

Minutes of a Meeting of the Newcastle Higher Community Council held in Tondu Primary School, Aberkenfig on Tuesday 9th July 2019 at 7.00 p.m.

Cllr Altaf Hussain: Presided

Present (8) Cllrs Derrick Baker, Heidi Bennett, Ann John, Dave Fowler, Alex Marshall, Byron Jones, Altaf Hussain, and Meryl Wilkins
County Borough Councillor James Radcliffe (for part of the meeting), Clerk John Richfield, Claudette Evans, Tondu and Aberkenfig Community Association, G Powys Jones (Planning Consultant).

Before the meeting, the Clerk had arranged to display the Community Council's accounts and financial statements and full details of all receipts and payments for the preceding financial year, for members of the public and councillors to view, in addition to the period of time when viewing could take place on request.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Gary Haines, Cllr Joyce Haines and Cllr Mal John.

2. Members Declaration of Interests on Agenda Items

Cllr Heidi Bennett declared an interest in that she was an ongoing and present committee member of the Penyfai Village Community Association.

Cllr Meryl Wilkins declared an interest in land to be built on by Llanmoor homes.

For future meetings, to assist members in declaring any interests, the Clerk would bring a form to record members interests that councillors could complete as necessary.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th June 2019

The minutes were approved as a correct record, subject to confirmation of Cllr Meryl Wilkins statement concerning her declaration of interest (item 4 Matters Arising) the substance of which was to add to and clarify her published declaration of interests.

Item 6 (b) delete 'and Robin'

Item 8 substitute 'Reduction in subsidy' for 'rationalisation' of bus service.

4. Matters Arising on the Minutes

Item 8 Stuart Baldwin, (visitor) was not only Mayor of Bridgend but also the elected member for Morfa Ward, Cllr Hussain explained.

Item 17 (2) Cllr Heidi Bennet asked it to be recorded that the Chair had remarked that there were not enough members to have additional Finance and HR Committees. Cllr Heidi Bennett had proposed that the Council ought to have a Finance and HR Committee to deal with these matters. This proposal was now recorded.

5. Police Community Support Officer - PACT

The PCSO had stated he would be present at the meeting, but unfortunately was not able to attend. There were no questions on this item from Councillors.

6. Village Green Status – plan for public meeting to be held on 16 July in Penyfai School

Cllr Heidi Bennett introduced the item with a reminder that arrangements had been made by the Penyfai Community Association to hold a public meeting at the school. The Clerk had also invited G Powys Jones to both this meeting and the council meeting to advise.

Mr Jones outlined the legal provisions He indicated that the land could safely meet most of the provisions to qualify, such as open to the public for over 20 years, used by many people, however he reminded all members that the evidence of use of the land had to be 'as of right'.

NHCC had asked BCBC for evidence of the evolution of how the land use came to be as it presently is. Most of the larger lot of land that the field is part of were acquired by the BCBC's predecessor council. A decision was made to retain it in the 1970s and it has been maintained by the BCBC and used informally. Currently it appears on the candidate sites registrar twice. The NHCC has asked that it be designated as public open space, and the BCBC had asked for it to be designated as at play area and housing.

G Powys Jones had viewed the conveyance. He wanted to hear from members of the public what the land was used for at the time when it was sold.

By way of background to the public meeting, Cllr Alex Marshall had written to BCBC Rights of Way asking to convert the footpath to a full right of way. They had responded that they had no objections, but the application had not gone any further.

Cllr Heidi Bennett reported that a local historian had been asked to attend the Community Meeting to speak and members of the public would be asked to provide statements for review by G Powys Jones to try to make an application for village green status, if the preconditions were able to be met.

The public meeting would be advertised extensively in the area, and it was hoped that many people would attend, and as many community Councillors as were able to.

8. County Borough Councillors

(a) County Borough Councillor for Penyfai

Cllr Altaf Hussain reported on the following matters:

Visit of Mark Shepherd BCBC to Penyfai on 22 July 2019

Cllr Altaf Hussain reported that Mark Shephard of BCBC would be visiting Penyfai for 2-3 hours on 22 July. He had produced an agenda to take advantage of this meeting, and he invited all other Councillors and Community Association members and a number of local residents to attend the meeting. Residents would be designated to speak, meeting at 09.30 in the Pheasant.

