**GROSMONT FAWR COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MONDAY 8TH MARCH 2021 at 7.30pm – MEETING TO FACILITATE THE BI-MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING**

**DRAFT CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllr David Hughes-Jones Cllr Andrew Farr

Cllr Mrs Margie Barker Cllr Peter McVann

Cllr James Stark Cllr Paul Sheridan

Cllr Witek Mintowt -Czyz

Mrs Jan Chatfield Mrs Jane Moggridge

Ms Clare Preece – Clerk

**Apologies** Cllr Martin Davies Cllr Jim Beavan

PC Sara Mason

1. To accept apologies for absence: Cllr Martin Davies, Cllr Jim Beavan, PC Sara Mason
2. To disclose pecuniary interests in items of business listed below: None
3. Public Forum – (The meeting will be suspended to permit the Public Forum –10 minutes only and each participant limited to 2 minutes. The meeting will then be reopened). – There were no matters for discussion.
4. To consider matters relating to the Grosmont Futures Project – The Grosmont Hub
5. To receive the Grosmont Futures/Grosmont Hub progress report and to agree the plan ongoing.

Cllr Mintowt-Czyz was invited to give an update. He said that good progress has been made on the timeline of the project. He asked that Councillors attention be drawn to the item requiring support for the application of a grant from the Green Energy fund to finance the structural renovation of the Town Hall. The Chairman invited comments; Cllr Andrew Farr said that there was the potential for opposition to the application. The Green Energy solar panels are situated in Llanvetherine and as the Boundary review declared that in May 2022 Llanvetherine will no longer be part of the current ward and will instead be merged with Skenfrith and Cross Ash and there was the possibility that the application be turned down. He said that the Green Energy fund does not like giving grants for maintenance work.

The Chairman is on the Committee for the Green Energy fund. He said that if the application was presented in a different way it may be treated more favourably. Cllr Mintowt-Czyz thanked the Councillors for their comments and said they had been very helpful. The renovation would facilitate the wider project.

1. Cllr Stark asked if the survey being sent to householders in Grosmont would encompass the whole area of Grosmont Fawr. Mrs Jan Chatfield said that it wouldn’t but an area of 33 square Km had been covered. Cllr Stark asked that the response to the survey could be distorted if the whole area had not been included in the survey. Cllr Stark asked if non returned surveys would be reported upon in the results. Mrs Chatfield said that they would be.

**Resolved:** The report and the application of a Green Energy fund application was unanimously supported.

1. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of previous meetings held: **Resolved:** The minutes of the November meeting and the two interim meetings held in January due to the Clerk having had Coronavirus were approved unanimously.
2. To consider the matters arising from the minutes:
3. Dog Waste – The Clerk spoke to Balfour Beatty who are the contractors for waste disposal for Herefordshire but they could not help with the emptying of the dog waste bins in Grosmont. The Chairman contacted Sue Parkinson, the Green Infrastructure and Litter Education Awareness Officer at Monmouthshire County Council. Merlin Waste could be persuaded to empty the bins in Grosmont but to make it economical at least 4 bins would need to be emptied and at present there are 2. The one at the Church could be included to make this 3. Therefore, another one would need to be purchased at a cost of £189 plus VAT. The cost of emptying the 4 waste bins would be £3.90 each a fortnight. The cost of this would be £405.60 per year. The other alternative would be to encourage residents to dispose of the dog waste in the litter bins which will be emptied. The problem here would be that people may accumulate their dog waste and the current litter bins could not accommodate all the waste. Most dog owners are responsible and take their waste home and dispose of it in their own dustbins. If the latter is trialled as a solution then the dog waste bins would have to be sealed or notices put on them.

Much discussion was had. Cllr Mintowt-Czyz said that this is a very important issue and that to have sufficient bins would be ideal. However would the public be prepared to pay for them?

Mrs Jane Moggridge added for the record that there was in fact only one dog waste bin in the village which is situated by the church.

Cllr Stark said that the dog waste problem in the village was a cost which should be met by the village.

