

Due to guidance in respect of COVID19 the meeting was held remotely.

Present: Cllr Ann Bowyer, Cllr Jenny Carpenter, Cllr Paula Clarke, Cllr Judith Hopkins, Cllr Helen May-Moebus, Cllr Jo Storey, Cllr Peter Sutherland.

1. Public Meeting:

Cllr Colin Deakins and Mr T Kear were present to observe the meeting. No issues had been raised with the clerk by members of the public.

2. Sign the attendance book:

It was not possible to sign the attendance book as the meeting was held remotely.

3. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from County Cllr Val Smith.

4. Declaration of interest from members:

Cllr Hopkins had previously declared an interest in agenda item 10.a. as the contractor carrying out the work is a close family member.

At this point in the meeting the Chair acknowledged the sad news of the passing of Cllr Peter Clarke, recognising his great commitment and contribution to the Council during his many years of service, and the resulting loss of knowledge and experience for the Council. Councillors, some of whom had known Cllr Clarke for many years, added their own tributes, sharing their memories of him and offering their appreciation for the support and guidance he gave them and his professional manner, all done with a twinkle in his eye.

The Chair reported a letter of resignation had been received from the clerk. He thanked the clerk for her contribution during her time with the Council, acknowledging it had been during difficult time for the Council due to the pandemic. The Chair confirmed the clerk's leaving date as 28th February but as 9 days annual leave were owing the clerk's last working day would be 10th February. The clerk was happy to help the Council with the transition.

5. Adoption of Minutes:

The Chair proposed the minutes of LCC Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 5th January 2022 be approved, seconded by Cllr Hopkins, all in agreement. **ACTION: Chair to sign minutes at earliest opportunity, clerk to publish on website.**

6. Clerk's Report

The clerk's report for February had been circulated prior to the meeting for councillors' consideration.

The following updates were received:

The Gwent Anglers – The Chair had written to The Gwent Anglers to clarify the Council's position.

Options for Speed Reduction – The Chair had written to Cllr Jane Pratt. Cllr Pratt suggested a site meeting with officers from Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and representatives of the Council. **ACTION: Chair to liaise with Cllr Pratt regarding suitable dates.**

Transport for Wales Application to the Community Woodlands Fund – Cllr Hopkins had submitted response. The Council had been invited to attend a 2nd round interview.

MCC Llanbadoc Section 19 Flood Report February 2020 - Natural Resources Wales and MCC are working together. The flooding issues was discussed at the December meeting of Strong Communities. Ross Price subsequently circulated information which was shared with Councillors and other interested parties.

Adoption of Councillors Allowances – one response outstanding. **ACTION: Chair to follow up.**

ACTION: Chair to sign report at earliest opportunity.

7. Discussion with County Councillor

County Councillor Smith was not present to report.

8. Matters arising from recent correspondence / new business.

a. Police report for December

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was duly noted.

b. Co-option in Respect of Llanbadoc Vacancy

Mr Pearson from the Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) Electoral Registrations Office had advised that due to the proximity of the election in May 2022 the Council could fill the vacancy by co-option. The clerk advised the co-option process must be open and transparent and suggested the vacancy should be advertised. Cllr Carpenter asked whether the previously interested party may still be interested in applying. Cllr Storey added a co-opted councillor may bring skills to the Council which could help provide cover until a new clerk was appointed. It was agreed to advertise the vacancy for a week on the website and in the Council noticeboards. Cllr Deakins offered to publish the notice in the Little Mill public noticeboard. **ACTION: clerk to provide advert for noticeboards and publish on website.**

c. Arrangements for the Management of the Council Facebook Page

To be looked at in the future.

d. Election Arrangements

Information for candidates standing for election had been circulated to all Councillors and published on the Council website. MCC had also arranged webinars for candidates to attend. The clerk advised candidates should read requirements carefully as there were some changes to previous elections, and reminded Councillors that a claim for elections expenses was required by 6th June 2022, if no expenses were incurred a nil return should be submitted to avoid disqualification.

