

BURTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the monthly meeting held at the Jubilee Hall, Houghton on Wednesday 7th November 2018

Present: Cllrs Nia Phillips, Laurence Price, Alun Williams, Robin Howells, Derek Jones, John Evans, Iain Wood, Michael Pettit, Scott Sinclair (vice-Chair); Peter Horton (Clerk).
Apologies: C’lir Paddy McNamara

Declarations of known interests

C’lir Alun Williams declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the planning application ref. 18/0641/PA, as a close neighbour of the development site.

Minutes of October 2018 monthly meeting

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and signed by the Chairman (proposer C’lir Derek Jones, seconder C’lir Robin Howells).

Discussion of need for sewage disposal infrastructure improvements at Houghton

Members welcomed Mr. Neil Mowlam & Mr. Richard Davies, attending on behalf of Welsh Water. The Chairman proceeded to outline the current situation. The matter had arisen due to problems reported by a local resident, concerning discharges from an overflow pipe from the pumping chamber in Houghton. A site meeting had taken place between officers of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Welsh Water (WW), to discuss the matter. As a result, questions had been raised over the function and legality of the pipe in question, which were in the process of being researched. It was possible that an application by WW would be made to NRW to regularise the pipe.

Mr. Davies described Houghton as a ‘small hamlet’. He said that, from their records, there had not been a large history of flooding / overflows in Houghton, and nothing had previously been reported to NRW. However, C’lir Laurence Price mentioned that there had been frequent events, including an event as recently as two weeks previously, caused by a collapse of the sewage rising main.

C’lir Laurence Price referred to a letter from Jackie Lawrence (previous M.P. for the constituency) in relation to the sewage issues in the community. Her letter had referenced lack of capacity and investment. As the letter was written a number of years ago, he cited this as evidence of a long-standing issue with capacity and under-investment on the network locally. C’lir Price mentioned the two 6” gravity mains in the village, feeding one 4” rising main going out of the Village. He mentioned the fact that the rising main had apparently been sleeved quite recently, presumably further reducing its effective diameter. He also mentioned a number of overflow events that had occurred from the pumping chamber, which had apparently been caused by a failure of the infra-red level-sensing device. Mr. Mowlam mentioned that a new back up float device is now operating in the chamber as a secondary means of monitoring levels in the chamber.

After the discussion outlining the nature of the problem, Mr. Davies said there would be a need to investigate the issues in detail, and undertook to do so. He suggested that it would be necessary to check on the possible problem of excessive clean water flows entering the system, which if happening could cause or exacerbate the problem. He undertook to look into this and report back to the community council with the findings.

The discussion then touched on new development recently constructed / under construction / planned in the community. Mr. Davies said that WW would always look for ‘betterment’ of the sewage disposal system in connection with any new development proposed. This would particularly relate to identifying ways to reduce the amount of clean water entering the system.

C’lir Alun Williams raised the issue of proposed investment in improving the infrastructure. He mentioned that B.C.C. had previously objected to planning applications for new development on the basis of inadequate sewage disposal infrastructure. Previous approaches to WW had brought the response that no new investment was planned within their 5 year plan. Mr. Davies acknowledged this, but said that any planning / investment issues would need to be looked at later on, in the light of the findings from their current investigations.

C’lir Laurence Price mentioned that he would like as part of these investigations to see details of the failures that have occurred, and details of the sleeving exercise carried out on the rising main.

Regarding the pipe from the pumping chamber, Mr. Davies mentioned that the pipe was not consented as a ‘combined overflow’ for outflow in rainy weather, but only as an emergency overflow in case of system failures.

C’lir Scott Sinclair requested feedback on proposals from WW to address the problems identified. This was understood by the WW officers, who undertook to feedback the results of their findings, as well as any actions proposed. At Members’ request, this would also be done in relation to Church Road Burton, and Ashdale Lane, Llangwm.

It was arranged that all feedback to the community council would be sent via C’lir Laurence Price and copied to the Clerk.

Following the discussion, Members thanked Mr. Mowlam and Mr. Davies for their attendance, following which they left the meeting.

Matters Arising

Speeding. The Clerk had approached P.C.C. regarding a possible increase in speed monitoring in the community. In their response, P.C.C. had suggested that B.C.C. might wish to consider requesting this directly via the Community Police Liaison Forum.

