



GRAIG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held both at Graig Hall and remotely via Zoom Video Conferencing on 29th September 2021 at 7pm

1. **To receive apologies for absence:** Cllrs A Whitfield, M Smart, P Gregory, D Williams.
Present: Cllrs R Caston (at Graig Hall), D Evans (at Graig Hall), K Sayer (remotely), J Harris (remotely), W Haigh (at Graig Hall), L Fry (at Graig Hall), P Appleton (remotely), J Bailey (remotely), K Thomas (remotely), N Tarr (remotely), J Taylor (remotely), J Jones (remotely), S Davies (Clerk (at Graig Hall). Chaired by Cllr Harris.

This meeting was held both at Graig Hall and remotely via Zoom.

2. **To receive declarations of interest:** None.
3. **To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25th August 2021:**
The minutes of the meeting held 25th August 2021 previously circulated were read and approved. Proposed Cllr Caston, seconded Cllr Bailey. Regarding Planning items, Cllr Appleton expressed dismay that Council is not always privy to additional information NCC has prior to making comments on applications. Regarding Item 8b – Graig Community Centre management Committee had arranged a committee meeting. There were no further comments. **Action: None requested**
4. **Clerk's Report:** Council discussed the report items briefly. Regarding Item 12 - Bassaleg Bridge Issues, Cllr Jones told the group that progress was slow but there were less parking issues. The works to stabilise the bridge could take a long time. Regarding item 11 – speed camera at Lower Machen, Cllr Appleton asked Cllr Jones if there was any news when this would be installed. Cllr Jones said he was to have a meeting with the Police, but he was aware there were no proposals for this on their agenda. NCC had said it would be installed but were now saying there were no plans to do so. It was thought this was because of lack of funding but it would be pursued. He also said NCC were lagging behind with the WG proposals that all residential areas in Wales would have speed limits reduced to 20mph. Proposed Cllr Taylor, seconded Cllr Caston and approved. **Action: Cllr Jones to progress with Item 11.**
5. **Accounts for Payment:** Proposed Cllr Jones seconded Cllr Thomas
Cllr Tarr queried the purchase of the data stick which the Clerk reported she needed to store multiple copies of Council records ensuring there was no data loss.

Clerk salary and office allowance for September 21	£2127.07
Misc expenses (Zoom Aug-Sep 21 £14.39, mileage £34.65, Data Stick £15.00, Microsoft 365 annual subscription £79.99)	£144.03
TalkTalk – Graig Hall monthly broadband cost (taken by DD)	£35.94
TSOHOST – Webmail monthly hosting charge (taken by DD)	£5.00
Celtic Fire Protection – Fire extinguisher service to Graig Hall	£41.95
SSE – Graig Hall gas charge Aug 21	£29.48
SSE – Rhiwderin CC gas charge Aug 21	£39.73
Total to date:	£2423.20

Credit Notes:

SSE – Rhiwderin CC Gas charges credit May-Jun 21 £95.26

Receipts:

Newport City Council – 2nd Precept payment £39257.40

6. **Planning:**
- a. 21/0949 – Proposal: Single storey rear extension. Site: 11 Gloch Wen Close, Rhiwderin, Newport, NP10 8UN. Application Type: Full. **Comment: No objections.**
7. **Items for Discussion/Action:**
- a. Excess gym equipment update if available (JT) – Cllr Taylor told the group the equipment had been visually assessed and it was the opinion of the company storing the equipment that it was of no real value. Cllr Taylor was awaiting photos so Council could assess and decide on a course of action.
Action: Cllr Taylor to progress.

- b. Future full opening of Community Centres (standing item) – Cllr Harris reported he was having many enquiries for one-off hires of Graig Hall, with some upset that it was clear the hall was being used and did not understand why it could not be booked. It was agreed that an explanation would be put on Council's website and advertised on Council and Graig News Facebook pages. It was agreed it was unlikely one-off bookings would be able to be taken this side of the new year as Covid numbers were still rising and one-off bookings could not be held safely. **Action: Clerk to put the message on Council's website, Cllr Harris to put on Council's Facebook page and also request for it to be put on Graig News Facebook.**
- c. Arrangements for future Council meetings/ Reinstatement of Planning Committee (Items c and d were discussed together). – It was suggested at a previous meeting by the Clerk that with new responsibilities being put on Community Councils, and as the only employee of the Council, she was becoming overwhelmed. That Council needed to find a way to reduce the pressure on her to allow her to do her job properly as over time she had absorbed more work as it came, but she was at saturation point and could not absorb the further responsibilities that were coming soon. She suggested that Council reinstate the Planning Committee it had many years ago and reduce to one Council meeting per month instead of two. That this would allow time to absorb the responsibilities in the pipeline and to complete a CiICA qualification which was thought to become mandatory for Clerks in the near future.

