## Crynant Community Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting held Thursday 25th March 2021 via Microsoft Teams

The Chairman of the meeting Cllr. Sean Keir opened the meeting and extended a welcome to the two new Members to the Council Cllr. Rundle & Cllr. Hayes.

**685: Apologies for absence**: Chairman Barry Michael.

**In attendance**: Cllr. Sean Keir; Cllr. Peter Shopland; Cllr. Suzanne Waldron; Cllr. Sian Phillips; Cllr. Colin Bevan;

Cllr. Andrew Farthing; Cllr. Brian Lewis; Cllr. Roger Miles; Cllr. Stephen Rundle; Cllr. Maggie Hayes. County Councillor Sian Harris. Clerk: Heidi Mortimer & Ceri Wilcox.

**686: To receive declarations of Personal/Prejudicial interest**. No declarations received.

**687: To adjourn if necessary to receive public questions**. No questions received.

**688: To approve and sign the previous Council meeting minutes.**

**Resolved**: That the minutes signed as true and accurate.

**689: Matters arising from the minutes**.

Clarity sought on the point raised on receiving County Councillor reports. Copy of 'A shared community charter agreement' - between The Community and Town Councils of Neath Port Talbot and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council' has been shared for information.

**690: To receive Police report**.

Clerk advised Council of the latest recorded crime figures for Crynant January 2021: Violence & Sexual offences x 4, Anti-social behaviour x 2, Criminal damage & Arson x 1,other x 1.

Aled (PCSO) advised speed scoping exercises to be undertaken in the village imminently. Clarity was sought and given on the nature of the speed scoping exercises. Cllr. Keir stated that the last exercise was completed at Cefn Coed, on motorists leaving the village rather than being focused on the village itself. Councillor Keir advised that he was to receive information from the previous PCSO as to why we no longer have 'go safe' van to catch speeding motorists.

**691: County Councillor Harris report.**

As it has been placed in the minute’s that there was a discussion - on my absence, and comment’s, on the lack of a report, I feel I have to respond. For information - I have no legal obligation to attend a CC meeting or provide a report. However, I wouldn’t ever want to be placed in a position where I don’t attend or don’t provide a report. When I am asked to obtain information I try my very best to obtain it for you. If I don’t respond with a report it means I haven’t received a reply on the subject, and as soon as I do, I will inform you of the reply. I do work full-time as well as being your County Borough Councillor.

I am afraid, since the pandemic a year ago my personal workload for issues in the village has increased 10 fold. I have to prioritise a lot of issues, and sometimes providing a report is the last on the list when there are more pressing urgent issues to deal with. Please accept my apologies for any delay in providing reports, but you will have them as soon as I have the information and the time to write the report. **Noted.**

Section 106 – (apologies from NPT on the length of time it has taken to get back to me) in summary, policy section suggest CC refer to Policy SP4 and Policy I1 Infrastructure Requirements of the LDP, which provides details on why S106 monies are sought and areused to mitigate the impacts of development and make it acceptable in health, safety andamenity terms.

Our Planning Obligations SPG:<https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/7465/spg_planning_obligations_oct16.pdf>provides details on what S106 is and how it can be applied, and also formulas for calculating certain types of contribution.

There are two developer contribution categories on this site, Welsh Language and Open space. If it s the open space calculation the CC are querying, the planning policy section have confirmed that the calculations are based on an amount per open space category depending on number of units and shortfalls of certain open space provision in the ward. This is based on the planning policy section’s Open Space Assessment. The planning policy section said that if CC have any specific questions then they would be happy to answer them. CC can contact them on: [www.ldp@npt.gov.uk](http://www.ldp@npt.gov.uk). **Noted.**

Seats, grit-bins and bins plan, has been submitted, zone supervisor has replied with to the best of his knowledge they are 95% accurate, and commented on how well the report hasbeen completed by Cllr Farthing. Due to my current zone supervisor, moving due to apromotion. There has been a delay in communication. I am now waiting a Teams meeting with my former zone supervisor, to confirm in person the discrepancies in the report. He doesn’t seem to think they are in any way major ones. When we have had this discussion I can then submit them as a working plan for future use. Thank you Cllr Farthing for your hardwork on this one. **Noted**. Councillor Farthing asked when Community Council could expect a reply from NPTCBC. County Councillor Harris advised that a response would be received following a meeting with her supervisor hopefully within the next week or two.

