

YSCIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council meeting, held on 12 March 2014, at Cradoc Golf Club at 7.30pm

Councillors Present: Helen Howarth
Bob Wood
Margaret Rees
Rees Price

Also present: Michael Westhorpe (clerk)
John Cook Chief Executive BBNPA
Tracy Nettleton Head of Strategy, Policy and Heritage, BBNPA

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Dilys Davies, Cllr Roger Price and Cllr Jane Price
In the absence of Cllr Jane Price, Cllr Bob Wood chaired the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Cllr Rees Price declared an interest in item 11 and completed the appropriate form.

3. Discussion with Mr John Cook and Ms Tracy Nettleton

3.1 Cllr Bob Wood welcomed Mr Cook and Ms Nettleton to the meeting. Mr Cook explained that he had been meeting with town and community councils over the past two years in order for both sides to get to know each other and to improve communications. There was no formal agenda but it was an opportunity for community councils to raise any issues of concern.

3.2 The Council was concerned about enforcement of planning applications. Ms Nettleton explained that enforcement action can take a long time. In some cases the breaches are so minor that it is not expedient to pursue them. Mr Cook said that in the past resources had been switched to clearing a backlog of planning applications which had put pressure on the enforcement team. The latter has now been strengthened and the time taken dealing with enforcement issues has decreased. The emphasis is on negotiation and in most cases issues can be resolved without enforcement action.

3.3 The Council thought that the criteria for decision making on planning applications were not always clear. Ms Nettleton said that a new Local Development Plan was in the process of being printed and that decisions were based on this. Other factors are also considered, for example, highways standards, flooding implications.

3.4 Mr Cook said that a lot of concerns had been raised about how planning decisions were taken and in response to this a number of workshops for community councillors had been organised. Only factors that are material to the planning process can be considered; public opinion is not one of these.

3.5 There was a discussion about the subjectivity of the design element of planning applications. Mr Cook said that where there were concerns about a particular design, there should be a discussion about these to try and find a way forward, rather than an outright rejection of an application. The emphasis was on resolving issues through dialogue.

3.6 The Clerk said that the Council had been pleased with the work done by BBNPA to improve the Gaer bridleway. He asked how the budget constraints had affected the budget available for improving rights of way. Mr Cook said that the Council had to lose 13% of its budget over the next few years which required hard decisions to be made. However, as the majority of visitors to the national park come with the intention of walking, BBNPA has tried to

mitigate the effects of the budget reductions on rights of way. BBNPA is in receipt of a small grant from the Welsh Assembly Government for improving rights of way. With around 1800km of path, priorities have to be made. Studies have shown that the majority of people use the lower paths and bridleways. One way of making the money go further is to work with volunteers with BBNPA perhaps providing funding for materials and support from the Warden Team..

3.7 Mr Cook and Ms Nettleton were thanked for their attendance and they left the meeting at this point.

4. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 November 2013

4.1 It was agreed that the minutes should be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising that are not on the agenda

5.1 The clerk reported that with regard to 16.5, this was a Welsh Water cover that needed to be repaired and Powys County Council were pursuing this. The request for additional gritting is decided by the County Council Board. Cllr Gilian Thomas suggested that a request be made for next year's gritting schedule and this was agreed.

6.. Risk Assessment Review

6.1 The Council considered the risk assessment throughout all sections and agreed that all necessary measures were in place. The Council approved the risk assessment included as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

7. Internal Audit review and appointment of internal auditor

7.1 The Clerk reported that Mr Paul Arthur was willing to act as internal auditor again and this was approved.

7.2 The Council considered and approved the audit plan and question/action list, included as an appendix to these minutes.. The Clerk mentioned that at present he only had limited capacity for storing a copy of the Council's records in the 'BT Cloud.' He was considering an alternative broadband supplier and was hoping to resolve this issue then.

It was agreed that within the context of a Council of the size of Yscir, each area complied with the requirements of the Wales Audit Office.

8. Financial Matters

8.1 The Council approved the payment of £192.16 for the clerk's salary for January and February and £2.70 for his expenses. The Council welcomed the analysis of how the Clerk's time was spent.

