**GROSMONT FAWR COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

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**Chairman/Cadeirydd Clerk/Clerc**

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROSMONT COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD AT THE GROSMONT TOWN HALL AT 7:00 PM ON THE 14TH MARCH 2023**

Those attending the meeting: Councillors Witek Mintowt-Czyz (Vice-Chair), Jude Rogers, Janet Williams, Jamie Edwards, Margaret Barker and Christopher Bateman and the Clerk to the Council, Robert Wade. On the floor of the meeting were Janet Chatfield and Mark Whitaker.

1. **To accept apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Lowri Wyn Morgan, who had child-minding issues. The Vice-Chair was in the chair for this meeting. He welcomed those attending, and introduced a new Councillor, Chris Bateman, who had been co-opted to the Council that evening, proposed by the Vice-Chair and Seconded by Councillor Rogers.

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. **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 Clerk had previously enquired of the police if there was any objection to its publication. The response had been that a summary would be acceptable (a translation in Welsh would only be required if the report were to be published in full.) The Clerk was asked to put a summary on the web-site and notice-board.

1. **To consider the co-option of a new Councillor in place of former Councillor Martin Davies**

This had already been dealt with

1. **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting on the 26th January 2023**

It was agreed that the words “Borrowing Permission” should be substituted for “Treasury Loan” in Clause 6. With this reservation, the Minutes were approved, proposed by the Vice Chair and seconded by Councillor Barker.

1. **To consider matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting on the 26th January 2023**

Clause 12(b) - The Vice Chair said that he had spoken to the cleaner, who had assured him that she had a written contract, and she had undertaken to supply him with a copy of it. It was not to hand for this meeting.

1. **To consider the progress of the work relating to the Town Hall Project**

The Vice Chair said this should be considered with item 9. Highlight Report #11 had been previously circulated by Peter Clarke and was received by the Council without comment.

(a) The Architect, Sarah Browne, had spoken to the Heritage Officer of Monmouthshire County Council (“the HO”), and Jan Chatfield had e-mailed all Councillors prior to the meeting to inform them of the HO’s views, which included serious differences with the proposals for theexternal steps, upper floor ceilings, insulation of the walls on the upper floor, the timber doors, secondary glazing unit, lift and the enclosing doors on the ground floor and associated removal of the ironwork. The resiting of the lift in particular would affect the space available on the first floor of the Town Hall. Councillors were asked to consider options as to how Sarah should approach the issue of the Listed Building Application. Mrs Chatfield had usefully summarised the options as below and was thanked by the Vice Chair for this work:

1. Ignore the objections of the HO, continue with the application as it stands, and go through the appeal process with MCC, which will take a number of months. The delays may affect the chances of securing grant funding, and there is no guarantee of success in any event.

1. Accept the amendments as suggested by the HO in their entirety. This would ensure a swift and positive response, but seriously compromise what could be offered in the Hub in future years.

1. Take a pragmatic approach and accept the majority of the suggested amendments, but make a strengthened case for siting the lift in the Undercroft as originally planned.  This might be successful if a strong enough case could be made, explaining the benefits to the project of siting the lift where Sarah was proposing.

1. Withdraw the application and go back to the drawing board.

A proposal from the Vice Chair to support option 1 (with the caveat that the HO’s stipulations as to the secondary glazing, wooden doors and the small roof might be acceded to) did not attract a seconder. No other proposal was forthcoming with regard to the other options. Accordingly, the Vice Chair proposed instead that the advice to the architect should be delegated to the Steering Committee. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Barker, and passed without dissent.

(b) Reference was also made to the application for Borrowing Permission. The Vice Chair said that the Clerk had provided some necessary information, and the application form had been populated by Alex Minford, but clearly its submission had to await the start of the new financial year, the outcome of the negotiations with the HO and the application for the grant that was scheduled for the end of June. The Clerk asked whether there had been sufficient attention given to the need for public consultation and asked whether more precise figures would need to be provided. It was important that the loan application did not founder for those reasons. He also said that it might be necessary to reconsider the loan amount if one or other of the grant applications was unsuccessful. The general feeling of the meeting was that these were unlikely to be problems that would be encountered.