This was debated, and there were some objections to the suggestions from two Cllrs. The Clerk felt it necessary to read out a statement to Council in response to an email received from a Cllr (which is withheld from the press and public due to its personal nature) regarding her position, but the statement will be added as an addendum to these minutes and filed with the original copy. The majority of Council Members showed great support for the Clerk following the statement being read and asked for their support to be recorded. The Cllr in question wished to re-respond to the statement but the request was refused. Another Cllr requested her suggestion during the meeting be added to the minutes. This was to retain 2 monthly meetings but revert the Mid-month meeting to a Planning meeting only. This would allow for items to be added back to the Planning meeting if the Full Council meeting became too large to cope with in future if necessary.

Following discussions and a vote, Council agreed by a majority of 10/2 to reinstate the Planning Committee and reduce to one Council meeting per month which will be held on the last Wednesday of each month apart from December for a trial period at least. Cllrs Taylor, Bailey and Tarr agreed to sit on the new Planning Committee and the Clerk agreed to contact absent Cllrs to ask if they wished to join. There was concern about how Cllrs wishing to know about upcoming planning or the committee's planning decisions. The Clerk informed the group that planning agendas would be publicised on Council's website, as would minutes of the meetings. **Action: Clerk to contact absent members about joining the Planning Committee and set up the website to incorporate Planning Committee information. Council to revert to one meeting per month moving forward.**

- d. Reinstatement of Planning Committee – See Item c above.
- e. Bassaleg School Community benefit from contractors list – Cllr Gregory circulated a wish list of things Council could supply should any contractors performing the upgrade of the school be willing to help with as community benefit. It was noted that some things on the list would not be appropriate, but there were many things that could. Cllr Fry suggested approaching the main contractor to ask at first, in the hope they would encourage sub-contractors to help. The Clerk agreed to make contact with the main contractor once they had been determined. Cllr Jones agreed to find out who that would be. **Action: Cllr Jones to inform the Clerk if he discovered who would be the main contractor, Clerk to approach them to open up communications.**

8. Reports:

- a. Newport City Councillors – Cllr Jones discussed his recent dealings with the following issues: He had arranged a meeting with the Police on the following Friday where he would discuss traffic issues, including the speed camera at Lower Machen. He asked if there was evidence of previous commitments to this. The Clerk told him of an article in the South Wales Argus and assurances made by an NCC Officer a few months previously which she would forward to him. There were issues at Carnegie Court, residents were complaining of parking issues. NCC will not address this at present because the roads of the estate are not yet adopted. There were problems with an overgrown brook at Caernarvon Drive. This is on NCC ground, but the family in the affected home is willing to do remedial work themselves. There had been more fly tipping at Pound Hill. NCC have stated they are committed to tackling fly tipping issues and Cllr Jones has asked for Penylan Road and Pound Hill to be covered by cameras as a deterrent. Cllr Jones had received many complaints about traffic cones on Forge Rd and in the J28 vicinity which have been in place for a number of months. He had asked a local MS to

investigate. He has also requested that Forge Rd speed be reduced to 40mph. It was noted that the cones on Forge Road on the approach to Bassaleg Roundabout were in place to reduce the lanes of traffic prior to the A467 northbound dual carriageway as this road has been reduced to one lane because of the temporary entrance into Forge Mews. These will remain in place until Bassaleg Bridge is repaired and the entrance is no longer needed. A discussion followed about the amount of quarry lorries travelling through the villages. It was noted the quarry is moving more by train of late but the number of lorries transporting stone has increased considerably. **Action: Clerk to forward information about the speed camera as agreed. Cllr Jones to progress the issues he reported.**

Sub Committees:

