

CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANDDAROG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the January 2024 Meeting of Llanddarog Community Council held at Mynyddcerrig Club on 10/01/2024 at 19.00.

145/2023-2024 Present.

Councillors: S Herridge (Chair), R Jones, J Williams O.B.E, M Griffiths, K Waters, R Owen, R McFarlane, R Newell, M Rees.

Clerk.

Translator: C Llwyd.

146/2023-2024 To receive apologies.

Councillors: County Cllr A Davies, County Cllr H Jones, T Evans.

147/2023-2024 To receive declarations of interest.

None.

148/2023-2024 Opportunity for the public to address the Council on agenda items.

A member of MAP (Mudiad Amdiffyn Porthyrhyd) attended the meeting to discuss and update council members on the potential development at Wern Fraith Farm, Porthyrhyd. MAP registered with the planning committee at Carmarthenshire County Council over 1 year ago but a decision on who is allowed to speak on behalf of the community will not be made until a week before the meeting on 01/02/2024. At least 10 members of MAP are attending meetings and seeking advice from numerous parties. MAP are not against any development in Porthyrhyd but they are opposed to the size and location of the current planning application at Wern Fraith Farm. Evidence has been in place since 2005 regarding developing land within 5m of a flood plain. According to a report by Welsh Water there is no issue regarding drainage and sewage capacity in Porthyrhyd but in November 2023, 1 lorry attended Cwm Catti 17 times in 1 day to empty the sewer and this continued for a number of days. There will be 18 council members on the planning committee but from experience most of them will not be interested in the application as it does not affect the area where they reside. Further sewage deposits will be made into the river Gwendraeth more frequently now that NRW are not objecting. Developers will not fund the repairs that are required to resolve the issue therefore there will be a banquet of consequences sooner or later.

Now, it seems that all official consultees involved are in favour of the development, but MAP will not give up and will appeal if the development is passed. The community of Porthyrhyd is relying on the community council and MAP to fight the development.

Cllr M Griffiths asked who will speak on behalf of the community.

MAP replied that it was on a first come, first served basis. A confident speaker is required to help persuade the planning committee against the development. Posters will be displayed in the area very soon to lobby against the development.

The community member thanked the council members for their time and left the meeting at 19.30, not to return.

Council members discussed the information provided by the community member and considered all aspects relating to the development especially the social housing element and despite having to meet certain criteria there were no guarantees that people within the area would be allocated a home. After deliberation, council members nominated County Cllr H Jones as the best council member to speak on behalf of the community with Cllr R Jones being nominated as the next best speaker. **Resolved** for the Clerk to inform County Cllr H Jones.

149/2023-2024 County Council matters - County Cllr A Davies.

None.

150/2023-2024 Chairman's Report.

None.

151/2023-2024 Confirmation and signing of the Minutes of the Council Meeting 13/12/2023.

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes for 13/12/2023. Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E.

152/2023-2024 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.

153/2023-2024 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).

The Clerk reported that the following email was received from Mynyddcerrig Welfare Committee on 10/01/2024 –

“I'm writing on behalf of Mynyddcerrig Welfare Committee to politely request the £50 contribution towards a Christmas community celebration from Llanddarog Community Council.

I have attached a screenshot of the receipt from Mynyddcerrig Workmen's Club for the Welfare's contribution to the annual Crwbin Band Christmas carol service for the community”.

The request was discussed by all council members present and it was decided to donate £50.00. Proposed by Cllr S Herridge and seconded by Cllr R Jones.

Resolved for the Clerk to transfer £50.00.

The following email was received from a community member on 07/01/2024 –

“I would also like to add about the state of the area concerned and around the bus stop and who is responsible for keeping it safe and maintained”?

The email was discussed by all council members present and despite the land where the bus shelter stands not belonging to the community council, we are responsible for cutting the grass and it was decided for the Clerk to ask the contractor to eradicate the area of any overgrowth. Proposed by Cllr M Rees and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E. **Resolved** for the Clerk to contact the contractor.

The Clerk reported that a telephone call was received from a community member in December 2023 stating that his father's name on the memorial stone in Mynyddcerrig was located at the bottom of the stone, in a different font size to the other names and that the names were not visible due to erosion.

Cllr R Owen reported that the memorial plaque was removed from Mynyddcerrig School when it was closed and erected at the current location. Cllr R Owen stated that the name was added later to all other names and that there was limited space to engrave the name.

Cllr J Williams O.B.E asked if the memorial stone was on the community council's asset register.

The Clerk responded that the memorial stone was not a community council asset.

Cllr J Williams O.B.E asked the Clerk to investigate where the asset is registered.

