**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 9TH NOVEMBER 2022**

Those attending the meeting: Councillors Lowri Wynn Morgan (Chair), Witek Mintowt-Czyz, Janet Williams, Jamie Edwards, Margaret Barker, County Councillor David Hughes Jones and the Clerk to the Council, Robert Wade. On the floor of the meeting were Russell James, Susannah James and Jan Chatfield.

1. **To accept apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Jude Rogers, who had succumbed to the Covid 19 virus. There were no apologies from Councillor Martin Davies.

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 meeting was attended by Inspector Ioan Williams, who was welcome by the Chair. The Inspector said that he was the sole Inspector in Monmouthshire dealing with Neighbourhood policing. He said that he came from an operational police background. He had been in the job for 12 weeks. It was his priority going forward to approach the public in a personal way, to find out what their concerns were, how they wanted the police to operate. He had observed from the statistics that Grosmont was a nice place to live, with a low crime rate. However, it was close to the border with Herefordshire, which could have disadvantages.

The Chair mentioned the regular reports that the Council received. In a report earlier in the year, the issue of distraction burglaries had been highlighted. The Inspector said that he had developed a POP plan – Police Operational Policy – which was not yet in for this area, but he was aware that some villages suffered from this problem, although he said that it was usually non-dwelling houses which suffered. The Chair said that the reports the Council had received were of dwellings, while the occupants were at home, which was obviously very concerning. Her main question was: in the event of such an incident, would a police officer attend? Inspector Williams said that the answer was definitely “yes”, although burglaries would be referred to CID, who were very unlikely not to attend. However, if they didn’t, that would not sit well with him.

The Chair also commented that she would like to be made aware of the outcomes, and the Inspector agreed that he wanted to make sure that especially positive outcomes were made known. He said that the police clearly needed to provide feed-back, and he would make sure that happened. As the Chair commented, this was desirable especially in the context of ongoing investigations, in the interests of community safeguarding and reassurance.

The Inspector said that he met regularly with his officers to make sure they were aware of his priorities. One of these was increased visibility. It was a challenge to meet the demand, particularly when town centres clearly took up more time than outlying districts.

Asked about road safety, he said that B Roads tended to attract car enthusiasts and boy racers. Councillor Mintowt-Czyz said that there had been concern for many years about traffic speeding though the village. A 20 mph speed limit had been requested, but refused. The Inspector said that he was aware of efforts to make this more global, and described what police officers had been doing whilst trials had been conducted in (for example) Abergavenny, where motorists had been given te option of a fine or the viewing of a video. County Councillor David Hughes Jones said that the County Council had spent £32,000,000 towards the reduction in the speed limit. The Clerk said that it had been announced by Mark Hand that it was the Welsh Government’s proposal to make the 20 mph limit general on all restricted roads with effect from the 17th September 2023.

The Inspector led a discussion about the ways in which crime and/or concerns could be made known to the police. He said there was a Virtual Response Team to whom matters could be reported on line. Use of the 101 number was having problems nationally. He said that the use of social media was actually faster. The Chair from personal experience mentioned spending over an hour on the telephone, talking to 101 when her car was damaged. She had mentioned that there might be the scope for forensic evidence to be obtained, but nobody had been sufficiently concerned to come out. The tendency appeared to be that a crime number was given in order that an insurance claim could be made, but that was about it. She had felt upset about this.

The Inspector said that the police always gave a prompt response to 999 calls. This was within 9 seconds. He again mentioned social media reporting, and the on line complaint which would enable the caller to interact with a call handler. The Clerk mentioned his own unsatisfactory experience with Action Fraud, which the Inspector said tended to be more helpful in cases of losses of significant value. The Chair said she was especially concerned because there were many older people who did not have access to the internet and relied on the telephone, so an issue with 101 was a worry.

Reference was made to the new police station being built in Abergavenny in Llanfoist near McDonalds. The Inspector said that he understood the builders were waiting for a specialist drill. At present, Abergavenny police were operating from a station at Mamhilad, by the Secret Garden. The Clerk was asked to check what plans there were for Abergavenny, and the extent to which officers would actually be based there, which would clearly depend on the size of the proposed building.

The Inspector said that the issue of County Lines was high on his agenda. This referred to organised criminals coming from bigger metropolitan areas and targeting often vulnerable people in smaller areas. The issue usually related to drugs.

Councillor Janet Williams asked if the details of the police neighbourhood team, as given in the police report - could be publicized on the notice board and also on the web-site. The Inspector said there would be no objection to this. They were updating the team, and he would make sure that the Clerk was notified once that process had been completed, and a new list could be produced.

The Chair mentioned that there had recently been a police van in the village. The Inspector said he wasn’t aware of it. She asked if she could be informed.

The Chair thanked Inspector Williams for his attendance.

1. **Public Forum**

No issues arose save that Russell James made a general comment that corrections to Minutes should only occur if there was serious difference between what was in the Minutes and what was being proposed as a correction.

1. **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting on the 12th October 2022**

The Chair proposed that the Minutes should be taken as a correct record of the meeting. This was agreed. Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz asked that in future they should come out earlier. The Clerk said he had no problem with this in principle. The delay in this case had been largely because of the alterations to the Minutes of the 8th September which had been proposed by Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz.

