

MERLINS BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 6-30pm, online via the Zoom videoconferencing platform

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

Apologies: None.

Declaration of known interests

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

Approval of minutes of minutes of January 2024 monthly meeting

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

Matters arising

Boot Valley drainage problems. Members noted that this had been passed to P.C.C. for attention. Clerk to send message to the resident who had raised the matter, to inform them of the actions taken.

Pothole in car park of sub-Post Office. The Clerk confirmed that he had written to the owners about the problem. No response had been received, but Members noted that some of the worst potholes had been infilled with tarmac scalplings.

Defibrillators. C'Ilr Alison Palmer mentioned that the school would welcome a defibrillator sited in their grounds. However, Members reiterated previous comments about problems of accessibility outside of school hours. C'Ilr Alison Palmer undertook to ask them if they would be willing to leave the gate open permanently to facilitate access, if a defibrillator was to be provided. Separately, a response was awaited from P.C.C. on the request for consideration to siting a defibrillator on the gable end of the garage block on the corner of St. Issell's Avenue and Haroldston Close. The Clerk confirmed that the pads in the Village Hall defibrillator had been replaced.

Plans

Consents notified

23/0704/PA - Retrospective application to retain Portacabin; Merlin's Autos, Magdalene Street, MERLINS BRIDGE, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 1JJ.

Correspondence

- 1) Llyr 1 - public consultation on wind farm proposals - noted.
- 2) Local resident - Request for grit bin provision in community - Matter to be tabled for discussion in April. In the meantime, C'Ilr Michelle Lewis to place a post on the Facebook page, inviting views on the matter, especially on possible locations.
- 3) P.C.C. - holding response regarding request to site defibrillator on side of garage block at junction of St. Issell's Avenue and Haroldston Close - noted.
- 4) Local resident - application for family member to join community council - dealt with in agenda item below.
- 5) Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales - 2024 report - agenda item to be tabled for discussion in April.

6) P.C.C. - Notification of proposed closure of Pembstcc.co.uk website from April 2025 - Clerk to seek advice on the cost implications of updating the existing website.

Accounts

Payments

Defib Warehouse (defibrillator pads)	:	£80-34
Clerk (salary, Jan - March)	:	As per contract
H.M.R.C. (P.A.Y.E. tax)	:	As per contract

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

Community risk assessments (asset and financial)

It was agreed that the Clerk would again carry out the risk assessments this year.

Internal auditor for 2023/24 accounts

Clerk to arrange for internal audits to be carried out by the same auditor as for previous recent years (proposer C'llr Ian Lewis, seconder C'llr John Cole).

Discussion of request for donation towards cost of repairs and maintenance at Welfare Field playpark)

C'llr John Cole made a statement to the Council to provide details on the situation, and explain the need for assistance, given the limited resources of the Welfare Committee. In response to questions from other Members, C'llr John Cole indicated that the income of the Welfare Committee was approximately £10,000 / year, with approximately £8,000 of outgoings. It was also confirmed that legal ownership of the land and playpark was vested in the Merlin's Bridge Welfare Centre, which was a registered charity.

Following this, C'llr John Cole left the meeting while discussions on the proposed donation request took place.

Members proceeded to discuss the donation request. Members were concerned about the impact on M.B.C.C. finances of the donation request, which was in excess of £8,000. It was confirmed that the quotation forming the basis of the donation request was for repairs to address all medium and high-risk items highlighted in the external inspection report provided to the Welfare Committee. Members confirmed that transfer of ownership to the community council had previously been ruled out, and Members were not minded to re-visit this decision.

[NOTE - at this point, C'llr Mike Dare left the meeting with apologies].

As the meeting was not quorate, there being only three Members present, further discussion was deferred for consideration in April. It was noted that detailed financial information would be available in that meeting, that could be used to inform the discussion.

[NOTE - C'llr John Cole returned to meeting at this point]

County Councillor's report

P.C.C. precept. C'llr John Cole reported that the precept increase for 2024/25 had been set at 12.5%. This was due to unfavourable funding settlements from the Welsh Government, and had been pared back as much as possible, with priority being given to meeting statutory obligations.

Potholes. C'llr John Cole had received reports of several potholes around the community, and had passed these on to P.C.C. for action.

Discussion of co-option of new councillors

An application had been received for membership of the community council. The application had been submitted by the applicant's mother, on their behalf. C'llr John Cole knew the applicant and his mother, and was supportive of the application. Members were keen that the applicant's mother should understand clearly constraints that would apply to her interaction in community council meetings, if she should become involved along with her son, but not be an actual council member. C'llr John Cole undertook to discuss the matter with her, explain the constraints to her, and invite her consideration to becoming a member in her own right. C to discuss matter with her, and explain the constraints to her.

Any necessary discussion of environmental / dog-fouling issues in community

Community tree-planting. C'llr Michelle Lewis had put a post on the Facebook page, inviting comments on proposed tree-planting, and seeking volunteers to help with planting, ongoing care and maintenance. There had been around 250 viewings of the post. A number of responses had been received. Some respondents had offered to help, some had asked specifically about provision of fruit trees, and others had asked about community bulb-planting. These were considered valuable contributions, which if feasible to be implemented, could help to draw the community together. In addition, some residents had asked again about provision of a path around the Welfare Field, and creation of a community garden on land around the Welfare Hall. However, C'llr John Cole said these ideas had been previously raised, and would not be possible due to space constraints, etc. The Clerk was asked to contact P.C.C. and request a site meeting to discuss possible locations for planting of fruit trees and bulbs in the community. P.C.C. officers to be put in touch with C'llrs Michelle Lewis and John Cole, who offered to attend any site meeting arranged, subject to this being at a mutually convenient time / date.

Community flower beds. Clerk to contact P.C.C. to ask about the timetable for digging out new flower beds and planting of these for the 2024 season.

Planting of a Korean Fir. Clerk to enquire with P.C.C. about the possibility of supply and funding for planting of Korean Firs in the community, for possible use as permanent community Christmas trees. Enquiry to reference one in Glen View and one on the corner of St Issell's Ave. Enquiry to ask about the normal height of the trees at time of planting.

Any other business

Request for funding support for transport to take residents to Folly Farm and other destinations. C'llr John Cole had been approached by a resident about possible funding support for a bus to take people to Folly Farm, etc. They had been invited to write in with their request, but had not done so to date. C'llr John Cole undertook to speak further with them about this.

Defibrillator training. Agenda item to be tabled for discussion in April on arranging a training session for use of community defibrillators.

Next meeting. Wednesday 10th April 2024, at 6-30pm, in person at the Pembrokeshire College, and online using the Zoom platform.

The meeting was closed at 8-15pm.