

## CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANDDAROG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the January 2022 meeting of Llanddarog Community Council held online on the 12/01/2022 at 19.00.

#### 177/2021-2022 Present:

Councillors: M Rees (Chair), R Jones, S Herridge, H Jones, R Newell, W Evans, J Williams O.B.E.

County Cllr A Davies.

Clerk.

Translator: C Llwyd.

#### 178/2021-2022 Apologies.

Councillors: E Davies, J Youens, R Owen.

#### 179/2021-2022 Declarations of personal interest.

None.

#### 180/2021-2022 Opportunity for the public to address the council on agenda items.

None.

#### 181/2021-2022 Policing and Road Safety Matters

Cllr J Williams O.B.E. reported a faulty streetlight (52 4991 00) at Nantyglesiad, Porthyrhyd. **Resolved** by Cllr J Williams O.B.E.

Cllr W Evans reported a loose kerb stone outside the Prince of Wales, Porthyrhyd. **Resolved** for the Clerk to report to the relevant department.

Cllr W Evans reported a faulty streetlight on the B4310 at the roundabout near the A48 slip road. **Resolved** by Cllr R Jones.

Cllr R Newell reported a damaged "Play Area" sign opposite the play area in Mynyddcerrig. **Resolved** for the Clerk to report to the relevant department.

Cllr H Jones joined the meeting at 19.11.

#### 182/2021-2022 County Council matters - County Cllr A Davies.

County Cllr A Davies wished all council members a happy New Year.

County Cllr A Davies gave an update on Covid-19 figures for Carmarthenshire – Currently over 2,000/100,000 compared to 950/100,000 for the same period in 2021.

We all know people who have succumbed to the disease but thankfully the vaccinations have helped keep hospitalisations and deaths to a minimum. Despite many events being cancelled over the festive period, it's far more important to remain healthy and safe. Hopefully by next year, events will be able to proceed when the pandemic will be an endemic and something which we can all live with a little easier.

The Gritter strike is an interesting scenario as Carmarthenshire County Council have offered a pay increase but the union, which is Unison in this case has refused to pass that offer on to its members and asked for a strike ballot instead. The members voted for action without knowing what was on the table. However, there was a contingency

plan in place and the roads were gritted. It's also interesting to note that Carmarthenshire County Council pay the highest rate of pay to its members as a retainer within Wales and therefore its very puzzling why this action is taking place.

Budget consultations are taking place, and these will be open to all Members during w/c 17/01/2022 through to 21/01/2022. Budget setting will then take place within two Full Council meetings in February to discuss and finalise. The current projection is for Council tax to increase approx 4.5%.

Full Council meeting next week and to date, no agenda received. However, if there is anything relevant to our Ward, the Clerk will be informed.

With regards to planting trees to offset carbon emissions, there are public meetings taking place in Pumsaint and around the County, and County Cllr A Davies will be attending the meeting on the 27/01/2022 to see what can be done to stop farms being bought and transferred to tree production. This is re-wilding through the back door. The Plaid/Labour agreement notes that all Glasdir applicants need to be active local farmers, but even with that caveat employing companies, it may be the way out of that loophole.

Cllr R Jones enquired about the new vehicle charging points in Crosshands as they are not open as discussed in the November meeting on 10/11/2021, minute **140/2021-2022**. County Cllr A Davies reported that the EV charging hub had been officially opened by Lee Waters AM and Cllr Hazel Evans and said that she would enquire as to why it was not open to the public.

#### 183/2021-2022 Chairman's Report.

Cllr M Rees wished all council members a Happy New Year.

Cllr M Rees announced that she attended the nine lessons and carols service at St. Twrog church on 19/12/2021 but the Plygain on 09/01/2022 had been cancelled due to the Omicron virus restrictions.

#### 184/2021-2022 Confirmation and signing of the Minutes of the Council Meeting 08/12/2021.

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes for 08/12/2021 and for the clerk to deliver the minutes to the Chair for signing on 14/01/2022. Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr H Jones.

#### 185/2021-2022 Matters arising from the above minutes.

The Clerk informed council members that all matters to **resolve** had been actioned and if correspondence had been received, a copy of the Email had been sent to each member for information.

#### 186/2021-2022 To note correspondence or to list for consideration at a forthcoming council meeting.

None.

