

Minutes of General Meeting held on 11th May 2023

Present: Cllrs

Allan Morgans – Chair
Jac Armstrong – Vice Chair
Amanda Curtis
Simon Grice
Paul Sheldon
Margaret Narburgh – Clerk

Apologies:

Lyn Gibson

Standards Committee Observers:

Samuel Jones
Julia Hughes

Members of the Public:

Tony King
Hugo Watts
Dawn Skelhorn
Mr Davies
Mr & Mrs Dyson
Mr & Mrs Jelley
Martyn Holland

There were no requests to join by video conference.

605. Apologies

Cllr Gibson sent her apologies due to being on holiday.

606. Meeting Open to the Public

1. Mr & Mrs Jelley outlined their concerns about the burning of donkey waste and bedding at The Paddocks and stated there was no specification on the latest drawings and the owner did not have planning permission. Also, that the lights were still on all night.
2. Mr Dyson stated that he had no objections to the burning of the waste providing the owner had the required health and safety measures and licenses in place. He pointed out that the site map submitted to planning did not reflect the actual position of items on the site, specifically the litter bin and portaloo. He confirmed he had reported these matters to the Enforcement officer.
3. Mr Davies explained that the donkey waste was being spread on the fields, the portaloo had been moved to facilitate female employees as they didn't want to walk through the sawmill workshop. His neighbours had complained about the litter bin and so he has moved it from outside to inside. Also, that the outdoor lights were kept on overnight for security.

607. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk read out the declaration of interest statement. None were declared.

The Chair proposed moving item 17b on the agenda ref planning notice 21/2023/0263 regarding the donkey trekking business to the beginning of the meeting, Cllr Armstrong seconded and Cllrs Curtis, Sheldon and Grice voted in favour and the motion was carried.

608. Planning Application 21/2023/0263 – The Paddock Llanferres

The Chair acknowledged the concerns expressed by residents earlier and thanked Mr Davies (the owner) for his response. He also read out details of the written response received from Mr Davies to concerns raised by residents at last month's meeting. Mr Davies confirmed that the bio-mass boiler had been installed in 2016 and did not need planning permission at that time.

The matter under consideration in this application relates to compliance with Condition 12 of the planning approval regarding the burning of waste in a bio-mass boiler. Cllr Morgans stated that he had established that the substances to be burned were classed as non-hazardous by Natural Resources Wales but he had been unable to verify if the Environmental Agency required the owner to have an emissions permit as he did not have enough knowledge of the operation. After due discussion Cllr Armstrong proposed the Council comment to the effect that the Council supported the application in principle and ask DCC to consider the boilers location in relation to the effects on the immediate neighbours and if environmental permits were required. Cllr Sheldon seconded the motion and Cllrs Morgans, Curtis and Grice voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions. Action: Clerk to notify planning.

609. Co-option of Councillors

The Chair reported that Mrs Davies had withdrawn her expression of interest in becoming a council member.

Mrs Skelhorn was asked if she wanted to address councillors following her expression of interest. Her CV had been circulated to members before the meeting. She stated she had nothing more to add. The Chair proposed inviting Mrs Skelhorn to become a Councillor, Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Armstrong, Grice and Curtis voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions. Action: Clerk to arrange mutually convenient date for induction training and signing the acceptance of office form.

610. Approval of Minutes of General Meeting on 13th April 2023

Cllr Sheldon proposed accepting the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting and Cllr Morgans seconded the motion. Cllrs Armstrong, Curtis and Grice abstained because they were not at the last meeting.

611. Matters Arising from the meeting on 13th April 2023

- 388/4 Ongoing, Countryside Services have still not responded to Cllr Morgans which is unusual. Action: Cllr Morgans to chase.
- 533/2 Ongoing, Cllr Grice reported he has submitted a formal application to Denbighshire CC for a new dog foul waste bin and will report back to the Council when he receives a response.
- 579 Cllr Grice reported that Denbighshire CC would not erect a stone or brick sign at the entrance to Tafarn y Gelyn village and residents would not be granted permission to buy and erect one themselves as it would not be considered in keeping with the AONB. No further action.
- 583/1 Completed
- 584 Completed 15.4.23
- 592 Completed 15.4.23
- 594 Completed 15.4.23
- 597 Completed 15.4.23
- 598/1 Ongoing. Action Cllr Morgans to chase the stone mason.
- 598/2 Completed 15.4.23

612. External Audit

The Clerk reported that the Welsh Audit office had still not responded to the 2020/21 or 2021/22 audits. The paperwork is ready to submit for the 2022/23 audit but Audit Wales have not yet confirmed the date for the submission.

613. 2022/23 Internal Audit Results

The internal auditor has highlighted two issues. The first being the value of the new laptop the cost shown on the asset register includes VAT when it should be excluding VAT. The second being the allowance paid to the Clerk for home working has been included in staff costs when it should be in 'other payments'. The Clerk confirmed both items have been amended. Cllr Morgans proposed the internal audit be accepted, Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Armstrong, Grice and Curtis voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried.

614. Insurance

The Clerk reported the Council's insurance was due for renewal on 1st June. BHIB had confirmed the premium at £738.56 this is the second year of a three-year contract with them to take advantage of a 10% discount.

615. Correspondence List

1. Clocaenog Windfarm fund is now open for grant applications.
2. North Wales Fire and Rescue have invited the Council to join a focus group.
3. White Oak Properties quote to remove the fallen tree in Maes Ysgawen park was accepted by the Clerk and work is now underway to cut it into logs.

