

Sully and Lavernock Community Council
Cyngor Cymuned Abersili a Larnog

Annual Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 17 June 2020, 7.30pmp

In accordance with the Local Authority (Coronavirus)(Meetings)(Wales) Regulations 2020, the Meeting took place by way of the remote participation (Zoom) of members of the Council

Minutes

Present

Phil Baguley (PB)

Ian Barlow (IB)

Martyn James (MJ)

Christopher Morgan (CM)

Lino Scaglioni (LS)

Chris Tatt (CT)

Rod Thomas (RT)

Apologies

David Sylvester (DS)

Members of the public

37 attendees

Opening statement from the Chairman – We want to give you the opportunity to hold us to account as we haven't had the chance to hold public meetings during the current crisis.

Question from Nigel Crick via Facebook:

Hi Christopher, can you present the current finances of the council? What is your vision to improve the finances over the next 12 months and what savings as a council will you be considering?

Responses

Chris Tatt: Currently we have £34,000 in the bank to last until the end of August, the next precept from the Vale is then received which is roughly £30,000. We need more in-house work, for example the things we currently buy in can be managed better by ourselves and we can help a new clerk. We can keep the website updated. In the last two weeks we have identified ways to reduce seasonal costs by getting employees to work in a more efficient way.

Nigel Crick: I can't see the expenditure you have committed to. How do the figures relate to the expenses you are committed to? How much will be left at the end of the year?

Chris Tatt – difficult to answer, we have heavy expenditure – the David Roberts issue needs to be settled and will be a large amount. I can't confirm how much yet. Plus, other costs like wages. By the end of August, the £34,000 will be down to a five-figure sum

Martyn James – On our to do list is to prepare a financial risk assessment, listing what we are responsible for and at risk of spending. This task is a priority and will be published to the public to make the situation clear. We are on the case and it is part of our responsibilities.

Chris Tatt – *I'd like to avoid being in the situation we were in last year with Sullyfest, this was financed fully by the SVG and their supporters, they asked for a loan or grant, and we couldn't provide anything. I would like to be able to give a significant amount to the next Sullyfest. We must change finances around and work towards projects like that.*

Christopher Morgan – *SLCC is now open for business. We just spoke to OFC, Our Future Community, who are working on a community place plan and we will be supporting them financially with their work. Lots of groups are working for our community and we want to send the message that we support them.*

Lino Scaglioni – *at the end of the month we should produce a statement showing all ins and outs debtors and creditors so the community can see how we stand.*

Question from Hannah Bevan Mohaffel:

Will you be advertising for a clerk?

Responses

Christopher Morgan – *We will be very shortly. Our priorities since I became Chairman are to first complete the constitution of working groups and take in lay experts for planning and personnel groups. Next priority is to get the clerk on board ASAP. I'm expecting to advertise the post early July, first or second week and have a clerk in place by the end of July/early August. We want to move from an operational level to a strategic one with day to day work being completed by a clerk.*

Martyn James – *we are getting a job description together to give an outline of expectations for the clerk position. We must make sure the day to day running of the council is managed by a clerk so that councillors can then respond more to the residents and not manage clerk duties between us.*

Questions from Vicki Judd:

What was the outcome of the users meeting?

Responses

Ian – *it was an exchange of views meeting, views of users. The intention was for the council to consider them and get back to the users with a follow up meeting but that didn't happen due to Covid19. No doubt now the council can make some progress on it.*

Could we provide more rubbish bins on coastal path?

Responses

Chris Tatt – *Richard empties them 3 times a week using a wheelbarrow, takes 1-1.5hrs and I have an idea on how to speed this up.*

Vicki Judd – *Walking from On the Rocks along the field and the first rubbish bin is the one on Jubilee field, 2-3 dog bins, but not rubbish bins.*

Rod Thomas – *yes bins are being used more, we should put one bin in the middle of the coastal path, it is SLCC land and needs to be looked after. We must cut this part of the path between jubilee field and the BP field. A gentleman cuts it himself and I do, but we shouldn't be doing it.*

Repair to the rubber matting in the play park?