#### 187/2021-2022 Planning.

None.

#### 188/2021-2022 Payments.

The below payments were certified in the December monthly meeting and **ratified** in the January monthly meeting. Copies of invoices sent to all members electronically

prior to payment for authorisation. Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr W Evans.

Method of Payment	Date	Suppliers & Details	Sum £ inc VAT
Online	21/12/2021	WCVA Inv – 932	21.30
Online	21/12/2021	HMRC PAYE – Period 9	89.80
Online	21/12/2021	Catrin Llwyd – CCLL4	70.00
Online	21/12/2021	Mynyddcerrig Welfare Committee – Christmas Tree	60.00
Online	21/12/2021	Red Dragon Flagmakers – Inv GE191221	896.40
Online	22/12/2021	J.G Evans –December Payroll	343.23
Online	24/12/2021	Nest	32.58

Cllr R Jones stated that an error had been made on a payment to Mynyddcerrig Welfare Committee on 21/12/2021 as a payment had been made for £60.00 but the maximum agreed in the December meeting on 08/12/2021, minute **173/2021-2022** was £50.00. The matter was discussed, and it was resolved to deduct £10.00 from the next annual revenue grant payment, therefore reducing their payment from £500.00 - £490.00. **Resolved** to note.

#### **189/2021-2022 Receipts.**

Carmarthenshire County Council – Precept 3.

24/12/2021 - £7126.00.

#### **190/2021-2022 To discuss maintenance of community flagpoles.**

An email was received on 14/11/2021 from Cllr J Williams O.B.E stating that the flagpoles within the community required maintenance before the flags are raised in 2022. The Clerk contacted Red Dragon Flagmakers in Swansea as they were local and able to fulfil any maintenance work required. Photographs were sent to Red Dragon Flagmakers on 30/11/2021 and a prompt reply was received, stating that repairs and a LOLER inspection was required.

Cllr R Jones enquired if the work involved should be part of a tender process. Cllr S Herridge reported that as the maintenance required was a Health and Safety issue, that it should be rectified as soon as possible. The matter was further discussed by council members, and it was decided to sought repairs as soon as possible. Proposed by Cllr S Herridge and seconded by Cllr H Jones. **Resolved** for the Clerk to contact Red Dragon Flagmakers.

The Clerk reported that an engineer from Red Dragon Flagmakers performed a survey of all flagpoles within the community on 17/12/2021 with Cllr J Williams O.B.E. and Cllr W Evans in attendance. A report and quotation was received on 07/01/2022 and sent to all council members stating all the repairs that were required. LOLER certificates were received on 10/01/2022 giving the following results –

Llanddarog Flagpole – Fail.

Porthyrhyd Flagpole – Fail.

Mynyddcerrig Flagpole – Pass.

The required repairs were discussed by council members, and it was decided to complete all required repairs ASAP to comply with health and safety regulations. Once

all repairs have been completed, new LOLER certificates will be issued on all failed flagpoles.

It was also agreed to inspect and repair if necessary, each flagpole every 3 years as advised by the engineer. Cllr J Williams O.B.E. also asked for a contingency sum be placed aside for a new flagpole at Llanddarog as the engineer had advised that a replacement flagpole would be required in the near future.

Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E. **Resolved** for the Clerk to arrange repairs with Red dragon Flagmakers.

**191/2021-2022 To discuss the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon 02/06/2022.**

County Cllr A Davies previously reported that she had suggested to Llanarthne Community Council about approaching the National Trust to see if they want to organise a beacon in Paxton's Tower. County Cllr A Davies also suggested the potential use of the tower at Llanddarog Church to aid in the celebrations. Council members discussed the suggestions and agreed to ask the Clerk to contact the National Trust to discuss the matter. **Resolved** for the Clerk to contact the National Trust and place on the agenda for the November meeting on 10/11/2021.

The Clerk emailed the National Trust on 19/10/2021, asking them to consider the suggestion and reply with their thoughts prior to the November meeting on 10/11/2021.

No reply has been received and after a conversation with Mrs Jayne Henshaw from the National Trust, she informed the Clerk that discussions were taking place regarding the council's suggestion, and they would be in contact in due course.

