

Minutes of General Meeting held on Thursday 11th March 2021

Present: Cllrs

Allan Morgans – Chair
 Jac Armstrong – Vice Chair
 Ivy Watts
 Michael Cordiner
 John Almond
 Isla Watts
 Amanda Curtis
 Paul Sheldon
 Graeme Davidson
 C Cllr Martyn Holland
 Margaret Narburgh – Clerk

Apologies: None

Members of the Public

Hugo Watts
 Tony King
 Lesley Kendrick
 Andrea Strong
 Julie Wynne
 David Wynne
 Richard Haggerty
 Lesley Phillips
 Rob O’Neil
 Janey ?
 Norma Wright
 Julie Lawton
 Gaynor Hannibal-Woods
 Rupert Hannibal

Members of the Public cont.:

Suzanne Lodge
 Lindsay Turner
 Lesley Games-Lewsey
 Rob Lewsey
 Lee Mathews
 Lorraine Mathews
 Rachel Gibson
 Paul Taylor
 Mark Ridgeway
 Kayleigh Davies
 Jane Longworth
 Kris Longworth
Visiting Speaker:
 Hannah Parish Aggregates Officer
 Flintshire and Denbighshire CC

193. Agenda Items

The Chair and Clerk had technical problems joining the meeting, so Cllr Armstrong opened the meeting. He put forward a motion to start with Burley Hill Quarry as a discrete item until the Chair and Clerk were able to join the meeting. This was agreed. Cllr Armstrong then welcomed Hannah Parish Aggregates officer for Flintshire and Denbighshire CC and asked her to begin her presentation. Hannah began by stating that she didn’t have a presentation as such but wanted to outline the process. She stated that the Scoping Study related to what may need to be considered in the Environmental Statement as part of any planning application to extend the life of the quarry. DCC would review the scoping request and consult with relevant experts, both internal and external. Hannah also stated that the 20 plus residents’ views on the Planning Portal had highlighted a misunderstanding in that the scoping request could not be rejected although the comments would be taken on board. DCC has a duty to respond to the scoping request. This was not the same as the previous application for an extension to the quarry but rather an extension of the time permitted to work it. If this then proceeds to the next stages, then there would be further consultation and the Council would need to look at doing this virtually as physical village hall meetings couldn’t yet take place. DCC would then make a determination. Andrea Strong asked Hannah if the scoping study was a foregone conclusion. Hannah stated that she didn’t quite know what she meant by that but that this was a process to be gone through. The applicant states what they believe needs to be considered as part of the Environmental Statement within a planning application and asks the Council to comment on this. She went on to say that the Council would determine what studies needed to be undertaken and may respond to say that they haven’t thought about certain things. The Council uses its specialists to tell the applicant what needs to go into their statement, e.g., traffic monitoring. The scope is also assessed against planning policies as part of the local development framework.

Julie and David Wynne asked about the Liaison Committee and why no local residents had been invited to join the Committee as he and others had been on the original Committee in 2002. Cllr Armstrong mentioned that Tony King was being co-opted onto the Committee and that it would be possible to include other residents as well. Hannah added that discussions were still on-going as to what the shape the liaison meetings would take. This is not a statutory requirement but rather something that the Quarry was offering, and a Terms of Reference would need to be drawn up as to who should be on the Committee.

Several members of the public asked for further explanation and questioned why it was opening again now, why they had not had any communication from Tarmac, if there was an ulterior motive, if Denbighshire CC had already agreed to further extraction.

C Cllr Holland stated the Quarry Liaison Committee was being reformed and a meeting needed to be arranged with Tarmac ASAP. 4 Councillors from Llanferres CC, 2 Llanarmon CC and Tony King had agreed to sit on the committee along with himself. Andrea Strong and David Wynne asked if they could sit on the committee as well as residents most affected by any decisions.

Hannah Parish stated she would ask but could not insist that members of the public were represented. She requested a list of names, addresses and contact details for potential members.