Resolved for the Clerk to investigate.

Cllr M Rees asked the Clerk to obtain a quotation from a stone mason regarding the colouring of all the names. **Resolved** for the Clerk to obtain a quotation.

154/2023-2024 Planning.

None.

155/2023-2024 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 K Waters.

Method of Payment	Date	Suppliers & Details	Sum £ inc VAT
Online	27/12/2023	J.G Evans – December Payroll	878.97
Online	27/12/2023	HMRC PAYE – Period 9	249.91
Online	27/12/2023	Porthyrhyd Welfare Committee – 10 x meetings	200.00
Online	27/12/2023	Carmarthen & District Youth Opera - Donation	50.00
Online	27/12/2023	Llanddarog Village Hall – Christmas Tree donation	50.00

Carmarthen & District Youth Opera donation – Section 137.

Llanddarog Village Hall Christmas Tree donation – Section 137.

156/2023-2024 Receipts.

07/12/2023 – HMRC VAT Refund £781.35

22/12/2023 – Carmarthenshire County Council Precept 3 £6454.63.

157/2023-2024 To receive the Internal Financial Examiners report 01/10/2023 – 31/12/2023.

Each member had been provided with a written report prior to the meeting. A full verbal report was provided by Cllr R Jones. 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 M Rees and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E to accept the report. Members thanked Cllr R Jones and the Clerk for their work.

158/2023-2024 To develop and finalise the precept for 2024 – 2025.

a) Review of income and expenditure for period 01/04/2023 – 31/12/2023 – All members received a copy of the report prior to the meeting along with a copy of the bank reconciliation up to 31/12/2023. The statement balance on 31/12/2022 was £30,172.34.

b) Projected balance at 31/03/2024 – Cllr R Jones and the Clerk had discussed and formatted the figures based on current spending trends and expenditure for the same period in 2022 – 2023 (Please see table 1 below).

c) Report and recommendations in relation to 2024 – 2025 budget – A draft expenditure report was sent to all members prior to the meeting totaling £26,518.00. The Clerk reported that after a discussion with Cllr R Jones it was suggested that the admin budget should be increased to £3000,00 due to not receiving an invoice from Audit Wales for the past 2 years. All council members agreed.

A draft income figure was presented to the members from VAT refund of £1050.00.

d) Confirmation of the 2024 – 2025 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. The memorial stone project is yet to be finalised but Cllr J Williams O.B.E is confident that sponsorship from local businesses will help fund the project.

f) Report in relation to 2024 – 2025 budget – All members received a copy of the report prior to the meeting. The Band D Council tax base figure for Llanddarog Community Council 2024 – 2025 is **559.41** and all members were required to evaluate the presented "options" (Please see table 3 below).

g) 2024 – 2025 Precept Demand - All Council members considered the options provided for the 2024 – 2025 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 remain cautious. Cllr J Williams O.B.E was unclear where the difference (£6183.45) between the 2024 – 2025 budget (£26,518.00) and the precept (£20,334.55) was coming from and asked if it was from the council reserves. Cllr R Jones and the Clerk explained that if the projected balance at 31/03/2024 (£19,288.21) and the 2024 – 2025 precept (£20,334.55) were added together (£39,622.76), minus the 2024 – 2025 proposed budget (£26,518.00), it would leave (£13,104.76) in the account at 31/03/2025 which is approx. 50% of the proposed budget. Cllr J Williams O.B.E proposed a 5% increase of the Council Tax Band D as reserves would still be within the recommended amount. All council members agreed to the proposed 5% increase and that the precept demand would be £20,334.55 with a Council Tax Band D of £36.35.

h) To ratify the annual investment strategy – The strategy was discussed under policies in the Community Council meeting on 08/11/2023 minute **122/2023-2024**.

i) Insurance Policy – This matter was discussed in the May meeting on 10/05/2023 minute **37/2023-2024**. It was proposed by Cllr J Williams O.B.E and seconded by Cllr R Jones to commence the 3-year policy with Zurich Insurance.

The budget and precept report recommendations were proposed by Cllr J Williams O.B.E. and seconded by Cllr M Griffiths with no objections from any Community Council members. **Resolved** for the Clerk to request a precept of £20,334.55.

159/2023-2024 To receive update on Porthyrhyd memorial stone.

None.

160/2023-2024 Forum in order for Members to raise reports / questions through the Chairman.

Cllr M Rees reported that 4 x poppy wreaths remained at St Twrog Church, Llanddarog and were in a very good condition and could be utilized over the next 2 years. Cllr M Rees suggested that the wreaths be used and that the community council donate £60.00 to the Royal British Legion as in previous years. Council members discussed and supported the suggestion. Proposed by Cllr M Rees and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E. **Resolved** to note.

