

MINUTES OF CAERWENT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 13TH MAY 2021

Present: Via Remote Attendance
P Murphy (Chair)
M Beattie
P Dalton
K Evans
G Foxall
K Haddow
M John
AM Spooner

In attendance: L McKeon, Clerk to the Council

M3897 APOLOGIES

Councillor B Counsell – Council accepted his apologies due to illness
Councillor K Swift

M3898 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AS PER STANDING ORDERS

In line with standing orders that the Vice Chair automatically takes the position
Councillor P Murphy was appointed as Chair. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of
Office on video.

M3899 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Councillor Haddow nominated Councillor Evans, this was seconded by Councillor
Beattie. There being no other nominations Councillor Evans was appointed as Vice
Chair.

M3900 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Councillor P Murphy | All planning applications | Member of MCC Planning Committee |
| Councillor P Murphy | Caerwent Community Centre | Trustee |
| Councillor K Evans | Caerwent Historic Trust | Trustee |
| Councillor K Evans | Caerwent Village Hall | Booking Clerk |
| Councillor AM Spooner | Caerwent Playing Fields Assoc | Committee Member |

M3901 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Murphy thanked the outgoing Chair, Councillor Evans, for his excellent
Chairmanship this year and for keeping the Council going online during these
unprecedented difficult times.

M3902 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 8th APRIL 2021

To note that these have been approved remotely

Council noted that these had been approved and posted on our website.

M3903 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES

Council to appoint to representative bodies

The following representatives were agreed:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Finance Committee | Councillors Evans/Murphy/Swift/ Haddow/Beattie |
| Caerwent Community Centre | Councillor Murphy |
| Caerwent Playing Fields Association | Councillor Haddow |

| | |
|--|--|
| Footpaths Working Group | Councillors Swift/Counsell/AM Spooner |
| Mons County Citizens Advice | Councillor Counsell |
| Rogiet School (Minor Authority Rep) | Councillor Foxall |
| Caerwent Historic Trust | Councillor Evans |
| Emergency Contacts | Councillors Evans/Murphy |
| Toilets Working Group | Councillors Murphy/Counsell/Evans/ Swift/Haddow |
| FOI Requests Working Group | Councillor Evans/Haddow |
| Social Media Working Group | Councillor Evans/Haddow |
| Environment Working Group (Dog Fouling Working Group/ Caerwent Litter Champions) | Councillors Haddow/Dalton/Foxall |
| Dog Fouling Initiative (Abergavenny Group) | Councillor Beattie |
| Cluster Working Group | Councillors Murphy/Swift/Beattie |
| One Voice Wales | Councillor Beattie |
| Education Award Working Group | Councillors Murphy/Beattie/Haddow |
| Crick Wildlife & Environment Project | Councillor John |
| Caerwent Playing Fields Working Group | Councillors Evans/Murphy/Haddow |
| Survey Working Group | Councillors Evans/Dalton/Foxall/ Swift/Spooner |
| Caerwent Meadows | Councillor Evans |
| Council Policies Working Group | Councillors Murphy/Dalton/John/Beattie |

M3904 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES

Standing Orders

Financial Regulations

Risk Management & Procedures Policy

Complaints Policy

Local Resolution Protocol Policy

Unacceptable Actions of Individuals Policy

Retention of Documents Policy

FOI Publication Scheme

Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Privacy Notice

Information & Data Protection Policy

Social Media & Electronic Communication Policy

Council agreed that a Working Group be set up of Councillors Murphy/Dalton/Beattie /John to review the Council policies. The Clerk will arrange a meeting.

M3905 COMMUNITY COUNCIL TREE POLICY

To consider and approve draft provided

Council agreed to adopt this policy as amended.

M3906 ANNUAL REVIEW OF INSURANCE COVER

To approve

Council approved.

Agreed to seek advice from the local authority re the risk assessment of frequency of play area inspections.

M3907 POLICE REPORT

To note

Police report received covering Chepstow and Caldicot – Clerk had written to enquire if a Caerwent specific report would be received in the future.

Your Voice results received.

Notification of next online police catch up on 25 August 9.00 – 10.00.

Clerk to clarify if this is definitely the next planned meeting.

M3908 PLANNING

To consider any planning applications received after despatch of agenda

There were no planning applications

To note monthly enforcement list from MCC

Council noted.