Action: Cllr Holland to forward list to Hannah Parish and talk to individuals.

Cllr Armstrong informed the Chair he had not gone through the formalities at the start of the meeting and the Chair then took over.

194. Apologies

None

196. Declarations of Interest

None

195. Protocol

The Chair put forward a motion to change the order of business to discuss Maeshafn Playing Field and Orchard area next as members of the public wanted to speak. Cllr Curtis seconded and all Councillors agreed.

With so many people present he asked that all participants turn off their microphone when not speaking, explained each person would be asked to speak in turn for up to 3 minutes and ask everyone to show due respect for Councillors, the Clerk, each other and other's opinions. He explained the public would be invited to speak first, then the Clerk, then Councillors. After that someone would propose a motion which Councillors would vote on.

196. Meeting Open to the Public re Maeshafn Playing Field and Orchard

1. Rupert and Gaynor Hannibal-Wood had nothing to add to the concerns already voiced to the Council in numerous e-mails. They stated they fully supported the development and praised the Council for all its effort. They asked if the Council could re-consider the location of the education shelter because not everyone was happy and felt they had not been properly consulted on its inclusion or position. The Chair stated that they had been the only ones to raise any concerns when the notice was sent out by the Clerk in January informing residents of the development plans. 2 meeting took place and they had chosen the current location of the structure. Rupert was asked to confirm that they were both happy with location they had originally chosen which he did. He then went on to state that they only did so thinking everyone in the village had been consulted but it had now come to their attention that they had been the only ones and so wanted a full and open consultation. They had not changed their minds on their chosen location but would be happy if it were under the tree as well. The Chair then stated that he had been informed that during a meeting of the MADRA committee on 3rd March Rupert had stated he felt they had been duped and hoodwinked by the Council. The Chair asked if this was fact or rumour. Rupert stated that he could not recall the words but may have said something along those lines.
2. Lee and Lorraine Mathews stated they too fully supported the development and recognised all the effort that had been put into the project. They had nothing to add to the concerns raised in e-mails sent to the Clerk and stated their only objection was to the location of the ball catcher. They said it

was directly in front of their lounge window. Their e-mail on 4th March objected to a permanent structure being built without proper consultation and drew attention to the qualifying criteria for the grant. They asked if the ball catcher could be relocated and the Chair explained that its positioning was to facilitate easy access and use for wheelchair and mobility scooter users. Its position was also to prevent stray balls landing on the road and its bright colour was to help the partially sighted and was also something that may appeal to those on the autism spectrum.

3. Rob and Lesley Games-Lewsey stated the village had been waiting a very long time for this and thanked the Council for developing the park when a number of previous attempts had failed. Rob stated people should remember this was for the children and provided a safe place to play. He questioned why those people who were complaining had chosen to live next to the park if they didn't like children playing. In their opinion the Council should continue as planned.
4. Mark Ridgway & Kailey Davies stated they were all in favour of everything the Council was doing and said it provided an opportunity for people to come together and enjoy themselves. They couldn't understand why people were complaining. Rupert interrupted to restate his reasons and Kayleigh told him she had been deeply offended by his remarks during the MADRA meeting and felt he did not like teenagers and was discriminating against them by objecting.
5. Lindsay Turner questioned why they were opposing the positioning of the shelter as it was a community facility designed for all. There had been no facilities in the village for her children when they were growing up and she fully supported everything being done.
6. Rachel Gibson thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and stated the project had her overall support. She asked for the siting of the education shelter to be reconsidered because it was just yards away from the bottom of their garden and felt the Council had not engaged in a proper consultation process. She was keen to resolve this issue. The Chair stated the Clerk had personally put the initial survey form and notification of the Council intentions through her letterbox, that both documents had also been circulated on the Community Facebook page and by e-mail to those on the Chair's contact list. Information had been posted on the noticeboard and recorded in the minutes of Council meetings. The survey form had asked for residents opinions and the information sheet gave details of the plans, including reference to the education shelter being located in the orchard area. The Chair stated residents' had been fully consulted and that everyone had had at least 2 opportunities to raise any concerns but only one household had.
7. Jane and Kris Langworth had no objections and stated they lived opposite the park and felt they had been consulted and had the opportunity to engage with council. The ball catcher was garish but that's what they expect in a playing field.
8. Lesley Games-Lewsey interrupted to agree and stated she visited many parks around the area, and all had brightly coloured play equipment.
9. Lee Mathews was disappointed and although fully supportive of the project felt the colour and siting of the ball catcher was not in keeping with a rural area and ANOB. It was directly opposite his window. The Chair stated its colour was to help the partially sighted and the Council had a duty to include facilities for every age and ability.
10. Julie Lawton supported the project and asked for a full consultation to resolve the 2 issues being raised. She felt bad about everything that had emanated from the MADRA meeting.
11. Suzanne Lodge had no objections at all and reminded residents the village was already full of colour with a red phone box, yellow grit bins and very brightly coloured play equipment in peoples' gardens which was just as visible from their windows as the ball catcher.

