

MINUTES OF HARLECH COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE OLD LIBRARY, HARLECH AT 7.30 P.M. ON 02.12.24

APOLOGIES

Cllr. Ceri Griffiths,

PRESENT

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

There were 8 members of the public present at the meeting

Ms Annie O'Brien had requested to speak at the meeting regarding HAL and Dr. Martin Hanks's report and she stated that the Council should stop the cover up regarding the scam and she was pleased regarding the Council's decision with HAL. The complaints to Gwynedd Council Monitoring Officer and Audit Wales won't go away therefore was asking the Council to accept Dr. Hanks and Audit Wales recommendations and she supported the motion regarding HAL.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Many members of the public had approached him regarding the swimming pool, he was proud of what the Council had achieved so far but there was still a lot of work to be done. The way forward sub-committee had met and he had also spoken with the Cambrian News regarding the recent article.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on November 4th 2024 and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on the 21st November 2024 were found to be correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was agreed that this should of been included in the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November - Cllrs. Mark Lewis and Simon Turner signed the Acceptance of Office form before the start of the meeting.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Nobody declared an interest in any matter.

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 Lord Harlech informing her that Glyn Cywarch house had won the 2024 Historic House Restoration Award and the first to do this in Wales since the awards started in 2008. She had received an email from a constituent voicing concern that cars were coming and going along the road leading to the band room and swimming pool late at night as she had asked the Police to keep an eye on this. She had contacted the Traffic Manager, Gwynedd Council asking what the update was regarding the installation of a crossing near the Ty Canol estate after receiving several enquiries from constituents living on the estate. Cllr. Gwynfor Owen stated that he visited the craft fair and had attended the christmas lights procession and felt that this was very well attended. He had been present with Mabon Ap Gwynfor when he held his surgery in the town on the 29th of last month, had the privilege of opening the 24 hour snooker challenge.

MATTERS ARISING

Budget Plan

It was reported that the Council had spent £52,391.98 (which included bank charges) since the start of the new financial year and this was £22,021.02 less expenditure than what was earmarked in the budget for the year (This is after the budget has been revised).

HAL and Motion from Cllr. Martin Hughes

An e-mail had been received from the Chair of HAL Board informing the Council that following their meeting as Board Members on the 27th of last month that a decision was made to instruct their Solicitors not to proceed with the striking off of the company on the 4th of this month as they had decided to stay until a clearer picture is in place of what can be done with this community asset and also a public meeting would be held mid January 2025. It was made known that following the extraordinary Council meeting which was held on the 21st of last month that Cllrs. Reg Chapman, Simon Turner, Mark Lewis, Martin Hughes and James Maxwell would join the HAL Board. It was reported that four of the Council Members had met with the HAL Board on the 29th of last month to discuss how we might work together to get the best possible outcome for the swimming pool site. It was also stated that new information had been received which showed on the lease of HAL that the fence that runs along the road leading to the swimming pool is under the ownership of HAL and not the Community Council and Cllr. Reg Chapman stated that he had stopped all work with regards to the fence.

The below motion was received from Cllr. Martin Hughes and was asked to be included on the agenda for the extraordinary meeting of the Council on the 21st November.

Motion from Cllr. Martin Hughes

Harlech Community Council wants to take control of the swimming pool site to ensure any future plans benefit the local community and to avoid the site becoming a decaying eyesore for years to come. It is proposed that a task and finish team of 5 councillors be appointed to consult with interested parties and the local community to identify and evaluate options, with the final recommendation being submitted to the April 2025 council meeting for decision. The Council would take control by nominating the same 5 members to a new board of HAL to take control of the swimming pool on 1st January 2025. The Council will use existing swimming pool funds and council funds to fund the site until the end of the consultation period. Cllr. Martin Hughes withdrew his motion.

Following the meeting with the HAL Board on the 29th of last month Cllr. Mark Lewis brought forward an amendment to the above motion which was as follows:-

Motion from Cllr. Mark Lewis

Harlech Community Council wants to work in close partnership with HAL to ensure future plans benefit the local community and to avoid the site becoming a decaying eyesore for years to come. It is proposed that a task and finish team of 5 councillors be appointed to work with HAL to consult with interested parties and the local community to identify and evaluate options, with the final recommendation(s) being presented by the joint team to a public meeting in mid-January and a final decision being made by the HAL board shortly thereafter. The aim is to transfer ownership in April. The Council will assist HAL with running costs and legal fees related to an orderly transition to the new owner on an as-needed basis. In order to ensure that HAL is adequately supported and the Harlech community's investment is carefully controlled, the level of support will be assessed and agreed by the Council every month until the transaction closes. For the month of December the council will transfer £1,824.75 to HAL to assist with running costs and legal fees.

