

MINUTES OF CAERWENT COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD 12TH JULY 2012

Present: P Murphy (Chairman) D Hedley
B Counsell P Lewis
G Cousins K Swift
K Evans D Vosloo
K Haddow

In attendance: L McKeon, Clerk to the Council
A Rees, Gwent Orchards
D Mansfield, Adventa, MCC
S Bower, Mencap

Members of
Public: R Evans, Caerwent South Road Pigeon Club
P Shelley, Lawrence Crescent, Caerwent
J Markiw, Cwrt Morgan, Caerwent
A Davies, Llangerrig, Five Lanes
A Spooner, Centurions Court, Caerwent
P & P Edwards, New Cottages, Caerwent

M3742 APOLOGIES

Received from Councillor Trayler Smith.

M3743 WELCOME NEW COUNCILLOR

The Chairman welcomed Karen Haddow as the new Councillor for the Caerwent ward and looked forward to working with her.

M3744 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Evans from the Pigeon Club thanked the Council for previous assistance in their efforts to try to stay in the village. He explained that they are now located at Sudbrook Club and have had to purchase a new shed to store their racing baskets. He had sent a request for financial assistance – this will be discussed under Finance.

Mr Shelley had recently met with the Caerwent Community Centre Committee regarding various concerns but now wished to raise some issues with this Council. He queried why the Community Council had completed the sale of the Old Gym building and asked if Members were privy to a business cost analysis before reaching this decision. The Chairman stated that the decision was taken to acquire this building with the purpose of retaining the facility for the community. The Community Council had already made an agreement with MCC that Section 106 monies will be secured in order to make improvements to the building. We were satisfied that the facility, although it will never make any sizeable surplus, will be used as a valuable community resource. The Chairman explained that we bought the building for £10,000 with money from MCC which will be repaid from Barratts. Councillor Counsell stated that the building is ideal for robust activities for youngsters in the village – he explained that we had at one point transferred some activities to the Village Hall but unfortunately this building was not suitable in terms of size.

Mr Shelley questioned the Council as to whether they considered the building an asset or a liability. Council agreed that it was an asset, especially for youngsters of the area and given that a new housing estate is currently being developed in close proximity. Mr Shelly queried if the decision to take the building on was a majority decision – he was informed that the decision was unanimous.

Mr Shelley queried if the Council had completed a Cost Benefit Analysis and what the cost of the improvements will be. The Chairman explained that there will be no cost to the public purse and that Section 106 monies will be applied via Barratts. As the new owners we are in a better position to also apply for grants. Mr Shelley queried how we would be able to afford this when the Section 106 monies gave £300 per dwelling erected. He was corrected in that the figure is £2,850 per dwelling. The Chairman explained that the Section 106 monies can only be spent on recreation and leisure within the community and should be spent within 5 miles of the development. Other groups can also apply for this funding but our bid has already been accepted.

Mr Shelley queried if any other proposals had been put forward by the MoD. Councillor Counsell advised that the MoD had offered a parcel of land to the rear of Llanfair Road and that Section 106 monies would be used to erect the building – it was agreed at the time that this building would not give the same facility. Mr Shelley queried if any member of this Council was present at the MoD negotiations – Councillor Counsell stated that he was present. Councillor Hedley advised that we also looked at the possibility of extending the Village Hall to give the same facility but the cost at £600/700,000 was prohibitive.

Mr Shelley pointed out the importance of sound proofing. The Chairman understood that the recent sound proofing works had been unsuccessful but that this will be installed with the refurbishment. Mr Shelley felt that the whole area should be fenced off. He queried if steam cleaning following Dog Shows takes place. We were not able to advise him on this as the day to day management is handled by the Committee.

Councillor Hedley stated that this building has been used as a community facility for over 50 years – firstly a school, then a youth club, then the American forces used it as a gymnasium and social club. Mr Shelley felt that there had been an increase in activities at the building but this was disputed.

Councillor Hedley understood that we had not received any other complaints from residents until recently. Mr Shelley stated that he had sent in a petition in February 2011. The Clerk queried where he had sent this as she had not received it. The Chairman terminated this discussion given that other members of the public had issues to raise.

Mr Spooner expressed concern that the celebration of the Jubilee Oak planted recently at Merton Green covered up the history of the area.

Mrs Edwards queried where the Frostbite money had been spent. It was explained that a bench had been provided and that it was hoped to provide signage.

Mr Edwards was concerned about a planning application at Great House Farm. He was informed that we had not yet received this plan but will ensure he is informed if it arrives over the summer break.