- b. Graig Community Centre – Cllr Harris told the group a Management Committee meeting had been arranged and that he had been contacted by someone offering to donate a sanitising station to Graig Hall. **Action: None requested**
- c. Rhiwderin Community Centre & Fundraising Group – NTR. **Action: None requested.**
- d. Allotments – Cllr Caston reported that an inspection had taken place and that the site was in a fair condition. There are 17-18 people on the waiting list for an allotment. There was concern that some new plot holders had only covered their plots with polythene and had not worked them. He was thinking it would be prudent to proposing a three-month probationary period for all new plot holders in which time they would be expected to carry out some basic work. The inspection was restricted to two representatives from both Council's Allotment Committee and the Allotment Association to limit contact because of Covid. **Action: Cllr Caston to speak with the Chair of the Allotment Association regarding a three-month probationary period.**
- e. Burial Board – Cllr Harris told the group a meeting had been held on 20th September. The plan for the cemetery had been completed and showed more possible burials. Cllr Tarr reported that for the time being, the Committee was working to RCC's Standing Orders but the Clerk to the Committee was working on compiling a hybrid set of Standing Orders for the Committee's use which would be adopted by the Committee at a later date. **Action: None at this time.**

Working Groups:

- f. Play Areas Group – Cllr Taylor reported that the footpath by the gate on the open space had been repaired but all was not yet complete. The new button swing to replace the t-bar attachment on a piece of apparatus at Cowshed Lane play area had been attached. It was noted that a local contractor who was to replace the Sward turf at the rebound wall was having major issues obtaining the material so it was agreed this work would be postponed for now. **Action: Clerk to inform the contractor of Council's decision.**
- h. Horticultural Group/Best Kept Villages Group – Cllr Taylor reported that he had received many compliments whilst working on the roundabout outside St Basil's stores. **Action: Group to progress.**
- i. Technology Group – NTR. **Action: None at this time.**
- j. Events and Social Group – NTR. **Action: None at this time.**
- k. Consultation Group – Cllr Tarr reported that both recent consultations had been completed and submitted. **Action: None at this time.**

Temporary Working Groups:

- k. Memorial Garden Group – Cllr Fry informed the group that a landscape gardener from Monmouth had been engaged to do a provisional sketch and scheme for the area. He would be meeting with her on 23rd November and asked that those involved in the group attend if possible. **Action: Group members to attend the meeting if able.**

9. Items for forthcoming agendas:

Community/Resident's Engagement (KS) – Full Council Meeting 27th October 2021

Future full opening of Community Centres (standing item) – Full Council meeting 27th October 2021

Path along Harlech Drive (TA) – Full Council meeting 27th October 2021

10. Urgent Business not discussed above:

- a. Cllr Caston reported that he had noticed that the hedge had not been replaced as expected next to the Scout hut and orange mesh surrounded the car park. **Action: Clerk to investigate.**
- b. Cllr Appleton mentioned the damage to the noticeboard on Court Crescent. Both Cllr Jones and the Clerk informed the group that as agreed the number of noticeboards needed was being reviewed with the aim reduce them and to promote the use of Council's new website. This particular board did not service many residents due to its location and was being considered for decommissioning. The Court Crescent Residents group and the Paddock Committee have been approached to ask if they would like to take over the use of the board for residents in that area to display their own notices and this was

thought to be acceptable if that was Council's decision. Noticeboards would be discussed once the preliminary review had been completed. **Action: Cllrs Gregory, Fry and the Clerk to continue the review. Cllr Jones to progress talks with the groups mentioned above.**

- c. Cllr Tarr reported that he would like to place flowers on the memorial bench erected to former Cllr Norman Mountain to mark the 5th anniversary of his death and asked if this was acceptable to Council. There were no objections, it was thought to be a kind gesture from Cllr Tarr. **Action: Cllr Tarr to progress.**


11. Dates of next meetings:

Quarterly Finance & Admin meeting - 2022 precept – 20th October at Graig Hall & via Zoom at 7pm
Full Council Meeting – Wednesday 27th October 2021

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.47pm

Signed (Vice Chair) – 29.09.21

Compiled 13.10.21

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ADDENDUM A

Copy of Clerk's statement to Council attached to original hard copy minutes and filed, but withheld to the press and public due to its personal nature