e. Dates for Ordinary May Meeting and Annual Meeting

The Chair proposed the ordinary May meeting be held on 4th May 2022 as previously agreed and the Annual Meeting be held on 11th May 2022, seconded by Cllr Carpenter, all in agreement. **ACTION: clerk to update website.**

f. Repairs to Glascoed Notice Board

Cllr Carpenter suggested the Pathcare team be approached to carry out repairs, with the Council providing the materials. Two new posts would be required and cement. Cllr Carpenter proposed this be dealt with under Chair's delegated powers, seconded by the Chair, all in agreement. **ACTION: Chair to liaise with Pathcare team.**

g. Replacement of Monkswood Noticeboard

The noticeboard at the entrance to the housing estate had been removed following damage caused by a traffic accident. Cllr Paula Clarke offered to consult residents to establish whether a new noticeboard should be installed. **ACTION: Cllr Paula Clarke to consult residents.**

h. "No Mow May" and "Nature isn't Neat" Initiatives

MCC had confirmed the Council could choose whether to adopt the initiatives, and that all areas would be cut unless the Council indicated they wanted to adopt the initiatives. With regard to the "no Mow May" initiative Cllr Carpenter suggested Llanbadoc Island and Glascoed Common should be cut as the areas were well used by the public. Cllr Storey asked if anyone exercised commoners' rights on the common, alpacas have been grazed there. Cllr Bowyer proposed that Llanbadoc Island should be cut, seconded by Cllr Carpenter, agreed by all. Cllr Hopkins proposed Glascoed Common be left uncut, seconded by the Chair, 6 votes for and 1 vote against. Cllr Hopkins believed the MCC "Nature isn't Neat" initiative should be supported, all in agreement. **ACTION: Clerk to inform Nigel Leaworthy.**

9. Planning

a. MCC enforcement cases (confidential)

Circulated to full council on 6th January 2022 and duly noted.

b. Planning Applications

- i. **Planning Application DM/2022/00084** – the application relating to Mill View Cottage, Prioress Mill Lane, Rhadyr, Llanbadoc, Usk, was for a proposed two storey extension to existing dwelling. Cllr Paula Clarke reminded councillors the property was originally a cart shed which had been converted and extended. Cllr Paula Clarke believed the application would not be compliant with planning policy H4, Cllr Carpenter added further extension would not be in keeping with the original property. Cllr May-Moebus proposed the application be recommended for refusal, seconded by the Chair, all in agreement. **ACTION: clerk to submit response.**
- ii. **Planning Application DM/2022/00106** – the application relating to 1 Alexandra Place, A472 Pantypwyddyn Farm to Little Henrhiw, Monkwood, Usk was for a proposed single storey extension to rear of building (amendment to DM/2021/01589). Cllr Paula Clarke and Cllr Storey confirmed the proposed extension would be similar to other properties in the vicinity, a precedent had been set. Cllr Paula Clarke proposed the application be recommended for approval, seconded by Cllr May-Moebus, all in agreement. **ACTION: clerk to submit response.**

Cllr Hopkins, having declared an interest in the next agenda item, left the meeting at this point.

10. Finance

a. Payment of Invoice for Works at Llanbadoc Island

Cllrs Sutherland, Bowyer and Paula Clarke carried out a site inspection and confirmed all work quoted for had been completed and therefore recommended the invoice be paid. The clerk reported an error with the original invoice, VAT had been charged at 5% not 20%. A replacement invoice had been received for the sum of £5,644.30. The VAT would be reclaimed by the Council so was not an additional expense.

Cllr Hopkins re-joined the meeting.

The Chair expressed great concern with regard to the handling of issues raised in respect of the project and made it clear that this should not re-occur with any future projects undertaken by the Council. Following concerns raised by councillors in connection with delays to approval of the work carried out, the Chair reported that a review would take place. The Chair had already emailed councillors with a proposal that any issues should be raised in writing to the clerk & all councillors 48 hours before council meetings. Other councillors had also expressed concerns. It will be important to learn lessons from a number of recent issues raised by the Chair and councillors as part of the review outlined above. The review will ensure that the Council and all councillors are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.

b. Approval of the Pink Paper for February and Authorisation of Payments

The February pink paper was circulated prior to the meeting for councillors’ consideration. The Chair moved to approve the following payments:

	£’s
Clerks Salary and Allowances - February	462.77
HMRC PAYE - February	63.80
NEST (EE’s & ER’s Pension Contributions) - February	64.68
Merlin Environmental Services – Inv 1011 February	28.60
HSBC – Bank Charges February	5.00
Hopgrove Construction Ltd – Inv 1 Llanbadoc Island Works	5,644.30

The payments were proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr May-Moebus, all in agreement.

ACTION: Chair to sign paper at earliest opportunity, clerk to make payments.

