

## **MINUTES OF CAERWENT COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019**

Present: Councillors:  
M Beattie (Chairman)  
B Counsell  
K Evans  
S George  
A Gittings  
K Haddow  
P Lewis  
P Murphy  
K Swift

In attendance: L McKeon, Clerk to the Council  
Pc Louise Thorpe  
5 members of the public

### **M4832 APOLOGIES**

Received from Councillor Harris

### **M4833 WELCOME NEW COUNCILLOR FOR DINHAM WARD**

The Chairman welcomed Angelique Gittings onto the Council as member for the Dinham ward. He looked forward to working with her.

### **To Sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Councillor Gittings signed the acceptance form.

### **M4834 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Councillor K Evans	Trustee	Caerwent Historic Trust
Councillor P Murphy	Trustee	Caerwent Community Centre
Councillor P Murphy	Member of Planning Cttee	All planning applications

### **M4835 15 MINUTES PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Concerns were raised regarding the recent felling of trees at Dewstow Manor:

A resident referred to the Natural Resources Wales website regarding important considerations in protecting wildlife, being mindful of the trees/habitat generally and the fact that an ecological report should be prepared by the applicant before the work commenced. He queried if this had in fact been carried out and if so what their assessment was and the response from NRW. He enquired if the Community Council are satisfied that the requirements have been met and if not are they concerned that this type of felling could be replicated elsewhere within the community.

Concern was expressed about felling during the breeding/nesting season and the protection of wildlife. A resident had approached the owner of the land who informed her that the felling was due to diseased trees and an incident of a tree falling onto a car. The resident had disputed this and queried why other trees which appeared much more dangerous had not been taken down.

The Chairman advised that the Community Council were not informed beforehand of this felling as they are not statutory consultees of this type of activity. He understood that the owner did have a licence but the Community Council had received complaints and these had been passed on to NRW. They had been invited to this meeting but

unfortunately could not attend. NRW had instead sent a response which was read out by the Chairman:

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In September 2018 (expires September 2020) the NRW had issued a felling licence for an agreed mapped area. This covers 0.95ha of clear fell and 12.35ha of thinning. The areas that are to be clear-felled have been conditioned in the licence to be restocked where this is appropriate. A few small areas will be left where it would be unwise to replant as the trees removed have caused a hazard. This equates to 0.74ha left unplanted which is below the 1ha threshold for an Environmental Impact Assessment. Thinning is good woodland/forestry management and is beneficial for the remaining trees giving them room and light to grow, so these areas are not required to be restocked. It is the landowner's choice of how the trees are physically felled, by hand or by machine.

Wildlife, habitat and landscape is considered. During our pre-screening of the site we do a desk check for records of European Protected Species, Schedule 1 birds and Badgers; Designated Sites i.e. Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Zones etc. If anything is highlighted we consult internally and externally for any concerns or advice and also request that applicants complete a European Protected Species Checklist giving details of species they know to be present and any best practice or mitigation they will be carrying out.

For this site Great Crested Newts, Otters and Bats were considered as records existed within the 2km buffer and Brockwells Meadow SSSI. The work was discussed with a Conservation Officer who deemed that there would be no detrimental impact to these species or SSSI. No other European Protected Species records existed within a 2km buffer of the site. There were some schedule 1 bird records for Whimbrel and Brambling.

It is expected that before felling starts trees will be checked for signs of resting otter or potential bat roosts and nests and that these will be left if any evidence is found until further survey work has been undertaken. We will always advise that tree felling is not carried out during bird breeding/nesting season and additional guidance is issued with the felling licence detailing this, however NRW has no powers in the 1967 Forestry Act to stipulate when this felling is carried out. If an active nest is disturbed, then this is a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and needs to be investigated by the police. There are a number of constraints as to when trees should or should not be felled, including nesting birds, but it is a balance with considering other protected species at different times of the year i.e. Great Crested Newts are more likely to be disturbed if felling through the autumn/winter when they are away from the water and there is more chance of pollution to watercourses during wet winter months.

With regards to the landscape, the majority of the work will be thinning which will not dramatically alter the landscape and amenity of the site. Some of the area that is being clear-felled will be replanted.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act is outside of the remit of the Forest Regulation team and any evidence of a breach is dealt with by the Wildlife Crime Officers/Rural Police Officers. Our understanding is that officers have attended site and did not find any evidence of a breach during their investigation.

Within the Forest Regulation team, we deal with Felling Licence Applications for trees that are outside of planning permission boundaries. If trees are to be felled as part of

a development this is usually detailed within the location boundary and design plan and the tree felling is permitted under the planning permission and any decisions are made by the Local Planning Authority, so we do not get involved. The exception to this rule is if the felling of trees has not been detailed or permitted as part of the planning permission in which case it could be considered as an alleged illegal felling and will be investigated as such by the Forest Regulation team.