The Chairman asked whether it would be possible to remove the general waste bin from outside the Angel inn and locate it elsewhere and people encouraged to put their dog waste in the bins for general waste. These would then be emptied by Monmouthshire County Council. Cllr McVann added that the more bins the better as some people are too lazy to dispose of their waste in the correct manner.

Cllr Mintowt-Czyz suggested that the locations for new bins should be Poorscript Lane and Beavan Court but asked if these would be emptied.

Cllr Mrs Margie Barker said that people should be educated to take their dog waste home with them. Dog owners have a responsibility to do this. Cllr Mrs Barker recounted an episode where a skip outside the shop had been found to contain dog waste bags and that this was highly inappropriate.

The Chairman asked how the Council should move forward on this. **Resolved** The Clerk is to look into the possibility of acquiring extra general waste bins for the village from MCC

The Clerk wrote to Mr Tony Pain of the Wales and Marches Horological society enclosing a Christmas card thanking him for the generous donation of £100 to the Town Hall on behalf of the council.

1. To consider matters relating to the Web Content Access Guidelines 2.1: The Clerk will commence discussions with Netwise nearing the new financial year when funds allow. Until then the Web page previously in use is no longer available . A review of the page found it to be inaccessible and not fit for purpose. In the meantime the Grosmont Fawr Community Council Facebook page is being utilized for public information services. The community are being encouraged to locate the page and follow it. The Government Digital Service the body responsible for monitoring and enforcing regulations have issued a statement detailing the deadline of June 2021 to comply with Accessibility regulations.
2. To discuss the Fire Risk Assessment and ongoing closure of the Town Hall:

Cllr Farr informed the Clerk that he would be contacting the electrician again to discuss the implementation of an integrated smoke alarm. Is there any further update on this please? **DECISION REQUIRED:**

Cllr Farr attended the Town Hall to view the work carried out by Steven Ball of Spyrangle carpentry. He will ask the electrician to attend to make safe and attached the wiring to the wall from around the new door frame on the stairs. **Resolved** Cllr Farr is expecting the electrician to attend to this next week. (Week commencing 14th March 2021).

The Clerk provided the Planning department at Monmouthshire County councils with photographs and details of the proposed Fire Risk assessment work. This was given the go-ahead by Joanna Hughes on 5th February 2021. Planning application reference DM/2020/1860.

Steven Ball from Sprangle carpentry has completed the work at the Town Hall in order to comply with the Fire Risk assessment performed by FireRite. Photographs of the completed work were emailed to Councillors. Cllr Farr has attended the Town Hall to inspect the work and agrees with the Clerk that an excellent job has been done. The work is keeping with the aesthetic of the building.

Once the work has been carried out by the electrician to secure the exposed wiring around the door frame on the staircase the Clerk will arrange for FireRite to attend to carry out the Fire Risk assessment to allow the hall to reopen when Coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

