

Minutes of General Meeting held on 14th March 2024

Present: Cllrs

Allan Morgans – Chair
Jac Armstrong – Vice Chair
Paul Sheldon
Lyn Gibson
Simon Grice
Margaret Narburgh – Clerk

Apologies:

Amanda Curtis

Not Responded

HO Williams

Members of the Public:

28 members of the public were present

Visitors:

Caroline Dawson - AONB
David Shiel - AONB
Tim Towers – DCC Asset Risk

This was a face-to-face meeting with invitation to join by video conference sent to one resident.

760. Apologies

Cllr Curtis sent her apologies due to her sister having passed away a few days ago.

761. Presentation by AONB re Loggerheads Country Park and Moel Famau

The Chair welcomed Caroline Dawson and David Shiel from the AONB and thanked them for offering to outline planned improvements at Loggerheads Country Park and Moel Famau. They stated that:

- There has been a 30% increase in visitor numbers and existing facilities were no longer fitting.
- Concept drawings are being prepared and when complete can be viewed on their Website and notices around the park.
- Moel Famau improvements are planned for the top car park and include building a 'grab and go' catering hut, rangers office, toilets and information centre.
- Buildings will be as eco-friendly as possible with solar panels, grey water for toilets, grass roofs etc. so that they blend into their surroundings.
- Both permanent and volunteer rangers will be talking to visitors which has proved to reduce litter, dog fouling, parking in unauthorised places etc.
- Loggerheads priorities will be flood prevention and upgrading the existing buildings. Car parking was increased a few years ago so there are no further plans for further extensions.
- £1.3 million funding is coming from Welsh Government's Levelling Up fund and all work needs to be completed before the end of 2025.
- They are currently in discussion with Planning and other interested parties to complete the design.

Questions asked by the general public included:

- Q. Are there any plans in increase capacity at the lower car park at Moel Famau to stop visitors parking along the road?
A. No
- Q. Are these plans linked to the proposed National Park?
A. No
- Q. Are there plans to police parking on the yellow lines?
A. this is a matter for the police and so could not comment
- Q. Is this a profit-making venture?
A. No, but management needs to be self-financing due to the lack of funds within Denbighshire
- How has the location of the buildings been decided?
A. They are being designed and positioned to minimise the aesthetic impact on the landscape and to compliment what is already at Moel Famau
- Is additional funding available given the cost-of-living increases?
A. No, works need to be completed with the existing budget which will be 'challenging'

The Council accepted the AONB's offer to return and present the concept drawings to the meeting when available.

762. Rectory Lane

This item was on the agenda under Item 7, Correspondence. The Chair proposed bringing it forward given Mr Towers attendance, Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Armstrong, Grice and Gibson voted in favour.

The Chair stated that the Council has been aware that Rectory Lane is in need of repair for several years and acknowledged residents (particularly Mr Mulraney) and ex-County Councillor (Martyn Holland's) considerable efforts to establish the status and ownership of it and their discussions with Denbighshire CC. The Council is sympathetic to the situation and will provide whatever support it can to facilitate a resolution but it has no powers to repair the lane or provide any funding towards it.

The Chair read out an email received for Mr & Mrs McKinstry which provided a short history of activity surrounding the lane since 1987 – copy attached as Appendix A.

Mr Mulraney was invited to speak and outlined why he considered the lane was now dangerous. In his opinion, given that DCC had undertaken work in the past, it was up to them to repair it again now. He accepted the lane is a designated 'BOAT' and that there is a strange amalgam of information that is causing confusion over who is responsible for repairs.

Mr Towers (Risk and Asset Manager, Highways & Environmental Services) was invited to respond. He stated that the key factor is establishing if the lane is adopted or not. He has statutory powers to undertake work on adopted roads but he has no legal responsibility to repair 'BOATS' or unadopted roads hence the need to establish the status of the lane which no one has been able to do thus far.

