

Minutes of General Meeting held on 13th April 2023

Present: Cllrs

Allan Morgans – Chair
Paul Sheldon
Lyn Gibson
Margaret Narburgh – Clerk

Apologies:

Jac Armstrong – Vice Chair
Amanda Curtis
Simon Grice

Members of the Public:

Tony King
Hugo Watts
Dawn Skelhorn
Mr & Mrs Mann
Mr & Mrs Dyson
Mr & Mrs Jelley

581. Apologies

Cllrs Armstrong, Curtis and Grice sent their apologies due to other commitments.

582. Declarations of Interest

None

583. Meeting Open to the Public

1. Mr King asked if the Council could put pressure on Denbighshire CC to repair the road approaching the S bend leading into Maeshafn Action: Chair to contact Denbighshire highways.
2. Mr & Mrs Mann, Dyson and Jelley all expressed their concerns that the owners of the Donkey Trekking business along the Moel Famau road were breaching several conditions on the planning permission granted on 15th February 2023. Two emails received by the Council relating to this matter were on the Correspondence list for discussion under item 10 and the Chair proposed bringing these forward to the beginning of the meeting. Cllr Sheldon seconded the motion and Cllr Gibson voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions.

584. Donkey Trekking Business

The Chair read out emails received from Mr Dyson and Mr & Mrs Jelley which stated that they believed the owners of the business were in breach of conditions 4, 5, 10 and 11 and that roadside signage was larger than agreed, a Porta loo had been installed, unauthorised structures had been built in the field, the manure dump was overflowing onto the road and sleeping policemen had not been installed to prevent spillages. They also suspected the owner did not have the required licences to run the business. The Chair went through the conditions on the planning approval and agreed that if the claims were correct there was a breach of the conditions. Cllr Sheldon proposed contacting the owner, outlining the concerns that had been raised and giving them the opportunity to comment within seven days before the Council contacted Planning dept. Cllr Gibson seconded the motion and all Councillors present voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Actions: Clerk to send email to the owner and circulate response when received. Clerk to ask Denbighshire CC if they have issued the appropriate licenses.

585. Approval of Minutes of General Meeting on 9th March 2023

Cllr Sheldon proposed accepting the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, Cllr Gibson seconded and all Councillors present voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried.

586. Matters Arising from the meeting on 9th March 2023

- 388/4 Ongoing, Countryside Services have still not responded to Cllr Morgans which is unusual. Action: Cllr Morgans to chase.
- 391 On agenda for discussion under Improvement Plans for Maes Ysgawen park.
- 452 On agenda for discussion under Improvement Plans for Maeshafn playing field.
- 533/2 Ongoing, Cllr Grice reported he has submitted a formal application to Denbighshire CC for a new dog fouling bin and will report back to the Council when he receives a response.

533/5	Complete. Response received from the Minister and circulated to Councillors.
568	Ongoing.
572/5	Complete. The village hall committee has accepted the Council's offer of a contribution towards broadband costs.
573	Completed 10/3/23
574	Completed 10/3/23
575	Completed 10/3/23
576	Completed 12/3/23
578	Completed 10/3/23
579/1	Ongoing
580/1	Completed 10/3/23
580/2	Completed 10/3/23

587. Co-option of Councillors

The Council still has three vacancies which the Clerk is continuing to advertise on noticeboards, the website and in News & Views. Mrs G Davies has expressed an interest to become a councillor and the clerk has sent her relevant information for consideration.

588. External Audit

The Clerk reported that Welsh Audit office had still not responded to the 2020/21 or 2021/22 audits.

589. 2022/23 Year End Accounts

Total income was £19,174.37 and expenditure £16,997.25. The £2177.12 (11%) underspend is due to several works not being completed during the year as expected. The Clerk has ringfenced £3,145 to undertake this work as soon as practicable together with £2,500 for election expenses and £2,350 for Councillor Allowance payments at the end of 2023/24. Total reserves at the end of year were £16,538 of which £7,995 is ringfenced leaving £9,147 of available reserves equivalent to 49% of the year's precept. This is in line with audit guidelines. The Clerk has submitted a VAT reclaim totalling £427.71 for 2022/23. Cllr Morgans proposed accepting the year end accounts, Cllr Sheldon seconded the motion and all Councillors present voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried.

590. 2022/23 Internal Audit and Annual Return

The Clerk had circulated the Annual Return and Accounting Statements for 2022/23 before the meeting. The Governance Statement was read out by the Clerk. Councillors agreed with all nine points and the Chair signed the Council's approval. Action: Clerk to deliver audit papers to the auditor.

591. Correspondence List

1. Llanferres Village Hall wrote to thank the Council for the £50 gift voucher raffle prize to celebrate the King's coronation.
2. Paul Golthorp had notified the Council of a fallen tree in Maes Ysgawen park and two others that he thought were at risk of coming down and damaging play equipment in Llanferres playing field. Denbighshire CC's tree officer inspected the trees on 5th April and suggested a risk assessment be done to check the safety of all the trees along the boundary. The Clerk has obtained two quotes for a risk assessment, one for £314.27 and another for £539 exc. VAT and was expecting another two to arrive within days. LPFRA had offered to remove the fallen tree using their trained chainsaw volunteers but Councillors felt this would not be appropriate as they did not have appropriate insurance cover. Mr Watts stated that his company has the necessary training and insurance cover and the Clerk invited him to quote for the work. Cllr Morgans proposed giving delegated powers to the Clerk to arrange for the tree to be removed and have a risk assessment done when all the quotes were available. Cllr Sheldon seconded the motion and all Councillors present voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried.

