

Minutes of the Council meeting held at Village Hall on Monday 12th June from 19:00hrs

11/22

a. Councillors Present –:

- a. Mathern – David Harris, Matt Sidwell (remotely via Teams) Jayne Harris.
- b. Moun-ton- Carolyn Ovenden
- c. Pwllmeyric - Sylvia Stephens,
- d. County Councillor Louise Brown (remotely via teams)
- e. Clerk - Mrs J Kelley

b. Councillors Apologies -:

- a. Mathern – None
- b. Pwllmeyric–Cllr Gareth Page, Cllr James Anderson
- c. Moun-ton – None

c. Members of the public-:

- a. None

d. Police representatives-:

- a. None

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. Public Comments: -

- a. None

2. Received: Monthly Police Report: -

- a. Here is the report for the area between the above dates:

3/6/2022 – Report of a house burglary at a property in Mathern village whilst resident was away, sometime between Thursday the 3rd of June into Friday 4th of June. No visible damage caused to gain entry and an untidy search was made of the property. Not sure of what was taken at this time.

For your information we had a report of 3 males in high viz jackets in that area earlier in the same week. I have spoken to Welsh Water who have checked their records and confirmed it was 3 of their contractors in the area at that time.

Please remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity/crime at the time via either 101 or 999 if you deem it an emergency. If it is low level, you can also report via email on contact@gwent.police.uk

3. Apologies

- a. Cllr Gareth Page and Cllr James Anderson

4. Declarations of Personal or Pecuniary Interest –:

- a. None

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

- a. **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the A C M of Mathern Community Council meeting held on Monday, 9th May 22 as true and accurate records. Also, minutes of the monthly Meeting also held on the 9th May 2022

12/22 Finance –:

- a. To consider approval of payments as per below; all approved
- b. Monthly Bank Reconciliation authorisation (April) by Cllr J Harris
- c. Pension Regulator action needed. Re-enrolment third anniversary 17 10 2022 – Re declaration deadline 20 03 2023
- d. Budget to spending review – alpha analysis sheets attached. This was reviewed. Cllrs satisfied that budget to spending was on track. Clerk advised that Welsh Audit Office hope to have last year's invoice with us shortly.

A discussion was held re the purchase of dog poo bags, the cost of which is £97.68 for 2000. Clerk to use the present stock and then matter to be reviewed as this is a high cost to the Council for both bin-emptying and supplying the bags. Clerk to enquire how many other councils supply bags in our area. (Clerk to advertise the change in the supply of bags to local residents).

Chairman highlighted our training budget and advised Cllrs that if there were any course, they would like to attend then we have adequate budget for this.

- e. Cost of securing website – Quote requested Stock IT Ltd. Site now secure – Matter closed
- f. Internal Auditor has highlighted that the Clerk should have received a spinal point increase in April 2021 – Clerk to send her contract to O V W and seek confirmation of this.

<u>Receipts May/June</u>		
12 05 2022	Refund VAT	341.51
<u>Payments</u>		
12 05 2022	Smart Pension	127.12
21 05 2022	Bank Charges	6.60
24 05 2022	Viking	15.47
24 05 2022	VIKING	10.66
31 05 2022	J Kelley Salary	639.22

31 05 2021	HM Customs	187.36
06 06 2022	Stock IT Ltd	56.40
06 06 2022	Zurich Insurance	553.67
06 06 2022	M.C.C – Dog poo bags	97.68
10 06 2022	Merlin Waste	84.50
13 02 2022	Telephone and internet	61.65
13 06 2022	Mathern Village Hall Rent	15.00

13/22 PROGRESS REPORT ON ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

Responses to queries raised at previous meetings

- a. **Update - Speed Watch. Mathern Village:-**
Pending delivery of the 20-mph speed signage.
- b. **Update - Walks leaflets**
Work near completion. Hoped to be completed by next meeting.
- c. **Response from MCC re-sign clearance in Community**
No response from MCC. Clerk to chase.
- d. **Any update MCC re Palace Farm activities**
Awaiting an update from MCC and NRW. No Response as yet.
- e. **Any response the Dell re Governors Post**
As Councillors have been reduced from 9 to 7 following recent elections it is difficult for a Councillor to devote the time required to stand as a Governor for the Dell, together with Cllrs own obligations.