Apologies – but no further information on The Welfare, however I can see the CC have made good progress on this with the information gained so far. **Noted.**

Drainage – Cefn Coed Colliery and Iron Bridge, work is scheduled to commence on 6 April2021, and traffic lights will be in use for about 5 weeks. I have a meeting before next Thursday’s CC meeting, so hopefully will be able to give a verbal update in the meeting. The money for this work is WG money and not NPT budget money. It is capital money andalready allocated for the work on the A4109. **Noted**.

Flooding River Dulais, I am not aware of any flood prevention measures being undertaken onthe river. I am still trying to draw down funding from NRW for flood-gates for the houseseffected by the flooding issues. Priorities in other areas are continually over-riding thepriority in our village. However, I have chased this again and I am currently awaiting afurther response. **Noted**. Councillor Hayes raised a question on what the issue was with drawing down the funding, County Councillor Harris advised that she was just waiting to get to the top of the priority list, but money had been promised.

Cefn Coed – I will update further after my meeting on 13 April with CE Karen Jones, Director of Environment Nicola Pearce and Simon Brennan. All I can confirm currently is this does not affect the continuing work with the head-gear, there is no new name of Cefn Coed Valley Landscape Park and the 29k already spent, has been spent out of WG money for survey’s, and not any money that NPT could allocated to the project. I do not want to speculate on anything until I have had the above meeting. **Noted.**

Active Travel Fund – the work being undertaken in Seven Sisters is the off spin of the Safer Route to School programme of work’s that was undertaken by our previous County Borough Councillor. Safer Route to School programme has been re-named as Safer Communities. All planned worked was agreed and allocated some 5 – 6 years ago, before my term of office. I do not know why other wards were prioritised over ours, I do know that it would have been NPT that chose the areas and not the Councillor’s themselves. The reason I encouraged our village to respond to the consultation was for future use, if any kind of project was developed in the future. If I ever have the opportunity to bid for any kind of funding, or request any kind of help, then the village response has been logged, and I am hoping it could be put to good use in the future. I have no current project in mind, I simply wanted our voice to be heard for any future work that could be undertaken. Regarding the CC and a request to have a paved area between Seven Sister’s and Crynant, I believe this has been answered at the time as it was not feasible. I am told it would have cost 1.1 million pounds to link the two villages. It was a complicated task, involving compulsory purchases of land between the two villages. When it was tried to be taken forward it was rejected by the labour led council at the time. Who knows what we can achieve in the future, this is why I wanted our voice heard and logged. **Noted**.

Proposed planning for a 2 static caravan traveller site – a further injunction of 6 months has been obtained to cover the appeals time-frame. Once this has expired, the resident’s in the area will need to be vigilant for any activity on the site, as it is owned by the developer’s. **Noted.**

County Councillor Harris circulated a report on upcoming drainage works to be completed at the iron bridge. **Noted**.

**692: To receive a report from any Member concerning meetings at which he or she represented the Council**.

Cllr. Shopland reported that Creunant Primary school was in a good position, with children returning to the school, as restrictions ease. The finances were healthy due to a number of grants received.

Cllr. Shopland reported last month, of his concern regarding the grant funding for the visitor centre at Cefn Coed museum. The Clerk confirmed as per the email sent to all Members of the Community Council, that at the budget meeting of NPTCBC the NPT Director of Finance confirmed that the grant funding, that had been secured, for a new visitor centre at Cefn Coed was not proceeding. A letter has been sent by the Chairman of the Community Council on behalf of the Council and Community to Mrs K Jones, Chief Executive NPTCBC copied to Jeremy Miles MS & Christina Rees MP. The letter sent, and response received from Mrs Jones are attached. Councillor Shopland as Chairman of the Friends of Cefn Coed and representative of the Community Council for Cefn Coed advised that neither he nor the officers of NPT: Mr. Wayne John and Mr. Paul Walker were aware of any of the issues or the loss of the grant funding.

In response County Councillor Harris advised that she only knew about the grant funding situation two weeks prior to the budget meeting. County Councillor Harris confirmed that neither herself or County Councillor Hunt knew much about the position other than CADW were involved, and that maybe some of the survey reports had highlighted issues with the current buildings but no detail was provided. County Councillor Harris advised that verbal assurances have been received, and that they - Karen Jones, Nicola Pearce and Steve Brennan, are still willing to work on the buildings.