Members of the public were invited to speak and asked:

- Q. Why had solicitors told them the lane was adopted when they purchased their property?
A. When searching, solicitors use the same information as DCC which just says that the lane is maintained at public expense. This means within its' status as a 'BOAT' and as such DCC's only duty is to keep it 'clear and usable' which it is. DCC's records are very poor and this does lead to misunderstandings.
- Q. If the lane is unadopted why was it resurfaced at public expense?
A. The records show that it was done at 'Community expense' but no one can explain what this really means so it's a grey area.
- Q. Can DCC adopt it given it is not really a 'BOAT' due to the extensive work DCC has carried out?
A. Not in its' current state of repair. It would need bringing up to standard before DCC would consider adoption but there might be another way to do it.
- Q. Can the current 40 mph speed limited be reduced to 10 mph?
A. The Chair stated that this would need a separate order and that he had been trying to get the speed through Maeshafn village reduce to 20 mph but DCC are refusing to do so, it is therefore highly unlikely.
- Q. Who is responsible for repairing the culvert at the top of the lane as this needs doing first because water is overflowing and contributing to the poor condition further down?
A. This would need to be considered if the lane is repaired.
- Q. Can drainage be improved?
A. Current drains are not good and new ones would be difficult and expensive to put in. The existing drains can be unblocked.

Overall, residents felt that they were not getting 'value for money' when paying their Council Tax and deserved better from DCC.

Mr Towers stated that £1 million had been made available from Welsh Government for a pilot scheme to pay for roads to be adopted. He was willing to apply for funding to 'skim' the 400m length from the main road up to the top of the lane already surfaced. This would bring the lane up to the required standard and then DCC would be obliged to adopt it. Applications needed to be submitted before 29th March and those for £100,000 or less will be favoured but there is no guarantee that funds will be granted. Residents asked if the lane extending past the White House could be included and after further discussion it was agreed that:

1. Mr Towers would meet Mr Mulraney to 'walk' the lane and agree how far it would be possible to 'skim' over.
2. Mr Towers would submit an application for funding, keeping it below £100,000 to increase the chance of success.
3. The Council would write to Mr Towers confirming its support for the application.

Cllr Morgans proposed the Clerk write to Mr Towers to this effect, Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Armstrong, Grice and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against. Action: Clerk to write to Mr Towers

763. Meeting Open to the Public

Mr King commented on the history of Maeshafn road names and the Chair responded that this matter is on the agenda for discussion later.

762. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Armstrong declared a personal interest in Rectory Lane.

763. Approval of Minutes of Meeting on 8th February 2024

Cllr Sheldon proposed they be accepted as a true record of the meeting, Cllr Gibson seconded and Cllr Morgans, Armstrong and Grice voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried.

764. Matters Arising from Meeting on 18th February 2024

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 533/2 | Cllr Grice has exhausted his efforts to get DCC to agree to installing additional dog fouling bins and therefore the matter is now closed. |
| 747/1 | Cllr Morgans is continuing to ask for the new potholes that have appeared along Maeshafn Road to be repaired. |
| 747/2 | The broken salt bin along the Maeshafn Road has been replaced. |
| 751/5 | Completed 9.2.24 |
| 753 | Completed 9.2.24 |
| 754 | Completed 9.2.24 |
| 755 | Completed |
| 757 | Completed 9.2.24 |
| 758/1 | Completed 9.2.24 |
| 758/2 | Completed 13.2.24 |
| 759 | Completed 9.2.24 |

765. Correspondence List

1. Request for a map of the area covered by Llanferres CC has been sent to a member of the public.
2. LPFRA thanked the Council for its raffle prize for their fund-raising race night.
3. Denbighshire CC sent out information on increase parking charges at Moel Famau.

4. Details of the new household waste and recycling system had been received and circulated to residents.
5. Details of the free training courses available from DCC have been circulated to residents.
6. Details of the relocation of the Air Ambulance service to Denbighshire have been circulated to residents.
7. Detail of the AONB guided Ranger walks have been circulated to residents.
8. The Police Commissioner elections are due to take place in May.
9. 3 bids have been received for the ride on lawn mower.
10. The risk assessment report for Maeshafn playing field has arrived and been circulated to Councillors.
11. JDH Business Servies have provided information on the requirements for 2023-24 internal audit.
12. Residents of Rectory Lane had asked for Council's support in trying to get the lane repaired.
13. Llanferres village hall have asked if the Council will make a donation to organise a defibrillator training course. Cllr Armstrong proposed offering £50, Cllr Morgans seconded and Cllrs Grice, Sheldon and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to arrange payment.
14. Details of DCC offer of help for tourism businesses had been circulated to residents.
15. Details of the free books and vouchers to celebrate 'book day' available from Denbighshire libraries had been circulated to residents.
16. Bank statements dated 29th February showed there was £2051.92 in the current account. There is £21633.88 in the savings account which includes the first payment of £1475 from the National Lottery towards professional fees for Maes Ysgawen park.

