**Draft Minutes of Gwernyfed Community Council Meeting**

**Held in person at Felindre Hall and online.**

**on the 16th of January 2025 at 7.30pm**

**In attendance**

Cllr. Nick Pritchard- Chair

Cllr. Peter Varcoe

Cllr. Will Lloyd

Cllr. Grahame Day

Cllr. Rachel Harding

Cllr. Chris Jones

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

1. **Apologies**

Cllr. Mike Bugler, Mrs Keren Bender (Clerk) Cllr. Keri Doell gave their apologies which were accepted by all councillors due to valid reasons. Due to not having a clerk, the chair asked for a volunteer for someone to take minutes, but it was agreed that the Chair would type up the minutes using the recording of the meeting.

1. **Confirmation of Co-option of Mrs K Doell to become a Community Councillor**

This item was previously discussed in the December meeting and reiterated that all councillors in attendance agreed with the co-option of Keri Doell and noted the due to Keri Doell not being attendance today, the necessary paperwork will be completed at the next meeting.

1. **Agree Minutes of the 12th of December 2024 as a true record**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

1. **Matters Arising**

**5 a) Acceptance form to be forwarded to Keri Doell -** The Clerk confirmed via email that this has been sent **- Action complete**

**5 b) Confirmation of donation to the Welsh Air Ambulance has been made of £500 -** The Clerk confirmed via email that Welsh Air Ambulance donation was paid by bank Transfer on the 10th of December 2024 and an email acknowledging the donation and thanks has been received.  -  **Action Completed**

**5 c) Website update -** this was on the agenda under item 15. – **Action completed**

**5 d) Clerk to summarise changes in the new Financial Regulation 2024** – this remains ongoing and will be scheduled for the February meeting.

**Action Clerk**

**5 e) Clerk to update the council on the proposal issued for construction of a new footpath by the bus shelter -** The Clerk confirmed via email that she has contacted Lyn parry of Highways for an update, following the email he sent to us in October stating he had forwarded the proposal to the traffic and passenger department and was awaiting a response. Cllr Lloyd noted that he will also chase this up and will speak to the Clerk on this matter. This action remains ongoing.

**Action Clerk & Cllr Lloyd**

**5 f) Developing a Grant application form for Gwernyfed Community Council –** This remains as ongoing action and aims to be drafted for discussion for the February meeting. Cllr Lloyd shared the current form used by Talgarth Town Council.

**Action Cllr Harding and Cllr Bugler**

**5 g) Grant Funding Request to support attendance and wellbeing at Gwernyfed High school and what is the process to follow** – The Clerk confirmed that she will contact Helen Higgs at GHS to explain our current process and ask for further details on what the money was planned for as well as questioning the use of the allocation of £1,500 grant previously donated and called the ‘David Edlin’ fund allocation.

**5 h) Grant funding request for Penyrheol Baptist Chapel requiring current bank balance to support accounts submitted –** The Clerk has confirmed that this information has been requested but the accounts were submitted again. Councillors agreed that once the bank balances have been received along with the accounts this can be re-considered. Action remains ongoing.

**Action Clerk**

**5 i) Budget & Precept –** This was covered under item 7.

**5 j) Clerk Recruitment Update -**  This item was covered under item 9

**5 k) Cllr Lloyd to update councillors on the allocation of funding to PCC and the frequency of wheelie bn collections.**  **–** No update at this time regarding this matter.

**Action Cllr Lloyd**

**5 l) Letters to be issued to NRW, PCC and Welsh Water regarding the flooding issues at the Gro in Glasbury**. – Cllr Bugler confirmed via email that he will draft these letters in the coming weeks and ask the Clerk to issue them. This action remains ongoing.

**Action Clerk and Cllr Bugler**

**5 m) Three Cocks Green Spaces Lease** - This was covered under item 14.

1. **Correspondence and information.**

One Voice Wales- National Awards Nominations - circulated and noted

1. **Precept Setting**

As this item was discussed at length during the December meeting, a brief overview was provided as a reminder of the budget planned for 2025/2026 and that the Precept has been set at £23,688 which is just below the precept for 2024/2025. Cllr Varcoe proposed and Cllr Jones 2nd this with all councillors in agreement. The Chair will notify the clerk of this precept figure.

**Action Cllr Pritchard**

1. **Planning Applications**

Ref- 25/0001/TPO – Reduction and incorporation of hedge. Old Works Pontithel-circulated and noted by councillor with no comments.