To note appeal re 2020/01858 Lingfield, Five Lanes, Caerwent

Council noted.

M3909 RE-OPENING OF VILLAGE HALL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

To note latest WG ruling regarding re-opening

Councillor Evans reported that the Village Hall had reopened this week to long term hirers with their risk assessment documents etc in place. All hirers must also have their own risk assessment documentation. The kitchen and new extension will not be open and parties/private functions are not allowable at present as these are difficult to police and enforce.

The Community Centre are considering opening in September as they currently have a grant bid in and are keen to replace the floor in the large hall before opening. A lot of their hirers do not use their facilities over the summer so this is a good opportunity to deal with the issue of the flooring if they can.

M3910 FUTURE FACE TO FACE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

To consider and adopt Risk Assessment document

This was agreed with the following amendments:

The circulation of paper documents should not be suspended.

Arrangements for any public needs to be considered further but that they should book a place and this should be advertised on the agenda and amended on the risk assessment.

The Clerk advised that when meetings are held face to face, a large room could be required in order to comply with the current Covid social distancing regulations. It was agreed that Councillor Haddow contact John Barnard in order to establish the size of the Barns hall. It was also agreed that Councillor John contact Caerwent church regarding use of their facilities. Council agreed that the issue of Wifi and any sound systems should be investigated.

M3911 PROPOSED COMMUNITY SURVEY

To note minutes of Working Group held 28th April and make any recommendations

Councillor Evans reported on this meeting. Currently the Working Group are putting the questions together and will report back to full Council. Council agreed that this should be an online survey with hard copies available from the Post Office. Councillor Spooner reported that there are no specific grants available for surveys but that the Welsh Church fund could possibly help.

M3912 TREWEN PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (M Beattie)

To consider the transfer and any costs involved in relocating the Highmoor Hill phone box to Trewen.

The Chair reported that a further request had recently been made from the Caerwent Playing Fields Committee to site the Box near the Village Hall with a view to creating a village library. They had also offered to arrange for and fund the re-siting of the Box.

In view of this second request it was agreed to agenda this for next month to consider each group's future liability and also land ownership. The Chair will enquire of MCC or a local farmer regarding re-siting costs.

M3913 CAERWENT PLAY AREA

To consider quote of £145 to remove moss/algae and repair safety surface.

Council agreed.

M3914 TO RECEIVE REPORTS

CLERK'S REPORT

Play Area – (Caerwent)

Seesaw still on order – 6/8 weeks was the lead time so delivery will probably be in May.

Play Area – Trewen

Councillor Swift had met with some of the residents at Trewen as a representative from the Crick Environment & Wildlife Project. She talked to them about forming a group so they could raise funds etc and made a couple of suggestions e.g., log circle, wildflower margin all the way around the field as well as the bottom end and even changing the football pitch into a small 5 a side pitch running across the field so they had a bigger community wildflower/wildlife area with benches. She informed them of the Nature Isn't Neat project at MCC and also suggested that they have a look at Rogiet Wildlife Friendly Village and the Portskewett Cornfield project. The Chair had confirmed that MCC are now not cutting the east, south and west sides of the field to encourage wildflowers. The Clerk will request that Llanvair Landscapes do the same.

The residents seem keen to not jeopardise what they have got already, ie a formal play area and would prefer new play equipment, ie a slide.

They have been informed that the goal posts will be re-painted by our handyman.

They have also had a meeting with the Senior Operations Officer at MCC.

Phone Box

"Deep drop behind" signage which had recently been installed has been removed and thrown into the box. Agreed not to replace this.

Dog Bins

Placed an order via MCC for a bin at northgate end of Meadows. This may take some time as they wait for additional orders in order to obtain the best price.

Annual Audit 2019/2020

Clerk had delivered all accounts, petty cash info, invoices and council policies to our Internal Auditor for his approval. The Annual Return will be ready for Council approval at the June meeting.

Broken Gate – Cadw Barns

Reported to Cadw but not repaired as yet. Reminded again – in the meantime the site remains closed. The Clerk had reported this again today.

Stone Circle – Gray Hill

One of the stones had been moved. Councillor Murphy had reported to Cadw and this had been put back in place.

Basilica, Caerwent

Tree had fallen onto wall. Clerk had reported to Cadw. She will remind them as this is a safety issue for walkers.

