

MINUTES OF HARLECH COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE OLD LIBRARY, HARLECH AT 7.30 P.M. ON 04.11.24

APOLOGIES

None.

PRESENT

Cllrs. Christopher Braithwaite (Chairman), Edwina Evans, Wendy Williams, Ceri Griffiths, Rhian Corps, Gordon Howie, Martin Hughes, Giles Bentham, Reg Chapman, James Maxwell, Wendy Williams, and Cllr. Annwen Hughes and Gwynfor Owen (Gwynedd Council).

There were 10 members of the public present at the meeting

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Martin Hanks to the meeting to discuss the report he has created as he had been appointed as an independent investigator. The report was not discussed formally in the meeting as it was not on the agenda but it was agreed to discuss it at the December meeting of the Council.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that King George V playground sub-committee had met on the 11th of last month. He also stated he was unable to lay the poppy wreath on behalf of the Council at Remembrance service next Sunday and Cllr. Giles Bentham agreed to do this on his behalf.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on October 7th 2024 were found to be correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matter arising from the minutes

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The Council as a body declared an interest in the planning application for the installation of two slate monoliths approximately 3.3 metres high Land at Bron y Graig Park, Harlech and a Personal Interest Declaration form was signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Council and the planning application in question was not discussed.

GWYNEDD COUNCIL MATTERS

The following report was received from Cllr. Annwen Hughes and Gwynfor Owen. Cllr. Annwen Hughes reported that since the last meeting that she had received an email from the Environmental Department, Gwynedd Council informing her that they were developing the Ffridd Rasus site as their main waste collection and treatment hub for the south Gwynedd area. Also they wanted to know her views to trial closing "slots" to the recycling centre between 9.00 a.m. and noon (and sometimes until 1.00 pm) during the working week. She had also received visiting figures at the centre for the last two months and this information is available if anyone wants to see them. While visiting the public toilets near the Queens hotel last week she had discovered that one door had been vandalised and taken off its hinges and this was also affecting the neighbouring toilet. She had taken pictures of the damage and forwarded it to the relevant department at Gwynedd Council. She had been informed that the 20 mph signs at the junction to the Ty Canol estate had been removed and she had contacted Gwynedd Council with regards to this matter and asking why these signs were removed and she had received a reply stating that the signs had been taken down following a review of signs in the 20 m.p.a scheme and there is no right to install 20 m.p.a signs in illuminated areas that are already within an area signed as 20 m.p.a and there are legal implications if there is no compliance with the guidelines. The signs had originally been temporarily put up until the 20 m.p.a restrictions came into force. Cllr. Gwynfor Owen stated that he had suggested carrying out pilot scheme with closing "slots" for the recycling centre at Ffridd Rasus, had the pleasure of presenting the prizes at the flower show. 'There was a lot going on within Gwynedd Council and Wales missing out on the recent budget, four members of Gwynedd Council's Cabinet had resigned along with the Leader of the Council.

MATTERS ARISING

Budget Plan

It was reported that the Council had spent £38,297.95 (which included bank charges) since the start of the new financial year and this was £29,419.65 less expenditure than what was earmarked in the budget for the year (This is after the budget has been revised). It was agreed that the financial sub committee would meet to discuss a half-year review of the Council's financial position. Next month's agenda.

Election of Councillor

The Clerk reported that the notice which had been put up on both notice boards and the Council's website advertising the vacant seat that existed on the Council had expired on the 25th of last month and she had received a notice from the Electoral Officer stating that an election for the two vacant seats existing on the Council would be held on the 12th of December if more than two names would be received by him by 4.00 p.m. on the 15th of this month

Election of Council's Vice Chairman

The Clerk reported that this item had been put on the agenda following the resignation of Mr. Tegid John who was the Council's Vice Chairman. The name of Cllr. James Maxwell was proposed and seconded for the position of Vice Chairman with everyone voting unanimously to this.

Council's Website

Cllr. Giles Bentham informed the Members that Mrs Kim Howie had stopped making the Council's website since the end of last month and she had passed on the login in details of the website to him. Cllr. Martin Hughes stated said that he had been researching websites that would suit the Council and it was agreed that he send the names of these websites to the Clerk for her to contact them asking for a price to create a website for the Council.

Allotments

Cllrs. Giles Bentham and Reg Chapman informed the Members that the work on the above site had been completed. The Clerk further reported that she had received an email from Mrs Stephanie Evans stating that she and some who were renting an allotment were voicing disappointment that they did not know the work was going to be carried out and that it had not been carried out to a satisfactory standard. She also stated that now is the time to change the layout of the original plots. There is a large area of land in the lower part which could be converted into additional allotments. This area could also be used for woodland planting. These are available from the Woodland Trust but would require permission from the land owner. New paths need to be arranged to make getting to the allotments easier. The areas around the gates have not been cleared and it is still difficult to open the gates at the top and the bottom, with large buddlea bushes in the way. Plot 10 and 11 need to be revised and expanded with a new path placed on the left side to avoid going through plot 11 to get to 10. They would also like to amend the rules so that plotters could have a shed or greenhouse and grow fruits, vegetables and flowers. She stated that Paula Ireland would contact Cllr. Giles Bentham and they hope these plans would be discussed at this meeting. The Clerk reported that she had received five e-mail from people with an interest to rent an allotment and one general enquiry about an allotment. Next month's agenda.

