**GROSMONT FAWR COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MONDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2020 7.30PM – ZOOM MEETING TO FACILITATE THE BI-MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**DRAFT CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**Present:**

C Cllr David Hughes-Jones (Chair) Cllr Andrew Farr (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr James Stark Cllr W Mintowt-Czyz

Cllr Peter McVann

**In attendance**  Mrs Jan Chadwick, Mrs Jane Moggridge, Mr Peter Willis, Ms Clare Preece (Clerk)

1. **To accept apologies for absence:**

Cllr Mrs Margie Barker, Cllr Martin Davies

1. **To disclose pecuniary interests in items of business listed below**: None declared.
2. **Forum Public** – (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 re-opened.)

Mrs Jan Chatfield asked why the Town Hall was not open in light of the current guidelines which state that 15 people are allowed to meet indoors. The Chairman said that it was in the Council’s best interest to reopen the hall for business but in light of the matter concerning the Fire Risk assessment (covered in item 6, Matters arising from the minutes), the Town Hall would remain closed until the requirements of the Fire Risk assessment had been fulfilled.

Mrs Jan Chatfield also brought to the attention of the council the Christmas Tree festival organised by the village. Residents are being invited to put Christmas trees on their doorsteps and she wanted to know if the Council would be interested in taking part. The Chairman said that decorating the village was an excellent idea and hoped that the residents of Grosmont Village would enter into the festive spirit.

1. **To consider matters relating to the Grosmont Futures Project including play area at the castle.**

An email has been received from Peter Willis dated 8/10/20. He has been encouraged to see that the Community council has met during the lockdown as many councils have not. Not everyone involved with Grosmont Futures are happy to engage via video conferencing. Grosmont Futures has now drafted a constitution and is waiting for lockdown to ease to elect its committee.

The aims of the group are:

1. Community lead action to make Grosmont a better place to live, work and play
2. To act on issues and opportunities agreed by the community to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the area.
3. To work collaboratively with Grosmont Fawr community council, community groups and the wider community to ensure action is joined-up to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Peter has expressed his desire to have a discussion to clarify and formalise how the community council and Grosmont might work together to renovate the Town Hall. There is now up to £140K available in funding for a suitable project in Grosmont via Rural Futures. A lot of work still needs to be done to demonstrate to the Lottery fund how any renovations will impact on rural poverty and how it will improve access to services and reduce isolation for the local community and if there are any other potential benefits. Focus would need to be placed on the outcomes and changes that will be brought about because of the project. There would be a need to be able to demonstrate the new activities and services that such a capital project would enable. Crucially, any funding application would need to be in the name of the Town council as they own and manage the asset.

It is important to agree who will be responsible for developing this bid as it will involve a significant amount of work and will need a lead contact. Some kind of partnership agreement which demonstrates the project is being delivered together with Grosmont Futures will strengthen the application and the outcomes. Such a partnership agreement would formalise respective roles of the two bodies and give clarity to mutual expectations.

The following points heed to be discussed in the first instance by the community council and followed up by a joint meeting of representatives of Grosmont Futures and the community council. The amount of work will need a lead contact.

1. Is the community council happy to be the funding applicant?
2. Who would be the lead contact? Who would be responsible for completing the application?
3. Would the Community council welcome a formal partnership with Grosmont Futures to develop the funding application?
4. What role would the community council see Grosmont Futures having?
5. What timescale does the community council have in mind to develop the project?
6. Is any of the preparatory work that was undertaken for the unsuccessful funding application form 4-5 years ago still useful?

Peter Willis was asked if he would like to speak to the Council on behalf of Grosmont Futures instead of the Chairman reading the email above out to all present. Peter said that Grosmont had been in his thoughts during the pandemic and he was pleased to see familiar faces. The Chairman thanked him for his good wishes. He gave an overview of the position Grosmont Futures had reached before the pandemic caused the promotion event “Grosmont has got talent” to be cancelled. If the chances that a lottery fund grant of £140K is to be achieved the relationship between the Grosmont Fawr Community Council and Grosmont Futures will be paramount. The owner of the asset, (The Town Hall), has to be the applicant for the grant. There needs to be an agreement drawn up between the Council and the other party (Grosmont Futures) to help ensure the application is a success. Peter Willis asked whether the application would be started afresh or whether the process would be picked up where it left off before the pandemic and before the previous Clerk left. **Resolved:** The Clerk is prepared to act on behalf of the Council in the process and Peter Willis and the Clerk will communicate going forward.