Mr Edwards queried progress re School Lane. The Chairman advised that a meeting to discuss this will be held at County Hall on 31st July. Mr Edwards advised that Pound Lane is extremely dangerous – the Chairman had advised Highways already.

M3745 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 14TH JUNE 2012

These were agreed as a true record.

M3746 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P Murphy
Councillor K Swift

Caerwent Community Centre Committee
Crick Wildlife & Environment Project Committee

M3747 MONTHLY POLICE REPORT

The Police were not present. A report had been circulated – the priority for our area will continue to be speeding. The Chairman warned of metal thefts in the area.

Councillor Swift is keeping a log of all accidents in Crick re reducing the speed limit.

M3748 PRESENTATION BY ALICE REES, GWENT ORCHARDS PROJECT OFFICER re PROPOSED ALLOTMENT SITE, MoD LAND

Ms Rees explained that the wooded area is an ancient orchard – there are some fruit trees and also various species taking residence in dead trees. They are hoping to carry out a survey to identify the trees and then hopefully create a community orchard with the support of the Gwent Wildlife Trust. There are a significant number of very mature trees alive, probably ten, and mistletoe in the northern section. The Chairman queried if there would be enough space to create allotments – Ms Rees explained that there could be a problem as the trees are so big that there would not be enough light. She confirmed that the field next door is not available.

Councillor Hedley informed Deserie Mansfield that we have a duty to provide allotments but are struggling to find some land. The Chairman had enquired of County Farms but no land is available. She agreed to let us know if she becomes aware of any land.

Councillor Cousins felt that we should now consider the field next to McAlpines as suggested by Councillor Swift previously. It was agreed to write to the owner.

M3749 PRESENTATION BY DESERIE MANSFIELD, SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, ADVENTA, MCC re BROADBAND PROVISION

Deserie explained that she has been looking at broadband provision in rural areas and Caerwent had been identified as an area for improvement. A survey had been carried out and 500 people from our area had responded saying that they required a better service. Funding is available but in order to obtain this it has to be community led. She is currently working with a group in Devauden “Big Dig” who are progressing extremely well and advised that we could liaise with them. She advised that the more people involved the better solution. It was agreed that Councillor Evans take a lead on this – he will also liaise with Councillors Vosloo/Swift regarding any other villagers interested. A document “Local Broadband Networks – Feasibility Study” was passed to Councillor Evans.

M3750 SANDRA BOWER, VICE CHAIR, CHEPSTOW MENCAP

Mrs Bower explained that they had put in an offer (along with two others) to purchase the Northgate Inn building. They plan to convert the building into a day centre with flats above to teach independent living, a conservatory, a shop selling essentials and a vegetable plot. They already have a centre in Chepstow but it is now full to capacity with 35 service users. If successful they will apply to the Peoples Lottery. It will be open 8.30 – 4.00 Monday to Friday. Councillor Cousins suggested that “Northgate” remains within the name – Sandra agreed to bear this in mind. Councillor Cousins suggested that a bus operators licence may be required. Deserie confirmed that MCC support this project. Sandra enquired if this Council could provide a letter of support – this was agreed.

M3751 MATTERS ARISING

Merton Green

Oak Tree planted in open space 6th July.

Proposed Closure of School Lane

The Chairman reported that a meeting to discuss this will take place at County Hall on 31st July.

Old Gym Building

Meeting held with Caerwent Community Centre Committee and Mr P Shelley on 26th June. Subsequent letter received from Mr Shelley. This issue had been discussed under Public Participation.

Crick Wildlife Reserve

Received final Lease. MCC have made requested amendments except for the period relating to the rent review (will stay at 3 years as opposed to our request of 5). Lease was signed.

It was agreed that the Crick Wildlife & Environment Project manage it and cover the rent. Deserie will advise Councillor Swift on grant applications.

Circular Walk

Councillor Counsell reported that he is still waiting to hear from Mr Moran, Recreation Manager at MCC. Deserie agreed to chase this up for us.

Footpath - Great House Farm

It was agreed that the permitted footpath should be agreed before the sale of the land. The Chairman will discuss this with the Chief Officer.

Time Team Field

Our Solicitor had looked at draft lease – couple of minor amendments.

Request from a villager regarding grazing sheep. It was agreed to check if this would be allowed under the terms of the lease. Councillor Swift felt that this field would be ideal for a wildflower area/picnic spot.

Cwrt Morgan Adoption

Councillor Evans will speak to MCC.

War Memorial Names

Six names need to be added. We require more details of individuals, ie rank, regiment and which war. Information received from gentleman who compiled the Caerwent Book of Remembrance together with two other suggestions. One already on Mathern cenotaph. One we have no details on – Deserie offered to help us through archive records.