4. Llanferres Garden Club have asked if the Council would make a contribution toward the cost of their visit to RHS Bridgewater. The Clerk stated this was possible under Section 127. After due discussion Cllr Sheldon proposed giving a grant of £150, Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllr Morgans, Armstrong and Grice voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions. Action: Clerk to arrange payment.
5. A tree surgeon has inspected the sycamore tree in Maeshafn park and quoted £375 to remove the dead branches and prune the canopy to clear around the telephone cables. After due discussion Cllr Morgans proposed accepting the quote, Cllr Curtis seconded the motion and Cllrs Armstrong, Grice and Sheldon voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions. Action: Clerk to notify the contractor and arrange a date for the work to be done.
6. Denbighshire library service have launched a loan scheme for tablets and chrome books.
7. The Clerk reported that the Green Flag Award inspector had visited both Maes Ysgawen and Maeshafn parks on 9th May and was impressed by the plans to improve both parks. He indicated both would be awarded the green flag for 2023.
8. Welsh Government have issued a written statement regarding plans to improve community engagement.
9. Mr Davies response to allegations of breaches of planning permission for the donkey trekking business had been circulated to Councillors and read out earlier in this meeting.
10. Mr Dysons comments on the latest planning application for the donkey trekking business had been circulated to Councillors for consideration.
11. The bank statements at the end of April confirmed there was £276.82 in the current account and £21,721.98 in the savings account. The amounts include the first precept payment from DCC of £6416 and the 2022-23 VAT refund from HMRC of £427.71. £7995 of the money in the savings account is ringfenced for expenditure later this year.

616. Planning Applications

21/2023/0252 Maes y Garnedd Llanferres – Councillors considered the plans and agreed to support the application. Action: Clerk to notify planning.

617. Park Improvements

The Clerk stated she had studied the criteria from twelve potential funders and the council was only likely to qualify for grants from the National Lottery Community fund for Maes Ysgawen park and the National Lottery Heritage fund for Maeshafn park. Clocanog Windfarm fund have reduced the amount they will fund from 80% to 70% of costs and the Council does not have sufficient reserves to fund the additional 30%.

A video conference meeting has been arranged with the National Lottery on Tuesday 16th May to discuss the projects in more detail and ascertain how best to move forward.

Twenty letters have been sent to local organisations asking if they will support the planned improvements and to date five positive responses have been received.

Fifteen Landscape Architects have been invited to quote for preparing drawings and specifications. Five have responded – two declined to quote, the Clerk and Chair have attended meetings on site with two of the other responders and Cllr Gibson and Mr Thomas have agreed to meet the third on 20th May.

618. Risk Assessment - Trees

Three quotes have been received from specialists to undertake a health assessment on the trees along the boundary between Maes Ysgawen park and Llanferres playing field at £539, £314.27 and £150. The lowest quote is from a small company who manage the trees in St Berris church yard. They were the only company to agree to visit the park before quoting. Cllr Morgans proposed accepting the quote for £150, Cllr Grice seconded and Cllrs Armstrong, Curtis and Sheldon voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to notify the contractor and arrange a date for the assessment to be completed.

619. King Charles III Coronation

LPFRA's planned party in the park on Sunday 7th May has been postponed until the end of May.

620. Banking and Accounts

Cllr Sheldon reported he had checked the April bank statements against the internet transactions and accounts and all were correct.

621. Payment of Bills and Invoices

The following bills were presented for authorisation to pay

1. AVOW – payroll invoice for May 2023	£497.81
2. HSBC – bank charges April 2023	£5.00
3. Aubergine – website annual domain registration fee	£36.00
4. Tesco – stationary	£15.00
5. JDH Business Services – 2022-23 internal audit fee	£294.00
6. Llanferres Village Hall – meeting room fee for sub-committee	£10.00
7. BHIB – insurance renewal premium	£738.56
8. Llanferres Gardening Club – grant towards RHS visit	£150.00
Total bills for payment	£1746.37

Cllr Armstrong proposed all bills be paid, Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllr Sheldon, Morgans and Grice voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to pay all bills on the schedule.

622. Other Matters brought to the Council's Attention

1. Cllr Armstrong reported that the flower planter opposite the boundary stone along the A494 has been damaged. The Clerk stated that it was not on the Councils asset register and thought it belonged to Countryside Services. Action: Clerk to notify to Countryside Services.
2. Cllr Morgans stated that the rubbish tipped in the hedge along the Maeshafn road has been removed by NWWT.
3. Cllr Morgans stated that he has again asked DCC to repair the Maeshafn road leading up to the S bend as its condition is deteriorating fast with the extra buses now running along the road.
4. Cllr Morgans reported that there had been a house burglary in Maeshafn and the resident had asked if the Council would install CCTV cameras as a future deterrent. Mr Holland was asked if he could comment on the camera system installed in Llanarmon and he stated that it was located on the outside of the village shop, needed a reliable electricity supply and somewhere to house the recording equipment. He thought the cost was around £4000. Cllr Grice stated such systems were subject to strict privacy laws and the Council would need to consider other residents views. Action: Cllr Morgans to ask residents for their opinion and make further enquires as appropriate.
5. The Clerk asked is Councillors wanted to attend the One Voice Wales Innovative Practice Conference being held at the Royal Welsh Showground on Wednesday 5th July. Cllr Grice said he would be interested and would check if he is available on that date. Cllr Morgans stated he would like to attend. Action: Clerk to book places.

Cllr Morgans proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Armstrong, Curtis and Grice voted in favour. The meeting was closed at 21.00 pm.

The next General Meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 8th June 2023 at 7.30 pm in Llanferres Village Hall