There then followed an exchange of opposing views between the residents.

Mrs Mathews asked the Clerk how many complaints had been received about the ball catcher. The clerk responded that she was aware Mrs Mathews had knocked on residents doors during the day asking them

to complain. Two had been received at 2 o'clock and the Clerk stated more may have come in since. Mrs Mathews said she had only contacted people she knew had not been out of their homes due to Covid restrictions and Mr Lewsey interrupted to say this was not true.

The Chair had asked the Clerk to prepare a chronology of all the events leading up to this meeting which would answer many of the questions asked. A lot had happened and she read out her notes which are attached to these minutes as Appendix 1 and a verbatim record of what was said.

1. Cllr Sheldon stated that the Council's Code of Conduct says that Councillors should be given time to consider any correspondence received. In practice this meant anything coming in after 3rd March should be deferred until the Council meeting in April by which time work in the park would have been completed. However, the Council wants to resolve this matter before then which is why it is being discussed tonight. He felt the Council had passed the point of changing anything, due to the financial repercussions. He suggested that once complete, the Council could look at sympathetic planting to help mitigate the impact of the ball catcher for Mr & Mrs Mathews.
2. Cllr Almond agreed and said work should continue as planned with the education centre in the orchard area and the ball catcher staying where it is. If this did cause problems in the future the Council should revisit the matter.
3. Cllr Cordiner said he had been listening very carefully to everything that had been said and felt the Council had done everything it could to give residents their say. Councillors could only make decisions on the information in front of them at the time decisions needed to be taken. He felt work should continue as planned, monitor what happens and address any problems when they arise.
4. Cllr Davidson agreed but felt Councillors should define what 'problem' meant to avoid trivial matters being raised.
5. Cllr Armstrong agreed with his fellow Councillors. He stated complainants should not visit Councillors homes and should contact the Council via the Clerks e-mail. He felt residents had been consulted and the Council had gone above and beyond to seek resident's views. Councillors could not be expected to decide what residents might want if they had not voiced their concerns at the appropriate time. Making changes at this late stage was not viable. If the education facility was not built Clocaenog could withdraw all their funding which would devastate Council finances and be an unreasonable burden on local ratepayers. Cllr Armstrong questioned why Mr Hannibal was speaking out for other complainants, and that he should limit his concerns to those effecting only himself.
Whilst Cllr Armstrong was speaking Paul Taylor tried to speak several times but could not be heard. The Chair stopped the meeting and called his name 3 times, but he seemed to be having technical difficulties.
6. Cllr Ivy Watts felt this had got to the stage where the Council could not turn back because requests to reposition equipment had come in too late and the Council had to meet its contractual obligations.
7. Cllr Curtis said she thought everything possible had been done and that people often didn't realise just how much time, thought, consideration and planning went on behind the scenes before decisions were taken. She agreed with fellow Councillors and felt work should continue as planned.
8. Cllr Isla Watts was unwell and did not comment.
9. Cllr Morgans there was no duty to consult but the Council had chosen to do so and felt work should continue as planned.