An email was received from One Voice Wales on 30/10/2021 and forwarded to all council members with an update on the guide to taking part in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee beacons. The update is now encouraging those lighting Beacons to plant a circle of seven trees with each tree representing a decade in The Queen's reign to assist with the sustainability of the planet, along with providing a permanent reminder of this unique, and amazing moment in The Queen's life and in her reign.

Cllr M Rees reported that it was not possible to illuminate the church spire more than it currently is but that the church would be lighting the spire and celebrating the occasion on 02/06/2022.

Resolved to note and place on the agenda for the December meeting on 08/12/2021.

An email was received from the National Trust on 08/12/2021 and forwarded to all council members asking for more details with regards to the proposal (Proposed site, size, etc). The lead ranger who is responsible for the land and meadows project at Paxton's Tower was also copied into the email.

The Clerk advised council members to wait until the Llanarthne Community Council meeting on 14/12/2021 to decide on a reply to the questions. Cllr R Jones enquired if the NBGW were celebrating the occasion. The Clerk instructed council members that he would make enquiries. **Resolved** for the Clerk to contact the NBGW.

The Clerk reported that an Email was sent to the NBGW on 04/01/2022 asking if they are planning an event to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. No reply has been

received. The Clerk invited County Cllr A Davies to report on the plans of Llanarthne Community Council.

County Cllr A Davies reported that Llanarthne Community Council are planning to have a beacon at Paxton's Tower and the event at Llanarthne Village Hall. Capel Dewi were organising an outdoor event with a band and catering in attendance. County Cllr A Davies stated that a UK wide bonfire beacon was planned for 02/06/2022 with summer picnics planned for 05/06/2022 and celebrations throughout the weekend.

Cllr M Rees suggested that Porthyrhyd Village Hall would be an ideal venue for the celebrations as they have a large outside area and playing fields. Cllr S Herridge offered the services of her daughter Rhiannon to perform during the celebrations and Cllr R Jones suggested that she might be able to sing the official jubilee anthem.

**192/2021-2022 To discuss Electoral Matters and the Local Government Elections and Town/Community Elections, 2022.**

The Clerk reported that he had spoken with a member of Carmarthenshire County Council and the estimated cost for printing nomination packs is £250.00. This is dependent on the number of applicants and may increase. Cllr R Jones added that an election was imminent but if no voting was required then there was no need for a polling station in the community, therefore saving on costs.

**193/2021-2022 To receive the report of the Internal Financial Examiner for the period 01/10/2021 - 31/12/2021.**

Each member had been provided with a written report prior to the meeting. A full verbal report was provided by Cllr R Jones (Internal Financial Examiner). The report confirmed the accuracy of the bank reconciliation and statement of accounts provided to the council. It also confirmed the accuracy of the on-going budget report provided. It was proposed by Cllr J Williams O.B.E. and seconded by Cllr H Jones to accept the report. Members thanked Cllr R Jones and the Clerk for their work.

**194/2021-2022 To develop and finalise the budget and precept for 2022 – 2023.**

a) Review of income and expenditure for period 01/04/2021 – 31/12/2021 – All members had received a copy of the report prior to the meeting along with a copy of the bank reconciliation up to 31/12/2021. The statement balance on 31/12/2021 was £25,147.48.

b) Projected balance at 31/03/2022 – Cllr R Jones and the Clerk discussed and formatted the figures based on current spending trends and expenditure for the same period in 2020 – 2021 (Please see table 1 below).

c) Report and recommendations in relation to 2022 – 2023 budget – A draft expenditure report was sent to all members prior to the meeting totalling £24,380.00. A draft income figure was presented to the members from VAT refund for £1140.00.

d) Confirmation of the 2022 – 2023 budget – The budget is presented in table 2 below.

e) Confirmation of the special project's programme and the Council's other reserves. The reserves are found to be on track albeit with some easily identifiable differences. No funds were allocated to the DFS signs as the project was completely funded by Carmarthenshire County Council and the memorial stone project is yet to be finalised. Cllr J Williams O.B.E. also asked for a contingency sum be placed aside for a new flagpole at Llanddarog as the engineer had advised that a replacement flagpole would be required in the near future. Agreed by council members.

f) Report in relation to 2022 – 2023 budget – All members received a copy of the report prior to the meeting. The Band D Council tax base figure for Llanddarog Community

