

Minutes of General Meeting held on 14th September 2023

Present: Cllrs

Allan Morgans – Chair
Jac Armstrong
Paul Sheldon
Margaret Narburgh – Clerk

Apologies:

Amanda Curtis
Lyn Gibson
Simon Grice
Not Responded
CCllr Huw Williams

Members of the Public:

Tony King
John Almond

There were no request to join the meeting by video conference.

667. Apologies

Cllr Grice sent last minute apologies due to his train being delayed. Cllrs Gibson and Curtis sent their apologies due to unavoidable family commitments.

668. Meeting Open to the Public

Nothing brought to the Council's attention

669. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

670. Approval of Minutes of Meeting on 13th July 2023

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

671. Matters Arising from Meeting on 13th July 2023

- 388/4 Cllr Morgans has contacted Countryside Services on three occasions regarding tidying up the Heulog. They have failed to respond for over a year suggesting that they do not want to engage in this work. The matter was closed.
- 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 reply.
- 622/4 Cllr Morgans had established that installing a camera system in the centre of Maeshafn village to deter burglars would require a capital investment of around £2,500, an ongoing monthly internet fee and permission from BT to fix the cameras to their telegraph pole. After due discussion Councillors felt there was insufficient support from residents and the cost was disproportionate to the benefit. Cllr Morgans proposed not going ahead with the plan to install surveillance equipment and Cllr Sheldon seconded the motion. Cllr Armstrong voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried.
- 646/1 Completed 14/7/2023
- 646/3 Completed 14/7/2023
- 649 Completed 14/7/2023
- 651/2 Completed 14/7/2023
- 651/4 Completed 14/7/2023
- 652 Completed 14/7/2023
- 653 Completed 14/7/2023
- 654 Completed 14/7/2023
- 655 Completed 14/7/2023
- 656 Completed 14/7/2023
- 657 Completed 13/9/2023
- 658 Completed 2/8/2023
- 661 Completed 14/7/2023

672. Approval of Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting on 2nd August 2023

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

673. Matters Arising from Extraordinary Meeting on 2nd August 2023

The application for a grant from the National Lottery to improve Maes Ysgawen park was submitted on 8th August 2023 and the Clerk has received confirmation that it will be considered during the meeting in November.

674. Co-option of Councillors

Despite continuing to advertise the three vacancies, no one has expressed an interest in becoming a Councillor. Action: Clerk to continue advertising.

675. External Audits

Welsh Audit office posted its audit report for 2020-21 and 2021-22 on their website on the morning of 7th September and the Council was able to read its copy that afternoon. It requires the Council to publish a public notice in a local newspaper giving at least 7 days' notice of when and where the audit findings would be discussed by members. The report arrived too late for discussion at this meeting and so it will be on the agenda for the next meeting on 12th October 2023. After due discussion Councillors agreed to post the notice with the required information in the Denbighshire Free Press. Action: Clerk to confirm the fee and arrange. The 2022-23 audit report is still outstanding.

676. Correspondence List

1. LPFRA thanked the Council for its grant to pay their insurance premium.
2. Mr Dyson sent the Council a copy of the response he received from DCC's Enforcement Officer regarding donkey trekking on Moel Famau.
3. Welsh Government's Diversity and Equalities Division have acknowledged the public statement issue by the Council in July.
4. One Voice Wales have circulated Pontypridd's Future Development Plan for reference.
5. Notice of an appeal for additional time to comply with the enforcement notice on Aberduna Farm had been received. No action was required.
6. Ramblers Cymru had copied the Council with its complaint to Tarmac about the continued closure of a footpath in Big Covert.
7. Denbighshire CC have inspected the gate leading from Rectory Lane into the school following a recent incident when a child was nearly hurt by a passing van.
8. Parish Online had sent an automatic renewal invoice to the Clerk who returned it to them for cancellation because the Council had not agreed to this subscription.
9. North Wales Wildlife Trust have asked the Council to support its efforts to stop the deforestation of healthy trees on Moel Famau. The Chair had attended a meeting with them and Natural Resources Wales who stated they were operating on direct instructions from Welsh Government to prevent the spread of disease. After due discussion Cllr Morgans proposed writing to the Minister responsible to ask if current policy and guidance notes on deforestation were being followed and Cllr Sheldon seconded the motion. Cllr Armstrong voted in favour, there were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Cllr Morgans to draft letter and send.
10. The 4 monthly accessibility check on the website has been completed and no errors were reported.
11. The consultation document from Audit Wales regarding the increase in their fees had been circulated to Councillors.
12. The Clerk had responded to a Freedom of Information request for the number and location of all the benches and picnic tables in the area.

677. Local Community Plan

Cllr Grice had circulated information to Councillors during the month. Given he is leading on this and was unable to attend this meeting, it was agreed to defer the matter for discussion at the next meeting. Action: Clerk to include on agenda.

678. Planning Applications

21/2023/0510 The Paddock Llanferres. After due discussion Councillors agreed that the proposed signage was too big. Cllr Morgans proposed objecting to the application and suggesting it be reduced in size by at least 50%, Cllr Sheldon seconded. Cllr Armstrong voted in favour, there were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to notify planning.