Cllr Almond proposed that ***work should continue as planned and that any problems arising would be rectified.***

The Chair asked if there were any amendments to the proposal.

Cllr Armstrong proposed an amendment to say that ***work should continue as planned and in the event of issues being raised the matter would be re-considered.***

The amendment was seconded by Cllr Curtis

The Clerk read out the amendment to ensure its correctness.

The Chair asked for a vote on the amendment, Cllrs Morgans, Almond, Armstrong, Sheldon, Davidson, Cordiner, Curtis and Ivy Watts voted in favour. Cllr Isla Wates did not vote as she was unwell.

The Chair then asked Councillors to vote on the amended motion, Cllrs Morgans, Almond, Armstrong, Sheldon, Davidson, Cordiner, Curtis and Ivy Watts voted in favour. Cllr Isla Watts did not vote as she was still unwell.

The motion was carried.

Paul Taylor tried to speak again during the proposals and was heard to say ‘they have cut me off’ even though he was still audible and visible at the meeting. He then left the meeting.

197. Approval of Minutes on 11th February 2021

Cllr Sheldon proposed they be accepted Cllr Curtis seconded and all Councillors voted to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

198. Matters Arising from Meeting on 11th February 2021 ref minute:

- 177 completed 11.2.21
- 179 completed 13.2.21
- 180 would be discussed next
- 183 all actions completed 12.2.21
- 184 completed 13.2.21
- 189.1 contractor was due to PAT test week commencing 15.3.21
- 189.2 on agenda for discussion later
- 189.3 on agenda for discussion later
- 192.1 Cllr Holland was still to speak to DCC re repairing potholes
- 192.2 on agenda for discussion later

199. Correspondence List

The Clerk had circulated correspondence to Councillors as appropriate during the course of the month. Four items needed considering:

1. Clerk explained that following Brexit all references to GDPR had to be changed to Data Protection Act 2018 but nothing else needed changing. She had updated the Councils documentation.
2. Denbighshire CC’s proposed Public Space Protection Order had wide reaching implications but due to the hour asked the Clerk to put this on the Agenda for the next meeting in April.
3. NWWT’s request for Council support no longer needed considering because BT Openreach had already started work on faster broadband connections in the area.
4. The complaints received regarding Maeshafn playing field had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

200. Scoping Opinion request 21/2021/0052 Burley Hill Quarry

The Clerk had circulated a draft response to Councillors prior to the meeting but because of the time, suggested Councillors send her an e-mail on Friday morning if they wanted any changes made following Hannah Parish's discussion earlier.

Action: Clerk to finalise the response and send to Denbighshire Planning Dept before 18th March deadline

202. County Councillor Martin Hollands Monthly Report

Dog Control Regulations

New DCC dog control regulations will be issued after a public consultation. The current regulations have expired.

Housing Stock

The County have identified 23 empty houses in our ward (Rhyl West 74).

There are over 500 empty houses around the county at any one time some of them have been empty for many years and the County are trying to bring these back into the housing stock.

Replacement Bench

The Trunk Roads Agency have confirmed that you can replace the bench on the A494 between Tafarn Y Gelyn and Loggerheads. Ideally it should be on the same base.

Parking at Moel Famau

The first draft of the proposed Parking and Highways restrictions for Moel Famau have been submitted by the consultants. The County have been presented with a number of options and recommendations. They are looking at 55 additional parking spaces with some time limited free parking bays on the road side.

There will also be help for the residents road side parking and double yellow lines from the Bryn Bowlio Caravan Park through to the first bend as you head for Llanbedr.

Before any parking restrictions are formalised there will be a public consultation.

Burley Hill Quarry

The deadline for the Burley Hill Quarry Scoping exercise has passed but late submissions are still being accepted. The County's report will be issued towards the end of the month. At this stage it is important to note that this is not a planning application but a fifteen-year review of the quarry's practices against the current quarries national standards.