The Chairman stated that this amended motion deems concerns of no representation on the Board meaning no control over decisions and the following wording was added to the above motion – 2 Members of Harlech Community Council will be accepted onto the HAL Board as voting members to protect the interest of the Community Council and the December payment and future payments will be made when the new Directors are added to the Board. This motion was proposed by Cllr. Reg Chapman and seconded by Cllr. Simon Turner and all Members were in agreement of the above motion.

Bron y Graig Park and Upper Bron y Graig Car Park

The Clerk reported that she had received a reply from Gwynedd Council regarding the above sites and they stated that they were ready to begin discussions with the Community Council about the future of the Park.

About Upper Bron y Graig car park being taken over she had been informed that the Council will have to send an official letter to Gwynedd Council about this and also including a detailed plan about how they would run the car park. It was agreed to invite an Officer from Gwynedd Council to the meeting in February to start discussions regarding the Council taking over Bron y Graig park from Gwynedd Council. Cllr. Reg Chapman stated that he was going to create an agenda of how the Community Council could run Gwynedd Council facilities. Also it was agreed to discuss opening the toilets by Min y Don car park all year instead of just 6 months.

Council's Website

The Clerk reported that she had sent to 4 companies and that she had received a reply from them all stating that they would be interested in creating a website for the Council and 2 had sent more detailed information of how they will create a website for the Council. It was agreed to forward all the information received to all Members.

Allotments

Because there was not enough time to discuss the above item tonight, that the item be moved to February's agenda.

King George V playing field and Mr. Joe Patton's final report

It was agreed to accept the final report from Mr. Joe Patton and also support for additional funding for another notice board and this was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr. Gordon Howie and everyone present was in agreement (Cllrs. Giles Bentham and Martin Hughes had left the room).

Progress review of recommendations from Audit Wales and Mr. Martin Hank's report

It was agreed to review the progress of Audit Wales recommendations and discuss Dr. Martin Hanks' report. Comments were made to accept all 8 recommendations and the Way Forward sub committee recommend creating a task sheet and this was proposed by Cllr. Martin Hughes and seconded by Cllr. Giles Bentham. After a discussion it was agreed to discuss recommendation 8 in Dr. Hanks' report.

As recommendation 8 was to do with staffing matters the Chairman asked members of the public to leave the meeting and also the Clerk was not present when this matter was discussed.

Nature trail management plan

Because there was not enough time to discuss the above item tonight, that the item be moved to February's agenda.

Council's Assets Register

Because there was not enough time to discuss the above item tonight, that the item be moved to February's agenda.

Translator

It was agreed to invite a translator to the next meeting of the Council in January.

One Voice Wales Conference – report by Cllr. Martin Hughes

Because there was not enough time to discuss the above item tonight, that the item be moved to February's agenda.

One Voice Wales & SLCC Conference – report by the Clerk

The Clerk had already forwarded the link to the conference to all Members.

Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Because there was not enough time to discuss the above item tonight, that the item be moved to February's agenda.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Conversion of barn to a one-bedroomed annexe accommodation together with the construction of an extension and installation of 4 rooflights (3 on front elevation and 1 on rear elevation), and installation of external flue (Re-submission) Foel, Harlech (NP5/61/608D)

Support this application.

Change of use of ground floor shops to restaurant (Revised application) Castle Court & Gwynfa, High Street, Harlech (NP5/61/123F)

Support this application.

RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Responsible Financial Officer reported that there was £15,052.05 in the current account and £103,483.73 in the reserve account.

Invoices needing payment since last meeting

Mr. Joe Patton - £35.27 - repayment for items to the community wildflower garden
One Voice Wales - £40.00 - Councillor's training
Mr. G. J. Williams - £156.00 - cut grass in King George playing field and football pitch
Cambrian Clearance - £384.00 - two christmas trees
Dr. Martin Hanks - £940.00 - investigation of Harlech Community Council

Applications for financial contributions

Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure - £1,824.75 - precept proposal (monthly payment)

The above payments were processed by Cllr. Wendy Williams and Cllr. Edwina Evans 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
Pritchard and Griffiths - £1,824.00 - burial of the late Mr. Douglas Russell
Gwynedd Council - £2,500.00 - grant to bring allotments back into use

Invoices paid since the last meeting

Catrin Soraya Williams - none - translation services

CORRESPONDENCE

Gwynedd Council – Cae Besi Corner

Received a reply from the above stating that the Inspector had visited the site and the fence will receive attention in the coming weeks.

Gwynedd Council – Electoral Department

Received an email from the above department regarding a community survey which will run from the 11th of last month until the 20th of December and asking if the Council would like to take part in the survey. The Clerk had already forwarded this email to Members.

Gwynedd Council – Environment Department

Received an email from the above regarding consultation with parking plans starting from the 1st of April 2025 the enforcement hours of the short stay pay and display parking will change from 10.00 up to 16.30 to the new regime from 9.00 up to 17.00 and also there will be a change in the parking fee structure and parking will have to be paid for at least 4 hours compared with the 2 hours in existence now. The Clerk had already forwarded this email to Members.

SIGNED.....Chairman

DATE.....