3. Welsh Government had sent out a consultation document on changes to Taxi hire regulations.
4. Welsh Government had sent out a consultation document on a new biodiversity policy.
5. Natural Resources Wales had circulated plans to manage public forests around the area and the Chair had responded asking them to include private woodland management as well.
6. Liverpool Airport has notified the Council of proposed changes to the airspace in North Wales.
7. An owner of land in Big Covert has notified the Council of their intention to thin some trees in the wood.
8. Ramblers Cymru had circulated a document regarding the closure of footpaths around Burley Hill quarry.
9. Aubergine have sent the results of their quarterly accessibility check on the website. No errors were reported.
10. SLCC/NALC had circulated the updated Practitioner Guide which the Clerk has put on file.
11. Rod King has circulated details of the 20mph speed limit due to come into force in Wales in September 2023.
12. Welsh Government Climate Affairs have responded to the letter sent in March asking them to reconsider the speed limit along the A494 between Ruthin and Mold. They stated that no action would be taken given plans to reduce speed limits throughout Wales later this year.
13. The end of year bank statements confirmed there was £214.52 in the current account and £16,503.85 in the savings account at the end of March.

592. Planning Applications

21/2023/0086 Lynfield Ruthin Road, Cadole – Councillors considered the plans to raise the roof to provide additional living accommodation in the roof space and agreed to support the application. Action: Clerk to notify planning.

593. Park Improvements

The sub-committee had its first formal meeting on 27th March and surveyed Maes Ysgawen park on 6th April. A list of potential improvements has been prepared and will be used to create an indicative drawing and potential specification. Upgrading the path to make it suitable for wheelchair and mobility scooter users is likely to be the most difficult and costly aspect of the project. Four residents have suggested the Council create a 'Community Garden' to grow fruit and vegetables. The Clerk had discussed the legalities of sectioning off an area of Council land in Maes Ysgawen park for this purpose with Cllr Armstrong in his capacity as a barrister. Cllr Armstrong thought the simplest approach would be to create a sub-committee to manage land set aside for this purpose and appoint an appropriate resident willing to manage the garden as a de-facto manager. He did not think a formal lease agreement would be appropriate. Councillors agreed in principle to making land available providing suitable controls are put in place to protect the land, its use and control the erection of buildings. Cllr Morgans had obtained a quote from a local company to prepare a rough layout drawing of the park at £140 and arranged to meet a representative from a local landscape architect to discuss the project in detail and provide a quote for preparing professional drawings and specifications. Action: Sub-committee to discuss at the next meeting.

594. Review of Financial Regulations

The Clerk suggested updating the Financial Regulation to correct the discrepancy between the threshold for going out to formal tender between these and the Council's Standing Orders to £25,000 and increasing the threshold for obtaining three quotes from £800 to £1,500. Cllr Morgans proposed accepting these changes and include that they were exclusive of VAT, Cllr Sheldon seconded the motion and all Councillors present voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to revise and circulate to Councillors.

595. King Charles III Coronation

LPFRA are planning a party in the park on Sunday 7th May and have asked if the Council will contribute to the cost of giving a commemorative coin to local children if they decide to go ahead.

596. Banking and Accounts

Cllr Sheldon reported he had checked February and March accounts/bank statements and all were correct.

597. Payment of Bills and Invoices

The following bills were presented for authorisation to pay

1. AVOW – payroll invoice for April 2023	£497.81
2. HSBC – bank charges for March 2023	£5.00
3. Druid Inn - gift voucher for raffle prise	£50.00
4. Lawn Order – spring treatment for Maeshafn village green	£40.00
5. Clerk – expenses from January to end of March 2023	£21.60
6. Play Inspection Company – risk assessment fee Maeshafn	£114.00
7. Checkpoint Services – spray paint to mark trees	£8.00
8. Llanferres Village hall – contribution to broadband fees	£380.00
Total bills for payment	£1,116.41

Cllr Sheldon proposed all bills be paid, Cllr Gibson seconded, and all Councillors present voted in favour. There were not votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to pay all bills on the schedule.

598. Other Matters brought to the Council's Attention

1. Cllr Sheldon reported that the stone sign on the road into Maeshafn from the old youth hostel has been damaged. Action: Cllr Morgans agreed to ask Celtic Stone for a quote to repair it.
2. The Clerk reported that St Berres Church had requested financial assistance towards the cost of maintaining the church yard. Cllr Morgans proposed offering them a grant of £500, Cllr Sheldon seconded and all Councillors present voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to arrange payment.

Cllr Morgans proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Sheldon seconded and the meeting was closed at 21.10 pm.

The next Meeting of the Council will be the AGM followed by a General Meeting to be held on Thursday 11th May 2023 at 7.30 pm in Llanferres Village Hall