It was noted that Cllr Heidi Bennett regretted that she was unable to attend on that date.

Hedges

Cllr Hussain had held a meeting with Peter Bissmire, BCBC, about hedges in Angelton Road.

Hillside

Cllr Hussain had asked Ruth Davies the BCBC Planning Enforcement Officer to visit the area, in response to many complaints.

Speed Signs

The speed signs had now been installed and were working well, although there were still some speeders.

Illegal Parking

Following parking by commercial vehicles in Plas Ty Mawr, the BCBC was monitoring the situation and had been asked to provide traffic signs. Cllr Hussain would take this up with the BCBC again.

Date of LDP

Following an email from the Clerk requesting the date of the LDP, Cllr Altaf explained that the LDP was separate to the application for village green status for the field. He also felt that the BCBC would not bring forward plans for development in the near future due to the traffic.

Cllr Hussain was thanked for his report.

(b) County Borough Councillor for Aberkenfig

Cllr James Radcliffe reported on the following matters:

Biomass

Cllr Radcliffe reported that the BCBC had rejected biomass.

Active Travel

Cllr Radcliffe and Cllr Hussain were designing the questions to demonstrate improvements in Penyai and Aberkenfig for a survey in August to justify the need for road safety and road improvements in the area to encourage more walking and cycling.

Claudette Evans contributed to this as a person with mobility problems, and reported that the kissing gates in Coronation Street Park did not permit a bike access. She would take photographs for the survey. It was noted that it was possible to access at Oak Street, but not via Coronation Street. Cllr Radcliffe noted that BCBC have a duty to act, which had been accepted, but at present there was no funding to do so. Cllr Derrick Baker asked if the gates could simply be removed, however they were designed to prevent children running out in case of traffic.

Grass cutting

The grass cutting had now been done, which was difficult as it was very high. The presence of Japanese knotweed had been logged.

Recycling – Rock Street, Aberkenfig

Kier had agreed to use a narrower vehicle to access Rock Street, following difficulties with the standard vehicle.

Cllr Radcliffe was thanked for his report.

7. Community Associations Update

(a) Tondu and Aberkenfig

Grass cutting

It was reported that some County councils were using wild flowers rather than grass for roadside verges to benefit nature and save money. This was welcomed as an option and the Clerk would commend it to Jason Jenkins of the BCBC Highways Department to consider if any suitable areas could be identified.

Llanmoor Homes

Exploratory work had started for the development of 450 houses. The Clerk would email Llanmoor to confirm that they needed to take care not to damage the hedgerows. Cllr James Radcliffe would also remind them of their obligations.

Notice Board

A new notice board was now in use. There was a space for a defibrillator which would cost some £1,500. When a request was received this would be added to the agenda.

Cllr Meryl Wilkins declared an interest in the Llanmoor Homes development and observed that road congestion was causing a problem.

Cllr Altaf Hussain felt that it was necessary to raise specific traffic problems with BCBC.

(b) Penyfai Village

Cllr Heidi Bennett, Committee member, made a report, inviting all Councillors to attend the public meeting which was being organised at the school by the Village Community Association.

8. Update from Maintenance Committee

Cllr Alex Marshall reported on behalf of the Maintenance Committee on the following issues.

Report from Tondu

Pruning the trees around the lights at the start of the footpath at the back of Pentrefelin had been priced at £380 to include chipper hire. This would be left on hold as there was an option that the BCBC might do the work.

Meadow Street Footpath

The task of path clearance on the footpath leading towards Meadow Street for the children walking to and from school had been priced at £260 – it was agreed to put this work in hand.

It was asked if the NHCC could ask for more money from the BCBC for the agency agreement for footpath maintenance.

It was also agreed that the Clerk contact Mr Colin Hill regarding the trees overhanging at the path at Pentrefelin to try to have this actioned.

Angelton Road

2 drains had been cleared in Angelton Road – thanks to Jack Davies of BCBC.

Aberkenfig Woodland

It was suggested by the Maintenance Committee that cutting back the Himalayan balsam before there was significant flowering would reduce this problem for future years. At a brush cutting cost of £350 per day Matt Scott had been asked to concentrate on this area for two days at a total cost of £700.