161/2023-2024 In camera 20.15.

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.

162/2023-2024 Staff pay run January 2024.

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. Proposed by Cllr R Jones and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E.

163/2023-2024 The meeting finished at 20.28.

Chairman

Date

LLANDDAROG BUDGET & PRECEPT 2024-2025

Please find below a report on the 2023-2024 budget, the actual expenditure to 31/12/2023 and the estimated expenditure to 31/03/2024. Reasons are given on sum difference and will be discussed in the January meeting on 10/01/2024.

HEADING	PREVIOUS BUDGET	ACTUAL SPEND TO 31/12/2023	ESTIMATED SPEND ON 31/03/2024	DIFF	REASON
Ground Maintenance	1800.00	1815.00	1815.00	15.00	Tyre
Staff Salary & PAYE	6400.00	5128.20	6837.00	437.00	Inflation & NALC increase
Admin, Inc Audit Fees	2500.00	2025.12	2500.00	0.00	-
Insurance	1020.00	589.98	589.98	- 430.02	-
Financial Assistance – Inc Standing Revenue Grants	2000.00	1900.00	1900.00	-100.00	-
Seating & Asset Maintenance	1500.00	131.55	750.00	- 750.00	-
Street Lighting Estimate	6700.00	0.00	6700.00	0.00	-
Misc – Inc Subscriptions	450.00	0.00	410.00	- 40.00	-
Members Allowance	468.00	285.40	753.40	285.40	Late Payment 2022 - 2023
Election Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-
Section 137	900.00	396.00	900.00	0.00	-
Allocation to Special Projects & Reserve from Precept	2000.00	615.60	615.60	- 1384.40	-
TOTAL	25,738.00	12,886.85	23,770.98	- 1967.02	-

There was a projected VAT refund in the 2023-2024 precept of £775.00. This reduced the precept demand from £25,738.00 to £24,963.00. It was resolved to demand a precept income of £19,363.89 in 2023-2024 and for general funds to replenish the £5599.11 shortfall.

Please find below a proposed budget for 2024 - 2025 in comparison to 2023 – 2024. Reasons are given on sum difference and will be discussed in the January meeting on 10/01/2024.

HEADING	PREVIOUS BUDGET	PROPOSED BUDGET	REASON
Ground Maintenance	1800.00	1800.00	-
Staff Salary & PAYE	6400.00	7200.00	-
Admin, Inc Audit Fees	2500.00	3000.00	-
Insurance	1020.00	1000.00	-
Financial Assistance – Inc Standing Revenue Grants	2000.00	2000.00	-
Seating & Asset Maintenance	1500.00	1500.00	-
Street Lighting Estimate	6700.00	7400.00	Inflation
Misc – Inc Subscriptions	450.00	650.00	-
Members Allowance	468.00	468.00	-
Election Cost	0.00	0.00	-
Section 137	900.00	900.00	-
Allocation to Special Projects & Reserve From Precept	2000.00	600.00	-
TOTAL	25,738.00	26,518.00	

At the time of preparation, the only projected income for 2024 - 2025 is a VAT refund of £1050.00. This will reduce the amount of the precept demand from £26,518.00 to £25,468.00. Also reducing the overall demand will be the projected bank balance remaining in the account. Full details below.

Bank balance as at 31/12/2023	£30,172.34
Less projected expenditure 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024	£10,884.13
Projected bank balance as at 31/03/2024	£19,288.21
Expenditure proposal for 2024 - 2025	£26,518.00
Less Estimated income for 2024 - 2025 (VAT Refund)	£1050.00
Less projected bank balance as at 31/3/24 (based on projected expenditure)	£19,288.21
Amount required to make up the difference	£6179.79
Add 50% of projected expenditure to create a reserve of 50% of revenue	£13,259.00
Amount required as total precept for 2024 - 2025	£19,438.79
By using tax base 559.41	
Amount raised by keeping the Band D rate the same as last year @ £34.60	£19,355.59
Amount raised by Increasing the Band D rate to £36.35 (+5.00% on last year)	£20,334.55
<p>NB. If we keep the Band D rate the same as 2023-2024, we will end up with a budget deficit of £83.20 which will be deducted from the reserve. The reserve will then be equal to 50% of annual expenditure (6 months). This is acceptable for a council of our size.</p> <p>NB. If we increase the Band D rate to £36.35, we will end up with a budget surplus of £895.76 which will be added to the reserve. The reserve will then be equal to 53% of annual expenditure (6.5 months). This is acceptable for a council of our size.</p>	