1. To receive items of correspondence:
2. Email dated 18/11/20 from Monmouthshire Citizens advice thanking the council for its donation of £50.
3. Email dated 25/11/20 from One Voice Wales offering free webinar training for Councillors on topics such as Understanding Local governance and finance and Understanding the Law. These Webinars are available ongoing and if any councillors wish to attend please inform the clerk and she will submit an application. The latest timetable for the March Webinars is available now. The Welsh government Local Government and Election Act 2021 will be making it a formal requirement that Councillors attend training. Bursaries are available for qualifying councils and all details are available from the clerk.
4. Email dated 02/12/20 from Age Cymru drawing attention to the results of their survey into older people’s experiences of the pandemic. The survey discusses their manifesto plans for the 2021 Senedd elections and details for volunteers who want to join their Friend in need project. The newsletter also contains useful features on exercises for older people and webinars which will help those with mid-life career reviews. A link to the survey has been posted to the Grosmont Fawr Community Council Facebook page. This page is an important tool during this time when the council’s web page is no longer in action and whilst they prepare for the set up of their new page which will adhere to Web Content Access Guidelines.
5. Email dated 9/12/20 from One Voice Wales enclosing the link to the National plan for Wales 2040. Information can be found on the Welsh Government web page.
6. Email dated 10/12/20 from Boundaries Wales. The first stage of the boundary review for Monmouthshire has now been completed. The draft proposals have been published and a link to the publication is available from the clerk. The notice of period of representation ends on 10th March 2021. After this date the Commission will consider any new evidence that has been received before they prepare their Final Proposals. These will be published and submitted to the Welsh Government, who may give effect to the proposals either a submitted or with modifications. Councillors were emailed the link to the report on 19/2/21 and asked if they had any comments.
7. Email from One Voice Wales dated 11/12/20 detailing the launch of the Understanding Welsh places by the Institute of Welsh Affairs. It aims to bridge the data gap around towns and that this will in turn inform and influence the development of policies which will help the development of policies which will help the areas in which so many of us live. Over the last year the IWA have worked with people in communities across Wales to update it with new data that highlights the assets of each place so that people can be supported to make positive changes where they live and work based on the evidence around them. This is crucial as the impact of Covid 19 is different in all our communities. A spokesperson said that throughout the pandemic local people have been seen coming together to provide mutual support. It is hoped that this tool can help them take the next step in thinking about how they can work together to improve the social, environmental and economic fabric of their communities. It has the facility to share a community’s plans and research so may be of interest to the Grosmont Fawr community.
8. Email from One voice Wales dated 15/12/20 announcing the public consultation for the Strategy for an Ageing Society. The consultation ends on 15th March 21 and a link to the statement can be found on the gov.uk Welsh government site.
9. Email dated 21/12/20 from the Welsh Air Ambulance emergency appeal asking to be considered for a grant by the council at the next council meeting. **Resolved:**  Cllr Farr proposed the council make a donation of £50. He said it was an excellent charity and Cllr Mrs Barker agreed and seconded. It was unanimously agreed that a donation of £50 be made and the Clerk is to draw a cheque.
10. Email from One Voice Wales dated 5/1/21 drawing attention to NHS, SOCIAL CARE AND FRONTLINE WORKERS DAY on 5th July 2021. A unique day of celebration and commemoration of those that work 24 hours a day, seven days a week without any thought of their own safety. It is asked that a unique flag be raised at 10am and that a 2 minute silence at 11am be respected. Afternoon tea at 4pm and the ringing of the church bells 71 times with each ring representing a year in the 71 years of the NHS AT 8pm. The day is also being used to raise vital funds. Those taking part are asked to register on their involvement on [www.nhsfrontlineday.org](http://www.nhsfrontlineday.org) to enable the organinsers to communicate with them. All 735 Community and Town councils are being encouraged to take a leading role in organising celebrations in their community.

The Chairman asked the clerk to make this an agenda item for the next meeting. **Resolved:** The Clerk to agenda this item for the May meeting

1. Email from Nesta Jones at Urdd Gobaith Cymru dated 13/1/21 asking councils if they will be willing to make a donation to the Eisteddfod society. Like many organisations they have suffered losses due to Covid19.