Balance of current account £3,080.43 balance of deposit account £9,050.03.

c. Cyber Security Insurance

Further to information circulated by Cllr Bowyer, Cllr Hopkins circulated information provided by a contact she knew. Cllr Hopkins suggested that in order to obtain relevant quotations for cyber insurance the Council would need to be specific in their requirements. Cllr Bowyer observed that if the necessary measures are in place to mitigate any likely problems, and they are adhered to, cyber insurance should not be required. The decision was deferred until after the election in May. **ACTION: clerk to agenda in June.**

d. **Update of Bank Mandate**

The Chair proposed Cllr May-Moebus be added as a bank signatory and Cllr Peter Clarke's name be removed, seconded by Cllr Bowyer, all in agreement. **ACTION: clerk to supply bank with new mandate.**

e. **Little Mill Playground Inspection**

The Chair used delegated powers to approve the quote received from Hags for £207.90. The clerk had placed the order for an inspection to be carried out within 6 to 8 weeks. Despite following up a date for the inspection had not yet been received. **ACTION: Cllr Hopkins to pursue.**

f. **Quarterly Report on Bank Reconciliations**

The Chair had carried out the quarterly check on bank reconciliations. All entries were found to be correct and no issues were identified.

11. Reports from Advisory Groups

a. **Procedural and Financial** – Cllr J Carpenter, Cllr J Hopkins, Cllr J Storey, Cllr P Sutherland, Cllr C Deakins (Advisory).

1. **Update on meeting held 1st February 2022**

A review of the Risk Assessment identified no areas of concern. Cllr Carpenter gave an update on the Self-assessment Toolkit and advised she and the clerk were due to attend a discussion forum on the 28th February 2022. Following the resignation of the clerk Cllr Carpenter confirmed she would attend on her own. Cllr Carpenter's view of the toolkit was that the document was too large, it indicated the Council was mainly meeting it's requirements, the only issue was in respect of Community engagement.

2. **Quarterly Review of Annual Plan**

ACTION: Chair to bring an update to the March meeting.

3. **Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and all other Council policies.**

The clerk reminded councillors of the requirement to review all policies and procedures annually. The Chair suggested each councillor review the same document as the previous year. Cllr Hopkins undertook to review those previously undertaken by Cllr Winter. The Chair undertook to review the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Reviews to be undertaken as below:

Annual Risk Assessment – Finance and Procedures Group

Standing Orders – Chair

Financial Regulations – Chair

Internal Audit Policy – Chair, Cllr Carpenter and clerk

Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit – Chair, Cllr Carpenter and clerk

Complaints Procedure – Cllr Paula Clarke

Social Media Policy – Cllr Hopkins

Welsh Language Policy – Chair

Equality and Diversity Policy – Cllr Hopkins

Freedom of Information – Chair

ACTION: All Cllrs to review documents.

4. **Update on Self-assessment Toolkit**

Update given under agenda item 11.a.1

b. **Environment** – Cllr A Bowyer, Cllr Paula Clarke, Cllr J Hopkins and Cllr P Sutherland.

1. **Litter pick held on 30th January 2022**

The Chair reported the litter pick had gone well; a lot of litter had been collected. Cllr Hopkins undertook a litter pick at Trostra Common. The Chair thanked Cllr May-Moebus for becoming the Council's litter champion.

2. **Tree Planting**

The saplings from the Woodland Trust are due to arrive between 28th February and 18th March. The clerk reminded councillors the community should be engaged in the project to meet the Woodland Trust requirements. Cllr Bowyer suggested publishing a request for volunteers on the website. Cllr May-Moebus had previous experience of planting saplings so would be able to provide advice. Concerns were raised that sheep may damage saplings at Llanbadoc Island. **ACTION: Chair to speak to the farmers.**

12. Reports from representatives on Other Bodies

a. One Voice Wales Monmouth/Newport Area Committee

The Chair attended the meeting held on 13th January 2022. Minutes had been circulated.

b. Give Dog Fouling the Red Card Working Group

MCC had requested dog waste bins to be given unique identifiers, to be forwarded with information requested by Sue Parkinson. **ACTION: clerk to respond to Sue Parkinson.**

13. Option for Speed Reduction

County Cllr Jane Pratt had responded to the Chair's letter offering a site visit with officers from MCC. **ACTION: Chair to respond with dates.**

14. Climate Change

The Chair suggested developing an Environment Transition Plan which would bring together all elements the Council is involved with such as the biodiversity plan, initiatives such as "No Mow May" and the Bee project. The Chair proposed this be taken forward when priorities allow.

15. Matters to be considered for the next agenda (at the discretion of the Chairman)

Audited Accounts for 2020/21

Tree in memory of Cllr Peter Clarke.

16. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 2nd March 2022, 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The Chair thanked the clerk for her contribution during her time with the council and there being no further business the meeting closed at 20.28 pm.

Beverley Young
Clerk/RFO