**GROSMONT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**CYNGOR CYMUNED GROSMONT**

**Chairman/Cadeirydd Clerk/Clerc**

**Councillor Lowri Wynn Morgan Mr R Wade**

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROSMONT COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD AT THE GROSMONT TOWN HALL AT 7:30 PM ON THE 10TH MAY 2023**

Those attending the meeting: Councillors Lowri Wynn Morgan, Jude Rogers, Janet Williams, Jamie Edwards, Margaret Barker, Christopher Bateman and the Clerk to the Council, Robert Wade. Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz arrived at 20:39 after experiencing family difficulties. County Councillor David Hughes Jones was also in attendance. On the floor of the meeting were Janet Chatfield, Susanna Jones, Jane Moggridge, Peter Clarke and Russell James, and, latterly, Marcus Percy.

1. **To accept apologies for absence**

No apologies had been received.

1. **To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in items of business listed below**

It was agreed that these could be announced as and when the situation arose during the meeting.

1. **Election of Chair, Vice Chair and other Council officers**

Councillor Wynn Morgan was proposed as Chair by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Williams and duly elected

Councillor Rogers was proposed as Vice Chair by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Barker, and duly elected

The Clerk said that there were no other officers’ roles to be filled.

1. **Discussion on matters arising from the Police Report and police issues generally**

The report had been circulated by e-mail previously. No matters were raised connected with it. The Chair said that she was aware of a burglary near her which presumably would be in next month’s report, and she would like that to be followed up. The Clerk said that the police had stated that the entire report could only be published if there was also a translation into Welsh. The Chair said that, in principle, she would be happy to undertake such a translation.

1. **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting on the 12th April 2023**

The Minutes were approved, proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Williams.

1. **To consider matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting on the 12th April 2023**
2. Page 6 - 15(a) – the matter of the Cleaner had not been resolved. The Chair said she had e-mailed her, but it appeared had mis-spelt the name so that the e-mail had not been received. She had been away during the last week. She asked that the issue should go into the Agenda for June. She asked about cleaning materials. The Clerk said that he understood it had been agreed that the Cleaner would order through the village shop, who would in turn contact him. It had happened once only. However, the procedure was there if required.
3. Page 2 – 6(c) – The issue of the loan was considered at this point. The Clerk had distributed the Minutes from previous meetings at which the issue had been discussed. It was agreed that, in principle, the Precept was within the power of the Council, who had the power and duty to make sure it had sufficient money to conduct all necessary business, and this included keeping the Hall in a reasonable state of repair. However, when it came to the loan, the Welsh Government clearly imposed definite rules which included making detailed calculations of the cost of the work to be done and also consultation with the community who would have to foot the bill. Peter Clarke from the floor said that it would probably take six months to come up with the detailed calculations. The Clerk was requested to obtain guidance from the Welsh Government as to what they would require for this and also for consultation. In general it appeared that there would have to be a door-to-door drop of documentation plus a further event from Grosmont Future concerning the plans for the Hall.
4. Page 6 – 15(d) – The Clerk had circulated some possible designs for a notice-board for Llangattock Lingoed, but it was agreed that they were expensive. The Chair proposed (seconded by Councillor Edwards) that Councillor Bateman should be given authority to source a suitable notice-board at a cost in the region of £600.
5. Page 5 – 12(b) – The matter of charging for the use of the Hall was discussed again. The Clerk had clarified the present charging, which was on the web-site – basically, £15 per hour for those living in Grosmont and £25 per hour for those living outside, with an extra charge if it was booked for more than three hours in the evening. Peter Clarke and Marcus Percy said that electricity cost the Council £8 per hour, so that, if the Council charged anything less than that, it was making a loss straight away, and that left out of account completely any other costs. It was pointed out that the church charged only £10 a session for its use, and the church was warmer than the Hall. The point was made that it was essential that the Hall should be made a more attractive place to be in. It was agreed that a more rigorous check on the cost of the Hall was required, and the matter could be considered again in June. Janet Chatfield said that the Council would be given £20,000 to assist in the running costs once the Hub was fully set up, but obviously that was very much in the future.

1. **To consider the progress of the work relating to the Town Hall Project**
2. The Chair said that this would be combined with consideration of item 9, and it was agreed that the two would be combined in future Agendas. The latest position with Monmouthshire County Council was that the plans had been approved in principle – very good news – but there had been some 15 conditions imposed which needed to be looked at. Sarah Brown the architect was coping with a family bereavement, but would be asked to look at the conditions once she was back in work. Peter Clarke said again that he believed it would then take six months to put together detailed calculations and that it would then be necessary to satisfy the community of their virtue. He also stressed the advisability of having a more streamlined process for disbursing the money, and a more modern booking system. All that was clearly very much for the future, and it was agreed that the issue should remain on the Agenda for the foreseeable future.
3. **To discuss Grosmont Online**

Councillor Rogers had prepared a written report on the results of the Online Survey conducted by  Grosmont Online, and presented it to the meeting. This was her short summary**:**

1. The most popular ways of finding out information about village events were:
   * the Grosmont Noticeboard on Facebook
   * The village noticeboard
   * speakingtofriends/family.

The Grosmont Community Hub Facebook page, which averaged 5.6/10 for communicating information, was less so – a few people commented that we should just post on the Grosmont Noticeboard page

2) The website averaged 5.9/10 for how good people thought it was - so room for improvement!

3) Popular asks for the website were more colour and photographs, so I will put a shout-out on Facebook and will on the noticeboard for locals to send some to me.

4) People wanted walking routes, local history features, regular blogs and info about tradespeople in a local magazine or on the website most – something to be discussed in our next subcommittee meeting, alongside Deb Nevill’s interest to include info on mental health and wellbeing, grants for heating, food banks and warm spaces and the nice idea from one villager to have a monthly village quiz online. Also a regular update from Grosmont Futures would be useful.