**Resolved:** Councillors do not wish to donate

1. Email dated 17/1/21 from PC Sara Mason asking to take part in the council meetings. The Clerk has responded asking her to email if she wishes to attend the bi-monthly meetings and will supply her with the meeting code and password.
2. Email dated 21/1/21 from One Voice Wales asking from the HM LAND REGISTRY SURVEY to be completed. All public sector body land must be registered by 2025 and all land held privately must be registered by 2030. The closing date for the preliminary survey was 26th February 2021. The Clerk has been able to complete this initial survey but would like input from Councillors on the position of the council with regards to land ownership. **Resolved:**The Clerk to speak to Councillors and examine the files for information
3. Email dated 21/1/21 from the Banking department at Monmouthshire County council to confirm the payment of the Precept will take place in three instalments of £6500 on 30/4/21, 31/8/21 and 31/12/21. (£19,500)
4. The Digital Media Guide which was delayed due to the pandemic is now available to download as per an email from Once Voice Wales on 22/1/21.
5. Letter from Welsh Audit dated 18/1/21 setting out the dates for preparation and publication of the Statutory Financial Accounts for 202-2021. The draft accounts must be submitted by 31 August 2021 and the final audited accounts by 30 November 2021.
6. Email dated 26/1/21 from Amy Gullick enclosing the latest register of electors.
7. Email from One Voice Wales dated 4/2/21 containing the minutes of the Monmouthshire Newport area committee AGM. The Clerk did not attend this due to time constraints involved with the Community Councils own meetings which were cancelled due to the Clerk having had Coronavirus.
8. Email dated 4/2/21 from Philip Thomas of MCC regarding the issue of phosphate levels in the rivers Wye and Usk and how this impacts how the County Council deals with planning applications. The report is available from the Clerk.
9. Email dated 8/2/21 from Dewi Jones at MCC. The Council is to provide a boost to wildlife with a reduced mowing programme. MCC have been awarded a National Lottery Heritage grant to buy new equipment which will enable the council to cut the grass when it is longer and remove cuttings. Mowing of the edges of paths and pavements will continue with paths cut through new patches of meadow providing access for children to play and to encourage exploration and enjoyment of the flowers.
10. Email from One Voice Wales dated 9/2/21 containing an updated CODE OF CONDUCT which was circulated to all Councillors. This is deemed essential reading.
11. Letter dated 11th February 2021 from the Local democracy officer at MCC. Coronavirus restrictions mean that the use of the Town Hall as a polling station for the Senedd and Police and Crime Commissioners elections on 6th May 2021 have been cancelled and MCC have spoken to the Chairman to ask him for the details of alternative venues. The details of the knave at the church have been provided.
12. Email from Rhys Price from Senedd Insight dated 11/2/21. The Reducing Worklessness and Economic inactivity in Wales conference will be broadcast live on Wednesday 26th May 2021. Wales had the largest increase in unemployment in the UK between August and October jumping to 4.6%. Supporting marginalised groups into employment and tackling the root causes are key to the recovery during and post Covd19.
13. Email from MCC Planning policy dated 12/2/21. A survey sheet was forwarded and completed by Councillors in respect of the Replacement local development plan. Closing date 5th March 2021.
14. Email from PC Sara Mason dated 15/2/21 asking the Community to take part in the Your Voice survey. This was forwarded to Jane Moggridge and councillors.
15. Email from Rachel Rawlings at MCC dated 17/2/21 asking the council to raise awareness of Census 2021. The Councillors were provided with a copy of the Councillor handbook. The Census will take place on 21st March 2021. The Clerk has updated the Council facebook page with a link to the Census which will take place primarily online. The link has also been shared with Jane Moggridge for the Village Website.
16. Email dated 18/2/21 from Calor Gas inviting application from the Calor Rural Community Fund. Applications open on 10th March. More details can be obtained from the clerk.
17. Email from Ellie Barker Census Engagement manager dated 18/2/21 containing the Councillor handbook. The Census was publicised on Social media and by Jane Moggridge on the Village website. The Census which must be completed by law will take place on 21st March 2021.
18. Email dated 19/2/21 from One Voice Wales drawing the councils attention to the Litter and Fly Tipping prevention plan for Wales. A link has been shared to the Councils facebook page and to the Village website. The consultation ends on 22nd April 2021.
19. Email dated 23rd February 2021 from Mark Hand at MCC stating that due to the ongoing costs of the pandemic it has not been possible at present to implement town/village wide 20mph zones to help continue to promote active travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or scoot in their respective communities more. Welsh Government will be introducing 20mph as a default urban speed instead of 30mph which is expected to happen mid 2023.
20. Email from PC Sara Mason dated 25/2/21 apologising for not being able to attend meetings as the force does not support the use of Zoom at present.
21. Email dated 25/2/21 from Welsh Government, in accordance with the requirements of Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) measure 2011 a link to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report. Link available from the Clerk.
22. Email dated 28/2/21 containing the police report for February circulated to Councillors.
23. Email dated 3/3/21 from Welsh Government about taking care of your mental health this winter. The Five tips have been shared to the Councils social media platform.
24. Email dated 4/3/21 from Amy Edwards at Welsh Government enclosing the Electoral newsletter for February. The link to the “Use your views” site at Welsh Government has been shared to the Social media page.
25. Email dated 4/3/21 from One Voice Wales containing a summary of key provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for the Community and Town Council Sector. 5th March 2021, 9:31 am
26. Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (senedd.wales)

