

CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANDDAROG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the November 2023 Meeting of Llanddarog Community Council held at Llanddarog Village Hall on 08/11/2023 at 19.00.

108/2023-2024 Present.

Councillors: S Herridge (Chair), R Jones, M Griffiths, R Owen, R McFarlane, T Evans.

County Cllr A Davies.

Clerk.

Translator: C Llwyd.

109/2023-2024 To receive apologies.

Councillors: County Cllr H Jones, J Williams O.B.E, M Rees, K Waters, R Newell.

110/2023-2024 To receive declarations of interest.

None.

111/2023-2024 Opportunity for the public to address the Council on agenda items.

A member of the public attended the meeting as a spectator but did not wish to address the council.

112/2023-2024 County Council matters - County Cllr A Davies.

County Cllr A Davies reported that a full council meeting was held on 08/11/2023.

Mr Roger Thomas, Chief Fire Officer of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service presented the budget constraints and what the service costs. Most of the funding for Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service is received by way of levy from the six Unitary Authorities within their area and equates to approx 14 million per annum. The contribution is based on population. The Service is asking for a 7.6% increase in levy, which will impact on council tax. Last year they asked for 13% but it ended up at 16.4%. So this year it is very likely that the 7.6% will increase to 9.4%.

The increase will be used to payroll, transport, premises, supplies and service including insurance and capital financing and leasing. The increase in council tax will also fund Dyfed Powys Police and Carmarthenshire County Council.

Cllr R Jones enquired if there was a possibility of fire stations closing?

County Cllr A Davies stated that no fire stations would be closed. In Carmarthenshire, only Llanelli fire station has a 24-hour service, Carmarthen fire station is staffed during the day and has retained fire officers at all other times whilst the remaining fire stations are reliant on retained fire officers only. New recruits currently have a 40% dropout rate.

Cllr M Griffiths asked if the budget increase was for Carmarthenshire or for Wales.

County Cllr A Davies responded for Carmarthenshire only.

County Cllr A Davies also reported that forecasting a budget for Carmarthenshire County Council was challenging and that a further 13 million reduction on last year was required.

The pylon scheme was moving in a positive direction despite planning permission being sought for the Nant Mithil Energy Park via PEDW and the DNS service.

County Cllr A Davies reported that she has attended a number of events including the Dairy Show in Carmarthen, Gower Foods in Crosshands where they process milk into butter and ancillary products, a talk with Wyn Jones, Wales Rugby player in Llandovery, a number of Community Cohesion events with CarmDas and at the end of this month an event on the White Ribbon Campaign which highlights Domestic Abuse and includes cohesive control against women.

The first polytunnel frame is up in Bremenda Isaf and progress is being made in employing staff to work on the project.

If any Christmas events are being organised within our community, please inform County Cllr A Davies.

12/11/2023 – Cllr S Herridge and Cllr M Griffiths will perform a reading for the remembrance service at St Twrog Church, Llanddarog.

23/12/2023 – Carol service with Crwbin Brass Band in Mynyddcerrig at 18.00.

The translator left the meeting at 19.35 as no translation equipment had arrived.

113/2023-2024 Chairman's Report.

Cllr S Herridge reported that she chaired the Extraordinary General Meeting at Porthyrhyd Village Hall on 24/10/2023, where members of the community participated in a discussion regarding **PL/06638** - Construction of 42 no. dwelling houses with formation of access, estate road and associated infrastructure - Land part of Wern Fraith Farm, Porthyrhyd, Carmarthen, SA32 8PT. Cllr S Herridge thanked Cefin Campbell AS/MS, County Cllr Anne Davies and community council members for their support.

114/2023-2024 Confirmation and signing of the Minutes of the Council Meeting 11/10/2023.

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes for 11/10/2023. Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr R McFarlane.

115/2023-2024 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.

116/2023-2024 To note correspondence or to list for consideration at a forthcoming council meeting.

(All relevant correspondence is emailed to council members at the time of receipt and only brought before the meeting if necessary or specifically requested by members or the Clerk).

117/2023-2024 Planning.

PL/06638 - Construction of 42 no. dwelling houses with formation of access, estate road and associated infrastructure - Land part of Wern Fraith Farm, Porthyrhyd, Carmarthen, SA32 8PT.

An Extraordinary General Meeting was held at Porthyrhyd Village Hall on 24/10/2023, where members of the community participated in a discussion regarding the above planning application. The Clerk reported that a letter had been formatted by Cllr M Griffiths and sent to all council members for comments prior to being submitted to Carmarthenshire County Council on 06/11/2023. The Clerk read out the letter at the meeting.

County Cllr A Davies reported that many community members attended the meeting and numerous questions were asked regarding their concerns.

County Cllr A Davies instructed council members that during the consultation process, 4 people will be allowed to present for a maximum period of 4 minutes each. The material objections for the consultation process must be factual, direct and not futile. County Cllr A Davies suggested that each person should present on one topic of concern. The developers can respond to each concern, but no further comments will be allowed from the public. County Cllr A Davies stated that the SuDS report may not be submitted before the end of the consultation period but will be made available before approval and the noise report from Carmarthenshire County Council will be updated before the end of the consultation date. County Cllr A Davies reported that social housing was in high demand and if the planning committee requested a site visit, the final decision would be made once committee members returned to County Hall.

Cllr R Jones stated that transport connections were very limited in the community.

Cllr M Griffiths asked how the representatives would be nominated.

Cllr R Jones stated that a person could nominate themselves.

Cllr M Griffiths stated that it should be a community decision.