Caerwent Playing Fields – responsibility of trees

Councillors Murphy/Hedley to report following their meeting with Mr T O'Donovan of MCC. Meeting arranged for Monday 16th July. They will also discuss the grasscutting of the Playing Fields.

“Gated Entrance” A48

The gates have now been removed and will be replaced shortly.

Navigant Consulting

We will be consulted on draft plan when it is completed.

Training in the Code of Conduct

Councillors Haddow/Swift and Vosloo had attended this.

Provision of Dog Friendly Stiles

Footpaths Officer meeting with farmer in mid July.

Caerwent Toilets

Chairman/Councillor Counsell investigated and meter is still running even when water is turned off. Welsh Water will make a site visit and report back.

Dog Waste Bins

Chairman had met with MCC in Caerwent to discuss this. Possible locations are at toilets, eastgate noticeboard site and end of School Lane. These could be provided from the Tidy Towns Initiative – the Chairman will push for more to be provided on the other side of the A48. Llanfair Landscapes had reported excessive dog fouling at the eastgate junction grass area. Problem with litter bin in Lawrence Crescent Play Area – full of dog waste – Clerk will ask contractor to empty it. Council considered placing a bin near the Old Gym site.

Tree Preservation Orders

Jim Keech, Tree Officer, had replied regarding the trees on the A48 stating that Barratts are fully aware of the presence of the TPOs so he would expect them to contact MCC if the trees need trimming back. He will however contact the site manager just to remind him. Unfortunately there is not much MCC can do in respect of new house owners - they will be aware of any TPO as it will appear on their deeds.

Councillor Counsell reported that some extremely old oak trees had died at Westwood Farm due he believes to an excess of effluent from the farm. He proposed that we request Tree Preservation Orders on some other nearby trees

Councillor Swift proposed that we request TPOs on trees at Bradbury Farm – this was agreed.

Councillor Vosloo requested that the cherry tree at Laburnum Steps be trimmed – agreed.

M3752 IT WAS AGREED TO EXTEND STANDING ORDERS BY 30 MINUTES

M3753 PLANNING

2011/00809 Coach & Horses Public House, Caerwent
Proposed Alterations and Extensions (Amendment – Extension on East Elevation has Changed from Two Storey to Single Storey)
*This Council recommends **Approval***

2012/00335 Old Sunday School Barn, St Brides Netherwent
(retention of partially constructed detached garage, revised designed)
*This Council recommends **Approval***

Council agreed that any planning applications received during August be delegated to two Councillors and the Clerk

The Chairman informed the Council that a website and facebook page had appeared regarding the development at Rose Cottage in Llanfair Discoed containing very inflammatory slanderous comments about Officers of MCC. He had received a letter from a couple of residents of Llanfair who wished to be disassociated from the comments made on that website. The Environment Agency and MCC Planning are currently working on proposals to deal with the sewage from the site and samples are being taken from the brook.

M3754 FINANCE

Council agreed payments as per Finance Schedule July 2012.

Clerk had sent to external auditor all requested documents.

M3755 ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment document was reviewed and agreed. Inspection duties agreed.

M3756 CORRESPONDENCE

1. IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT OFFICER, MCC Improvement Plan 2012-2015.
2. KEEP WALES TIDY GRANT SCHEME

M3757 HIGHWAYS/RIGHTS OF WAY

Councillor Swift reported that recently MCC had cleared the brambles at the rear of the bus shop at Five Lanes thereby destroying a white throat's nest and breaching the Wildlife and Countryside Act. She was advised that this is a police matter. There is also evidence of grass cuttings being tipped in this area – the Chairman will speak to the grass cutter and request that grass trimmings are not collected.

Footpath on Caldicot Road (St Tathan's to Canon Lane) – hedge overgrown.

Chevrons at westgate need renewing – Chairman advised this is currently being discussed.

Building waste being taken into the top of Ifton Quarry , nr Brockwells – report to Environmental Health.

Speed of traffic on Caldicot Road – difficult to enter and exit St Tathan's at times. Chairman advised that the whole area is being investigated as part of the School Lane proposals.

Much larger Crick sign required – we are awaiting the report from the consultants re signage.

Bridleway on Five Lanes being used by quad bikes.

Suggestion received from villager that the two village water pumps previously a feature of this village be re-instated. Previous locations were in the curved area opposite the entrance to Burton Homes and the other on the grassy bank opposite the site of the old Village Institute. It was agreed to seek advice from Deserie Mansfield.

M3758 REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Councillor Counsell reported that Caldicot CAB are currently in talks re merging with the other Bureaus.

Chairman Date