Cllr. Keir asked if the museum would be opening at all this year? Cllr. Shopland advised that onsite Management at Cefn Coed are anticipating opening in July.

Cllr. Lewis asked if money was in place to carry out remedial work? County Councillor Harris replied, "yes but they do not know where from".

**693: Clerk’s report to include bank reconciliation & payment authorisations**.

The Clerk reported that the year-end Mar 21 accounts and accounting statements being prepared. **Noted**.

The Community Council asset schedule had been updated and provided to Came & Co. Council insurance brokers. **Noted.**

**Resolved:** That the following payments made:

Wages as per contract £2452.76 March payment including HMRC

Forest Park & Gardens £ 199.25 Equipment purchase

NPT ELRS £ 770.00 Covid safety screens & leaflet printing

Came & Co. £ 468.72 Motor insurance renewal.

B&Q £ 106.40 Postcrete

S.Keir £ 30.44 Materials for maintenance

Total Gym service £2003.69 Equipment & Service

Clerk advised that the quotation had been received to provide eighteen new cremation plots at the cemetery £1970 plus VAT. **Resolved:** To accept the quotation and proceed with essential work.

**694: To receive/approve the Notice of Conclusion of Audit year end March 2020**.

The Clerk presented the audit conclusion for the year end March 2020 stating that the audit was unqualified. With two minor issues raised. The Clerk confirmed that the audit conclusion notices had been posted. The Chairman thanked the Clerk.

**Resolved:** That the audit conclusion report accepted in full. Payment of the invoice for the Wales Audit office authorised.

**695: To receive update on Asset Management & Development plan**.

**General:** Councillor Keir advised Council of the following:

The Community Centre has rainwater leaking in through the roof over the storeroom and ladies toilet, and around the stone revels to the three large windows at the front of the building. D&R Roofing will come and assess required works.

The monies have been awarded to refurb the toilets at the front of the building, drawings are being prepared by Mr. Trevor Francis who is to visit site again to discuss requirements/amend drawings.

New litter bins installed in the teen park.

The meadow fences repaired.

The first round of weed spraying has been completed.

The trees and branches overhanging the MUGA has been cut back.

The pond in the nature reserve, has been cleared and ducks and frogs are back.

The cemetery grass has been cut for the first time this season.

The pump track works had been delayed, due to the Contractor workload.

It was agreed that Cllr. Rundle would take on the role of volunteer co-ordinator.

**Outdoor Gym**: Councillor Farthing advised that the contractors, Caloo are due to commence work week beginning 24/05/2021. Councillor Farthing stated that concerns had been raised with him, regarding the position of the outdoor gym. Cllr. Lewis reminded Council that when the decision was taken on where to position the gym, it had been agreed unanimously. Cllr. Peter Shopland raised a point of order, in that the resolution to position the outdoor gym in the freeplay area alongside the MUGA was made less than six months prior. The Clerk confirmed that before any item brought back before Council it would be subject to allowance from Standards. Cllr. Hayes requested clarification on where the original sites proposed, the sites considered were: in between the rugby pitches, removal of one tennis court, community centre car park and free play area of the MUGA. Cllr. Farthing confirmed that at this time no instruction had been made to amend any of the confirmed plan and he was still working with Caloo to deliver the project in the agreed freeplay area. Cllr. Bevan requested information on the timescales, for completion of the installation including the work in the school. Cllr. Farthing confirmed that work was planned to be completed over a three day period, with the work completed at the school at the same time as the installation for the community. **Action:** Clerk to contact monitoring officer Mr. Craig Griffiths.

**Crynant forest walk**: Cllr. Waldron updated Council on progress of the Forest Walks, Crynant Plant had offered to donate a litter bin however this had to be declined due to NRW policy. Tegfan will be sponsoring a carving of a fox, site visit to be undertaken to confirm the position. The fungi interpretation panel will be installed shortly. The application for LEADER funding is being completed, the Clerk to provide the financial information required.

Cllr. Lewis raised the issue of dog fouling along the permissive path between Brynawel and Badger gate. It was agreed that this has been an historic problem, however as the land is owned privately there is nothing that can be done by NPT or NRW.

**696: To consider the determinations contained in the 2021/22 Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and agree on those determinations that are discretionary. The Panel had published its annual report and it was necessary for the Council to consider the determinations contained therein**.