766. Sale of Ride on Lawn Mower

Three bids have been received at £300, £700 and £740. Cllr Morgans stated that the mower had been advertised in good working order but that he had been unable to start it because a safety switch has broken. The estimated cost to repair is less than £100. Cllr Armstrong proposed going ahead with the repair, Cllr Gibson seconded and Cllrs Morgans, Grice and Sheldon voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Cllr Morgans to arrange repair.

Cllr Grice proposed accepting the highest offer of £740 when the machine is working again. Cllr Armstrong seconded and Cllrs Morgans, Sheldon and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to notify each bidder of the outcome.

767. Maeshafn Road Names

The Chair and the Clerk had a meeting with DCC's Street Naming and Numbering officer on 29th February. It was agreed that DCC would contact all Maeshafn residents to canvas their opinion on the name and ask if they would like road name signs installing to help prevent deliveries going astray. The number of responses received will dictate if they progress this further.

768. Statement of Internal Controls

The Clerk had updated the Statement of Internal Controls in preparation for year end and circulated it to Councillors for consideration. Cllr Sheldon proposed it be approved, Cllr Armstrong seconded and Cllrs Grice, Sheldon and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to include in the internal audit documents.

769. Assets Register

The Clerk had undated the Assets Register in preparation for year end. There are no additions and Maeshafn Christmas tree lights have been written off due to irreparable damage by squirrels. The ride on lawn mover will also be written off when its sale is complete. Cllr Morgans proposed the update be accepted, Cllr Armstrong seconded and Cllrs Gibson, Grice and Sheldon voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to finalise an include in the internal audit documents.

770. Planning Applications

Application 21/2024/0085, the Paddock Llanferres.

After due discussion Cllr Armstrong proposed objecting to the application to vary Condition 4 on the original application number 21/2023/0908 on the basis that no information has been provided to justify increasing the opening hours or how it might affect neighbours, noting that there was no objection to opening from 20th March to include Easter holidays. Cllr Morgans seconded and Cllrs Sheldon, Grice and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to notify Planning.

771. Local Community Plan – Preparation for Public Meeting

A draft slide presentation prepared by Cllr Grice outlining what a Community Plan is, had been circulated to Councillors for consideration prior to the meeting. Cllr Sheldon found some of its content confusing. Cllr Gibson felt unable to comment on the actual content but that it was important to improve the Council engagement with the community. Cllr Armstrong stated that it was different to what he had expected and that it should only include deliverable objectives to manage expectations. The Chair recognised the effort put into it and stated that he was uncomfortable with some of the wording because he felt it would raise residents expectations of what a small Council could deliver. After due discussion it was agreed that Cllr Grice and the Clerk would work on rewording it to provide a clearer understanding of what and how a LCDP works. Action: Cllr Grice to provide the Clerk with dates of when he is available to redraft the slides and circulate to Councillors before the next meeting on 11th April.

Cllr Gibson suggested the Council set up its own Facebook page to improve engagement with residents because information posted on the 3 community platforms was being lost amongst the many other postings. Cllr Grice offered his input and the Chair agreed it was a good idea. Action: Cllrs Gibson, Grice and the Clerk to set up the Councils own Facebook page with limitations on who can post information on it.

772. Maes Ysgawen Park Improvements

The Clerk had agreed to ecologist Steve Cutmore being present to assess if there were bats roosting in trees when Phil Lloyd started pruning the trees along the boundary between Maes Ysgawen park and the playing field. None were found and work was completed within 4 days. The total cost was £3,090 leaving £1,910 from the £5,000 grant received from AONB. The Clerk asked if Councillors wanted to use the rest of the money to trim the fir trees overhanging the rear boundary. Cllr Morgans had spoken the owner who had no objections to the work being done providing they weren't trimmed back to the wood. Cllr Morgans proposed having the trees trimmed, Cllr Gibson seconded and Cllrs Armstrong, Grice and Sheldon voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to arrange for 3 quotes and report back to Council.

The concept drawings for the improvements have been delayed due to the architect been taken ill. Work has started and should be completed within the next week. Action: Clerk to circulate as soon as available.

773. Maeshafn Playing Field Risk Assessment

The assessment has highlighted the need for a few actions but nothing serious. Cllr Morgans has fixed the 2 loose boards on the rear wall of the outdoor shelter and is arranging to have the loose felt on the roof repaired. Weedkiller has been bought to spray the paths, the eastern boundary fence needs repairing/removing, the goal post nets need replacing using a better system for holding them in the ground and holes need to be drilled in the climbing frame tyres to allow water to drain. Action: Cllr Morgans and the Clerk to arrange as appropriate.