203. Projects Update

1. Maeshafn Playing Field had been dealt with earlier.
2. Brian Palmer will be planting oak trees in Big Covert on 13th March and has invited the community to plant and dedicate a tree.
3. The Chair has spoken to Highways Dept regarding installing a bench in Tafarn y Gelyn and they have sent him the procedure to be followed under the 1980 Highways Act. He had tried to read it but found it complicated. Installing a bench would cost around £500 so the Council needed to decide if it was 'value for money'. Cllr Cordiner felt it would be well used because it was on the bridleway and many people used the route walking from Llanferres to Loggerheads.

Action: Chair and Cllr Cordiner to survey the site and report back at meeting in April

204. Maintenance in the Community

1. Pat testing of the telephone kiosk and Christmas tree lights would be done week commencing 15th March.
2. Highways have confirmed the bench on A494 can be replaced with one of similar size but an attempt will be made to repair it first
Action: Cllr Morgans to arrange with carpenter
3. Highways have confirmed they are happy for the Council to add to their maintenance program but it was too late to discuss this now
Action: Clerk to put on agenda for next meeting
4. Cllr Morgans has had a reply from the plumber who had a look at repairing the Millennium water fountain. He said it is a fiddly repair and it may have to be kept switched off until Covid restrictions are lifted.
Action: Cllr Holland to confirm if this is the case with DCC
5. Cllr Morgans had visited Tafarn y Gelyn where there is already one dog foul waste bin next to the bus shelter but did not know where the request for a 2nd one had come from or where it was to be located. Cllr Isla Watts said it was something she had picked up on Facebook.
Action: Clerk to put on agenda for next meeting

205. Banking

The Clerk had sent Cllr Ivy Watts January's bank statements and accounts for her to check against internet banking transactions. Everything was in order.

206. Schedule of Bills for Payment

The following bills were presented for authorisation to pay

1. AVOW - payment of Clerks salary, backpay and admin fee for March	£330.90
2. Debit card payment of GoTo meeting fee for February	£13.20
3. Welsh Water direct debit for Millennium fountain	£17.36
4. Cartridge People debit card payment for printer ink	£38.99
5. UK Sign Shop debit card payment for sign on gate to orchard	£24.99
6. B&Q paint to decorate Maeshafn storage shed and goal posts	£45.00
7. Wiswell Building repairs to Maeshafn shed	£181.15
8. Celtic Stone base for education shelter in Maeshafn park	£1495.00
9. Travis Perkins debit card payment for hazard tape	£10.91
Total	£2157.45

Cllr Almond proposed all bills be paid, Cllr Curtis seconded, and all Councillors voted in favour.

Action: Clerk to pay all bills on schedule

207. Other Matters Brought to the Councils Attention

1. Cllr Cordiner had been given some no dog fouling signs so if anyone needed them, they could be collected from his home.
2. Cllr Morgans had been told the finger posting sign had been knocked down and salt bin damaged near the main entrance gate to Big Covert. This had been reported to Countryside Services.
3. NWWT have cleared the rubbish by the S bend in Maeshafn even though it was not on their land.
4. Cllr Morgans had been contacted re damage to the ditches opposite Glan y Gors on the road out of Maeshafn by parked cars was causing flooding. He had asked Cllr Holland if Denbighshire could create some parking spaces by the gate into Moel Findeg
5. Clerk reported News & Views was now available as a PDF document. Anyone wanting to receive an electronic version should send their e-mail address to Sandrine.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending Cllr Curtis proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Davidson seconded, and the meeting was closed at 10.39 p.m.

**The next General Meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 8th April 2021
starting at 7.30 pm by Video Conference**

Information Read out during Llanferres Community Council Meeting on 11th March 2021
re Development of Maeshafn Playing Field and Orchard Area

To take this subject forward I have been asked to chronical the events leading up to tonight’s consideration of the concerns raised by a number of residents in relation to the work being done in the playing field and orchard area. I am going to read my notes so as not to miss anything as they provide answers to many of the questions raised. This is going to take about 10 mins minutes so bear with me because it has become clear that many people are not aware of the Councils role within the community and how this works in practice.