679. Assets Risk Assessment

The Chair and the Clerk had completed the Assets risk assessment during the month and circulated it to Councillors for information. Debris in the guttering on all the bus shelters and in the stream, needs clearing ready for winter. The grass and hedge around the noticeboard in Cadole needs trimming back; the cork backing on the noticeboard in Pant Du needs replacing; the noticeboard in Tafarn y Gelyin needs replacing next year; the stone wall and fencing around Maeshafn playing field need repairing; the inside of the 2 telephone kiosks need cleaning; the lectern in Maes Ysgawen park needs removing and the bench along the A494 will soon need replacing. The trees, hedges and paths in Maes Ysgawen park need attention and these matters are being addressed as part of the park improvement project. Cllr Morgans proposed asking White Oak Properties to quote to undertake the routine maintenance work outlined above and Cllr Sheldon seconded. Cllr Armstrong voted in favour, there were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to arrange for a quote.

The Chair had been asked if the ride on grass cutter in Maeshafn shed was for sale given the Council now contracts out the grass cutting. The mower was bought with a grant when the stone wall and storage shed were built in the early 2000's. It is unclear who owns the mower although it has been insured and maintained by the Council for many years. After due discussion Councillors agreed to try to establish ownership and if this was not possible to put it up for sale through advertising on the local noticeboards inviting offers. Action: Cllr Morgans to speak to the Chair of MADRA and the Clerk to establish its potential value.

680. Armistice Day

After due discussion Councillors agreed to place wreaths on the benches in Maeshafn and Llanferres but not Tafarn y Gelyin given last years was vandalised. The Chair invited John Almond to read the epitaph and agreed to lay the wreaths himself. It was agreed to donate £60 to the British Legion. Action: Clerk to arrange the wreaths and send the donation.

681. Maeshafn Road Names

The Chair explained that in 2005, four households along the A494 asked Denbighshire CC to change the road name from Village Road to Pont yr Mwynwr and to put up road signs because their post was going astray. DCC asked the Council, MADRA and the AONB for their views. The change of name was agreed but the erecting of road signs rejected. 18 years later, and the road name has now been changed without notice or further consultation. A number of residents in Maeshafn have asked why this has happened because the change of name has resulted in post and parcels not being delivered and one resident has had a voucher for £100 cancelled because the store says the address it was issued to (Village Road) does not exist.

The implications of the change on name are far reaching because the address on residents' passports, driving licences, utility bills, land registry and other legal documents are now incorrect. Business addresses and contact details for the Council held by various agencies are also incorrect. After due discussion Cllr Morgans proposed asking DCC to change the name back to Village Road and Cllr Sheldon seconded. Cllr Armstrong voted in favour, there were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Cllr Morgans to contact DCC.

682. Maes Ysgawen Park Improvements

The grant application to the National Lottery was submitted in August and will be considered during their November meeting. No further action can be taken until the outcome is known. The Clerk has been notified that a copy of the 2020-21 Audit Report was made available to the National Lottery Funding Officer anonymously on the same morning it was published. Action: Clerk to update the Council as appropriate.

683. Banking and Accounts

Cllr Sheldon stated that he had checked the bank statements against the internet banking and accounts and the transactions were all correct. There is a discrepancy between the description in the accounts reference 31 which states the payment is for ‘travel expenses’ and the bank statement which states ‘GoTo Meetings fee’. The Clerk explained that this was because she had forgotten to change the description as it would appear on the bank statement. Action: Clerk to include a note in the accounts and on the statement for audit purposes.

684. Payment of Bills and Invoices

The following bills were presented for authorisation to pay

1. AVOW – payroll invoice for September 2023 inc. additional admin fee	£504.56
2. HSBC – bank charges July 2023	£5.00
3. One Voice Wales – training course fees x 2 for Cllr Morgans	£76.00
4. Aubergine – annual subscription for website compliance and support	£507.90
5. Welsh Water – Millenium fountain water bill for church supply	£15.15
6. Lawn Order – Spring and summer treatments for Maeshafn village green	£80.00
7. British Legion – donation to armistice day poppy appeal	£60.00
8. HSBC – bank charges August 2023	£5.00
Total bills for payment	£1253.61

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

685. Website Update

The Clerk reported that the website was now three years old and would benefit from being ‘refreshed’. Since its launch, Aubergine have added a number of new features including an ‘archive’ for older documents e.g. minutes of meetings, to make the site easier to navigate. After due discussion Councillors agreed to update the website. Cllr Sheldon suggested creating a link to read Llanferres News & Views on line and Cllr Morgans suggested updating the photographs. Action: Councillors to forward suggestions for other improvements to the Clerk. The Clerk and Cllr Curtis to update the website as appropriate.

686. Other Matters brought to the Council’s Attention

1. Cllr Morgans stated that yellow paint markers have appeared on the Maeshafn road from the S bend to the Youth Hostel suggesting DCC are planning to repair it soon but he had not been able to establish when this would happen.
2. The Clerk stated that Councillors have been invited to attend an online TEAMS video meeting on Monday 9th October between 6 and 7.30 pm to engage in the project to discuss designating North East Wales as a National Park. Cllr Sheldon reported that invites had also gone out to members of the public to attend both online and in-person drop-in meetings being held in Loggerheads Country Park and other locations. Action: Cllrs to sign up themselves if they wish to attend, Clerk to circulate information to residents.

Cllr Morgans proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Armstrong seconded and the meeting was closed at 20.39 pm.

The next General Meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 12th October 2023 at 7.30 pm in Llanferres Village Hall.