Report circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk advised of the determination's for consideration:

a) Determination 42 – It be noted that an allowance of £150 would be paid to all members in 2020/21 other than in the case of any member who wished to opt out.

b) Determination 44 – The ability to pay up to 5 members an allowance of up to £500 in recognition of specific responsibilities.

c) Determination 45 – Travel payments be made to members in the case of them undertaking authorised duties.

d) Determination 46 – Overnight stays be paid at the stated rates in the case of members staying overnight on authorised duties.

e) Determination 47 – Financial loss compensation at the stated rates be paid in appropriate cases.

f) Determination 48 – Reimbursement of caring costs be paid in appropriate cases.

g) Determination 49 – The allowance for the Chairman.

h) Determination 49 – The allowance for the Vice-Chairman.

**Resolved:** That b) Determination 44 - Agreed that 1 Member be paid an allowance of £500 in recognition of the role undertaken as Sexton. All other determinations to be agreed at the Annual General Meeting.

**697: Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. To consider the implications for the governance processes applying within the Council.**

A summary of the provisions of the Act had been circulated to members for their information. Two matters requiring attention at the current time related to the publication of a summary of meetings within 7 working days of meetings and arrangements for the continuation of remote meetings. The Clerk would ensure that all matters would be appropriately actioned.

**698: To receive & consider responses to Welsh Government consultation document - Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro.**

The information was received and duly noted. Cllr. Waldron stated that we should be encouraging responses to this consultation, Cllr. Keir agreed. **Action:** Ensure links are posted onto Council facebook page.

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**699: To consider an invitation from One Voice Wales to take up membership in 2021/22 at a cost of £312**

**Resolved:** To renew membership and payment of £312 authorised.

**700: Any other business.**

Cllr. Farthing requested information on behalf of a resident of Heol Las Fawr, regarding an issue raised with him directly. County Councillor Harris advised that an email had already been sent.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 19:26

Copy letters as referred to, item 692

Dear Mrs Jones,

Cefn Coed Colliery Museum

I write to you on behalf of Crynant Community Council and the Residents of Crynant to express our anger at the mismanagement of the Cefn Coed project. You should be aware of the importance that the Mine and hence the Museum has historically in the village of Crynant and the other villages in our valley. How on earth has it come to pass that major decisions are being made without proper consultation stretching back, in some cases, years that will have an impact on people’s lives and expectations?

Time and again we, the people of Crynant, are not being consulted nor advised in a timely manner of decisions. Your Council insults us. Your council has the right to make democratic decisions, which we of course would respect, provided you extend that democracy as a courtesy and by right to the electorate. There are some issues other than the Museum that we have major concerns about, but I will leave that for another time.

With regards the Museum project, why has there been no consultation, why has not one villager ever seen the now defunct development plans? Did they not exist? Why of the £200,00 now left has £29,000 been already spent-in advance? Why was no discussion taken place with us or any other interested party on how best to spend the £200,000 prior to £29,000 being committed?

The steering group for the Museum project, met once. Our request for representation on the steering group as Crynant Community Council was ignored, with updates to be provided via the Chair of the Friends of Cefn Coed, no terms of reference for the steering group, have ever been provided as promised.

In ending as I know you are extremely busy on our behalf, could I suggest you nominate the correct senior officer to sit down with myself and our Clerk (socially distanced) to understand better what has occurred so we can inform, with knowledge, the rest of the village. At the same meeting your nominee can then brief us properly on the proposed spend at the Museum and we can then consult with the rest of the village and feed back their observations so your council can make informed decisions as is your right.

The other outstanding issues whilst few, are important, but they can wait for calmer days.

Dear Mr Michael

I acknowledge receipt of the letter you forwarded to me by e-mail dated 22nd March 2021.

I note the points made about the Cefn Coed project and will discuss those with my officers. As I have had no direct involvement in this project to date, I am unable to respond more fully until internal discussions have been completed. I am also due to meet the Councillor for Crynant, Cllr Harris and the Councillor for Seven Sisters, Cllr Hunt in April to take on board their views.

As someone who grew up in the Rhondda Valley, I am fully aware of the importance of our mining heritage. Clearly, there are reasons why the scheme we had hoped to develop at Cefn Coed has not progressed. I will write to you again when I have a fuller understanding of the position.