1. **To consider matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting on the 12th October 2022 and in particular the amendments proposed by Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz to the Minutes of the meeting on the 8th September**

The Clerk pointed out that Minutes of a meeting were not intended to be a verbatim account, but to get the flavour of what was discussed. There was absolutely no point in the alterations suggested by Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz where all that was happening was that the wording was being tinkered with. All that would achieve was more work for him, the Clerk. If he had misreported or misrepresented what an individual Councillor had said, he or she would of course be absolutely entitled to say so. The Chair recognised the considerable work the Clerk had done, and said there might be a need to consider another way of taking Minutes, and possibly to make them shorter. The Clerk said that the discussion needed to be reported fully – that was not the issue. The Chair nevertheless proposed that the Minutes as amended by Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz should be accepted as the true record. This was seconded by Councillor **Witek** Mintowt-Czyz, and agreed.

1. **To consider the progress of the work relating to the Town Hall Project**
2. The Chair said there that neither Peter Clarke or Alex Minford was able to be present that evening. However, she said there had been a very successful meeting with Sarah Browne, the architect, things had really started moving and Building Consent had been applied for.
3. At this point, the Clerk mentioned that the Green Grant of £10,440 was going to have to be returned. The Clerk said he would have to make sure he had cheques signed by David Hughes Jones and Andrew Farr because Lloyds Bank had said it would probably be another five weeks before the new signatories would be on their records. He would make sure the cheque was dispatched by Friday at the latest.

1. **To discuss Grosmont Online**

The Chair read out a report from Councillor Jude Rogers regarding the progress of this. The Chair proposed (seconded by Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz**)** that the Council should make itself responsible for the payments, due on the 16th January, for the Word Press Plan and Domain name ownership, and this was agreed.

Councillor Edwards said they were still putting together the questions for the survey, but that would be done shortly.

1. **To consider the Highlight Report**

The Chair said that, as she understood it, the existing report had not been updated. Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz proposed (the Chair seconding) that the existing report should be accepted, and that was agreed.

1. **To receive items of correspondence**
2. The Clerk said he had had a response from Mr Hand to his e-mail regarding the pot-hole which had caused physical injury to a pedestrian. Mr Hand had said that it would be attended to. Had it been? Councillor Edwards said yes, but very badly. The Chair commented that the County Council’s general approach unfortunately appeared to be that what was done was not done properly. County Councillor David Hughes Jones said that, although he did not speak in any way for the County Council, he was aware that they tried to avoid litigation by repairing potholes as soon as they were reported. However, there was a list of priorities which often had to be varied when a task of greater urgency came along. Councillor Edwards referred to a bridge at the bottom of Cupid’s Hill which was falling down. County Councillor David Hughes Jones said he had been there himself with the County Council engineer three times during recent years.

1. There was some discussion regarding litter bins and/or dog waste bins. The Clerk said that it appeared that the one at Llangua probably was owned by the Council, although Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyzsaid he had no recollection of the Council ever buying one. One major question was: who was emptying it? Would that be the County Council? The Clerk was requested to check with Sue Parkinson and also with former Councillor James Stark, whose enquiry had first generated the discussion, to see what he thought about the need to replace it. The Clerk had obtained details and prices. However, Councillor Edwards had a photograph on his mobile phone, and it seemed to be repairable.
2. **To consider matters relating to Planning.**
3. DM/2022/01500 – Mill House Cross ash to Grosmont – modification of a condition. Permission had been granted in 2021 for one design, which was now too expensive, and permission was sought to erect something less grand. This was agreed.
4. **To agree expenditure and other accounts matters**.
5. The following items were agreed:

Clerk’s salary £1250

Tracie Vaughan £432.25

Grosmont Shop £18.71 for consumables for cleaner

Mr Evans for new lock to toilet £25

1. The Clerk also produced the Financial Statement. Councillor Witek Mintowt-Czyz said at this point that the Precept was supposed to accommodate the repayment of a loan for £30,000 which had been agreed by the previous Council. He agreed to look into the availability of loans, and to get together paperwork, although the Clerk said that his understanding was that a loan from the Treasury at least had to be used within the financial year in which it was taken out.
2. **To discuss the state of the roads in and about Grosmont**

Councillor Edwards asked that the Clerk should write to the County Council regarding the line marking at the junction by the Town Hall.

1. **To** **receive and consider any other business**
2. The work being done by Mr Stumpf on footpaths. Reference was made to this in the written report by Councillor Rogers. ire of the Town Hall – this had already been adverted to, so no further discussion was undertaken at this stage
3. Councillor Margaret Barker said that there was a bag of confidential waste from the previous Council in the Grosmont Events cupboard. County Councillor David Hughes Jones agreed to look at it to see if it was possible to dispose of it, and how.
4. Councillor Margaret Barker said that Grosmont Events had had its AGM the previous Friday, and it now had a new Chair, Jean Price.
5. **To decide the date of the next meeting**

It was agreed that this should take place on the 7th December at 7 p.m. The Chair said she very much hoped to be there, although personal circumstances might intervene.