Councillors agreed that they would advertise the Governor's position within the Community and the Community Council's position on this to see if any villager would wish to stand as a Governor.

Should no interested resident come forward, Mathern C C would need to miss a term of 4 years and hand this back to Chepstow Town Council. Councillors are very reluctant to take this action.

14/22 Highways/Footpaths

- a. Footpaths project
Board walks Bishops Mead to be completed by MCC Footpaths Officers shortly.
- b. Box Tree Cottage, overhanging tree obstructing pavement – Now completed
Pot Hole - Mounton Church to Trelenny.
- c. Damaged direction signs on Mounton Roundabout.
- d. The matter of weed spraying and road sweeper work was discussed – Cllr M Sidwell to draft an email with photographs to be sent to Nigel Leaworthy illustrating the poor condition of the pavements and silt build up throughout the village.

- e. Clerk has been requested to contact MCC re verges being cut before the Wales in Bloom judging on July 4th.

15/22 COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS/CLERKS REPORT

1. One Voice Wales (OVW).

- a. Next Meeting –July date to be confirmed.

2. Defibrillators- monthly checking

- a. Clerk checked Mounton Brook Lodge - all working. The landlord at the Millers Arms is now checking the machine there - all working.

3. Best Kept Garden competition as seen from the road – Cllr S Stephens and Cllr J Harris

- a. Currently seeking a judge for the event.
- b. To ask Christine Morton for a summary of the competition to place on the website.
- c. Competition work sheets have been updated
- d. Prizes of £15.00 First and £10.00 second to be donated by Chepstow Garden Centre.
- e.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT JUNE 2022

- a. **County Councillor Brown advised: -**

i. County Council-Training

New and existing County Councillors are still undergoing training for the various council committees, albeit that Planning Committee members have been trained and started on the 8th of June.

ii. Traffic Congestion at High Beech Roundabout

- iii. It was expected that the next stage of the Welsh Highways report on the WEITAG2 study on considering options for improvements of the High Beech roundabout Chepstow would be consulted on upon in late Spring/Early Summer.

However, after the election I was informed by the Head of Operations Welsh Government Highways that the Welsh Government have not provided the funding this year for this study due to Welsh Government highway priorities elsewhere across Wales. The WG Budget has also been cut from £140m to £70m so this is likely to have impacted funding.

I have responded to the Head of Operations and expressed extreme disappointment in view of the daily traffic congestion and the impact of the mini services at Larkfield garage on Pwllmeyric at different times of day not just at peak times which demonstrates the fragility of the single road network. I have asked if it is possible to appeal against this decision not to fund this year and await a response back.

iv. Issues Raised on the Doorstep/Questionnaires

Issues of concern to residents tended to be road safety, litter and fly tipping, burglary and robbery, traffic congestion and the A48. There was concern about what was happening to Chepstow high street and there has been a recent press report on people's responses to the road closure and free parking was advocated.

There was support for the 20mph being implemented but different views on any extra measures such as speed humps. It was pointed out that if a property was close to the road, then the lorries going through the village already caused vibrations which would be even worse for the householder if heavy vehicles had to go over speed humps. So, location considerations are very important as well as the pros and cons of such measures.

The daily number of large lorries and the volume of soil or waste being transported to a farmer's field through the village was a concern at the time of the door knocking. It was a particular concern for those living in the properties close to the main village road who were even more directly impacted by the noise and muck generated. The Council issued a temporary stop notice in view of these concerns.

In terms of the times when speeding traffic came through the village when used as a rat run I was told that this was at 6am in the morning and I also witnessed vehicles speeding at about 6pmish when the traffic from the nursery was quieter.

There was a concern about how the 20mph speed limit would be enforced once it was implemented. I suggested that those who were interested could express interest in the speed watch as obtaining a speed camera was highly unlikely both due to expense and due to the fact that there is only one permanent sited speed camera in the whole of Monmouthshire

Crossing the A48 due to its business was seen as a problem for those with poor eyesight, for younger families with prams and for those with school children who needed to cross due to the school bus collecting or dropping off on only one side of the road.

The County Council has undertaken previous studies on a pedestrian crossing on the A48, but their findings were that there were insufficient people crossing to justify it. Despite the obvious consideration that few people may have crossed because it is so dangerous to do so. The financing of islands or crossing facilities is often considered when there are new developments so something that could be represented on at that time.