5) 72% of people were keen on having a village magazine - this was one of the most responded to questions on the whole survey, and many people said they missed the Church Link, so there is a big appetite for it. Some understandable environmental concerns regarding printing however – suitable paper and processes to be considered in next quote.

6) There were requests for more info from the Angel and Grosmont Events re events – I have emailed and will keep checking the Angel’s newsfeed to include more.

7) 82% of people would like the town hall to be bookable online – useful for Grosmont Futures planning.

50% of villagers would be interested in using Zoom to access meetings for a variety of access reasons.

She said that Nick Jones, who was caught up in exams at school for the moment, was meeting soon with Reverend Gaynor to discuss how the past Link magazine worked, and find out how this could help the future magazine.

She asked for thoughts. It was agreed that it was important to avoid duplication, which would be counter-productive. There would clearly be a necessity for the Council and Grosmont Futures to work together, in particular. She said that Nick Jones, who was caught up in exams at school for the moment, was very keen on promoting the magazine.

Her plan at the moment was for a newssheet to be produced on a Friday, with all the week’s news and future events, so that everybody knew. This would have to be in hard copy for the notice boards so that those without computers would have access to it as well. She would be asking that all material should be in her hands by the Wednesday. It was agreed that this needed to involve Llangattock Lingoed as well to make sure they were reassured as to their place in the community. David Hughes Jones asked about Llangua, and Councillor Rogers confirmed that she would include it – she knew there was a notice board there.

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She had prepared a computer program to draw the raffle, which was won by ACH Brooklands.

She confirmed that she was still conferring with Halls Together on the matters referred to in the Minutes of the last meeting.

1. T**o consider the Highlight Report**

See 7 above.

1. **To receive items of correspondence**

The Clerk said that he had received no correspondence that he needed to bring to the attention of the meeting save for that already being discussed elsewhere in the meeting

1. **To consider matters relating to Planning.**

The Council considered 3 applications:

1. DM/2023/00523 – the Old Greyhound – an application for permission for a Garden shed/log store

1. DM/2023/00598 – Little Goytre – an application for permission for a timber extension to an existing steel portal barn, relocation of an existing access track, a low impact stone trackway, extension of the hardstanding area at the rear of the barn, a proposed polytunnel and construction of a small section of trackway.
2. DM/2023/00539 – Yew Tree Cottage – an application for repairs and reconstruction to reinstate residential use to a listed building.

All these applications were approved.

1. **To discuss an increase to the Clerk’s salary**

It was agreed that this could be postponed to the next meeting. The Clerk was asked to provide his reasons for seeking an increase by the week prior to the meeting so that it could be properly considered.

1. **To agree expenditure and other accounts matters**
2. The Clerk asked for and was given authority to pay his current salary of £1250 and travel of £60 and £68.84.
3. He produced a financial statement which was for the month of April 2023and showed that the Council had £27,160.77 available to it in the bank, and also sums of £8,418.51 available from the Community Fund Grant and £3,919.60 which had been allocated to Grosmont Futures.
   1. **To discuss the state of the roads in and about Grosmont**

The Clerk said that all complaints had been passed on to Mark Hand at Monmouthshire County Council, although it was suggested that the person actually responsible for the work was Carl Touhig. In any event, the information had been passed on, and had seemingly been added to a long list. County Councillor David Hughes Jones said that there was a problem with the money available for repairs, so that the County Council had to prioritise. If a pothole was clearly dangerous, it was tarmacked over speedily. If not, then it was put on the rolling programme for the entire County. Sometimes this might involve a hole being dealt with dealt with individually, sometimes by an entire stretch of road being resurfaced. Marcus Percy from the floor asked if the Council could engage in “self-help”, although David Hughes Jones said this would involve the Council imposing an undesirable burden on itself, and would need consultation with the community as a whole. Comments were made about the state of deterioration of the Kentchurch Bridge.

1. **To discuss Footpaths**

Councillor Rogers said that she had forwarded an e-mail from Andrew Stumpf regarding a leaflet which had been devised for Paths to Wellbeing.

1. **To receive and consider any other business**
2. The Clerk mentioned the signs for the toilet, and particularly one which would replace the current unsatisfactory hand-written version in the undercroft of the Town Hall. He was authorised to obtain a sign which would be sufficiently conspicuous, and have an arrow point to the toilet, inside the undercroft, and one in the area outside the Hall, advising the public of what was available inside.
3. The Chair said that the toilets had been closed for some days while the Cleaner was on holiday. She said that there needed to be keys available to keep the facilities open, and the Clerk was requested to ask the Cleaner to make on available so that it could be copied. She was happy to be a key-holder, and Councillor Barker said she was also willing to do so. In the long-term, the Chair said that she thought somebody should act as caretaker, and the Clerk was asked to see if the Cleaner might be prepared to act as such. The Clerk said that this was an issue which he had raised with her in 2022, without success, but he would certainly try again.
4. The Clerk said that Marcus Percy had very kindly agreed to do the PAT testing of the Council’s electrical appliances. He confirmed this, and the meeting conveyed thanks to him for agreeing to do so.
5. From the floor, Jan Chatfield read an e-mail she had received which stated that areas of the grass around the Castle would not be mowed in order, it was said, to assist with Biodiversity. It was agreed that this might be designed also to assist with the County Council’s finances, and that it could cause problems with access to the Castle. Councillor Mintowt-Czyz suggested that the Clerk should respond to the e-mail to point this out. It was agreed that this should be kept under review.

1. **To decide the date of the next meeting**

This was agreed as the **14th June 2023 at 7 30 p.m.**