



MINUTES OF THE ARGOED COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD AS A REMOTE MEETING ON TUESDAY 4 January 2022.

Representatives:

New Brighton Ward

Councillor J McCarron
Councillor GK Mutch
Councillor J Morris
Councillor B Clarke
Councillor G Owen

Argoed Ward

Councillor J Holiday
Councillor I Jolly (Chair)
Councillor H McGuill
Councillor M Shepherd
Councillor F Hadfield-Jones (Vice-Chair)

In attendance: Clerk Mared Eastwood

1. Apologies
Received from Councillor R Marsh, Councillor M Bradley and Janet Jones
2. Co-option of Members
None to consider.
3. Declarations of Interest
None.
4. Standing Orders
No changes to note.
5. Chair's Report

I would like to thank all members of council and staff for their work in particularly during this unprecedented pandemic. Everyone concerned have had to learn different ways of working with virtual meetings becoming the 'norm', a feat that had not even entered our minds before March 2020. However, this meant that council could still carry out its duties and community projects throughout.

Around our community

Floral & Fauna

In the Summer months the hanging baskets and planters made a delightful feature in the Wards.

Grateful thanks to the volunteers who planted the daffodil bulbs, a colourful display for the coming Spring.

A wildflower meadow is under construction on the grassed area behind the Elite studio and plans afoot for similar in the Quarry. Also, attractive bug boxes are due to be erected in the Quarry, enabling a game for children to find the coloured box.

The one lone mole who was causing mounds in Y Bonc has now been successfully stopped.

Dog walkers in the Y Bonc will be pleased to learn the broken leaning section of fence in the Dog's area is now in hand for repairs. Y Bonc has also been resurfaced. Strimming of the vegetation has also taken place in the Quarry. Also, plans are afoot for a community dog walking group to be arranged.

Remembrance

Street Poppies on the lamp posts were placed around the villages and the services for Remembrance Sunday was well attended.

Christmas Festivities

The Christmas trees, lights and festivity arrangements were again well received. Council sends th thanks to Shangri La for the interesting and unusual display of seasonal creatures placed in their garden.

The replacement of Milestones in the community.

As over the years many of the originals had been broken or removed –My Chairman's allowance for this year is donated to the project of replacement milestones to enhance the villages.

Platinum Jubilee Celebration.

A working committee is in place and third part representation invited to arrange activities for the celebration.

Administration

'Tesco Bags of Help' have confirmed that this council's application for funding regarding the community basic cookery classes for lonely and people on a tight budget has been approved. It is hoped that this will increase public engagement, especially to residents living alone or new to the area.

The office filing system is now more organised, with an index system of the contents of cabinets.

The council has now three new co-opted members in the team -one of who will be helpful in items included in the Welsh Language policy which is now under preparation.

Other policies, relevant to council are also being arranged.

Grants

The Council continues to support by giving financial aid to several diverse groups in the community. It considers several national charitable organisations who also seek funding.

Community Allotments

Many residents in our community have expressed an interest, it is hoped that at some future date this can be achieved.

Volunteers in the Community

Many thanks to all residents to take part in the litter picking (Keep Wales Tidy Scheme) Volunteers being such a great asset to our community wellbeing.

6. Clerk's Report

The Christmas lights have been more consistently on this year, in comparison with previous years, which has made the maintenance work on the feeder pillars worthwhile. Positive feedback has been received for the Christmas trees and the new lights.

We've made enquiries about a different kind of poppy for the lampposts. Even though they are more expensive, they may be less prone to damage. A sample will be obtained for Councillors to inspect prior to a decision being made.

CLlr J McCarron has sent links for schemes relating to vehicle charging points. Further enquiries will be made into the feasibility of the schemes.