Responses

Vicki Judd – *rubber matting is a trip hazard, needs replacing, we don't have any other outdoor play area that is contained. Whilst it is not in use it is a good time to fix it and make it safe for children to use.*

Chris Tatt – *I inspected this with Lino last week, we identified this as a tripping hazard, we are getting quotations to address this. Picnic bench and bench is being painted in there. Grass is being cut. Butterfly Garden is now going in.*

Rod Thomas – *park is out of date and needs new equipment. We must look at what we are providing, get grants, ask the vale to cough up. Hopefully we will have 106 monies to look at.*

Nigel Crick – *is SLCC responsible only for the Jubilee play park?*

Chris Tatt – *yes this is the only SLCC park.*

CHRISTOPHER OPENED UP QUESTIONS TO ALL MEMBERS IN THE MEETING, ASKING THEM TO RAISE A HAND:

Anthony Earnest:

What plans do you have for the Lavernock ward, there is lots of talk about Sully Village but are there any thoughts on the Lavernock/Cosmeston/Swanbridge areas?

Martyn James – *I welcome this question; I am the new councillor for Lavernock. The parking concerns were brought to my attention this week. I saw many cars parked in dangerous positions outside the park. We engaged with the Vale to draw their attention to it. The consultation period for the parking charges closes soon, we are challenging this on behalf of the residents. Please ring me and engage with me on any of these issues, I recognise I represent Lavernock and Cosmeston and welcome all queries.*

Anthony Earnest – *I'm encouraged by everything being said, precepts are paid by Lavernock residents too and they need to be considered in all spending and decisions.*

Martyn James – *we must celebrate the Marconi history Lavernock should be proud of*

Christopher Morgan – Facebook hub poll was overwhelmingly against the parking charges and we will represent the community on this.

Lino Scaglioni – Fully support celebrating Marconi as he was Italian!

Question from Karen Rogers:

When I was Acting Clerk, I recommended that Council should pay a consultant who has experience in working with councils, to draft new policies and procedures for Sully & Lavernock Community Council. It was clear the current ones had not been reviewed in years and were not fit for purpose and there were several omissions.

This was approved - I think recommended at a working group meeting and then formally approved at the next full Council Meeting. I duly appointed a consultant (after seeking three quotes) who was paid by the council a considerable amount to start work. The amount and dates of payment will of course be recorded in the financial records. The consultant commenced work and started with providing the draft documents listed below. She planned more documents i.e. a Health & Safety Policy so the council would have ended up with a complete 'set'.

182/2019 Minutes of 2 April 2019 read as follows: To approve the following new or updated documents:

- ***Terms of reference of the Personnel & Policy Committee***
- ***The Disciplinary Policy & Procedure***
- ***The Whistleblowing Procedure***
- ***The Grievance Policy & Procedure***
- ***The Harassment and Bullying Policy***

It was resolved to refer this to the next Personnel Committee Meeting. The Acting Clerk pointed out that Cllrs had received the documents on 28 February and therefore had had plenty of time to read the documents.

Why have these documents not been approved and posted onto the Council Website? Other Community Councils have such policies in place i.e. Llandough. They can be used to measure standards work and behavior of council employees and councillors. Cllr Barlow quickly referred the item to the Personnel Working Group, but the other Cllrs did not object. I suspect several had not read the documents. I don't know what happened after April as I resigned but new policies and procedures would have is such a big step forward I don't understand how it has just been forgotten.

Responses

Ian Barlow – as Chairman for the last year I wasn't a member of Personnel, so Councillor Baguley who was the Chair might be able to help

Phil Baguley – No idea where they are to be honest, I was kept away from most things despite being Chair.

Chris Tatt – The problems we had were due to having no permanent clerk since October 2017. 2 part time clerks for short periods. The Chair of the Personnel Committee resigned

last year and wasn't replaced, we have lots to catch up on. I am now Chair of the Personnel committee and plan on catching up as much as possible. I hope to start having zoom meetings with the Personnel Working Group.

Vicki Judd – *Will we ever find out the total cost that the suspended clerk cost us as a community?*

Christopher Morgan – *I don't want to provide an answer now, but when I am allowed to I will. I'm not sidestepping it; I am not allowed to discuss this now.*

Martyn James – *I have been in the Personnel Groups since becoming a councillor. I have looked into the previous clerks of the council; we are proposing to have a system where we can communicate during Coronavirus to put to bed the issues we need to. We recognise them. I support our chairman in dealing with the final parts of this clerk saga. I would support what Christopher said, as soon as we can answer you, we will. We are not here to hide things; we are here to be accountable to you for our actions and inactions and I give this as a personal promise.*

Christopher Morgan – *Our working groups can make recommendations. Planning and personnel will now have members of the public in them. For personnel a HR professional would be useful for pro-bono work, this is a skill we are lacking. In the days ahead we will be putting a shout out for this. This should require one night a month roughly.*

Any other questions from the public: NO.