1. **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of previous meetings held**. Minutes of the Council meeting held via Zoom on Monday 14th September 2020 **DECISION REQUIRED:**
2. **To consider matters arising from the minutes**.

i)The Clerk at the request of the Chairman collated all items required for signature and these have now been signed and are on file for audit purposes.

ii) The two handsanitiser dispensers were purchased by the Clerk from Clean My and have been installed at the Town Hall by Cllr Mintowt-Czyz.

iii) **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT -** THE CLERK HAS FOUND THAT SHE HAS BEEN ILL ADVISED BY AN EMPLOYEE AT THE WEST MIDLANDS FIRE BRIDGADE. AT THE TIME THE CLERK WAS UNABLE TO CONTACT SOUTH WALES FIRE BRIGADE AND BELIEVED THAT ADVICE SHE WAS GIVEN BY PARDEEP RAW OF THE WEST MIDLANDS FIRE BRIGADE TO BE CORRECT. Before the lastest update the Clerk and Cllr Minowt-Czyz carried out a fresh Fire Risk Assessment in line with guidelines obtained from the Fire Brigade. The Fire Risk Assessment undertaken in December 2019 by FireRight was found to recommend measures be taken which were in fact not required by law. Cllr Minowt-Czyz and the Clerk can report that as the hall is used by the Latymer School for “summer camp” and pupils sleep over in the hall that smoke detectors should be fitted to the upstairs hall. The ceiling in the Town Hall is high and the Clerk noted that it may be difficult for someone other than a professional tradesman to install an alarm. During the investigations the Clerk made in connection with obtaining smoke alarms from the Fire Brigade it came to light that Pardeep Raw, from West Midlands Fire Brigade was not qualified to offer an opinion with regards to the Town Hall Fire Risk Assessment and the Fire Safety officer warned the Clerk that if the Town Hall did not meet Fire Safety regulations then the Clerk could be prosecuted if it was found to be lacking and that it was recommended that the council follow the risk assessment carried out by Fire Rite. The Clerk has now come full circle with her investigations. The Clerk has now managed to leave a voice mail for a Neil Griffin of South Wales Fire Service and has submitted an online contact form with regards to what steps to now take in light of this new information. Does the Council accept that the Town Hall does not meet fire safety regulations and that everything necessary will be done in order for them to comply? Cllr Farr was looking into the matter of the synchronisation of a smoke detector upstairs with the one already in place in the downstairs corridor. Has any progress been made with this? **DECISION REQUIRED:**

The Clerk has spoken to South Wales Fire Brigade who seem to think that the Council may have to carry out another Fire Risk assessment due to the fact that the hall is used by Latymer school and children sleep there overnight. Paul Williams Fire Safety Officer at South Wales Fire Brigade has grave concerns over the legality of the fire safety measures in place at the Town Hall. He has asked to see a copy of the Fire Risk Assessment carried out by FireRite and will be speaking to Carl Evans who carried it out to see if he was aware that the hall was used as a sleeping venue when he carried out the assessment. The Hall cannot be used until the fire safety measures have been put it place. The Council needs to avoid prohibitive measures that may be placed upon it. The Clerk has spoken to Paul Williams again and he is happy that the Fire Risk Assessment carried out by FireRite is adequate but he has stressed that to avoid enforcement the Actions raised by the FRA need to carried out immediately as they are already overdue and the hall risks enforcement. He recommended that a carpenter could carry out all the actions for a few hundred pounds. The Clerk has assured him that the matter will be dealt with and finalised at this meeting. He is happy to speak to anyone who may have any queries. **DECISION REQUIRED:**