Pat Gallanders had sent a further message concerning the speeding problem, and this was discussed by Members. She was requesting additional 30mph signage. However, it was noted that there appeared to be a confusion in her message between 30mph repeater signs and the 30mph signs associated with the speed camera signs.

It was not thought by Members that there was likely to be any benefit in referring the matter to the Community Policing Team. C’lir Iain Wood expressed the view that extra signage would have little or no benefit, and only increased levels of enforcement would have any significant effect.

Clerk to respond to Pat Gallanders explaining the signage issue, and informing her that she could get in touch with the Go Safe organisation directly to request any additional signage she feels is necessary.

Sandy Bear. From the information available, it appeared to Members that the organisation appeared to be bona fide. Matter of a possible donation to be revisited next year in conjunction with the annual donation discussion.

Noticeboard repairs. Still in hand with C’lir Laurence Price.

Footpath Hill Mtn. C’lir Alun Williams reported that mud and detritus had been removed from the manhole covers along the route, but still not from the footpath itself. Matter to be kept under review.

Barnlake roundabout. C’lir Rob Summons had circulated a message to mention the proposal in P.C.C. to put a gate across the lower road. In response to a query from B.C.C., P.C.C. had stated that a roundabout at this location was simply not possible due to cost implications. C’lir Scott Sinclair expressed the view that the only real solution would be to sort out the junction with the main road properly. He also mentioned the possibility that the current problem might worsen once the tolls are removed from the Cleddau Bridge.

Clerk to contact C’lir Paul Miller to pursue the matter of junction improvements, especially in relation to the perceived need for a roundabout at this location.

[NOTE – at this point, C’lir Nia Phillips left the meeting with apologies]

Stornoway. C’lir Alun Williams had visited the property owner and seen documents and plans in her possession. Her current problem was with water running off the highway onto her property. C’lir Alun Williams had suggested to her that she should take up the matter directly with P.C.C., and she had indicated that she would do that.

Telephone box, Port Lion. The Clerk confirmed that this had been reported to B.T., but nothing heard back. Clerk to chase up B.T. for a response / action.

Houghton Green bollards. Members were informed that the work had been programmed in by P.C.C.

Post box. Further response awaited from Stephen Crabb, M.P. Agenda item to be tabled for December.

Summer fete. The date for this was confirmed as 29th June 2019. Agenda item to be tabled for February 2019. Any necessary paperwork to be aimed for completion prior to that date.

Defibrillators. C’lir Alun Williams confirmed that he checks the defibrillators at least monthly.

Plans

Applications

18/0641/PA (Change of use of the land to garden in retrospect, Hideaway Lodge, Ashdale Lane, LLANGWM, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 4NU)

[NOTE – C’lir Alun Williams left the room during consideration of this application]

Unanimously no objections to the proposals.

Correspondence

- 1) P.C.C. – Response to various Highways issues raised – noted.
- 2) P.C.C. – Request for information on areas with poor broadband reception – noted.
- 3) P.C.C. – Invitation to meeting to discuss promoting dementia-friendly communities – noted.
- 4) P.C.N.P.A. - Consultation on the Annual Monitoring Report 2018 – noted.
- 5) P.A.V.S. – Invitation to Pembrokeshire Community Building Network meeting, to be held at 6pm, Tuesday 27th November, Crundale Hall – noted.
- 6) P.C.C. – Invitation to Milford Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone Transportation stakeholder consultation event, to be held at 1pm, Monday 19th November 2018, at Committee Room 2, County Hall, Haverfordwest – noted.
- 7) Pat Gallanders – Further comments / requests in connection with traffic-related issues in Ashdale Lane / New Wells Road – discussed in ‘Matters Arising’ above.
- 8) Barclays Bank plc – Request for update information on account – Clerk to handle and return as necessary.

Accounts

Payments

There were no payments for approval this month.

Budget review

Members considered the budget report provided by the Clerk. This indicated no immediate cashflow issue or problems with budgeting during the rest of the current financial year.

However, there were more long-term issues year on year to be addressed. There was an agreement that the precept would need to be substantially increased next year.

C’lir Derek Jones commented that due to talk of more responsibilities being transferred to Community Councils, it could be that community councils will need to fund more items than has previously been the case.

