

Whitecastle Community Council

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UNAPPROVED Minutes 9 May 2024 Council Meeting

Present : Cllr. J. Biggs, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. L. Hughes, Cllr. D. Edwards
In attendance : L. Taylor (Clerk)

1. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons and County Councillor I. Chandler

2. To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in items listed below.

It was agreed to allow members to disclose interests as they arise.

3. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 April 2024.

Resolution The minutes from the full council meeting held on 11 April 2024 were agreed as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. D. Edwards and agreed unanimously.

4. Matters arising.

- A decision on how to display the framed portrait of King Charles has been delayed to the next meeting.
- The clerk has contacted the Village Life Project about working with the council on the provision and management of defibrillators in the community but has not received a reply.
- The Churchyard Management Plan is being considered for approval by the council.

5. To consider an application to be co-opted as the member for the Newcastle ward.

Members reviewed the application from Mr Nigel Graham and decided not to make a decision until Mr Graham is able to attend a meeting to sign the declaration form. The council wishes to ensure residents of Newcastle ward are aware of the application. A notice to this effect is to be added to the council website with a deadline for responses ten days before the next meeting.

6. To consider the use of the council website.

The clerk reminded members of recent changes to the website and asked for comments. The clerk asked members who use Facebook when it is appropriate to remind residents of the website. The following items were added to the News and Notices page :

Bees of Monmouthshire Recording Project,
The National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme,
Churches Count on Nature 2024,
Minor Injury Unit Changes,
Public consultation on Maypole speed limits,
Monmouthshire County Council News,
Monmouthshire County Council consultation 'Listening on 20mph'.

7. To consider correspondence.

One Voice Wales contacted the council on the following matters :

- Training for councillors
- Advice on the Preparation and Publication of Annual Reports
- Advice on how to produce a Contract of Employment
- Notification of the Area Committee meeting 4 July 2024
- Practice Development Note on Members Allowances and various notices to do with biodiversity.
- The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales annual report.

The clerk discussed the implications of this report and explained mandatory payments to members of Community Councils and contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance. These payments include £156 for the extra costs of working from home and a payment of £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out the councillor's role. Members were reminded of the tax implications of the above payments. Payments are free of income tax unless members are already receiving a working-from-home allowance from HMRC. Members were given a form which they were asked to sign and return. Members were reminded they should receive money to which they are properly entitled as a matter of course which also includes the costs of care or personal assistance.

The Chair and Vice-Chair both decided to forego an optional payment for their roles. Members were asked to consider the payment of an attendance allowance (taxable), payment for financial loss and travel and subsistence (non-taxable).

Resolution To allow members to claim attendance allowance, financial loss allowance and travel and subsistence allowance. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. D. Edwards and agreed unanimously.

Monmouthshire County Council contacted the council on the following matters :

- A talk entitled 'Beavers: Nature's Engineers'
- An update on Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan
- A request to update the Emergency Contacts Directory (This has been completed.)

Other

- Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice are looking for Trustee board members.
- Monmouthshire Citizens Advice impact report.
- An update from David TC Davies MP on the re-tendering of the contract for milk.
- The Campaign for Real Ale asked for information about the orchards at Penrhos. Cllr. Biggs provided details of the history of the site.

8. Councillor reports

Cllr. Hughes informed members that Cross Ash School is currently undergoing an inspection by Estyn. The James Powell's Educational Foundation has been able to provide a number of grants to students in post 16 education for the next academic year.

9. County Councillor's report

None presented.

10. To consider planning matters.

DM/2024/00485 2 May 2024 Householder Two storey side extension and associated external works. Yewtree Cottage The Hendre NP25 5HL

Members were supportive of the proposed developments and recommended approval.

11. To consider highways matters

- The Chair reported on work done by the county council to make safe a culvert next to the road in Treadam. A cover has been added but operatives were unable to take any action to clear the blocked culvert as they did not have the correct paperwork. Action was taken by the Chair to ensure the work was done and the culvert cleared.

- Cllr. Biggs reported the poor condition of roads in Penrhos ward, particularly around Llaca Du.
- Cllr. Edwards was concerned about the quality of repair work to potholes.
- Members were informed of the public consultation on new speed limits in Maypole which was part of the Monmouthshire County Council Traffic Regulation, Speed Limits And Parking Regulations Consolidation Order 2019 (amendment order no 14) 2024
The council was surprised and disappointed that the requested change to speed limits in The Hendre was not included in this order. The county council explained the omission was due to limited available resources and officer time and it will be included in a proposal later this financial year.
- Members were made aware of the new county council consultation 'Listening on 20mph'.
- The Chair reported problems caused by the closure in January 2024 of footpath 91. The closure is due to an unsafe footbridge on the River Trothy. Closure signs are only posted on the bridge and not at access points to the footpath. This has caused walkers to stray off the footpath which has created problems for landowners and caused injury to walkers. The clerk was asked to contact the county council to ask for a meeting with a member of the countryside team to discuss this matter. Footpath 91 is also in Gobion Fawr Community and the clerk to the council is to be informed of the issue.

12. To discuss churchyard matters.

A meeting took place on 18 April at Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern church. This was attended by Cllr. Astill-Parsons, the clerk and Karen Stafford-Smith (a member of the church committee). The meeting was called following a meeting of the church committee to discuss the use of funding to improve the paths in the churchyard. The church committee considered and rejected a number of options. The church committee supported constructing a fine gravel path from the car parking area to the church porch. A quotation had been obtained from Morgan Civil and Agricultural Contracting Ltd and an estimate from GCC and Plant Hire Limited. Members of the council discussed the information provided and supported the proposal from GCC and Plant Hire Limited. The clerk will ask for the work to proceed on the basis that the council and the church committee will jointly supervise the project and payment will be made by the church committee. A meeting with the contractor will be organised once the offer is accepted.

13. To consider policing matters.

The April policing report had been circulated to members and posted on the website.

14. To consider financial matters.

- The latest bank statements for 2024/25 were unavailable and reports will be made available at the next meeting.
- The clerk asked for approval of the following payments. The Chair examined invoices and documentation to confirm accuracy of the payments.

L Taylor	Secretarial duties April 24 + expenses	£364.30
One Voice Wales	Subscription 24/25	£242.00

15. Any other business.

- Cllr. Biggs asked about a quotation for a notice board in Penrhos. The clerk was able to provide an estimate based on the cost of the notice board at The Onen. Cllr. Biggs suggested asking for an estimate from a local joiner which is likely to be cheaper.
- Dates of meetings for 2024/25 were discussed and agreed as follows.
27 June, 12 September, 14 November, 16 January, 20 March and 8 May AGM

Meeting closed at 9pm