This information will be included in the minutes of this meeting as a formal record of what has been said. When the minutes are approved they will be posted on the Councils website.

First of all, Councillors are elected by residents to take decisions on their behalf. They are required to act in what they believe are the wishes and best interests of the whole community, not just a select few. Councils are not required to seek residents permission to perform their duties.

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Work in the playing field and orchard – including the installation of the education facility falls within ‘permitted developments’ under planning legislation. This means the Council has exactly the same rights as private individuals and there is no statutory requirement for Community Council’s to engage in a formal consultation to undertake small works on their own land.

It is when planning permission is required for larger works that the planning application triggers full consultation with residents living in the immediate vicinity of those works.

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There are 5 driving forces behind this project

1. Residents have been asking for a better playground for 20 years or more
2. The existing play equipment was past it useful life and barely complied with health and safety legislation
3. Numerous UK and Welsh government policies and initiatives require all Councils to increase the number of facilities to promote mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing. Amongst other things, this means Councils are expected to provide fully inclusive outdoor play facilities and open spaces for both able bodied and disabled people of all ages – Covid is now putting a much greater emphasis on this
4. All Councils now have a statutory duty under the 2016 Environmental Act to promote and improve Biodiversity through education and physical action, which is where the education facility, butterfly garden and planting the orchard comes in. The 5th driving force is
5. Denbighshire’s Open Spaces and Assessment Audit which recommends local councils increase the number of play area’s and open spaces to comply with Government policy and legislation.

So, this project is part of a much bigger UK initiative which goes part way towards meeting the Councils statutory duties.

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- 3 years ago, Allan got quotes to replace the existing play equipment but the cost was prohibitive and so the project got put on hold
- In February 2020, the play inspection report stated the existing equipment no longer met health & safety standards and so would need removing or replacing before the end of the year
- The Council already had £4000 put aside for this and had another £1000 available in the precept giving £5000. Replacing the swings alone cost £6000 so this wasn't enough.
- Shortly after, Clocaenog Wind Farm fund became available and Martyn Holland persuaded them to extend the catchment area for grant applications to include Llanferres – the catchment are finished in Ruthin. This provided an opportunity to apply for funding to develop the park
- So, in Sept 2020, the Council resolved to see what funding was available and I search all possible sources. Almost all the grants were only available for Covid related projects. Clocaenog was the exception.
- The Council met Clocaenog eligibility criteria and felt it could fulfil at least one aspect within 4 of their 5 measures for being awarded a grant
- First we had to demonstrate community NEED and SUPPORT so in Oct 2020 the survey form was circulated around the village. We posted leaflets through the letterboxes of 60 of the 67 houses in the village, put it on the Community Facebook page and sent it out by e-mail to those on Allan's contact list
- I wrote to the pub, MADRA and NWWT explaining what the Council was trying to do and asked if they would support the project

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11 households completed and returned the survey form, 5 sent e-mails expressing their views, 4 people stopped Allan when walking in the village, the pub, MADRA and NWWT each sent letters of support.

More recently a local farmer offered to support the project by cutting the hedge, a local businessman offered to refurbish the goal posts and flatten the football area as best he could and a local builder offered to dig up and remove the rubble that had been fly tipped in the orchard area - all free of charge which saved the Council a fortune.

We came across a few people in the pub who said they hadn't responded to the survey because they didn't have children so didn't mind what happened.

Allan and I then went through the responses and drew up a 'wish list' in order of priority based on how many people had asked for what.

the swings, climbing frame and surprisingly, more seating came top
2nd – was a see saw and basketball hoop
3rd - education shelter
4th - flat football pitch, better goal posts and nets that fit
5th - roundabout
6th - timber products
7th - disabled access
8th - zip wire
9th - spinning hat
10th and lastly a slide

4 contractors were invited to survey the site and quote for all the items on the 'wish list' – total cost came in just short of £50,000

The Council had £5000 in the kitty and could apply for another £19,000 from Clocaenog giving a total spend of £25,000

The project needed to be INCLUSIVE for a whole range of reasons so facilities for the disabled became the first priority.