**iv)** At the last meeting Cllr Farr was going to speak to the electrician and plumber again in an attempt to get the leaking hot water system in the toilet in the undercroft resolved. Is there any update regarding this? **DECISION REQUIRED:**

v) The Clerk has ordered a heavy- duty waterproof padlock and chain with three keys from Amazon 22/10/20 costing £21.81

vi) At the last Council meeting Cllr Stark said he would be removing the old storage heaters with the help of Cllr Farr. Has this now been done? **DECISION REQUIRED:**

vi) A cheque for £50 as a donation for the Citizens Advice Bureau was raised 22/10/20

vii) Following on from the last council meeting has there been any development with regards to the matter of the trees on the Council Bank? Cllr Farr was in touch with Dennis Farr, the tree surgeon and was going to look into obtaining a quote. **DECISION REQUIRED:**

1. **To consider matters relating to Web Content Access Guidelines 2.1**

The Clerk attended the Society of Local Council Clerks Virtual Conference throughout the week 12th October to 16th. One of the workshops attended was concerning WCAG 2.1 compliance hosted by Aubergine (A web developer who have developed and maintain the SLCC website). The Clerk now has an understanding of what is involved to make the Grosmont Fawr Website a compliant site with regards to Access for people with a wide and varying level of disability, transparency and GDPR, which became law on 23rd of September 2020. At the last meeting the Councillors asked the Clerk to investigate what needed to be done to make the Council’s website compliant.

The site needs to be made accessible by people with disabilities who will for example, be using a screen reader or other kind of device to enable them to understand the web content. They may for instance have impaired sight, or they may have a learning disability such as autism or they may be dyslexic or colour blind. It also needs to be accessible by mobile phone users.

The Clerk ascertained from the conference that there is a requirement, by law, to include and make public information such as Minutes from 2018.

It has become apparent that in order to comply with legislation, a web designer will have to be employed. The Clerk has no web development experience. Monmouthshire County Council employed a web designer and then maintain their own website drawing on the experience of their IT Department employees. The Councillors must understand that there is a need for a high level of IT skills to get such a project up and running. The Council currently have a page builder not a website which is not compliant by any stretch of the imagination. The Clerk has researched providers on the internet and held lengthy telephone discussions. She has also spoken to some Clerks from other areas regarding their experiences. Aubergine were keen to point out that there are some unscrupulous people out there offering web design services who will sell a domain name very cheaply and profess to offer the services to make a web site compliant only for the user to find out that they have been conned at a later date. The Clerk has been approached by one such person in cold call.

The Clerk has contacted web design companies on the internet and got a response from three of these. She has also spoken to Aubergine who sponsored the web compliance event at the SLCC conference.

Funding for this project can be included in the Precept budget the council will calculate in January. We are fortunate that Welsh Government seem open to funding projects of this nature as English Government are making very little funding available to local councils there.

Costings are briefly outlined below:

Basic set up and Year 2/3

Year 1 Support

Aubergine (Leighton Buzzard) £899 + VAT/ £1198 + VAT £199+ VAT

£299+ VAT

NetWise UK (Merseyside) Premium package (3rd of 4)

£599 +VAT £399+VAT

Eyelid Productions (Hereford) £919 +VAT £179.99

£269.99

+VAT

Zonkey Solutions (Bath) £2495 +VAT £48 p/h

The Clerk considers NetWise UK to be the best option and this decision is not based soley on cost. NetWise are the largest provider of website services to Parish and Community councils and have a very comprehensive website. They are on a par with Zonkey for approachable and helpful customer service. The Clerk will need support in the early days to learn how to operate and maintain the site and it is important that the service provided is adequate. They also come with testimonials from other local councils and the Clerk spoke with the Clerk from Bourton on the Water who recommended them completely. NetWise were, the Clerk found, the most knowledgeable about the role of community and parish councils and she did not feel the need to have to explain the needs of a website. The Premium package is the 3rd level of 4 packages they offer and the most popular. The Clerk has examined each package and it is clear that sufficient storage must be bought at the outset to avoid unnecessary additional costs which have not been budgeted for. There is a jump from300MB/ 500 MB to 5GB when comparing the Basic/Standard and Premium Packages. With the Premium Package there is the facility to upload Newsletters and to custom functions. The two cheaper packages have smaller bandwidth (transmission capacity). The Super Premium package is directed towards larger Town councils. The Clerk has sent information and links via email, to Councillors if they wish to examine the subject in more depth. The Clerk will prepare the costings to add to the budget when the Precept is applied for in January. **DECISION REQUIRED:**