It was also suggested that a dog waste bin might be installed at the start of the path leading to The Moulders and another in the carpark near the school. The item cost would be £400, excluding installation and subsequent emptying services. This would be held for the present, pending a check on the full costs, as the Council was already substantially committed on providing such services.

Flooding of footpath near Pentrefelin, Tondu

The site was visited by personnel from Llanmoor homes, their director Simon Grey and officers from BCBC, rights of way and land drainage. They carried out an inspection for current drainage installation. When rain had fallen they would return to determine what works can be carried out to alleviate flooding.

It was resolved to authorise the work to the footpath at £260 and the balsam clearance at £700, in total costing £960.

The report of the Maintenance Committee was received and adopted.

Cllr Meryl Wilkins asked when Llanmoor homes would start the rest of the development. This was currently being dealt with.

Cllr James Radcliffe noted that the Welsh Government had accepted the recommendations on affordable housing. This applied to current applications. The reputation of a developer would count in any future applications they made.

9. Casual Vacancy in Aberkenfig Ward – consideration of applications

CB Cllr James Radcliffe let the room for this item, as a candidate. Claudette Evans also left the meeting.

The Clerk reported that, following the closing date for receipt of applications from persons interested in being co-opted to the Council that there were two applicants, Marged Griffiths and James Radcliffe. The applications had been circulated to all members of the Council and after discussion a vote was taken. Mr Radcliffe was co-opted to the Community Council by five votes to two.

11. Correspondence

The notes circulated on the incoming correspondence were taken as read by the Council, the correspondence was as follows:

1. Centregreat Limited

Centregreat was holding an event for Town and Community Councils concerning Christmas Lighting Features on Tuesday 16 July between 12.30 until 16.00 at Coytrahen Community Centre. There would be a number of types of Christmas lighting Features available to view as well as other lights and details of what Centregreat may be able to offer. Councillors could attend, as it was agreed last year that the NHCC review its Christmas lighting again this year. The Clerk would remind all members of this event, and he had consulted BCBC, Floodlighting Services, and Plantscape to provide quotations.

2. Westcotec

Copies of Electrical Installation completion Certificates for the speed signs installed at Penyfai. Noted.

3. Andrew Thomas BCBC Group Manager Sport and Physical Activity
Following notification that NHCC would not be able to support the scheme as it was not in Penyfai, Ynysawdre CC had agreed to support the Active 4 Life Scheme in the Len Evans Centre, Aberkenfig.
4. G Powys Jones
G Powys Jones was available on both Tuesday 9 July for a preliminary discussion of how to best prepare for the community meeting, and also on Tuesday 16 July in Penyfai School, hosted by the village Community Association to advise as necessary. He was delighted to help for 50% of his usual fee. (community project rate £60 per hour).
5. Cllr Heidi Bennett
Information on and detail about the representations made by residents on the temporary closure of footpath 29, in particular why the closure was granted before finalisation of the planning application. Noted.
6. Wales Auditor General
Link to a report (forwarded to all members of the Council) on Internal Audit arrangements in Welsh Councils, and details of a survey undertaken on the need for many community and town councils to make improvements to their arrangements. A note identifying where NHCC is currently in relation to Councils in general had been circulated. All councillors were recommended to read the report.
7. Tondu Primary School
Following the last meeting, it has been agreed with the headteacher that the Council could use the Hall with tables and chairs for the July meeting. The Clerk would be present from c.18.30 to set up.
8. Penyfai Primary School
Permission was granted by the Head Teacher for NHCC to use the School for the Council's meeting on 3 September at a cost of £25.00.
9. BCBC Footpaths
Notice of revocation Order concerning temporary footpath closure Footpath 29. A second communication was received the same day, 4 July making a temporary footpath closure to Footpath 29, number 1 order 2019. Cllr Altaf Hussain had been notified.
10. One Voice Wales
Agenda and papers for OVW Bridgend/Cardiff/ Vale area committee meeting and AGM on Monday 22 July at 19.00 in the Lesser Hall Cowbridge. At present NHCC had no representative.
11. Llanmoor Homes
Further to Cllr Alex Marshall and Maintenance Committee meeting with Llanmoor Homes, they would put together proposals and monitor the footpath in liaison with Bridgend Drainage Department prior to their implementation. They undertook to keep NHCC apprised of progress. They confirmed that any trees, branches on their land could be cut back as required. The seesaw in the park would be replaced shortly.
12. SSE Swalec
Invoice for £22.99 for Christmas electricity for lights. To be paid.
13. Bridgend Town Council
Invoice for £1,360 for emptying of 17 bins from 3 December 2018 to 31 March 2019. (4 Months) to be paid.
14. Penyfai Fun Day Committee
Request for funding for the 10th Annual Penyfai Fun Day. £2,000 requested again. Agreed to pay.
15. Westcotec
Invoice for 2 speed boards related to the receipt of the BCBC community grant of £5,000. In the sum of £5,280 inc £880 VAT. To be paid.
16. BCBC
Invoice for quarterly cleaning of bus shelter £59.63. To be paid.
17. One Voice Wales
Invoice for £40.00 – Code of Conduct training for HB. To be Paid.