Statement from Christopher Morgan - *3 written questions were sent in by Nick Miller, Les Humphries and Mike Fudge, all relating to how we will fill the 9th Councillor position. I need to make a statement on this. I have today been contacted by the Electoral Registration Office in the Vale and they have asked me to point something out to you.*

In the days past you may have seen my post on the hub and SLCC regarding the vacancy and the co-option options. I need to make it very clear that this was my personal view. If an election is requested it won't be held until 2021, if this is what residents request that is their democratic choice. Costs will be anywhere from £1500 to £6000 and costs can be paid to the Vale over 2 years. If ten residents or more don't request an election, then the council will consider all names put forward for co-option. No councillors should persuade the community on the way in which they exercise their legal right. No intimidation should be used, if anything written online makes you nervous about calling an election please don't let this put you off, it is your right to do so. Let's see democracy in action. Any questions at all, please contact us. Are there any more questions in relation to this?

Les Humphries – *what I see is nobody is taking collective responsibility, if you have a vote in the council and it is 5-4, the majority get the resolution through. It is incumbent on the council to support motions. Motions aren't currently being supported by all councillors when they are agreed upon. This teamwork is needed. I urge the council to adopt collective responsibility, to get the best for Sully.*

Chris Tatt – *I agree, some people don't understand what collective responsibility is, I urge them to look it up.*

Richard Thomas – *how long will the council wait before going ahead with the co-option process?*

Christopher Morgan – *the vacancy was posted on Monday 15th June. If within 14 days 10 residents request an election, then it will be held March-April 2021 costing £1500-£6000 split over two years. If they don't then the next councillor will be co-opted. People can apply to us and will be interviewed, and one will be nominated onto the council. I wish to disassociate myself from one individual that the community has suggested. I will look at all candidates with no prejudice.*

Vicki Judd – *Chris Tatt said that by the end of Aug we will have only a five-figure sum left in the bank, how would we afford an election? Can we prevent what happened last time when we only had two people for two positions and we still had to be pay for the cards sent out by the Vale?*

Ian Barlow – *It is a matter for the Vale to run elections, the process is clear, if 10 electors want an election it has to be held, it is then advertised, and nomination papers go in. This is the cost of democracy and can't be avoided. Election rules are law and if you step half an inch out of line you will have all sorts of people at your door. 10 electors can call an election and if will then be delayed until 2021 due to covid. There will be a ballot paper regardless of how many people put themselves forward so that cost cannot be avoided, this is the law and we must abide by the law*

Chris Tatt – *Last year we had the election and we had a bill for £6000, we paid the bill over 2 years and it was only paid off last May. If an election takes place again, we will have to pay £3000 this year and £3000 next year. Next year is the 5yr election term so there will be another bill for £6000, so over a 3yr period we could be spending £18000. People do need to consider this when asking for an election.*

Les Humphries – *will another councillor resign? Will there be an enquiry about Kay resigning? What happens if this occurs again? What are you doing about why people want to resign from this council? We don't want to lose any more people.*

Christopher Morgan – *Events back in May are currently under review. Measures are being laid – we have fresh blood, new working groups that actually work and new transparency like this meeting. I can promise you we are now trying to go down the right road.*

Les Humphries – *I hope all other councillors support you*

Lino Scaglioni – *we now have a situation where things are dynamic in the council, it is very open with good communication. The Facebook hub is working wonderfully, we also have the SLRA and can all communicate with each other. We must ask the residents what they want. Tell us how you want us to act.*

Christopher Morgan - *Thank you for joining us on this first public meeting*

Martyn James – *thank you and please give us some feedback. Let us know if we are going in the right or wrong direction.*

Vicki Judd – *it is a shame it took covid19 to get a meeting screened via live feed to allow all members to attend. Thank you for reaching the 21st century. This meeting is running nicely. It is a shame that certain things can't be said tonight, which is very clear.*

Christopher Morgan – *look out in the days ahead for us to ask for people to join our Planning Working Group.*

Chris Tatt – *Plus for our Personnel Working Group - HR people out there, we need you!*

MEETING CLOSED