

MERLINS BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting 9th June 2021 at 7pm held in the Welfare Hall,
Merlin's Bridge

Present: Cllrs. John Cole, Alison Palmer, Nick Stamp, Mary Owen, Paul Davies, Lisa O'Sullivan (tied in by telephone); Peter Horton (Clerk).

Also present : Mr. & Mrs. Richard and Michelle Lewis (members of the public).

The meeting commenced at 7-00pm.

Apologies

None.

Declaration of known interests

None.

Approval of minutes of 2021 A.G.M.

These were approved by Members (proposer C'llr John Cole, seconder C'llr Alison Palmer).

Approval of minutes of May 2021 monthly meeting

The minutes were amended in the agenda item on 'discussion of Welfare Committee request for donation towards new Village Hall roof' to record that C'llr Davies initially abstained from the vote on making the donation, but subsequently cast a vote against the resolution. With this amendment, the minutes were approved by Members (proposer C'llr Mary Owen, seconder C'llr Lisa O'Sullivan).

Matters arising

Advertising of current open vacancies for Council members. C'llr John Cole had obtained a quotation to print leaflets for distribution. This would cost £40 for 1000 A5 single-sided leaflets, or £50 for double-sided. This did not include for any cost of obtaining a Welsh translation. C'llr Paul Davies said he had spoken to someone who had advised that a Welsh translation would only need to be provided on request. After some discussion, it was agreed to advertise vacancies for co-option on the community noticeboards and webpage, but not by a blanket letter-drop (proposer C'llr John Cole, seconder C'llr Nick Stamp). This was in part due to the relatively short time remaining until the next election in 2022, and the existence of at least three potentially interested parties. Clerk to arrange to place notices in the noticeboards and on the

webpage, with a closing date of 31st August 2021. Clerk to also send a copy of the notice to the school for their noticeboard.

Sign for back of noticeboard outside Welfare Hall. Provision of a suitable sign still in hand with C’Ilr John Cole.

Plans

There were no plans for discussion this month.

Correspondence

- 1) Queenie Thomas – Request to re-join Community Council – deferred for consideration in September meeting.
- 2) P.C.C. – Information regarding speed-activated signage outside the Rugby Club – noted.
- 3) P.C.C. – Request for letter of support for grant application being made for town centre improvements – C’Ilr Nick Stamp felt that there was far from universal support in the wider community, due to perceived poor decisions made by P.C.C. in their handling of development of the town centre. This viewpoint was shared by other Members. However, it was felt that if the grant application was to fail, the money would go somewhere else, which might make the matter even worse. This being the case, it was resolved for a letter of support to be sent to P.C.C. (proposer C’Ilr John Cole, seconder C’Ilr Paul Davies). Clerk to write and send in a letter accordingly.
- 4) Michelle and Richard Lewis – Expression of interest in potentially joining Community Council – Deferred for consideration in September.
- 5) Denise Mayr (Internal auditor) – Internal audit report for 2020/21 accounts year – dealt with in ‘Accounts’ below.
- 6) Welfare Committee (via C’Ilr John Cole) – Request for financial support – dealt with in agenda item below.
- 7) C’Ilr Mary Owen – minutes of recent Welfare Committee meeting – these were read to Members for information. The Clerk was asked to arrange for reports from all Members appointed to represent the Community Councils on outside bodies to be tabled as regular items on forthcoming regular monthly meeting agendas.

County Councillor’s report.

C’Ilr John Cole mentioned that some residents had reported problems with blocked road drains. It had also been confirmed to him that the electricity supply to the speed-activated sign by the Rugby Club was working, and the problem was with the sign itself. C’Ilr Nick Stamp commented that the sign needed relocating in any case.

Accounts

Payments for approval

Internal auditor (internal audit of 2020/21 accounts) : £ 60-00
Shaw and Sons (accounts book) : £ 78-00
Clerk (salary /fixed expenses, 6th April – June 2021) : As per contract
H.M.R.C. (P.A.Y.E. tax for Clerk's pay) : As per contract
Clerk (incidental expenses, April – May) : £ 22-02
The above payments were approved by Members (proposer C'llr Mary Owen, seconder C'llr Lisa O'Sullivan).

Monthly accounts report / budget statement

Copies of the budget review / monthly accounts statement had been circulated to all Members. Members noted that the budget for 2021/22 had been agreed as the same as that for the previous year. Detailed discussion of budget for the forthcoming period to be discussed in September.

The Clerk was asked to supply figures on the standing of accounts to each monthly meeting.