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Residents queried with Pc Thorpe her remit and if NRW Officers had indeed attended the site before the felling. She confirmed that her team is responsible for any wildlife crime and that NRW had attended on several occasions. Concern was expressed regarding felling whilst birds were nesting and whether a crime had been committed. Pc Thorpe advised that they can only consider any form of prosecution if there is evidence and there was none. Disturbance of the woods does not mean that there were nests in the trees. The onus is on the person cutting to check at the time.

A resident was concerned about the SSSI Brockwells Meadows which is within the 2 km zone around the felling site which also needed to be surveyed, under the provision of the licence, to look for protected species which might be impacted.

A further query was raised regarding a footpath post in that area near Shirefield Cottage which now had a firearms sticker on it advising residents of this activity. Pc Thorpe was not aware of this but she will check it out. Resident also reported that the path was inaccessible due to a large bush which requires clearing. Councillor Lewis confirmed that the owner had mowed the path recently.

A resident raised the issue of very overgrown grass on the A48 impeding driver vision. Councillor Murphy will raise this with MCC.

#### **M4836 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chair's announcements.

#### **M4837 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF AGM HELD 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019**

These were agreed as a true record.

#### **M4838 MONTHLY POLICE REPORT**

##### **To note**

Report not received. If we do not receive this soon Councillor Murphy will again raise this with the Police Commissioner.

#### **Visit by PC Louise Thorpe regarding tree cutting at Dewstow Manor**

Pc Thorpe was thanked for attending and dealing with questions during public participation. Agreed that we write to NRW to ask who will be monitoring the Dewstow Manor site.

#### **M4839 PLANNING**

##### **To consider any planning applications received after despatch of agenda**

There were no plans to consider

##### **To note monthly enforcement lists**

Noted

**M4840 TO CONSIDER THE PROVISION OF A DEFIBRILLATOR IN OUR PHONE BOX AT HIGHMOOR HILL**

Agreed that this was not a feasible option due to lack of electricity, the remoteness of the location and the eight minutes guidelines on successful defibrillation.

**M4841 TO REVIEW THE ANNUAL EDUCATION AWARD AND PROPOSE ANY ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

Agreed to set up an Education Award Working Group. The Chairman and Councillors Murphy, George and Haddow were nominated. To meet in September.

**M4842 TO CONSIDER THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW BENCH AT THE WAR MEMORIAL, INCORPORATING THE WINNING DESIGNS OF OUR COMPETITION FROM THE TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The Chairman circulated drawings of a proposed bench at a cost of approx £160 to match the planters. Agreed to research alternative memorial benches – Councillor Haddow to report back to next meeting.

Agreed that the two winning school designs could be onto metal and then fixed to the side of the planters. Councillor Evans will investigate. Failing that the designs could be placed on top of two of the new slabs.

All information to be provided to the Clerk to be sent out with the next agenda.

**M4843 TO CONSIDER REQUIRED WORKS AT THE VILLAGE HALL AS RECOMMENDED BY MCC**

Agreed to obtain quotes for this work.

**M4844 TO RECEIVE REPORTS**

**CLERK'S REPORT**

**Dog Fouling**

New containers now placed on all bins by Mr/Mrs Dawson and filled up. Clerk had ordered five more boxes of bags from MCC. Stickers for the bins will be ordered for all bins asking residents to please not leave bags on the ground or on top of the bin and advising them if the bin is full to use the nearest litter or dog bin or place dog waste in their household rubbish.

**Dogs on Leads, Cadw land**

New signage had been placed on the walls requesting that dogs be kept on leads.

**War Memorial Improvements**

Cleaning/inscriptions completed. Awaiting a date for the paving contractor to commence – Councillor Swift will chase.

**War Memorial Planters**

Planters not ordered yet due to paving/painting works not completed – lead time of four weeks.

**Grant – Broadband Infrastructure**

No further progress re grant.

Council noted update from MCC regarding Superfast Cymru 2.

**Defibrillator, Caerwent Village Hall**

Councillor Haddow is now progressing this as grants have just become available from the British Heart Foundation.

### **Defibrillator, Coach & Horses Public House**

Councillor Haddow was advised to contact Cadw regarding any guidelines regarding relocating this to outside.

### **Education Award**

The Chairman had visited Rogiet School today to give out the prizes and hand over the time capsules. He was extremely impressed with the staff and pupils and had written to them to congratulate them. He will be visiting Shirenewton School on 18<sup>th</sup> June.

### **New Play Equipment, Caerwent Playing Fields**

Now installed and reports received from the CPFA that local children are extremely happy with it.

### **Crick Speeding**

Senior Traffic Engineer at MCC had written to inform us that they were unsuccessful in securing any funding from Welsh Government for the feasibility study on the A48. However, this will be done within this financial year, using their existing internal capital funding. He has no date yet but will ensure that this is done as soon as possible.