Important new legislation that has been passed, here are some key elements:

• 16/17 year olds are now allowed a vote in local elections as well foreign nationals who are legally resident

* Electoral cycles will now be 5 years instead of 4

\*There is a General Power of Competence in Wales which allows Community Councils some more freedom in decision making

\*There is now a permanent provision for hybrid meetings using a mixture of video links and actual attendance

\*There seems to be a duty that within seven days of any meeting Council has to publish key details of that meeting. Grosmont Fawr do this already.

\*From April 2022 we have to publish an Annual Report saying what our priorities are and what we have done in the previous year

\*From May 2022 have to publish full training plans for both Members and staff.

• The choice of sending of summons electronically is now in law

There was much discussion regarding the amount of correspondence in this section of the Agenda. The Clerk said that she had sifted through the hundreds of emails received every month and had identified those which either directly impact the Council or those, the information contained therein is required to enable the Councillors to undertake an informed approach to their work. It was suggested by the Clerk that an executive summary be produced and submitted to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Mintowt-Czyz said that he would prefer to receive the full email in a timely manner thus being able to make informed decisions at the time of the email release. **Resolved** The Clerk is to forward selected emails to Councillors throughout the month, as she receives them to enable Councillors to stay up to date with developments and to avoid the requirement for a long list of emails and letters to be read out at the meeting.

1. Paths for people project – A short presentation by Amanda Hill, Walking spaces officer at Ramblers Cymru: Unfortunately Amanda Hill did not arrive on Zoom.

1. To consider matters relating to Highways and Rural roads: The Highways report from the November Meeting was submitted and the following items were logged and replies received.
2. The Bridge on the B4347 – Log 7670458, reported to the Projects Engineer.
3. A465 Number 3 Llangua Terrace – under the jurisdiction of SWTRA. The Clerk has duly emailed them. Log E2004465. The Clerk has been informed that a recent gully cleanse has been carried out and a further visit is being programmed to investigate the drainage line South Wales Trunk Road Agent will contact the Clerk when this has been carried out.
4. Potholes in the area of the Bridge on the B4347 have been reported to the Area Superintendent under Log 7670538
5. Potholes on the Junction of Hand Road and Little Hand Road have been reported to the Area Superintendent under Log no 7670921
6. The street cleaning in Grosmont Village and Llangua has been reported to the Cleansing and Waste department and a request submitted under Log 7671004.

At the interim meeting held in January Cllr Peter McVann gave the Chair a list of problems arising for reporting regarding Highways and rural roads. Is there any update on these matters?

The Chairman said that there had not been any update regarding the roads since the last meeting.

Much discussion was had surrounding the poor state of the roads in and around Grosmont. Cllr Stark reported that the road at the top of Llangua pitch had collapsed because of floods. Cllr Sheriden said that the road at Grosmont Wood Farm was like a third world road. Cllr Farr said that the two man gang were needed to temporarily fill the potholes but he cannot see anything happening to improve the state of the roads at present. Cllr Mintowt-Czyz said that the gullys are either blocked or giving out water. Cllr McVann informed the meeting that the salt remained in place where there had been a diesel spillage where the gritter went over at Cupids Hill. Cllr McVann asked whether it was now deemed to be the responsibility of the farmers to clear ditches. Comments made indicated that it would appear that MCC changed its policy on this as it suited them. Ditches are full of silt and drivers either drove on the left on the verges to avoid water in the middle of the road or in the middle of the road to avoid the ditches dependent upon road conditions. **Resolved:** The Clerk is to inform Highways.