Discussion of common land at Sardis

C’lr Sinclair mentioned that a biodiversity funding scheme run by Welsh Water had been suggested by the Common Land Officer as a possible source of funding for improvements to the land. However it had transpired that the Community Council was not eligible for this funding. It was noted, though, that the Common Land Officer had suggested that hypothetically P.C.C. might be able to part-fund any positive maintenance schemes put forward.

C’lr John Evans mentioned that a local resident had come to see him upset that he had been approached by a local person involved in the matter, and had found the experience rather intimidating. Members were agreed that, unfortunate as this was, it was not a Community Council matter, but rather potentially a Police one.

C’lr Iain Wood raised the question of what, if anything, should now be done with the land, especially as at present it is an open invitation to fly-tippers.

IW – what are we going to do? At present it is almost an invitation to fly tippers.

C’lr Michael Pettit suggested that it should be fenced and left to go wild.

C’lr Iain Wood suggested the possibility of writing to all local residents to explain the status of the land. He felt it important for this point to be made, as he mentioned that some people down there seem to view the road as their own property, and had apparently said that the Community Council ‘cannot fence it off’ as it is needed for turning. C’lr Wood felt it important that this attitude should be challenged.

It was agreed that the Clerk should approach the Common Land Officer to ask him for a site meeting, this to be held with C’lr Alun Williams on behalf of B.C.C. At the meeting, possible routes for a line of bollards to be assessed. Clerk to request a quotation from P.C.C. for installation of any bollards that might be agreed as desirable. Members also discussed the possibility of planting trees on the land at a future date. This was left as a possible issue that could be discussed on a future occasion.

Matter to be placed on December agenda for further discussion.

It was also noted that the issue of items being stored along the lane leading down to the common land was not a community council matter.

Discussion of land at Barnlake

C’lr Rob. Summons had advised that a lease of the land might be available from P.C.C. at a peppercorn rent.

C’lr Scott Sinclair noted that the idea of taking on responsibility for the land had previously been rejected by the community council, while acknowledging the possibility of revisiting this at some future date.

No decision was taken to revisit the matter of taking on responsibility for the land. Clerk to write again to Property Services and Rights of Way departments of P.C.C. asking them to carry out needed maintenance of the land and public right of way.

Clerk to write to Meadow Homes to thank them for their offer of help, but explain that this could not be taken up, as the land had been determined to be the responsibility of P.C.C.

Discussion of ‘Enhancing Pembrokeshire’ grant funding arrangement

Matter dropped, as, while Members were agreed that it was a constructive scheme, B.C.C. was not in a position to follow it up at present.

Discussion of draft charter between P.C.C. and community councils

It was noted that O.V.W. was crucial to the charter as an important link in the proposed relationship between P.C.C. and town and community councils. Membership of O.V.W. to be reviewed in a future meeting.

Mention was made in the draft document of possible community asset transfers and transfer of some community-based services, though all in very general terms. The Clerk understood that the language in the document was due to be made much more concrete and specific.

Clerk to send in feedback, asking for more specific details on the proposals, and commenting that they need to be more concrete. Feedback to also mention the need for any changes that might have an impact on community council precepts to be brought in with sufficient time for the precept to be adjusted as needed.

Discussion of problems with footpath behind Prince of Wales Close

Members were informed the necessary hedge-cutting and maintenance had now been done.

Discussion of proposals for changes to NHS services at Withybush Hospital

C’lir Derek Jones raised the matter of the proposed reduction in services at Withybush Hospital. He and his wife had been in conversation with the local A.M. during a recent visit to Cardiff. He had suggested that it might be beneficial for B.C.C. to write to the Health Minister regarding this.

C’lir Michael Pettit mentioned a related issue concerning the transfer of neo-natal services from Withybush. Apparently all births occurring in Carmarthenshire have to be registered in Carmarthenshire, with potential adverse knock-on effects for Pembrokeshire.

Clerk to send letter to Health Minister expressing concern over the proposed reduction of services at Withybush Hospital, especially in connection with A&E services. Letter to ask what the previously-proposed ‘hubs’ are now to be replaced with under the most recent proposals, as the original decision had been to replace A&E centres with ‘hubs’, and it was now understood that this proposal had been abandoned. Letter to also raise the birth rate issue mentioned above. Copies of letter to be sent to Stephen Crabb, M.P., and C.E.O. of Hywel Dda Health Board.

Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 9pm. Next meeting, Wednesday 5th December 2018