Council school buses are provided because of the lack of a safe route to school and told that consideration is given to the distances involved to the nearest school of 2 miles or over for secondary and 1.5 miles or over for primary pupils. However, if a secondary school was only 1.9 miles away but not a safe route to school then this would be a factor to be considered.

I have asked about this problem in relation to school buses only collecting and dropping off from one side of the A48 but told that the traffic levels and turning are such that if the school bus was to collect and drop off on both sides of the A48 it would increase the journey time too much for the existing bus service. However, if any parent has a particular problem, then they can contact the MCC school transport services and I would be happy to support them.

On the NHS side local people generally saw improving GP services, more staff and emergency services as a priority. The Health Board are independent from local government in Wales and there is no direct accountability, so local authorities can only seek to influence decisions as there is no scrutiny function for local government.

Investment in Chepstow School, the Leisure Centre, a Chepstow bypass and High Beech roundabout improvements was generally seen as very important.

The above is just a general account of some of the common issues raised as opposed to all of them.

I am grateful to residents for taking the time to speak to me on the doorstep or completing questionnaires. It will greatly assist me in making representations on behalf of residents about areas of local concern.

- v. **Risk Assessments-: Pwllmeyric and Mounton forms completed. Mathern to follow.**

16/22 PLANNING MATTERS

To include any received after Agenda is circulated

- a) New applications: – None
- b) Decisions and appeals: - None
- c) Enforcement: - None

Notice from MCC re Mathern Fishery - alleged breach of parking area construction re. material used as hard-standing.

17/22 CORRESPONDENCE AND FORTHCOMING MEETINGS – INFORMATION ONLY

10 05 2022 Village in Bloom Grant Application Form
10 05 2022 MCC Response re comprised drainage
11 05 2022 Delivery of dog poo waste bags
11 05 2022 Update Welsh Government re Larkfield roundabout
12 05 2022 Response Governing body Dell School – term starts 13 07 2022 for 4 years – 2 training courses to attend – 6 meetings per year. Further update after 17 05 2022
12 05 2022 Village Hall increase in booking fees now £8.50 per hour
15 05 2022 Wales in Bloom – request for verge cutting sweeper before judging
16 05 2022 MCC notification enforcement Mathern Fisheries E22/151
20 05 2022 OV W Training List
23 05 2022 Welsh Government correspondence re Larkfield congestion
23 05 2022 Smart pension submission receipt
23 05 2022 Wye Valley Archery enforcement correspondence
23 05 2022 Pension regulator advise 3rd Anniversary 17 10 2022 redeclaration 20 03 2023 actions needed
24 05 2022 MCC advise that Wye Valley Archery referred to environmental health
24 05 2022 Merlin invoice May £81.50
24 05 2022 Gwent police – we don't buy crime
26 05 2022 Dell School reply re Governors
28 05 2022 Insurance Renewal – Zurich £553.67
30 05 2022 Merlin Waste Invoice May £81.50
31 05 2022 MCC invoice Dog waste bags £97.68
31 05 2022 Merlin Waste invoice June £81.50
01 06 2022 Stock it Limited invoice £56.40
01 06 2022 Your Voice survey

18/22 OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- a. **Community Resilience - Climate Emergency** – Welsh Audit Office Resilience Survey completed
- b. **Items for Website** – Cllr J Anderson – Clerk to request once written Notice re Governor Dell – Summary of the Best Garden Competition - Note re Jubilee celebrations
- c. **Jubilee celebrations thanks from Community**

The Chairman thanked Cllr M Sidwell and Cllr J Harris for arranging the event on Sunday 5th June and also the tree planning help earlier - with the team of helpers – everyone enjoyed the event and it was very well organised.

A letter of thanks to be produced for the Website and thanking Mathern C C for contributing towards the cost of the celebrations.

The time capsule is near completion and will be put in place shortly.

19/22 PROJECTS AWAITING COMPLETION

Archive to Ebbw Vale when possible.

Councillors had previously agreed that the records should be kept for public access and authorised Councillor Ovenden to sign any papers on behalf of the Community Council.

Archives have now advised that they need to check the information before it can be stored. Cllrs happy that Cllr C Ovenden keeps these archives at her home until a later date. Matter to be removed from the agenda.

20/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next meeting: Monday 11th July 2022 at 7 pm.

Signed

Dated