1. **To receive items of correspondence**:
2. Email from Sian Bowden dated 15th September 2020. The Minister of Housing and Local government informed One Voice Wales that she would not be requesting that MCC relook at its Community Boundary Review. One Voice Wales then wrote to the Legal team at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), seeking advice on any further steps that could be taken on behalf of those Community and Town Councils in Monmouthshire who were calling for a fresh review. NALC were provided with copies of all correspondence between One Voice Wales/MCC/Local Democracy and Boundary Commission Wales and the Minister of Housing and Local Government. NALC’s opinion is that no further action can be taken to challenge the Order to be made following the Community Boundary Review. One Voice Wales appreciates that this information will be very disappointing for a number of Community and Town Councils in Monmouthshire and we are sorry that on this occasion we were not able to secure the outcome that was hoped for by some councils.

A further explanation was provided by Gary Barker the solicitor from NALC. “ A Community Boundary Review was conducted by MCC and it stated to local Community Councils that once the recommendations were presented to LDBCW there would be a further consultation during which the Community Councils could raise objections. This information was incorrect and no such consultation took place with the result that the Community Councils could not submit comments and objections until the final stage when the matter was to be confirmed by the Welsh Government.

In view of the unfairness of being mislead by MCC about a further consultation, contact was made with LDBCW about challenging the Community Governance Review. They stated that the Community Councils could seek a rerun of the process from MCC and if that was not given then a rerun could be requested from LDBCW itself. Finally, if all else failed the Welsh Government Minister for Housing and Local Government could be asked to require MCC to rerun the process.

I understand that all three quests for a rerun of the process were made to the relevant bodies but all have been refused.

Whenever a local authority fails to follow the proper process or makes a decision that no reasonable council could make then it can be challenged by Judicial review. However, the issue here is not that MCC did not follow the process but that it gave out incorrect information about what another body would do. Given that the result of the review has been considered and accepted by both LDBCW and the Welsh Government it cannot be said that the result is one that no reasonable council could arrive at. In the light of that there is no further action that the community councils can take to challenge the Order made following the Community Governance Review.

I hope that this clarifies the position but if you require any further information or advice please contact NALC again.”

1. Email dated 16/9/20 from Fly-Tipping Action Wales. As part of the effort to tackle fly-tipping they have recently re-launched their “It’s you Duty to Care” campaign. It is the householders duty to check that their household waste is not being passed onto a fly-tipper by checking the carrier has a license on the National Resources Wales website or risk a fine of £300 and prosecution for not following their Household Duty of Care. The council have been asked to support their efforts by downloading the toolkit which includes free printable posters, leaflets and signs. Councillors are asked their suggestions of places where this information could be best deployed other than on the Council and Village websites **DECISION REQUIRED:**
2. Email from the Cyber Crime Team Heddlu Dyfed-Powys regarding a parking fine scam affecting Dyfed and Powys. Their notice was published on the Council website and forwarded to Jane Moggridge for inclusion on the Village site.
3. Email from Mrs Melanie Mercer dated 17/9/20. The Community Green Energy Advisory Group has some funds still available for 2020 and have decided to do a second round of applications this year. The advert has been placed on the Council website and forwarded to Jane Moggridge for the village site. Do the Councillors know of any parties who may be interested in applying for the grant? **DECISION REQUIRED:**
4. Email from the Aneurin Bevan Health Board dated 23/9/20 publishing the findings of their Winter survey along with a link to enable the public to take part in a survey on NHS care during the Coronavirus emergency. The report can be viewed on the Council website and the survey can be accessed via a link posted there too.
5. Email dated 25/9/20 detailing the Written Statement of Phase two of the Diversity in Democracy plan from the Welsh Government. This plan is a continuation of the journey towards the establishment of a fund to support disabled candidates seeking election for both the 2022 Local Government and 2021 Senedd elections. Developing a mentoring scheme which is aimed at providing advice and support to under-represented groups to help them actively participate in public service. The report highlights the important steps to improve the opportunities available for individuals to participate in local democracy, raise the profile of councillors across Wales and harness the spirit that exists within communities, as demonstrated by the recent Covid19 experiences. The statement has been published on the council website.