1. **To discuss Grosmont Online**
2. Councillor Rogers said she would submit a report on the survey results by e-mail before the next meeting, but summarised the main findings. Many used the website but said it needed to be updated and improved; several said they wanted it to be simpler and more accessible and wanted photographs to be included.  Some had said they wanted it to be interactive, although Councillor Rogers said she was against that it would require daily management which would not be possible without volunteers.  Some people wanted articles from readers.

1. Councillor Rogers said that she expected that Grosmont would be on the Halls Together web-site shortly, which would make a difference to the booking system. The aim of the scheme was to pool resources. The Clerk said this was fine so long as he was notified, so that he could check on payment. There had also been a favourable response to the idea of a village magazine to replace the previous Church Link, which had folded during the pandemic.  Nick Jones of the sub-committee was going to meet Rev Gaynor to discuss it, and another sub-committee meeting would be held in the next month. The Vice Chair said it was important to include Llangattock Lingoed, and Councillor Bateman agreed.
2. Councillor Rogers said that the prize draw for respondents to the survey would take place at the next Council meeting.
3. She said that she anticipated a meeting with Michael Powell to see if a suitable template for the web-site could be produced, and would come back to the Council with the result before publication started.
4. T**o consider the Highlight Report**

 See 7 above.

1. **To receive items of correspondence**

The Clerk said there were no items of correspondence which were not going to be discussed under other Agenda headings.

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

There were no planning applications to consider

 12.**To agree expenditure and other accounts matters**

The following bills were approved:

Cleaner £428

Clerk’s salary £1,250

Admin £226.80 for travel from August 2022 to the present

* 1. **To discuss the state of the roads in and about Grosmont**
1. Councillor Edwards said that the bridge at Kentchurch was becoming more and more decrepit, and he believed it had suffered from several collisions from motor vehicles. It was three years since the flood.
2. Councillor Edwards said that, in general, the roads were getting worse. He had counted twenty potholes, but said that without a lot of difficulty he knew he could find forty more. He encouraged everybody to report the defects. The use of What Three Words had proved useful. Councillor Bateman recommended “Fix my Street” which he said he had used with some success to try to get things done when the County Council was leaning back and trying to claim that they had fixed all defects but clearly had failed to do so.
3. Councillor Bateman also asked what the boundaries of the area were said to be. Some Councillors said they had been sent a map, and the Clerk said he would send one to him.
4. The Vice Chair said that all the roads were breaking up, and there was general agreement that the roads were in a terrible state. The Clerk said he referred all matters on which concern was raised to Mark Hand, and was assured they were being put on a list, but that was no guarantee of quick action. The Vice Chair encouraged everybody to just keep documenting.
5. **To discuss Footpaths**

The Clerk referred to the correspondence already exchange with Councillors from Andrew Stumpf and Scott Greenaway. The Vice Chair said that the original bridge to the Llangua church had been at a site where ox-bowing of the river made it impossible to rebuild it. The restitution of a crossing would be dependent on identifying a site where the river bank was stable, and that had not been achieved. The cost of any new bridge was likely to be several tens of thousands of pounds. The Clerk said that Scott had suggested crowd-funding, and was prepared to put £1,000 into the cost himself. The Clerk said he had written to Monmouthshire County Council on the matter, but had yet to receive a response from Ruth Rourke, who was on holiday, but he would report back to the next meeting.

1. **To receive and consider any other business**

The Vice-Chair mentioned the possibility of resurrection of the railway station at Pontrilas**.** It was unsure how far this was going to be taken, but he said that an eye should be kept open for developments.

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

It was agreed that the Council should revert to the default position of the second Wednesday in the month, so that the next meeting would would be on the **12th April at 7 p.m.**