

CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANDDAROG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the March 2024 Meeting of Llanddarog Community Council held at Porthyrhyd Village Hall on 13/03/2024 at 19.00.

184/2023-2024 Present.

Councillors: R Jones (Chair), County Cllr H Jones J Williams O.B.E, R Owen, M Rees, M Griffiths.

County Cllr A Davies.

Clerk.

Translator: R Jones.

185/2023-2024 To receive apologies.

Councillors: S Herridge, R McFarlane, K Waters, T Evans.

186/2023-2024 To receive declarations of interest.

None.

187/2023-2024 Opportunity for the public to address the Council on agenda items.

Members of the community attended the meeting but asked to wait until County Cllr A Davies joined the meeting before declaring their concerns.

A community member asked how the community council could assist in reducing the number of speeding vehicles travelling through Porthyrhyd and Llanddarog.

Cllr R Jones stated that they could contact Carmarthenshire County Council.

The Clerk reported that contacting Go-Safe is the most efficient way to reduce speeding vehicles in the area and that he would contact them the following day to report the issue. The Clerk also asked the community members to report the issue to Go-Safe as this may prompt a rapid response.

A community member asked if the community council could arrange and supply litter collecting equipment for the community.

County Cllr H Jones stated that litter collecting equipment was available free of charge from Keep Wales Tidy and asked the community member to arrange delivery.

The community member responded by asking the community council to lead the way and take charge of the exercise.

Cllr R Jones responded by stating that it would be discussed in a future meeting.

Resolved to note.

County Cllr A Davies joined the meeting at 19.08 during this agenda item.

A community member reported that the March meeting was the final meeting prior to the planning meeting in regard to the potential development at Wern Fraith Farm, Porthyrhyd and asked if a date had been received.

County Cllr A Davies stated that no date had been received yet and that it was her role to represent the community at the planning meeting.

The community member stated that numerous residents were concerned about the potential development. On 30/10/2023, No4 Cwm Catti was damaged when raw sewage and surface water entered the property and ruined all rooms and furnishings within. Community members are concerned that surface water is entering the sewage system. She reiterated that there were no objections to housing developments in Porthyrhyd as there was a need for new houses, but the development should be at the correct location where services and infrastructure are able to deal with the number of houses. She also stated that 135 days had passed since the contamination at No4 Cwm Catti and that there was a concern about other properties in the vicinity. A medical professional had stated that the house was not suitable for habitation since the event on 30/10/2023 and that the community council should represent and take care of the community.

The community members left the meeting at 19.25, not to return.

County Cllr A Davies reported that she had been involved with the incident at No4 Cwm Catti and had been in a meeting with the resident. Carmarthenshire County Council had attended to the property to deep clean and install a new bathroom. The resident wants to dispose of all the contaminated products and Carmarthenshire County Council are required to replace all the floorboards as effluent has seeped underneath. To complete these works, the resident is required to vacate the property for 10 days and Carmarthenshire County Council are currently organising sheltered accommodation for the resident.

Cllr R Jones stated that this was an excellent example of the sewage system not working properly in Porthyrhyd.

Cllr J Williams O.B.E asked where the sewage came from and if there was a remedy for the issue.

Cllr R Jones reported that Welsh Water had stated previously that there was only an issue in Porthyrhyd when it rained.

Cllr M Rees reported that numerous Welsh Water personnel had been working in the area over the past few weeks.

Cllr R Jones stated that Welsh Water had been working in Pontfaen.

County Cllr A Davies stated that unless an independent survey was carried out the issue would not be resolved as the planning committee within Carmarthenshire County Council require evidence.

Cllr J Williams O.B.E asked why members of MAP (Mudiad Amddiffyn Porthyrhyd) were representing members of the community and should the community members not represent themselves.

Cllr M Griffiths stated that he was unhappy with the comment that the community council were not active or helpful within the community.

County Cllr A Davies suggested that the Clerk should contact Welsh Water with regards to all the issues within Porthyrhyd.