Timber products were then chosen to blend with the rural landscape even though they are roughly 20% more expensive than metal or plastic. Affordable ball catchers and springers are only available in bright colours

We then continued down the priority list until we ran out of money.

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The education centre came within the budget and we did consider if it would attract anti-social behaviour. We know all 23 children in the village and talk to most of them on a regular basis so have a 'feel' for their characters. We also know their parents, and consider them to be responsible adults who would very quickly put a stop to their children misbehaving.

We also considered the risk of youths travelling from outside the village to congregate, but because of the lack of transport decided it was unlikely.

So, we deemed the risk of children congregating and causing a nuisance to be minimal.

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The main purpose of this structure is to hold country craft workshops for local people to educate and engage in improving Biodiversity. The idea is to show children in particular, how to build and place bird and bat boxes, bug and hedgehog houses, plant wildflowers, pick and press fruit from the trees to produce drinks.

We also see it as a meeting point for walks through the nature reserve and woods with specialist guides talking about the wildlife, flora, fauna and fungi. You may remember the fungi walk last autumn had to be cancelled due to Covid.

The structure also provides shade in a quieter area of the park for those who just want to get out of the house, sit and chat

MADRA has a very long history of organising social events in the park although admittedly not in recent times. The Council envisages this continuing and residents would be more than welcome to make use of this community facility during these events.

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We relied on professional advice to decide where each item could be sited because of the complexities involved in complying with legislation – particularly Health & Safety and issues around

- Child safety
- Road safety
- Potential damage to surrounding property
- Ongoing maintenance
- And budget constraints

By the time all these factors had been considered there was no choice - the play equipment effectively sited itself.

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The ball catcher was positioned near the gate to facilitate easy access for wheelchair and mobility scooter users and far enough away from the front boundary to reduce the risk of stray balls landing in the road.

It's position enables people like Eddie Wild to access it on his mobility scooter and play with his grandchildren. It's perhaps worth saying at this point that no one has a right to an uninterrupted view from their lounge window. Disabled people do, however have rights to be included and the Council has a statutory duty to provide for them.

It's bright red colour is to help the partially sighted.

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The original plan was to position the education shelter in the playing field behind the tree but then Allan and I decided it would be better in the orchard area because

- Everything was being crowded in the playing field area
- Installing the base could damage the roots of the tree
- It would be in the shade of the tree so would require more maintenance
- The moss and damp around there would reduce its life expectancy
- It could be damaged by stray footballs
- People using it could be hit by stray footballs
- Space around it was limited and it seemed silly to have people congregating in a small space when the orchard area was empty

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In January we sent out the notice letting people know we had got the grant, listed everything we would be doing and invited people to contact the Council if they wanted more information.

Only one household did so and this was by formal e-mail to the Clerk on 17th January. They asked for a meeting with Allan and myself to discuss their concerns and this took place on 21st January in the park. The meeting was pre-arranged and NOT through a chance encounter as is being claimed.

They felt it would be a magnet for youths to congregate drink, take drugs, party, leave the place littered with cans and generally disturb their peace and quiet.

Allan and I spoke to them at length and tried to allay their fears. They were told there was scope to reposition the structure and they were invited to attend the meeting we were having the following week with the Contractors. Cllr John Almond attended this second meeting with us. He listened to their concerns, spoke at length about his experience of anti-social behaviour both as a Councillor in a rural area and someone who himself lived next to a playground. By the end of this meeting, the residents decided the best location for them was in the corner of the orchard area where the base was laid 4 weeks later. Cllr Almond also agreed the Council would put a sign on the gate saying the area was closed from 7pm or dusk and assured them that if it did attract the kind of behaviour they feared, the Council would act quickly and even remove the shelter if circumstances warranted it.