Council 2022 – 2023 is **552.96** and all members were required to evaluate the presented “options” (Please see table 3 below).

g) 2022 – 2023 Precept Demand - All Council members considered the options provided for the 2022 – 2023 precept. A council needs to hold some reserves to make sure it can pay for unexpected events and to make sure it has enough money to pay bills until it receives income. Unless it has specific plans for future spending, councils should only hold reserves to provide a reasonable balance. The Clerk reported that the reserve percentage was on track last year but with uncertain times ahead regarding inflation and utility charges, it would be advisable to keep the Council Tax Band D at the same figure as 2021-2022. All council members agreed to the proposed 0.00% increase and that the precept demand would be £21,255.78 with a Council Tax Band D of £38.44.

h) To ratify the annual investment strategy – The strategy was discussed under policies in the Community Council meeting on 10/11/2021 minute **149/2021-2022**.

i) Insurance Policy – This matter was discussed in the May meeting on 12/05/2021 minute **37/2021-2022**. There was no possible collaboration of insurance policies with Llanarthne Community Council to reduce premium costs. The Clerk was advised that this could be done but that if a claim was ever instigated within either one of the Community Councils, the other Community Council would receive an increase in premium costs. It was proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E. to renew the policy.

The Clerk announced that there was an overspend against the budget regarding Section 137 and this was due to the Section 137 allocation and Chairman’s allowance being paid after the AGM in May. As Financial Requests were considered twice per year it was inevitable that there would be an overspend on this heading. The Clerk recommended that the Section 137 and the Chairman’s allowance be paid in the month of march, prior to the end of the financial year. Proposed by Cllr S Herridge and seconded by Cllr W Evans.

The budget and precept report recommendations were proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E. with no objections from any Community Council members.

#### **195/2021-2022 Forum in order for Members to raise reports / questions through the Chairman.**

Cllr H Jones reported that he had attended the Board of Governors meeting at Llanddarog School on 10/01/2022 and asked the Clerk to email the headteacher to officially inform them that Cllr J Williams O.B.E. would be joining as Llanddarog Community Councils representative. **Resolved** for the Clerk to send the email.

Cllr S Herridge informed council members that the conifer trees on the corner of Crwbin Road had been removed.

Cllr S Herridge reported that she had received a call from a community member on 07/01/2022 informing her that a vehicle had parked on the pavement near Porthyrhyd Garage and was blocking the entrance to 2 x properties. The owner of the vehicle also created a disturbance at 22.30 by sounding the horn. The Clerk and council members stated that this was a police matter and that they should have been informed at the time of the incident.

#### **196/2020-2021 In camera 20.00.**

Those who were not Community Council members or the Clerk departed the meeting – not to return. The exclusion is due to personnel / staffing matters being discussed.

**197/2020-2021 Staff pay run January 2022.**

The Clerk reported the payroll amounts verbally to all council members. It was **resolved** to accept the report and ratify the payment of the sums as presented.

Cllr R Jones informed council members that the Clerk had not received a pay increase in 2021 as no correspondence had been received from NALC. Cllr R Jones suggested that the subject should be added to the council calendar in the month of September to avoid this issue in the future. All council members agreed. Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr W Evans. **Resolved** for the Clerk to contact NALC.

**198/2021-2022 The meeting finished at 20.22.**

Chairman

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Date

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## LLANDDAROG BUDGET & PRECEPT 2022-2023

Please find below a report on the 2021-2022 budget, the actual expenditure to 31/12/2021 and the estimated expenditure to 31/03/2022. Reasons are given on sum difference and will be discussed in the January meeting on 12/01/2022.