18. Cllr Alex Marshall

Report of meeting with Llanmoor Homes at Pentrefelin, and with Matt Scott regarding footpath maintenance.

12. Planning Committee Report

The Council noted the following planning applications had been notified to the council since the last meeting. There were no objections, as they were not considered controversial.

P/19/397/FUL 36 Bridgend Road, Aberkenfig

P/19/437/FUL 15 Parkfields, Penyfai

13. Other Reports from Councillors

Cllr Meryl Wilkins reported on rubbish including a dead rat on a path in Protheroe Avenue. She had not received any satisfaction from the Council officials. Cllr Altaf would take this up via the referrals system to resolve the problem on request.

14. Finances

(a) Accounts for payment

The following accounts would be paid:

	£	
SWALEC (electricity)	22.99	(201676)
Bridgend Town Council (empty bins)	1,360.00	(201677)
Westcotec (speed Signs)	5,280.00	(201678)
BCBC (bus shelter cleaning)	59.663	(201679)
One Voice Wales (training HB)	40.00	(201680)
Penyfai School (room hire)	50.00	(201681)
Penyfai Fun Day (grant)	2,000.00	(201682)

(b) Quarterly Update on Budgets

The Clerk reported that he had prepared complete quarterly records of income and expenditure, analysed by budget headings, for the Council.

(c) Draft Financial Regulations

The Clerk had prepared draft Financial Regulations for the Council to adopt, adapted from a document provided by One Voice Wales. The NHC adopted the Draft Financial Regulations as they met the standard for the time being recommended by One Voice Wales.

(c) Draft Grants Policy

The Council agreed to defer consideration of a draft Gants Policy until the following meeting, as there was insufficient meeting time.

It was however agreed to pay a grant to the Penyfai fun Day of £2,000, as in previous years.

15. Report from Wales Audit on Welsh Community Audits

The Council noted that the Auditor General had published a report on Internal Audit Arrangements at Town and Community Councils in Wales. A note was circulated which listed all the key findings, with an update on the NHCC's current arrangements for Internal Audit.

It was recognised that NHCC was not in the category of some of the Councils who were not making adequate arrangements, it was also agreed that it was wise to continue to consider potential improvements on the advice of audit. It was noted that the appendices to the report, Terms of Reference, Work Programme, Action Plan and Audit Report would serve as useful templates to ensure that Wales Audit continue to find NHCC's arrangements satisfactory. It was noted that to fully deal with the increased legislative environment in which Community Councils operated might take up significant staff time.

16. Any Other Business

1. Cllr Baker requested that the position regarding grants to enable the maintenance of churchyards and similar locations be clarified;
2. Cllr Meryl Wilkins was concerned that the Health and Safety Executive had attended at Hillside and the BCBC enforcement officer was checking the situation and would report to Cllr Altaf Hussain;
3. The Clerk would agenda the plaque on the Square to mark its opening;
4. The Pheasant Pub had put forward a request for a notice board. There were options as to where it might be located; in the interim, Cllr Heidi Bennett would look at prices;
5. The last time a water supply to the allotments was considered, it was not proceeded with as there was no agreement to pay for the water. The Clerk was asked to ask the Allotment Association of the result of its recent survey and look again at the costs of installation.

There being no more business, the meeting closed at 8.55 p.m. The next meeting would be held in Penyfai School, on Tuesday 3 September 2019.