Christmas Lights

The Clerk reported that she had been in contact with Mr. Tomos Slattery regarding erecting these lights on the electricity poles and asking him to contact Cllr. Reg Chapman regarding this matter. Cllr. Chapman stated that he was still waiting for the electrician to come and test these lights and the Chairman agreed to contact him.

Council's Historical Documents

Because there is not enough time to discuss the above issue tonight, that the issue is moved to next month's agenda.

Nature trail management plan

Cllrs. James Maxwell stated that he had contacted the Woodland Trust with regards to the above site but had not heard back from them. Next month's agenda.

Council's Assets Register

Because there is not enough time to discuss the above issue tonight, that the issue is moved to next month's agenda.

King George V playing field

Because there is not enough time to discuss the above issue tonight, that the issue is moved to next month's agenda.

Car Parks

The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Environment Department of Gwynedd Council to ask what their plans were with upper Bron y Graig car park and she had also asked what income they had received from the car parks in the area during the last financial year and she had received the following reply. They currently have no specific development plans for upper Bron y Graig car park but electric charging points had recently been installed on site. Also stating following a meeting with Council Cabinet Members on 15th October, the Environment Department has been given the go-ahead to go ahead with plans that will affect the County's car parks, including Harlech. Here's a summary of them;

1. Extend short-stay car park enforcement hours from 10:00 to 16:30 to 9:00 to 17:00.
2. Adjustment to Band Long Stay Fee Structure 2.
3. Increase parking fees in all car parks owned by the Environment Department.

Preparations are underway for the introduction of the above changes and we would receive further information through a consultation process on the above points 1 and 2 in due course. 'The Clerk had already forwarded this email to all Members. Cllr. Gwynfor Owen reported that he had requested a site meeting with some Gwynedd Council Officers to discuss this issue but had not yet received a reply from them. It was asked why the Council was losing £500 of the parking fee contribution and also the sign stating that there was an additional car park in Bron y Graig Uchaf car park was not obvious. It was agreed to hold a site meeting with Cllr. Gwynfor Owen together with the Chairman, Cllrs. Reg Chapman and Martin Hughes. Next month's agenda.

HAL

The Clerk stated that she had sent to the Internal Auditor with One Voice Wales about continuing to pay a precept contribution to the above centre and she had received the following replies from them. 'The Internal Auditor stated that we have the power under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to spend on anything likely to achieve or improve the economic, social or environmental welfare of the area, up to the maximum expenditure of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. It is for the Council to decide if further contributions to the HAL Board are likely to achieve this. 'One Voice Wales stated that a Community Council has the power to fund projects for the benefit of the community under S137, but in any case, the Council also has a duty to spend public money wisely and it thought the Council would need to see a credible plan from HAL on how any funding provided would benefit the community. The Clerk had contacted the External Auditor and Mr. Martin Hanks to ask their opinion on this matter.

The Clerk reported further that she had received an email from Lindsey Ellis, Community Support Service Manager providing the Council with an update regarding the above site. Cllr. Gwynfor Owen said he had met with Gwynedd Council's Cabinet Members and Officers to discuss the site and he hopes to hold a meeting with Gwynedd Council's Chief Executive. It was agreed to carry on to pay the precept contribution and Cllr. Reg Chapman stated he was happy to become a board member and it was suggested he contact Board Chairman Ms Heidi Williams.

Council's Training Plan

The Clerk reported that she had created the above plan and had forwarded it to all Members for them to go through before this evening's meeting. It was agreed to add that the Council is going to conduct in-house training for all members in the plan. The Clerk reported that she has booked a place on a course being held jointly between One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks which takes place on the 20th of this month. It was agreed to reimburse the costs of this training to the Clerk.

Progress review of recommendations from Audit Wales

Because there is not enough time to discuss the above issue tonight, it was agreed that the the way forward sub-committee meet to discuss it and to discuss Mr. Hanks's report. Next month's agenda

One Voice Wales Conference – report by Cllr. Martin Hughes

Because there is not enough time to discuss the above issue tonight, that the issue is moved to next month's agenda.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Advertisement Consent for grey Spar fascia with overhead trough light and window graphics Spar, High Street, Harlech (NP5/61/ADT558E)

Support this application.