Discussion of internal audit report for 2020/21

The report had been received, and was accepted by Members (proposer C'llr Lisa O'Sullivan, seconder C'llr Paul Davies).

Measures to be implemented or already implemented to address the matters raised in the report were noted as being :

- P.A.Y.E. (already being fully implemented)
- Completion of asset risk assessment (now completed)
- Provision of quarterly budget statements (in hand with Clerk)

Completion of Annual Governance Statement

2019/20 year. The Annual Governance Statement for the 2019/20 year was completed by Members, with all questions being answered in the affirmative. This was approved by Members (proposer C'llr John Cole, seconder C'llr Alison Palmer). The relevant section of the audit form had been signed by C'llr Lisa O'Sullivan following completion of the internal audit for that year, as the Member caring for accounts at that time. The form was signed by the Chairman following formal approval.

2020/21 year. The Annual Governance Statement for the 2020/21 year was completed by Members, with all questions being answered in the affirmative. This was approved by Members (proposer C'llr Paul Davies, seconder C'llr John Cole), and signed by the Clerk and Chairman.

Arrangements for public inspection of accounts

The Clerk confirmed that arrangements were in hand for the public inspection of accounts to take place in July.

Discussion of arrangements for filling open council vacancies

Covered in 'Matters Arising' above.

Approval of updated Asset Register

The updated asset register was approved by Members (proposer C'llr Paul Davies, seconder C'llr Nick Stamp).

Approval of updated Financial Risk Assessment

The updated financial risk assessment was approved by Members (proposer C'llr Paul Davies, seconder C'llr Mary Owen).

Approval of Asset Risk Assessment

C'llr Paul Davies had completed the asset risk assessment for the three bus shelters in Community Council ownership. He mentioned that the wall behind the bus shelter opposite St. Issell's Avenue, that had been mentioned in the May meeting, was not part of the bus shelter, but was in the ownership of the house behind it. C'llr Davies mentioned that he had spoken to Darren Thomas in the P.C.C. Highways Department, who had undertaken to try and get someone to carry out re-painting of white lining, and cutting back of growth encroaching on the bus shelter. Darren Thomas had also undertaken to get the re-painting of the road markings in the vicinity of the pedestrian crossing attended to, along with necessary maintenance work on the crossing lights.

C'llr Davies had also raised with Darren Thomas the matter of speeding on the Pembroke Road, especially in connection with possible provision of speed-activated signage. Darren Thomas had agreed for a site meeting to take place between Community Councillors and Clare Williams of his department (the officer with responsibility for advising on speed-activated signage installations, etc.). It was hoped that this meeting could include a discussion about other measures such as speed bumps, warning signage / road markings, etc. Members were in agreement for C'llrs Paul Davies and Nick Stamp to attend a meeting on behalf of the Community Council in order to pursue the matter further. Matter to be placed on the agenda for discussion in September. Members were in agreement that there should be a public consultation on any firm proposals made for additional speed-reduction measures along the road.

Discussion of future funding of welfare community field, maintenance, insurance, playpark, P.C.C. inspections and maintenance and any joint project plans

C'llr John Cole had forwarded a message from the Welfare Committee regarding this matter. This had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. The message outlined the annual running costs of the field and the equipment on it. This amounted to £4240 per year. Consideration was being requested by the Welfare Committee for

assistance to support these annual running costs on an ongoing basis. C’Ilr Mary Owen felt that Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance, and that the Community Council should take this aspect seriously, and consider assistance if it would contribute to ensuring the safety of local residents. C’Ilr Paul Davies suggested that the matter be held in abeyance for detailed consideration in the precept discussions for the next financial year. Matter accordingly left for future consideration.

Discussion of timetable of events for year

It was agreed that an agenda item should be tabled for discussion in September of all events, including the Remembrance Day event, Christmas tree provision arrangements, Carol Service, etc.

C’Ilr Mary Owen mentioned that the new pastor of the Emmanuel Mission Church had agreed to continue the arrangements for the Remembrance Day commemorations as for previous years.

Discussion of Boot Valley

Members were concerned with ongoing flooding problems along this path, due to drainage problems. After some discussion, it was noted that, as the route was publicly lit, it would appear to be a P.C.C.-owned route, and therefore their responsibility. Members agreed for C’Ilr Paul Davies to raise this for discussion during his meeting with P.C.C. officers, and seek action to address it.

Any other business

Next meeting – 8th September 2021.

The meeting ended at 8-40pm.