1. Email from Sue Parkinson at MCC dated 25/9/20 regarding Dog Fouling Action day. The Council do not have a representative to attend the meeting which has now been rescheduled for the Spring. **DECISION REQUIRED:**

Do the Council require Dog poo bags which can be purchased for £31.85 plus VAT for 5000 or a Dog poo bin at a cost of £179 each plus transport (free installation) **DECISION REQUIRED:**

1. Telephone call and subsequent letter from Mr Tony Pane from the Wales and Marches Horological Society. Mr Pane and the Society had booked the Town Hall for their AGM on Saturday 17th October 2020. Whilst the event had to be cancelled he wanted to express his thanks to the Council and the Angel Inn for making them welcome in the past and wished to donate the fee of £50 to the Town Hall. He then wrote to the Clerk with a further donation of £50 towards lost funds due to Covid 19. The Clerk has thanked him and will be writing to him officially. **DECISION REQUIRED:** The Clerk to action
2. Email from Joan Locket at Local Government Partnerships, Welsh Government informing the Council that their application for loss of income due to Covid application has been successful. The monies (£765.82) will be paid to Monmouthshire County Council during the first 2 weeks of October and then should be transferred to the Council according to her email. The Clerk is chasing MCC to see when we can expect the money. Joan Locket has provided the Clerk with a contact name (Jonathan Davies) at MCC and an email has been sent chasing up transfer of the funds. Jonathan Davies has responded to say that the funds have not been transferred yet and are expected week commencing 26th October 2020. **DECISION REQUIRED:** The Clerk to continue chasing to ensure the payment is passed on.
3. Email dated 12/10/20 from Local Government Partnerships regarding the Minister for Housing and Local Government and Welsh Government’s development proposals to establish Corporate Joint Committees (CJC’s) A consultation has been launched on the draft regulations which will establish the four regional CJC’s across Wales. These CJC’s will exercise functions relating to strategic development planning and regional transport policy and they will also be able to promote the economic well-being of their areas. Links to the consultation can be obtained from the Clerk and the closing date for responses is 4th January 2021.
4. Email from One Voice Wales dated 15/10/20 asking for nominations for representatives to sit on the area committees (maximum of 2). At the AGM the One Voice Wales representative position remained vacant. **DECISION REQUIRED:**
5. Email dated 15/10/20 from the Aneurin Bevan Health Board to inform us that The Grange Hospital will be opening ahead of schedule on November 17th 2020 based at Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran. A leaflet has been developed which will be delivered to every householder to enable them to understand how to access services in the future.
6. Email from One Voice Wales dated 20/10/20 about the New Strategy for Flood and Coastal erosion management in Wales. The new strategy is far clearer on roles and responsibilities and sets out new objectives on prevention, preparedness and better communication of risk.
7. Email dated 22/10/20 from the Aneurin Bevan Health Board regarding a consultation that has launched on the future organisation of specialist services from Cheltenham and Gloucester hospitals. Links to take part in the online consultation can be provided by the Clerk.

1. **To consider matters relating to Highways/Rural Roads:**
2. **To consider matters relating to planning**:

Cllr Farr had pointed out to the Clerk that Planning Comments had been submitted online before the deadline and before he had had the chance to comment. The Clerk will email Councillors one week before the deadline to remind them if their comments have not been received. The Clerk will wait until the day before the deadline for comments before posting the Councils response. Councillors are asked to reply promptly to the emails concerning planning applications.

1. **To consider matters relating to Grosmont Town Hall**
2. **To consider matters relating to Grosmont Events**: Nothing to report
3. **To agree expenditure and other accounts matters**.

Councillors are asked for their contribution towards the compilation of the budget 2020-2021. We are advised by the SLCC to draw up 2/3 budgets this year. One taking into account the worse case scenario ie total lockdown of the Town Hall due to Covid/ Partial lockdown in the warmer months/ eradication of Covid and to be completely specific with numbers and not give approximations where possible.

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.)**
2. **Closed session of the Council to consider matters arising from the Internal audit and staffing matters**.