
ABER VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE ABOVE COUNCIL HELD AT ABERTRIDWR COMMUNITY CENTRE AND ON MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY 13TH JULY 2023

PRESENT:

Chairperson: C. Bishop

Councillors: D. Berry, D. Daniels, E.P. Prendergast, and J. Taylor.

Clerk: J. Lloyd

48/2023 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Bishop, P. Cole, R. Gater, C. Page, J. Roberts, and M. Stretch.

49/2023 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors and Officers were reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests(s) in respect of any item of business on this Agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution, and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors, Officers, and Clerk.

50/2023 **PUBLIC MATTERS**

R. Thomas and A. Spence attended the meeting and gave a presentation on their 'Green Spaces' project. Members were shown a map of the Aber Valley with 'redundant' spaces identified, which also included the allotments and wooded areas. Members requested a copy of the plan which was agreed. Discussion followed regarding community involvement, food growing, and children's spaces in woodland areas. Members were informed of funding opportunities available and some areas which were privately owned.

Members were advised of a 'pop-up' event planned for 16/17th September 2023, on one of the identified sites. This would include a mini orchard and seating area and will see the community reaction to the site. Members also discussed the grant obtained for the trees.

51/2023 **POLICE MATTERS**

There were no attendees from Gwent Police at the meeting.

52/2023 **COMMUNITY SAFETY WARDEN – CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Community Safety Warden (CSW), Margaret Reed, attended the meeting and informed Members that patrols were ongoing in Abertridwr and Senghenydd, and the area had been quiet recently. A Member reported that some youths had been seen looking over residents 'back walls' at night. Members were advised to report this to the Police and to note their concern for their welfare.

53/2023 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8TH JUNE 2023.**

The minutes of the Community Council Meeting held on 8th June 2023 were approved as a true record.

54/2023 **CLERKS REPORT**

(1) Current Financial Situation

- (a) Members received the monthly statement of accounts and an update on the current financial situation. Members discussed and approved the Community Council's accounts.

(2) Income

- (a) No income had been received.

(3) Expenditure

- (a) Members approved the following expenditure:
 - (i) Caerphilly County Borough Council (room rental at Abertridwr Library) - £260.00.
 - (ii) (ii) Audit Wales – 2021/22 Audit Fees - £200.00.
- (b) Members noted the following expenditure:
 - (i) Payroll – Month 03.
 - (ii) EE Telephone Bill (monthly direct debit) - £25.01.

(4) A.O.B

- (a) EE Mobile Telephone Contract

The Clerk informed Members that the current contract was due to end. Members agreed for the Clerk to arrange a renewal/new contract and delegated powers were given to the Chair to approve this.

(b) Presentation Evening

Members discussed arrangements for the Community Council presentation evening on 21st September at Abertridwr Community Centre at 6.00pm and agreed to have the refreshments following the presentation at the Oasis. Members agreed for a donation of £150 to be given to the Oasis to cover costs. Members also discussed the entertainment and the possibility of having local people, singing and/or reciting poetry. Members agreed for the Clerk to liaise with Cllr. J. Roberts to contact the organisers of Tatws Sion Cent. Members agreed for this item to be added to the next meeting agenda to confirm arrangements.

(c) Community Recognition Awards

Members received the nominations for the Community Recognition Awards and confirmed the recipients for 2023. Members agreed that recipients would receive commemorative plaques.

(5) Planning Applications

None.

55/2023 **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

The Chair noted that there was nothing to report.

56/2023 **THE GREEN PLAN**

Members noted the presentation on 'green spaces' which had taken place earlier in the meeting.

57/2023 **BONFIRE NIGHT**

Members agreed for this item to be deferred to the next meeting.

58/2023 **TENNIS COURTS, ABERTRIDWR**

Members agreed for this item to be added to the next meeting agenda.

STAGECOACH BUSES

M. Tunstall and P. Morgan attended the meeting from Stagecoach to discuss the ongoing issues with Members regarding the unreliability of the bus service. Members were informed that recent meetings had taken place with the Senedd Member and local MP regarding the current service and ongoing issues. Members were advised that this was mainly due to lack of drivers, which was a result of the pandemic, changes to the labour market, drivers leaving the workforce, and DVLA strikes, which affected the production of provisional licences for new drivers. In addition, the Governments' financial incentives to HGV drivers had caused bus drivers to move to that sector.

Members were informed of the new recruitment process currently ongoing, although there is a 16-week training period for new drivers. There are sponsored recruitment adverts on social media and radio, and improved terms and conditions for existing drivers, although it was noted that there is still a shortage of drivers in the area.

Members discussed the ongoing issues of Stagecoach buses, particularly for residents with no other forms of transport, and noted that the published timetable should be the number of buses and times that are running and if advertised, this should be the service available. Members were advised that if the situation did not improve, this may be the alternative, and would involve liaison with the local authority regarding the reduction of the service, and then re-registering with the traffic commissioner.

Members referred to previous correspondence with Stagecoach last year and noted there had been no improvements since then. Members also noted that the 'Caerphilly to Senghenydd' route seems to be impacted more than other routes, when driver shortages occur. Members requested figures from Stagecoach to show which buses are not operating/cancelled. It was agreed that this information would be submitted to the Clerk to circulate to Members.

Members discussed the electric buses scheme and were advised that since the pandemic, the company had changed, and the owners were no longer prepared to commit to the level of funding required. Members were also advised that there is no scheme in Wales to bid for electric buses funding, as in England and Scotland.

It was agreed that the Stagecoach representatives would be invited to the next meeting on 14th September 2023.

MEMBERS MATTERS

Members reported on the following matters:

- (i) Overflowing bins and litter – Community Safety Warden had already reported this to CCBC.
- (ii) Trees causing sap on cars – Members referring to Councillors J. Taylor and J. Roberts.
- (iii) Nant-y-Parc school – warning sign to be added to next meeting agenda.

(iv) Community Empowerment Fund – at a recent CCBC meeting, it had been agreed that the minimum amount for applications had been reduced from £1000 to £500. This had been proposed by Councillor J. Taylor.

(v) It was noted that some street lighting in the area was only on for approx. 2 hours between 10pm and midnight.

61/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday 14th September 2023.**

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Signed: _____
Chairperson
Aber Valley Community Council