Erection 1 no. dwelling (in lieu of 2 no. dwellings granted planning permission under reference NP5/61/654 dated 23/04/2024) - reduction of one dwelling from 20 to 19 Land adjoining Pen yr Hwylfa, Harlech. (NP5/61/654B)

Support this application.

Install two slab monoliths approximately 3.3 meters high Land at Parc Bron y Graig, Harlech (NP5/61/625A)

The Members declared an interest in the above application and a Personal Interest Declaration form was signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Council and the application was not discussed.

RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Responsible Financial Officer reported that there was £24,822.08 in the current account and £103,312.88 in the reserve account.

Invoices needing payment since last meeting

Mrs Kim Howie	- £25.99 –	monthly payment for administration of Council website
Mr. Joe Patton	- £132.92 -	repayment for items to the community wildflower garden
One Voice Wales	- £40.00 -	Councillor's training
Trade & DIY Products Ltd	- £1,296.61 –	3 new benches
Mrs Yvonne Jones	- £270.00 -	clean public toilets by the memorial hall
Mr. G. J. Williams	- £156.00 -	cut grass in King George & football field
Mr. M. J. Kerr	- £580.00 -	opening grave re the late Mr Douglas Russell
Mr. Daniel Trahearn	- £3,330.00 -	work to develop the allotments back to use
Mr. Meirion Griffith	- £2,212.00 -	cut grass on public footpaths
Mr. Meirion Griffith	- £2,150.00 -	cut grass in public cemetery and surrounding area
Mrs Annwen Hughes	- £78.00 -	reimburse training course cost
Royal British Legion	- £20.00 -	poopy wreath

Applications for financial contributions

Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure - £3,649.50 – precept proposal (monthly payment) x 2

The above payments were processed by Cllr. Edwina Evans and Cllr. Wendy Williams approved the payments and permission was granted to the Clerk/Treasurer to make payment on line or by cheque at the end of the meeting.

Monies received since last meeting

Mr. Gareth Jones - £40.00 – rent for allotment no. 15

Invoices paid since the last meeting

Catrin Soraya Williams – £290.00 - translation services (September and October)

CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs K. Smith

Received an email from the above voicing concern about the broken fence running along the A496 opposite the railway line. The Clerk stated that she had made enquiries with Cllr. James Maxwell about the fence in question and she had been given the address of the land owner and she had sent him a letter but had not yet received a reply. The Clerk had already forwarded this email to all Members.

Gwynedd Council – Municipal Department

Received a reply from Mr. Bryn Hughes of the above department regarding Bron y Graig Park and stating that the park receives basic grounds maintenance which is an urban cut work programme which takes place three times a year. Also stating that in the last year further work including trail handling, assessment and treatment of the benches and picnic tables, cleaning the small lake and clearing the river banks has been carried out and that this work has been programmed to take place again this year by a Municipal Works Unit and it is expected that this work will take place shortly as part of the work programme for the autumn and winter seasons.

The Clerk reported further that she had received another email from Mr. Bryn Hughes informing the Council that they had carried out an inspection of the benches and picnic tables at Bron y Graig Park and he had received a preliminary report suggesting that there are benches and picnic tables in the park that need to be replaced because they are in poor condition. Unfortunately at the moment there is no budget available to order new equipment and asking if this Council would in principle be happy to order replacements instead of those that need to be removed. The Clerk had already forwarded this email to all Members. It was agreed not to buy the new equipment and wanted to ask if the Community Council could take over the park altogether and also the car park.

Gwynedd Council –Economy Department

Received an email from the above asking the Council to bring to their attention any building that has come into use during this financial year or is in development or is undergoing improvements to the appearance of the building . The Clerk had already forwarded this email to all Members.

Williams Homes

Received an email from the above regarding the housing development in the area and stating that their development on the new site in Harlech is progressing well and they are now at the stage where they are trying to name the estate. 'They thought they would run past the Community Council how they go about doing this in general, and they will engage with the school and work with the children to come up with a list of welsh names based on the history and geography of the area, then these names would be run past the Housing Association to ensure there is no conflict with plans they have elsewhere resulting in a shortlist. They will then invite the Community Council to comment on this shortlist before submitting it to the planning authority for approval. The Clerk had already forwarded this email to all Members.

Save Plas Tan y Bwlch

Received an email from the above along with a letter inviting the Council to join them in a campaign to save Plas Tan y Bwlch and stating that a public meeting is being held in Gellilydan on the 1st of this month. The Clerk reported that because this public meeting will have taken place prior to the Council meeting that she had already forwarded this email to all Members

Mrs Stephanie Evans

The Clerk reported that she had received an e-mail from the above regarding Cae Besi corner and stating that the fence above the site that runs along the main road has come loose. The Clerk reported that she had already forwarded this email to all Members and also forwarded it to the highways department of Gwynedd Council.

SIGNED.....Chairman

DATE..... 817.