis mentioned that many residents were not aware of what was going on in the community, and drew attention to the real need for events and activities to be better publicised. C’Ilr John Cole undertook to forward a list of events and activities connected with the Welfare Hall and Field to the Clerk, for forwarding to C’Ilr Michelle Lewis, and subsequent posting on the Facebook page and community noticeboards.

Discussion / update on arrangements for seasonal community activities

A message received from C’Ilr Alison Palmer was read out to Members. This mentioned matters concerning a Christmas event planned for 16th December, Remembrance Day arrangements, arrangements with the school for design of Christmas cards, and suggestions for donations to local organisations.

C’Ilr John Cole undertook to speak to Dan from Emmanuel Mission to discuss detailed arrangements for the carol service event planned for mid-December.

C’Ilr Mike Dare mentioned his plans for a possible lunch event in the Welfare Hall on Christmas Day, and doorstep carol singing on 5th and 12th December. All details to be sent over to Clerk for posting in noticeboards, and on Facebook page.

Clerk to seek confirmation from C’Ilr Alison Palmer of exactly what was planned for 16th December. Clerk to ask C’Ilr Alison Palmer to progress the matter of the Christmas cards as soon as possible, to allow time for printing to be arranged.

Members approved the following donations:

Emmanuel Mission, in recognition of their work which was of benefit to the entire community, by organising carols services, Remembrance Day services, etc. - £300

St. Mark’s School, as a contribution towards their transportation costs for seasonal activities for the local children - £300

Impact 242, for their wide-ranging community activities which were recognised as being of benefit to the entire community - £300.

In addition, it was agreed for C’Ilr John Cole to arrange to obtain selection boxes for distribution to all the pupils at the local school, as in previous years.

The above donations and arrangements were approved by Members (proposer C’Ilr Ian Lewis, seconder C’Ilr Michelle Lewis).

Discussion of possible purchase of second community defibrillator

Potential sites at the school, around the Tudor Gardens area, and around the Greenhill Crescent area, were briefly considered. Maps of the community area to be provided prior to the December meeting, for a detailed consideration to be made. Final decision on whether or not to purchase a further defibrillator to be deferred until January, for consideration in conjunction with the overall 2024/25 budget.

Any other business

There was no other business to be reported.

Next meeting

Wednesday 13th December 2023, at 6-30pm, in person at the Pembrokeshire College, and online using the Zoom platform.

The meeting was closed at 7-45pm.