**TABLE 1**

<b>HEADING</b>	<b>PREVIOUS BUDGET</b>	<b>ACTUAL SPEND TO 31/12/2021</b>	<b>ESTIMATED SPEND ON 31/03/2022</b>	<b>DIFF</b>	<b>REASON</b>
Ground Maintenance	2550.00	1500.00	1500.00	-1050.00	New Contractor
Staff Salary & PAYE	6000.00	4713.40	6110.23	110.23	-
Admin, Inc Audit Fees	2300.00	1007.20	1681.10	-1658.10	Translator 01/09/2021
Insurance	900.00	874.95	874.95	-25.05	-
Financial Assistance – Inc Standing Revenue Grants	2000.00	1500.00	1500.00	-500.00	Llanddarog Show
Seating & Asset Maintenance	1250.00	2340.21	3840.21	2590.21	Laptop / Flagpoles
Street Lighting Estimate	2750.00	0.00	2750.00	0.00	-
Misc – Inc Subscriptions	450.00	491.90	691.90	241.90	Zoom
Members Allowance	360.00	360.00	720.00	360.00	Late Payment 2021
Members Allowance PAYE	90.00	90.00	180.00	90.00	Late Payment2021
Election Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-
Section 137	900.00	920.00	1420.00	520.00	Donations
Allocation to Special Projects & Reserve From Precept	4000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,550.00</b>	<b>13,437.66</b>	<b>21,268.39</b>	<b>-2281.61</b>	



There was a projected VAT refund in the 2021-2022 precept of £1660.00. This reduced the precept demand from £23,550.00 to £21,890.00. It was resolved to demand a precept income of £21,378.00 in 2021-2022 and for general funds to replenish the £512.00 shortfall.

Please find below a proposed budget for 2022-2023 in comparison to 2021-2022. Reasons are given on sum difference and will be discussed in the January meeting on 13/01/2021.

**TABLE 2**

<b>HEADING</b>	<b>PREVIOUS BUDGET</b>	<b>PROPOSED BUDGET</b>	<b>REASON</b>
Ground Maintenance	2550.00	1800.00	New tender in place
Staff Salary & PAYE	6000.00	6400.00	Inflation & salary increase
Admin, Inc Audit Fees	2300.00	2300.00	-
Insurance	900.00	930.00	Inflation
Financial Assistance – Inc Standing Revenue Grants	2000.00	2000.00	-
Seating & Asset Maintenance	1250.00	2000.00	Flagpole LOLER inspection and repairs
Street Lighting Estimate	2750.00	2900.00	Expected increase in utility charges.
Misc – Inc Subscriptions	450.00	450.00	-
Members Allowance	360.00	360.00	-
Members Allowance PAYE	90.00	90.00	-
Election Cost	0.00	250.00	Printing costs
Section 137	900.00	900.00	-
Allocation to Special Projects & Reserve From Precept	4000.00	4000.00	DFS Flagpole
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,550.00</b>	<b>24,380.00</b>	

At the time of preparation, the only projected income for 2022-2023 is a VAT refund of £1140.00. This will reduce the amount of the precept demand from £24,380.00 to £23,240.00. Also reducing the overall demand will be the projected bank balance remaining in the account. Full details below.

**TABLE 3**

Bank balance as at 31/12/2021	£25,147.48
Less projected expenditure 01/01/2022 – 31/03/2022	£7,830.73
Projected bank balance as at 31/03/2021	£17,316.75
Expenditure proposal for 2022-2023	£24,380.00
Less Estimated income for 2021-2022 (VAT Refund)	£1,140.00
Less projected bank balance as at 31/3/22 (based on projected expenditure)	£17,316.75
Amount required to make up the difference	£5923.25
Add 50% of projected expenditure to create a reserve of 50% of revenue	£12,190.00
Amount required as total precept for 2022-2023	<b>£18,113.25</b>
By using tax base 552.96	
Amount raised by keeping the Band D rate the same as last year @ £38.44	£21,255.78
Amount raised by reducing the Band D rate to £35.60 (-7.38% on last year)	£19,685.38
Amount raised by reducing the Band D rate to £32.76 (-14.78% on last year)	£18,113.25

NB. If we keep the Band D rate the same as 2021-2022, we will end up with a budget surplus of £3142.53 which will be added to the reserve. The reserve will then be equal to 84% of annual expenditure (10 months). This is not acceptable for a council of our size unless unforeseen circumstances (Utility Charges, Inflation) are considered.

NB. If we reduce the Band D rate to £35.60, we will end up with a budget surplus of £1570.40 which will be added to the reserve. The reserve will then be equal to 76% of annual expenditure (between 8 and 9 months). This is not acceptable for a council of our size unless unforeseen circumstances (Utility Charges, Inflation) are considered.

NB. If we reduce the Band D rate to £32.76, we will end up with a budget surplus of £1.71 which will be added to the reserve. The reserve will then be equal to 67% of annual expenditure (between 6-7 months). This is acceptable for a council of our size.