1. **Clerk Recruitment Update**

Cllr Harding with the support of Cllr Varcoe and Cllr Jones provided a summary of the 2 interviews that took place on the 15th of January. The sub-committee provided the recommendation that Sue Thomas be appointed as the successful candidate to the clerk position. The Chair will contact both candidates via phone on the 17th to notify them of this decision and offer the role to Sue Thomas. Cllr Harding will provide some Feedback for the unsuccessful candidate. This was agreed by all councillors in attendance.

**Action Cllr Pritchard**

It was also discussed that due to this candidate not currently having the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification that the salary would be set at SCP Level 18 and for 28hrs a month. Councillors also discussed and agreed that the start date should be the 1st of February to enable enough time for a transition between the out-going clerk and the incoming clerk. However, it was noted that the chair will speak to Keren on what availability and capacity she has over the coming months to enable a smooth transition.

**Action Cllr Pritchard**

To help support the incoming clerk and develop the necessary employment contract and other key processes like annual appraisals. Councillors all agreed that a personnel sub-committee should be established as soon as possible. This will be tabled at the next meeting in February.

**Action Clerk**

1. **County Councillor Report**

There was no councillor’s report to be discussed. However, Cllr Lloyd shared a detailed email to councillors that can be summarised to the following. No PCC full Council meeting has occurred since November. A PCC Cabinet member highlighted challenges in setting this year's budget, citing a £39.1m funding gap by 2030 due to rising costs, service demands, and insufficient government funding. Major increases in social care and education budgets contrast with cuts in other areas. To balance the budget, an 8.9% Council Tax rise is proposed. The Sustainable Powys Programme aims to address long-term financial sustainability, but disparities in funding allocation continue to disadvantage Powys. Residents are encouraged to review the draft budget details and provide feedback. It was also noted that over the last month Cllr Lloyd has been out helping areas with key drainage issues: for example, at Ty-glas near Felindre as extensive water has been running off the hill: working with PCC teams to address this issue.

1. **Considering Merger with other Councils**

Cllr Pritchard raised this item due planned Boundary Review that in coming from PCC and that due to the increasing challenges faced for councils (resources & budgets). Should we as a Council consider a potential merger with some of our neighbouring councils such as Glasbury and Llanigon? We are of a similar scale, and all suffer the same issues. From initial discussion with these councils, they are happy to explore this further in joint conversations to understand what can be done and how it would work. In essence, all councillors agreed that we should explore a potential merger and alongside finding more details regarding the PCC Boundary Review. The key concerns raised was around the process, timescales and to ensure no areas with our councils would be disadvantaged by such merger. The Chair agreed to source more information for the council around the process and work with Cllr Lloyd on the Boundary Review details.

**Action Cllr Pritchard**

1. **Training Report from Councillors – All Councillors who have attended recent Courses.**

No training has been completed over the last month, but the Chair reminded Councillors to consider the courses available and add them to the training tracker. Plus, the Chair reminded that he had posted each of the handouts from the training into the Teams folder referenced ‘Training/handouts’ for other Councillors to study as well as asking Councillors to continue to report on training courses they had attended.

**Action All Councillors**

1. **Flooding at Gro**

As Cllr Bugler was not in attendance and noted from the actions, letters are to be drafted and issued over the next month on the flooding issues to NRW, PCC and Welsh Water. This will be discussed in February.

**Action Clerk & Cllr Bugler**

1. **Three Cocks Green Spaces Lease**

Cllr Pritchard stated that the Expression of Interest was submitted in preparation for the Strategic Asset Board on the 18th of December, but no acknowledgement has been received. Since then and despite a number of emails, no communication has been received to notify GCC or Three Cocks Matters if the EIO was discussed or if it was successful. As such., Cllr Pritchard will now email Head of Housing Andy Thompson on this matter and raise the concerns over the poor communication to date.

**Action Cllr Pritchard**

1. Financial Matters

The following were reported to the meeting:

1. **Bank Balances** as at 16th of January 2025

Reserve Account £9,843.79, Current Account £17,680.51 includes precept of £7,903.00, deposited on the 31st of December.

1. **Invoices and payments for approval**
   * + Clerks Salary and HMRC payments
     + Vodaphone – Broadband DD- £25.90 December Payment
     + Nick Pritchard - Monthly Microsoft Fee- £30.06 plus £3.34 January Payment
     + Nick Pritchard – Monthly Microsoft Fee – Credit Note - £26.72 from December Payment
     + Wales Audit Office – Audit Fees 2023/24 - £200
     + Love Glasbury- funding towards the purchase of hand dryers - £1500

All payments were approved.

Next Meeting 13th February 2025 at 7.30 pm

at Felindre Village Hall as a hybrid meeting over Teams