Caerwent House

It has been confirmed that the stone from the wall will be used on site. The trees will remain. Cadw had decided that there was no merit in retaining the pond as there is no sign of it on old maps. The amphibian survey showed that there was nothing there and it was full of grass and rubbish.

Report from our Handyman

The work from last year at Trewen eastbound stop survived the winter well. The paint looks good and there is no evidence of water/damp/moss. It was clean inside.

Regarding the Eastgate shelter - graffiti is present and someone else tried to remove it with a poor result. Handyman had painted it over and it looks cleaner now. A lot of litter here was picked. The nature of the litter (food and drink) coupled with the graffiti tends to suggest this a meeting point for extracurricular activities. Agreed to request that the police employ casual attention to prevent further damage.

The membrane and stones work is on the list for behind the Crick bus shelter. It does however attract all sorts of dumping. (Agreed to ask Councillor Swift to contact the litter pickers to add this site to their list).

Advance warning that the slats at the back of the black bench at the War Memorial are rotting.

Village Hall – gutters front and side cleared. Rear full of moss and blocked. The down pipe at the left does not exist but the plastic tube of the feed at ground level is still present but blocked so the underground pipes need unblocking. This is not a job he can do as you need special equipment. Clerk to make some enquiries.

Police Online Meeting

New Neighbourhood Sergeant introduced himself – 20 years in the force within Mons/Torfaen. Representatives from Chepstow, Caldicot, Rogiet and Caerwent in attendance. Arrests had been made re burglaries in Chepstow. Operation Bandstand in Chepstow has been successful following numerous reports of groups gathering on the riverbank – complaints much reduced. Rural Crime Team investigating off road bikes at Wentwood and advising of legitimate sites. Working with the Trail Rider Federation on this. Speeding on the B425 Caldicot to Magor – footpath needed. PCSOs could be included in these meetings.

Caerwent Council mentioned A48 speeding and if we could be informed of burglary arrests – he will look into these. Street Watch scheme was raised – Sergeant Butt will make enquiries. Referred us to Neighbourhood Watch. Inappropriate parking on the Roman Road near the Post Office – advised that we contact Highways.

Streetwatch/Paw Patrol Schemes

Information on these sent to Councillors.

Agreed that a Working Group be set up with Bernie Dawson and the Clerk will arrange a meeting.

Caerwent Toilets

Council agreed to accept the quote from SKG Property Services to paint the ladies toilet ceiling.

Field at Shirefield (Waterpits) allegedly being developed

Councillor Murphy had attended a meeting with concerned residents.

Councillor Beattie had also attended a similar meeting.

Resident has written to MCC expressing concern about lack of action from MCC.

Planning application had now been received.

Complaint sent from resident to MCC regarding re-routing of footpath – Footpaths Officer had spoken to the landowner and made him aware that although he may invite the public to permissively use an alternative route over his land the legal alignment of the path needs to remain available at all times. The landowner has made an application to divert the path from its present alignment. If however an order is made it will be consulted on publically and notices posted both on site and in a local newspaper. This normally involves consulting the user groups such as the Ramblers, the Community Council, the local member and adjoining landowners.

Shetland Pony Field, Shirefield

Reply received from Senior Footpaths Officer who had recently visited the site and confirmed that although the fence might obstruct in part the alignment that the public have been using, the legally recorded alignment of the path is still available for the public to use. Barbed wire did originally run along the inside of one of the lines of fence posts but this has now been moved to the other side. Map had been circulated to Councillors.

Caerwent Toilets

The Bill to give 100% relief from business rates to public lavatories has been passed by both Parliaments in England and Wales. Royal Assent was expected on Thursday 29 April. The relief will be backdated to 1 April 2020 (but not earlier years). The relief applies only to stand-alone public lavatories and not to lavatories forming part of a larger building such as a library or community centre.

The Laurels Cottage, Caerwent (nr crossroads)

Large conifer tree will be removed due to damage to wall.

Caerwent Community Centre

Their Committee are in the process of applying for a £20,000 grant from People and Places. The Clerk had sent confirmation of approval to carry out the works on the building.

Defibrillator, Village Hall

This was used on 5th May. Paramedics took away the defib as it now has to be updated with new pads so currently not in use. Clerk had updated The Circuit with this information.

The Clerk explained The Circuit procedure. She asked the Chair if he could seek confirmation from The Woodlands Tavern that their defibrillator was currently showing a green tick and emergency ready.

SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

1000+ Facebook members

1 further business blocked for persistent posting

Removal of private traffic cones by children

Dogs off leads

Drone usage – Councillor John advised that there is frequent drone usage by the police in our area.

Broken gate at Barns

Information exchange

PLAY AREAS INSPECTION REPORT

New issue concerning broken fence posts along the roadside at Trewen. Agreed to seek a quote from Llanvair Landscapes.

EMBRACE NATURE REPORT

Information received from Cadw regarding the process for claiming the grant. Council agreed that they were happy with the terms and the Clerk will now invoice Cadw for £2,500 for the year.

Council noted that they should monitor the work to ensure it is carried out in a safe way and relevant permissions are obtained, also to ensure that the expenditure is incurred by Embrace Nature. Six monthly updates to Cadw from either Embrace Nature or the Community Council would be required in relation to progress on the project in line with the Business Plan.

Council noted that there would also be the potential for additional sums to be made available when Embrace Nature start looking at implementing some of the specific future projects that have been identified but this would be on a case by case basis and with Cadw being a last resort funder. Cadw would expect Embrace Nature to source other funds or to be raised from the community to implement these projects as much as possible in order to reduce the request on Cadw.

M3915 FINANCE

To consider balances/payment and approval as per finance schedule dated May 2021

Balances as at 30th April:

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Community Account | £24,064.70 |
| Moneymaster Account | £12,122.45 |
| Petty Cash | £99.04 |

Clerk's Salary, Allowances, Mileage (30) as per NALC scales

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Inland Revenue | £200.13 |
| Torfaen Pension Fund | (employee) £58.59 |
| | (employer) £197.10 |

Clerks & Councils Direct magazine £12 per Councillor
(Councillors will inform the Clerk if they wish to receive this publication in the future)

| | |
|--|----------|
| S Roderick (bus stop works) | £25.28 |
| British Gas | £25.47 |
| MCC rates | £69.00 |
| Aardvarc Cleaning | £256.00 |
| S Roderick (bench work) | £47.35 |
| Merlin Waste | £240.00 |
| BHIB Insurance (annual policy) | £1615.33 |
| Llanvair Landscapes (mowing/replacement gate post) | £1024.00 |
| One Voice Wales (training) | £15.00 |

M3916 CORRESPONDENCE

Caerwent Training Area noisy activity notice

One Voice Wales training courses

MCC – establishment of an all-through school in Abergavenny

Gavo survey

Various grant information

Council noted

M3917 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

To note any verbal reports

Councillor Foxall reported that the Governors at Rogiet School are very happy with the performance of the school in spite of Covid. Teachers are supportive of the finance and direction decisions.

M3918 HIGHWAYS/RIGHTS OF WAY

TRAFFIC SITUATION IN CAERWENT VILLAGE

To consider the parking situation from the crossroads to the cenotaph where at times vehicles have difficulty in navigating, which in turn is a safety issue for pedestrians.

Councillor Spooner was very concerned about the dangerous congested traffic and parking situation which she feels will only exacerbate once Covid restrictions are eased. It was agreed that the Clerk request a site meeting with Highways and suggest the times of 0800–0930 or 1600–1800 for the meeting.

Councillors to report any issues

Signpost at crossroads needs turning.

Footpath from Martins Close – tree roots pushing up pavement, unlit area so a safety issue.

The Chair asked Councillors to continue sending photographic evidence to the Clerk of large lorries using the village, preferably with registration plate numbers.

Highways/Rights of Way Matters Update

Tree Felling, Gray Hill:

Natural Resources Wales have concluded their investigation and appropriate enforcement action will be taken.

There is still an existing thinning licence that expands beyond the area that has recently been worked at the top of Gray Hill. This will continue over the next few years, but with a much lighter touch now that the thinning operation has been explained to the landowner. The landowner will also be seeking some further specialist woodland management advice. Part of the area here is a Scheduled Ancient Monument but the archaeological features extend beyond this scheduled area so Cadw are keen to see that trees and vegetation are managed on the site in order to preserve these features also. NRW will be monitoring the work at this site within the limits of their resources to ensure that there are no more breaches of the felling licence.

M3919 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Defibrillator – possibility of moving Coach & Horses defib to outside.

Phone Box relocation

Chair Date