Cllr Morgans stated that the contractor who usually cuts the hedge around Maeshafn playing field is unwell and unable to do it this year. White Oak Properties have quoted to do the work and remove the rubbish for £150. Cllr Morgans proposed accepting their quote, Cllr Armstrong seconded and Cllrs Gibson, Grice and Sheldon voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to notify contractor and agree date.

774. Banking and Accounts

Cllr Sheldon stated that he had checked the bank statements against the internet banking and accounts for February 2024 and the transactions were all correct.

775. Payment of Bills and Invoices

The Clerk stated that she has been chasing Audit Wales for their invoices for the last 3 years external audits but nothing has arrived yet.

The following bills were presented for authorisation to pay

1. AVOW – payroll invoice for March 2024	£557.30
2. HSBC – bank charges February 2024	£5.00
3. Steve Cutmore – bat roosting report Maes Ysgawen	£240
4. Play Inspection Co – risk assessment Maeshafn playing field	£129.60
5. Phil Lloyd – Maes Ysgawen trees	£1450
6. David Pares – Maes Ysgawen trees	£1400
7. Charlies – weed killer Maeshafn park	£13.99
8. M Narburgh – clerks expenses Jan to March 2024	£72
9. XXXXXX – Councillor allowance payment	£208
10. One Voice Wales – 2024-25 annual membership fee	£143
11. Crocus – floral tribute for Cllr Curtis on death of sister	£24.98
Total bills for payment	£4243.87
Plus Village hall donation for defibrillator training ref Minute 765/13	£ 50.00
Total payments for this month	£4293.87

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

776. Other Matters brought to the Council’s Attention

1. Cllr Morgans reported that he had met with NRW, DCC’s Bridge officer and 3 residents to discuss a solution to the properties being flooded next to the ford at the bottom of Pont y Mwynwr road. He is waiting for a response to the suggestions that the weir could be removed and a flood plain created further upstream to reduce the risk. The owner of one of the cottages is checking if the flooding of her property is due to there not being a one-way flow cover on one of the discharge pipes in the river.

Cllr Morgans proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Gibson seconded and Cllrs Grice, Sheldon and Armstrong voted in favour. The meeting was closed at 21.50 pm.

The next General Meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 11th April 2024 at 7.30 pm in Llanferres Village Hall and by TEAMS video conferencing

Appendix A

From: tony@mckin.co.uk <tony@mckin.co.uk>

Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2024 12:32 PM

To: clerk.llanferres@gmail.com

Subject: Tonight's meeting re Tim Towers

Good Morning Margaret,

My wife and I are unfortunately unable to attend tonight's meeting to express our views in person on the condition of Rectory Lane so we have put together some information which may help any future decision making.

We moved into our house, The Orchard, in Rectory Lane in 1987 and it was shortly afterwards that Clwyd CC resurfaced the lane as far as the rear of the old rectory now known as The White House. Lighting was also installed around the same time.

A water main was subsequently installed in the lane to replace old lead piping. This water main has a hydrant installed to facilitate the fire service in the event of a fire incident. The latter may be compromised if the lane surface deteriorates further.

The condition of the surface of the lane has stayed in reasonable condition over the years and has only recently in the last few years deteriorated and now has many large potholes along the length of the lane. These potholes constitute a hazard to pedestrians and vehicles assessing the lane and indeed one Llanferres resident has fallen into one and broken his ankle and injured his wrist resulting in being off work for some 17 weeks. The highways division of Denbighshire CC have filled in a few potholes at the bottom and a little distance up the lane but have ignored those further up which still present a hazard. The quality of the remedial work they have undertaken leaves a lot to be desired as they have not sealed the edges of the holes and have over filled some with the result that the surface of the lane is not level and the holes soon reappear.

With the split up of Clwyd CC, Denbighshire CC now have a duty to maintain the surface of the lane either if it is adopted or if it is designated a BOAT (a byway open to all traffic). The latter has had specific guidance written for local authorities to follow.

There are a large number of residents living in the lane along with numerous walkers accessing the walking routes at the top of the lane, children also use the lane to access the side entrance to the school, so it is our opinion that resurfacing the lane would provide a safer, longer lasting solution as the original surfacing has lasted some 30 years and so would prove less costly to maintain in the future.

If this info could be passed it would be much appreciated.

Kind Regards

Tony & Joanne McKinstry