1. To consider matters relating to planning:

The following planning applications were dealt with during the period January – March directly:

DM/2020/0072 – Graig View, Hand Road

DM/2021/00047 – Cefn Y Bryn

The following application will now be considered: (Councillors were provided with this by email)

DM/2021/00103: MOD or Removal of condition. Removal of condition 7 (ensure archaeologist is present for any ground disturbing works) from planning consent DM/2018/1047 (not found online by the Clerk). New House B4347 Grosmont Bridge to Whitehouse Farm. **Resolved:** The Councillors saw no reason to object.

1. To consider matters relating to Grosmont Town Hall: The Town Hall remains closed at this current time awaiting a Fire Risk Assessment as well as being closed due to Coronavirus restrictions.

The Clerk has set up a public social media page on Facebook to enable useful information provided to the council by Welsh Government and Monmouthshire county council to be shared with the Community. Instead of submitting posts to the two the admins of the locally run pages it was decided to set up one of our own to ensure this information would be shared. The name of the page is

“Grosmont Fawr Community Council” and it is asked that this information be shared and that the page be given a like or followed to increase its audience. The page has significantly more followers following a link being shared on the Grosmont Notice board and Grosmont Community Hub Facebook pages. Thank you to the administrators of these pages.

The Clerk attended the Virtual Practitioners conference run by the SLCC held over 4 days during February and has achieved Fellow membership level of the society having achieved a level of training commensurate to this. The Chairman supported the Clerks application to study for the CILCA qualification (Certificate in Local council administration) and the clerk has obtained a 100% bursary from Welsh Government for this.

The Clerk attended the Gwent branch meeting of council clerks during February where the Local Government and Elections Act 2021 was discussed. One of the things it will be bringing into force is that all clerks must be studying for or will have to have obtained the CILCA qualification.

1. To consider matters relating to Grosmont Events: There is nothing to report.
2. To agree expenditure and other accounts matters:

Steven Sprangle has completed the work on the Town Hall and has submitted his invoice for payment as soon as possible.

His original quote was for £660 but following the purchase of fireproof paint which matches the paint used on the woodwork in the lower corridor exactly costing £97 (which he managed to get at a discount saving over £50), and extra time involved increasing the labour costs by £30 the total payable to him is £787. The Clerk had budgeted £1000 for this job. He did a lot of research into what was needed consulting with FireRite on our behalf and has not charged for this. **Resolved** Councillors agreed to pay the invoice.

**CHURCHYARD GRANTS:** £75 PER Church

Llangattock Lingoed

Grosmont

Cwmerra Chapel

Llanvetherine

Llangua

Greing Chapel

Clerks Wages January/February/March/April/May - £541.67 – paid by Fasterpayment through the bank

SLCC Course fee £42 – paid in November

Audit Wales £280.55 – paid in November

Clerks Expenses/General Admin - £124.18 – paid in November

Dwr Cymru - £43.97 – paid in December

Clerks expenses/General Admin - £192.94 – paid in December

Tracie Vaughan Caretaker - £76.47 – paid in January

SLCC Conference Fee - £90 – paid in January

FireRite - £195 - paid in February

1. To receive and consider any other business (items for noting only – matters requiring further consideration and will be listed for a future council meeting).

Cllr Sheriden reported that there had been instances of farm dogs causing concern to dog walkers by rushing out of farmyards in the area. People had taken to avoiding the areas for safety issues. It was suggested that a diplomatic off the record word be had with the owners to get the matter resolved. **Resolved**: Matter to be dealt with by Cllr Sheriden

The Chairman thanked Mrs Jan Chatfield and Mrs Jane Moggridge for attending and for their contribution to the meeting.

1. Closed session of the Council to consider matters arising from the internal audit, accounting and budgeting matters and staffing:

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution at what had been yet another long meeting. The date of the next meeting and AGM will be Monday 10th May 2021.

The meeting was closed at 9.05pm