7. Financial Matters

a) The following payments and invoices were noted:

Invoice no.	Supplier	Details	Amount (£)	
	ProVision		418.99	so
M130LU	BT	Telephone and internet (December)	94.05	dd
E0600GZGGL	Microsoft	365 Business Standard	11.28	dd
E0600GKJYN	Microsoft	365 Business Basic x 13	59.28	dd
EX001063	Flintshire County Council	Summer Playscheme	1,905.20	
	Shangri-La	Drive-by Father Christmas	200.00	
Total			2,688.80	

b) The salary and other employment costs for November were noted as £1,816.90

c) Bank Balances as at 31 December 2021 were noted as:

NatWest Current: £4,089.91
NatWest Reserves: £62,513.44

d) Budget review – preparation for Precept

The Clerk went through the draft precept request line by line after which it was fully considered and discussed by the Councillors. It was noted that the election costs could represent a significant uplift in the budget, which should be counter-acted, if possible, to mitigate any increase for the residents.

Resolved: Payments were noted and authorised to be paid.

Salary and other employment costs were noted, as were the bank balances as at 31 December 2021.

Draft precept proposal, which will give an 0% increase for residents, be approved as follows:

Precept Breakdown 2022/23				
Detail	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Estimated	2021/22 Budget	2022/23 Recommendation
Wages and Salaries	£18,267	£21,271	£23,150	£23,500
Staff Training	£0	£0	£300	£300
Payroll	£111	£137.50	£150	£150
Staff Expenses	£0	£0	£300	£150
Councillor Allowances	£2,200	£2,600	£3,350	£3,350
Councillor Training	£0	£30	£300	£300
Councillor Travel and Conference	£0	£0	£200	£200
Audit fee	£300	£336	£800	£800
Insurance and Data Protection	£1,740	£1,412	£2,200	£1,500
Legal and professional fees	£350	£14	£1,000	£1,000
Gardening Contractors	£14,689	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500

Planting	£1,342	£1,558	£1,850	£1,750
Plant containers	£499	£1,664	£3,500	£2,500
Hire of meeting room	£1,500	£1,500	£1,750	£1,750
Telephone and internet	£1,018	£1,061	£1,200	£1,400
Photocopying	£443	£441	£550	£550
Printing, stationery and office equipment	£1,480	£840	£1,000	£1,000
Subscriptions	£173	£231	£240	£240
CCTV	£600	£3,900	£600	£600
Playscheme	£1,743	£1,905	£2,000	£2,000
Christmas Tree and Lights	£2,665	£5,065	£5,000	£4,500
Fireworks	£0	£750	£750	£750
ARC	£9,375	£3,268	£0	£0
Play areas	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Other maintenance costs	£425	£1,462	£500	£1,500
Poppies for lampposts/poppy wreaths	£105	£230	£0	£560
S137 Grants	£2,000	£1,800	£3,000	£2,000
Street lighting energy	£1,027	£1,120	£1,700	£1,700
Street lighting inspection and maintenance	£501	£1,058	£2,200	£2,200
Street lighting upgrade	£5,028	£4,190	£5,050	£5,050
Election Costs	£0	£0	£0	£5,500
Platinum Jubilee	£0	£0	£0	£1,000
Totals	£72,581	£76,343.50	£81,140	£86,300

- f) To consider giving the Assistant Clerk access to internet banking:
General discussion on the requirement to have appropriate cover with regard to access to the banking should the Clerk be unavailable for any reason. Internet banking is working well for the Council currently and is considered to be better than using cheques.

Resolved: That the Assistant Clerk be set up with access to the internet banking.

8. To approve the Minutes of meeting held on 7 December 2021
Consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021.

Resolved: Minutes of meeting dated 7 December 2021 were approved.

9. Planning Applications/Decisions
None received.

10. Representative's Report

None received but contact has been made by a new PCSO Rachel Duddle, who has requested the dates of future meetings. Assistant Clerk will be tasked with sending timely reminders to the PCSOs so that we may receive reports/attendance at meetings.

11. Committee and Group Reports
None to consider.

Meeting concluded 8.10 pm
Next meeting to be held 1 February 2022