Cllr R Jones suggested that Carmarthenshire County Council should contact Welsh Water and help resolve the issues.

Cllr M Griffiths asked the Clerk to contact Welsh Water regarding the issues and feedback to council members once a reply is received.

188/2023-2024 County Council matters - County Cllr A Davies.

County Cllr A Davies reported that a meeting had been arranged with numerous County Councilors and Bute Energy on 14/03/2024 regarding the consultation but no

information had been received from Bute Energy yet. Llanarthne steering group will be meeting on 14/03/2024 in the evening to discuss the consultation. Bute Energy are organizing a presentation day for community members on 21/03/2024 at Llanarthne Village Hall.

The non-statutory consultation on the proposed Green GEN Towy Teifi project has now closed.

Carmarthenshire County Council have finalized the 2024 – 2025 budget. It was decided to increase the council tax demand by 7.5% but 1% of the increase is for education within Carmarthenshire.

WLGA Rural Forum will be attending the next pylon meeting on 24/06/2024.

County Cllr A Davies reported that training had been received from a barrister for planning to assist her in her role within Carmarthenshire County Council.

189/2023-2024 Chairman's Report.

None.

190/2023-2024 Confirmation and signing of the Minutes of the Council Meeting 14/02/2024.

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes for 14/02/2024. Proposed by Cllr M Rees and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E.

191/2023-2024 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.

The Clerk reported that he had not received the names of the residents of Hafod Ifan, Llanddarog from Cllr T Evans. Once received a letter will be written. **Resolved** to note.

192/2023-2024 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 following Email was received from Audit Wales on 28/02/2024 and forwarded to all council members.

Audit opinion: Qualified.

Except for the matters reported below in my Basis for Qualification, on the basis of my audit, in my opinion no matters have come to my attention to give cause for concern that, in any material respect, the information reported in this Annual Return: • has not been prepared in accordance with proper practices;

- that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met;
- is not consistent with the Council's governance arrangements; and
- that the Council does not have proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Basis of Qualification

Annual Governance Statement

In my opinion, the Annual Governance Statement is not consistent with the Council's internal controls and governance arrangements for the year:

- Assertion 1: Arrangements for the approval of accounts The Council did not make proper arrangements for the approval of the Annual accounts. The Council did not

approve the accounts by 30 June as required by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

- Assertion 4: The Council did not make proper arrangements for the public inspection of accounts as required by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- Assertion 3: The Council has not provided evidence that a budget has been set in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and that the precept has been set in line with the budget. The Act requires the Council to take into account its level of reserves when setting its budget requirement. We recommend that the Council sets a budget in accordance with the relevant regulations and codes of practice.

The Clerk telephoned Cllr R Jones (Internal Financial Examiner) on 28/02/2024 to discuss the result from Audit Wales and stated that assertion 1 was the only failure that was true due to not receiving the 2022 – 2023 annual accounts from the Internal Financial Auditor prior to the June meeting. The Clerk stated that he immediately replied to Audit Wales with the following email –

“Thank you for the 2022-2023 audit conclusion.

With regards to the auditor’s conclusion, we believe that Llanddarog Community Council practice all financial legislation regulations as recorded in monthly minutes. The Clerk records all transactions and records them on a monthly basis and these are discussed in our monthly meetings.

An internal financial examiner audits the paperwork every 3 months and reports his findings via email and in a council meeting. An Internal financial auditor examines all financial matters every 12 months and reports his findings to council members via email. With regards to budget settings and precept all evidence is outlined in the December 2022 and January 2023 minutes prior to the council deciding on a precept amount. Evidence was sent to the auditor when asked a few weeks ago and is also visible online.

We understand that the council did not confirm the accounts until July 2023 due to work pressures from the Internal auditor but the public were informed via notification within our noticeboards and website.

Could these matters be reassessed as we feel that some opinions are unfair, and our accounts are true”.

Cllr R Jones confirmed that he had spoken with the Clerk on 28/02/2024 and agreed to his email to Audit Wales. Cllr R Jones agreed that assertions 4 and 3 were completed and evidence was sent to Audit Wales as well as being recorded in the minutes.