County Cllr A Davies suggested that 2 x members of the community council and 2 x members of MAP (Mudiad Amddiffyn Porthyrhyd) should present their concerns at the consultation process.

Cllr M Griffiths stated that community members in favour of the development may not have attended the EGM or did not voice their opinion during the meeting.

The community member left the meeting at 20.05.

118/2023-2024 Payments.

The below payments were certified in the October monthly meeting and **ratified** in the November monthly meeting. Copies of invoices sent to all members electronically prior to payment for authorisation. Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by R Owen.

Method of Payment	Date	Suppliers & Details	Sum £ inc VAT
Online	25/10/2023	J.G Evans – October Payroll	360.42
Online	25/10/2023	HMRC PAYE – Period 7	171.40
Online	25/10/2023	Dynefor Tree Services - 007	300.00
Online	25/10/2023	Catrin Llwyd – CCLL22	70.00
Online	25/10/2023	Royal British Legion – 2 x Wreaths	60.00
Online	26/10/2023	Leekes - 173443	39.97
Online	30/10/2023	Nest	33.82

119/2023-2024 Receipts.

16/10/2023 – Sale of 8 x Bone China King Charles III Coronation Mug - £45.60.

120/2023-2024 To consider requests for funding.

The Clerk informed Council members that requests had been received from Wales Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support but no email had been received from Carmarthenshire County Councils Christmas Toybox Appeal as in previous years. County Cllr A Davies stated that an email would be received in the next few days. Council members discussed all requests for funding, and it was decided to donate £50.00 to the Christmas Toybox Appeal and defer the other requests to the March 2024 meeting on 13/03/2024. **Resolved** for the Clerk to arrange £50.00 donation.

121/2023-2024 To receive update on Porthyrhyd memorial stone.

No Update.

122/2023-2024 Review of Policies and Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

The Clerk received the following email on 27/10/2023 and forwarded it to all council members.

Basic payment for extra costs of working from home.

All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home.

Set payment for consumables.

Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

The Clerk received the following email on 01/11/2023 and forwarded it to all council members.

Community and Town Councils - Councillor Allowances – Homeworking arrangements and consumables.

The Panel has received the following guidance from HMRC, regarding the treatment of tax on councillor allowances:

Section 316A of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 states no liability to income tax arises in respect of a payment an employer makes to an employee in respect of reasonable additional household expenses which the employee incurs in carrying out duties of the employment at home under homeworking arrangements. The exemption only applies to the £156 payment made under the Determination of the Independent Remuneration Panel. It does not exempt any additional household expenses that a Councillor may seek to claim.

The following two conditions must apply to the exemption:

- The first provision is that there must be a formal arrangement between the individual councillor and Community and Town Council.

- Secondly, each individual councilor must declare they work from home regularly under these arrangements. This arrangement should be set out and a template letter is attached for your use.

The IRP has determined that Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively Councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

The Panel has also received confirmation from HMRC that an exemption may also be applied (from 5/4/2023) to the flat rate consumables payment. Where a Council has taken the decision to pay a flat rate reimbursement of £52, then this amount is considered exempt from PAYE arrangements.

It is advised that you send a short note outlining this to each Councilor and a template letter is attached. Clerks should also be mindful of any changes of circumstances, for example, when a Councilor cease working from home, or otherwise are no longer eligible, which would mean these payments no longer fall within the exemptions.

The Clerk and Cllr R Jones discussed the above prior to the meeting and agreed that the only change is that the £156.00 payment, if accepted by council members, would not be taxable. All other matters to be discussed as usual in the AGM on 08/05/2024.

123/2023-2024 Forum in order for Members to raise reports / questions through the Chairman.

Cllr T Evans reported that numerous accidents had occurred over the past few years on the A48 dual carriageway travelling westbound by Pant Y Pwll Farm with vehicles aquaplaning into the field because of standing water. **Resolved** for County Cllr A Davies to report to the relevant department.

Cllr R McFarlane reported an unsafe timber pole by Glenview, Llanddarog and concerns were raised regarding the safety of school children and community members. **Resolved** for the Clerk to investigate and report to the relevant company.

Cllr R Jones enquired if all council members were aware of the potential closure of Tumble and Crosshands Surgery. Cllr R Jones discovered by accident that a public meeting was being held in Tumble Village Hall on 08/11/2023 from 14.00 – 19.00. During the public meeting he was informed that not all letters had been posted to the patients, therefore attendance was very low. Cllr R Jones expressed his disappointment to a member of Hywel Dda University Health Board and asked the Clerk to write a stern letter to the health board and the surgery stating that all patients and community members should have been made aware of the public meeting ahead of the event as this was of great concern to everyone residing in the area. **Resolved** for the Clerk to format the letter and send it to Cllr R Jones for proofing.

124/2023-2024 In camera 19.55.

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.

125/2023-2024 Staff pay run November 2023.

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.

An email was received on 07/11/2023 and forwarded to all council members regarding the national pay agreement 2023 – 2024 from NALC.

The Clerk reported that the current salary of LC1 POINT 8, which is £20,852 had increased to £24,702 and that the new salary was effective from 01/04/2023. Cllr R Jones confirmed the Clerks report, and all council members present agreed to the new salary. Cllr R Jones also confirmed that funds were available in the budget to allow for the increase as the Clerk had forecasted the increase. **Resolved** for the Clerk to implement the increase from 01/04/2023 in the December 2023 payroll.

126/2023-2024 The meeting finished at 20.40.

Chairman

Date