I spoke to the landlord at the Miners arms who had 4 gazebo's outside the pub during lockdown. The pub was closed during a lot of this time and his gazebo's didn't attract any unwanted attention.

I also contacted other Councils in the surrounding area and asked about their experience. The only problems were litter and youths in Llanarmon moving picnic tables to create a more challenging skate park.

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It was almost 2 weeks after the based had been finished which was on Wednesday last week, that the secretary of MADRA rang to say someone had called for an urgent meeting of the MADRA committee to stop what was happening in the park. Allan was told it was a committee meeting rather than a village meeting so felt he could not attend. The meeting took place on Wednesday 3rd March.

By Thursday lunchtime 4 residents had contacted us to say they didn't agree with what had been said during the MADRA meeting and they fully supported the Councils plans. It later came to our attention that during this meeting

- Allan had been accused of refusing to attend
- Only residents with complaints had been invited to attend the meeting - no one else
- Some wanted to canvas residents to stop the education centre being built at all on the grounds that
 1. It would attract hordes of youths and anti-social behaviour
 2. The Council was not doing its job because they had not been properly consulted
 3. The Council had not complied with Clocaenog conditions
 4. The Council didn't have planning permission and
 5. 2 people felt they had been duped and hoodwinked by Allan, John and myself

The County Councillor rang on Thursday morning to say both he and Denbighshire Planning dept had received complaints and I understand the complainants were referred back to the Council. This resulted e-mails from 4 residents coming in late Thursday afternoon.

On Friday morning I contacted Play Quest to explain what had happened and discussed the Councils options.

The equipment had already been manufactured and if we delayed work just one day before it was due to start we would lose our slot and it could be the end of summer before they could come back.

If we cancelled the education centre we would be liable for the cost but not the installation.

Given the complaints focused on the shelter, I asked them to continue as planned with the play equipment but leave the shelter until I could get back to them after tonight's meeting.

I then got absorbed in other things and admit it never crossed my mind to inform either Councillors or residents about the new arrangements.

The contractors started work on Monday morning and that evening Clocaenog rang to say they had received complaints and could we have a video call first thing Tuesday.

During the meeting with them we were told the complainants felt had not been properly consulted and asked if they could attend Thursdays meeting to support them. Clocaenog said they could not do that because it was a local matter and referred them back to the Council. Clocaenog have asked to be sent a copy of the minutes of this meeting for their records.

Around 4 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon a resident came to our home, his manner was aggressive and he asked for the ball catcher to be removed because it was spoiling his view. Allan's response was simply 'tough'. Allan accepts he could have handled this better but his response was borne out of frustration at having being hounded from pillar to post by numerous people within the village for over a week.

Around 6.45 pm the secretary of MADRA rang saying a resident had visited her home and asked if MADRA could do anything to get the ball catcher removed.

Around 9 pm another resident rang to say the person who had come to our door earlier had called at his home and was very upset over what had transpired since the MADRA committee meeting the previous week. The resident was asked to pass on his apologies to Allan and myself which he did and ask again if the ball catcher could be removed or at least repositioned. I explained the reasons for its sighting was to provide a facility for the disabled and I understand the information was passed back.

At 11.17 pm we received an e-mail from one of the other complainants requesting that 'everyone receives the opportunity to be made aware of the details of the plans and to have their voices heard with regards to the siting of the education shelter'.

I stopped counting how many complaints came in on Wednesday because they obviously emanated from the same 3 original complainants.

Earlier today we were told one of the complainants has been knocking on doors around the village asking residents to complain about the ball catcher. The first one came in just after noon and the second at 2.20. I haven't replied to either. Not sure if any more have come in since because I have been busy with other things.

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The financial implications are that the base has already been laid and the invoice is on tonight's list to authorise payment. If we cancel the shelter at this late stage the Council would still need to pay PlayQuest for it. If this doesn't go ahead we would need to repay this element of the grant to Glocaenog which would be just over £5000 and have to paid out of Council reserves.