The Clerk reported that a further email was sent to Audit Wales on 08/03/2024 asking if the reassessment had been completed as council members wished to discuss it in the March meeting on 13/03/2024 but no response had been received.

All council members present discussed the audit opinion and agreed that only assertion 1 was a fault and asked the Clerk to inform the Internal Auditor that the accounts must be returned to the council prior to the June meeting. **Resolved** to note. County Cllr H Jones stated that from experience, Audit Wales do not reassess their audit opinions on a whim and warned council members not to pursue a legal complaint. Council members listened to County Cllr H Jones’ advice and asked the Clerk to contact Audit Wales to ask what timescale the community council should allow for a response. **Resolved** for the Clerk to contact Audit Wales.

193/2023-2024 Planning.

None.

194/2023-2024 Payments.

The below payments were certified in the January monthly meeting and **ratified** in the February monthly meeting. Copies of invoices sent to all members electronically prior to payment for authorisation. Proposed by Cllr M Rees and seconded by Cllr J Williams O.B.E.

Method of Payment	Date	Suppliers & Details	Sum £ inc VAT
Online	28/02/2024	J.G Evans – February Payroll	419.54
Online	28/02/2024	HMRC PAYE – Period 11	110.00
Online	28/02/2024	Carmarthenshire County Council - 97467721	750.60
Online	28/02/2024	PD Flagpole – 27/02/2024	570.00
Online	29/02/2024	Nest	40.06

195/2023-2024 Receipts.

None.

196/2023-2024 To discuss requests for financial assistance.

Each member had been provided with a copy of each request during the year and if received by post, the Clerk announced the request verbally. The Clerk had previously spoken with Cllr S Herridge with regards to allocating her civic allowance and the Clerk informed council members of her decision. Council members discussed all requests for funding, and it was decided to donate an amount to the following organizations.

Wales Air Ambulance - £57.00

Maes y Gwendraeth School - £97.00

Macmillan Cancer Support - £100.00

Llanddarog YFC - £100.00

Resolved for the Clerk to arrange payment.

197/2023-2024 To discuss Mynyddcerrig memorial stone.

Cllr J Williams O.B.E stated that he had not yet spoken with Carmarthenshire County Council regarding the adoption of the memorial stone.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Wyn Bishop Funeral Director and Memorial Mason but was still awaiting a quotation.

198/2023-2024 To receive update on Porthyrhyd memorial stone.

Cllr J Williams O.B.E reported that to move the 2 tonne stone from the Abadam Arms car park and place it on the concrete plinth prior to securing, a chain grab was required to lift the stone. Cllr J Williams O.B.E asked Cllr R Owen to arrange with Torcoed Quarry the loan of the chain grab. **Resolved** for Cllr R Owen to arrange.

199/2023-2024 Forum in order for Members to raise reports / questions through the Chairman.

Cllr J Williams O.B.E suggested that council members discuss the litter picking question that was raised by the community member earlier in the evening and

suggested that the community council purchase several litter pickers, bag hoops and high viz vests for community members to use at their leisure.

County Cllr H Jones disagreed with the proposal and stated that the community council would be liable for the safety of the community members that partook in the exercise. County Cllr H Jones also stated that all equipment required was available free of charge from Keep Wales Tidy and that interested community members should contact Keep Wales Tidy to borrow the equipment. Llanddarog Community Council would still be liable for insuring the equipment and the safety of the public if it participated in the project in an official capacity.

The Clerk suggested that the community council obtain quotations for all equipment required and either donate a sum of money or the equipment to the community where they would be able to use at their leisure. Therefore the council would not be liable for the equipment or the safety of the public. Council members agreed. **Resolved** for the Clerk to obtain quotations.

200/2023-2024 In camera 20.20.

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.

County Cllr H Jones left the meeting at 20.20 not to return.

201/2023-2024 Staff pay run March 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 M Rees and seconded by Cllr R Owen.

202/2023-2024 The meeting finished at 20.28.

Chairman

Date