### **“Crick” Signage**

Councillor Swift had received information from Standard Signs. She will speak with Highways regarding what is allowed size wise and a recommendation with images will be sent out with the next agenda.

### **Bus Service 75**

Clerk had sent in residents' proposals regarding the service to MCC who are considering these. Councillor Murphy will progress this.

### **Post Box, Highmoor Hill**

Awaiting re-instatement. Clerk to chase.

### **Caerwent Litter Champions**

Councillor Harris reported that he is still hopeful of a Litter Pick being arranged in June. Waiting for confirmation from Keep Wales Tidy.

### **Caerwent Show 2019**

Will be held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August.

### **Village Hall Transfer**

Clerk had sent all correspondence to Chairman. He has arranged a meeting with the solicitor for 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

### **Village Hall Drainage Survey**

Ordered extra cleaning.

### **Training Courses**

Chairman had attended Chairing Skills training course.  
Chairman and Councillor Gittings will be attending Code of Conduct Training.  
Clerk attending new “Clerks Council” meeting at MCC.

### **Large Poppies**

30 large poppies now arrived.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT**

589 members. Issues raised:

Drug taking equipment found on School Lane – asked police to carry out night time patrols.

Felling of trees at Dewstow Manor – written to NRW and report received.

Noise at The Base query – residents replied.

Speeding and not stopping at traffic lights on A48 in Caerwent – written to MCC to enquire about promised survey on A48 -will be carried out asap.

Burglary at Shirefield – warning put out to residents.

Bottle Refill Scheme – the Post Office has signed up for this.

Concern regarding roman stones cleaning at the War Memorial - all work carried out by skilled and licensed masons and complies with the National Association of Memorial Masons Code of Working Practice and British Standards and all current War Memorial Trust guidelines and Conservationist Best Practice.

Ash Tree Road status – wrote to MCC and received reply that Ash Tree Road is still private at this moment in time. The roads are ready for adoption, however they must first wait for the completion of the adoption of the open space area by MCC Grounds as they contain highways surface water drainage infrastructure.

Young children climbing up and over the roman walls – warning put out.

## **PLAY AREA INSPECTION REPORT**

Not received.

Councillor George reported that the spiderweb piece of equipment at Caerwent Play Area appears to have lost its elasticity. Clerk to report.

## **M4845 IT WAS AGREED TO EXTEND STANDING ORDERS BY TWENTY MINUTES**

### **M4846 CORRESPONDENCE**

1. One Voice Wales  
Training Courses Available, also available online now.
2. Caerwent Community Centre  
They are applying for grant from Sport Wales in order to install new flooring in the gym area. Sport Wales require sight of documentation regarding ownership. Clerk had already sent the Title Deeds of the building. Agreed that we also write stating that the Caerwent Community Centre Committee are our tenants who run the building for us. Also inform them that we are in the process of drawing up a lease which is intended to be for a term of 999 years. The Chairman will raise this with the solicitor at his meeting with him.
3. Caerwent Community Centre  
They had received a letter from a private company based in Langstone, Ludlow Healthcare, requesting that they agree to their building being nominated as an emergency facility. Councillor Murphy will seek more information on this and report back.

**M4847 FINANCE**

**To consider balances/payment and approval as per finance schedule dated June 2019**

**To consider annual request from Llanfair Discoed Best Kept Village Committee for a donation towards their planting**

The Clerk reported that there are now different criteria for entering this competition. Councillor Murphy advised that the LD Committee has not yet entered. Agreed that we defer this decision whilst waiting for clarification.

**To approve Annual Return 2018/19 and associated documentation.**

Council approved.

**To receive Internal Auditor report 2018/19**

Council noted.

**To approve the effectiveness of internal audit 2018/19**

Council considered that internal audit was effective.

**To receive quarterly budget figures 2018/19**

Council noted.

**To approve new bank mandate**

Information not received from bank. Clerk to check.

**M4848 HIGHWAYS/RIGHTS OF WAY**

**To note information from MCC re Civil Parking Enforcement**

Noted

**To note road closure on Roman Road, Caerwent, 15<sup>th</sup> July.**

Noted

**To report any issues**

Large tree had fallen on the Caerwent Playing Fields – had been removed.  
30 mph signs obscured by overgrown hedges.  
Cycle path from Five Lanes tip all along the A48 requires weeding/clearing.  
Pavement not re-instated outside No. 1 of new development on A48.  
Grass cutting all along the A48 very poor.  
Dying deciduous larch trees in Slade Wood opposite Hillside on Highmoor Hill.  
Three foot length of tarmac gauged out by farm vehicles opposite Hardwick Farm entrance.

**M4849 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

There were no reports.

**M4850 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Consideration of locations for further defibrillators within our community.

Chairman ..... Date .....