8.2 The Council noted the current financial position as shown in the cash book spreadsheet. The Clerk reported that he estimated that the end of year balance would be around £1410 which was close to the estimate included in the budget of £1370.

8.3 An invoice from One Voice Wales for £54 to renew membership was approved.

9. Update on Combined Farmwatch and Neighbourhood Watch Scheme including Text Local

9.1 The Clerk reported that most of the neighbourhood watch co-ordinators had opted into the messaging alert scheme but he had not heard back from the farmers he had contacted. He had had a meeting with the Police and they were very supportive of the Council's initiative. PCSO Steffan Rees had said that it was proving difficult to obtain Farmwatch posters as the Police were considering a new initiative called Rural Watch that combined Farmwatch with Neighbourhood Watch; just what the Council was doing.

9.2 The Council decided to publicise the Text Local messaging alert system in the newsletter and invite anyone in the community to join. Cllr Helen Howarth suggested that the Clerk

contact Text Local as they may be able to provide one number for individuals to contact to opt into the scheme. This was agreed.

10. Newsletter publication and distribution arrangements

- 10.1 The Clerk reported that he had taken over the production of the newsletter as Cllr Helen Howarth had too many other commitments. On her advice he had purchased a publishing package called Pages, cost £13.99. The Clerk said that his wife, as a former graphic designer, had done a lot of the work. An early draft of the newsletter was shown to members.
- 10.2 Photos were still required from the school and Pontfaen Young Farmers. Cllr Helen Howarth said that she would provide logos to match with Facebook and we need to promote our Facebook page in the newsletter. It was agreed that the final newsletter would be sent to members before being printed.

11. Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 19 February 2014

- 11.1 These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

12. BBNP Planning Application 14/10482/FUL- proposed raised balcony at 5 Oakfield Park, Cradoc

- 12.1 Cllr Gillian Thomas left the meeting at this point. The plans were considered and after a brief discussion it was agreed that there were no objections to the proposal.

13. Update on the new website and payment of UBE invoice

- 13.1 Cllr Helen Howarth outlined the training that she had received with the Clerk. (Cllr Dilys Davies had been unable to attend due to illness). Helen reported that the website programme was very easy to use if you were familiar with 'Word'. It can do all that the Council needs it to do.
- 13.2 The Clerk said that he was still updating the content and Helen said that she wanted to make some amendments to the style. The Clerk was asked to let other members see the new website before it goes live.
- 13.3 The Clerk explained there would be a rebate of £61.36 from the old website. The charge for the new website was £456 which would come from the Welsh Assembly's grant. The remainder of the £500 grant would be spent on the Clerk's work on adding content to and updating the website. Payment of the invoice from Upper Bridge Enterprises was approved.

14. Update on Facebook Page

- 14.1 The Clerk reported that over 100 people had seen the post about lost dogs last weekend. Generally the Facebook page was receiving around 40 visits per week, with 52 people 'liking' the page. It was disappointing that there had been no entries to the photo competition but there had been other entries, for example, a voluntary litter pick. Cllr Helen Howarth suggested that we needed a list of reserve ideas that could be used to keep the page ticking over.
- 14.2 It was agreed that when the newsletter was ready a link would be placed on the Facebook Page to the website. The Clerk said that the school should be sending him their weekly newsletter and he was hoping to add items from that.

15. Correspondence

- 15.1 BBNP letter clarifying no breach of planning control re. Siloam Shalom
- 15.2 One Voice Wales - the Voice - Winter newsletter
- 15.3 Walk for Life 27 April 2014 - request to organise charity event by Kidney Wales Foundation
- 15.4 Santander shareholders notice of Annual General Meeting

16. Improving drainage on the footpath to Pen y Crug

- 16.1 This item was raised by the community through the Facebook page. It was thought that the Council had received a grant for this work but as it was just before the gas pipeline was installed the grant was returned unused.
- 16.2 This is a very popular short walk but the first section to the open hill will always become extremely boggy in wet weather unless it is dug out and replaced with stone. It was agreed to write to BBNP asking for this work to be carried out.

17. Confirmation of date and time of next meeting

- 17.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 19 May 2014 at Cradoc Golf Club at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm