

RAGLAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 28 July 2010 at 7:00pm in Raglan School.

Present: Cllr S Thomas (Chairman)

Cllrs R Moorby, N Porter, D Watkins, A Crump, Mrs H Williams, R Parry, Mrs S Price and Mrs A Vaughan.

In attendance: The Clerk, County Cllr R Greenland, Mr G Ashworth, Det Insp S Thomas and Sgt R Bull with about 15 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Greenland and Mr Ashworth who had come to talk about the Local Development Plan and in particular the number of houses to be built in Raglan and their location.

Cllr Greenland explained the process for progressing the LDP and for taking account of comments received. He emphasised that any sites identified for development would still need formal planning approval before any development takes place, and that he was at the meeting to listen to the views of Community Councillors and the public.

Mr Ashworth emphasised that Monmouthshire is under heavy pressure to allow development, but it still needed to protect the environment and amenities that caused the pressure in the first place. In preparing the draft plan it had been decided to stick to the same level of development that had been included in the previous plan of about 350/400 houses per annum. Most of this would take place in the towns, but it was recognised that rural areas had pressures to try to find affordable homes for local people to enable them to stay in their communities.

Two sites totalling about 5 acres had been set aside for development in Raglan which should be plenty for the 40 or so houses planned to be built in the next ten years.

Comments were welcomed at this stage but they would need to be in writing.

The meeting was opened up for comments.

The Chairman noted that the recent survey carried out for Raglan on affordable housing needs showed some 69 houses needed whereas the total development for Raglan would only be some 40 properties and they would not all be affordable. It was also noted that the land proposed was County Council owned land, and Raglan Community Council preferred a site off the Usk Road, CS/0137, which had actually scored more points on the County Council's own site assessment system. That site was still within walking distance of the village centre and school and had good access without further congesting roads in the village.

A number of other comments were received from the floor.

Raglan should not be compromised as a village by too much development. There were some misgivings about what affordable housing meant, the site preferred by the County was really needed for a school and parking as well as a village hall. That had originally been accepted but the County were insistent on including it for housing which would enhance its value. If Parking is not addressed there will be no other sites suitable in the village. More houses will mean more school pupils; at present the school is full, and previous forecasts that pupil numbers will fall had not been proven to be correct. The majority of new houses in Monmouthshire will be for in-comers who do not currently live in the County. This did not help existing residents or their children. There should be no more pressure on the eastern side of the village: the site on the west favoured by the Community Council would avoid that. More development near the flood plain could cause more floods due to run-off from

hard surfaces. Station Road currently has two sorts of incompatible traffic – play-school and industrial from the Council`s depot. There are no plans to improve it with a pavement.

In response the following comments were made:

There is no statutory definition of a village, but a population less than 2000 is often accepted as about right (it depends on the character of the village).

Raglan has a lot of amenities and can sustain additional development at the level suggested without compromising its village status. Affordable housing is generally defined as costing about four times the average salary; it should be available for local people but this can only be controlled by the Housing Authority as planning cannot do it. Infill would be over and above the figure of 40 houses, but there is not much scope for infill in Raglan.

The projections for school population showed a reduction in need over the next few years. These had not proved to be wildly out in the past.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Greenland and Mr Ashworth for attending and those present for their comments. The Community Council still favoured the site on the west of the village off Usk Rd, and would be writing in to say so.

Cllr Greenland and Mr Ashworth left the meeting at this point.

The Chairman then welcomed the two Police representatives to the meeting and invited them to speak about the recent spate of crime and anti-social behaviour in the Raglan area. Inspector Thomas explained that in common with other areas of Gwent Police Monmouthshire has a team of detectives and uniformed investigating officers who are trying to solve crimes and arrest the perpetrators. Recently they had some success in arresting persons involved in many local burglaries and also another group involved in Land Rover thefts. They had also worked with the owner of a local Agricultural Machinery supplier to recover stolen goods and arrest perpetrators. Also, a recent burglary at Raglan Garden Centre was interrupted and one burglar was caught on site.

Members expressed satisfaction with this, but questioned whether sentencing would adequately reflect the severity of the crimes. Police are working with the local judiciary with this issue; Gwent was recently signalled as the highest place for burglary outside London, but Inspector Thomas emphasised that burglary in the Raglan area, despite the recent outbreak, was actually very low.

Cllr Mrs Price made it clear that the Council is concerned about what happens in the Raglan area, not elsewhere, and there was an insufficient police presence in the village.

Cllr Mrs Vaughan supported this and told the Officers that since she had found two needles at the play area, she had been keeping an eye on the area and the young people congregating there, and she was now subjected to abuse by those young people. What did she have to do to get the police to take this seriously?

Sgt Bull emphasised that any incidents of that sort should be reported to the Usk station, and messages left if no-one is there. The police plan their work to some extent on the calls received, so without calls they will not know and if only very low numbers of calls are received they will not get priority. It was noted that the drugs issue will be discussed at the next CSAT meeting and a plan developed to tackle it.

The police are also looking to resurrect Neighbourhood Watch using the internet to pass on information.

A question was asked about using a camera to assist in reporting incidents; this is perfectly acceptable so long as it does not compromise the safety of the person with the camera, and

a recent case was quoted where a householder found an intruder in the house and the picture taken led to a very rapid arrest.
The Chairman thanked the officers for attending and they left at this point.

The Chairman then called the meeting to order.

2241. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R Watkins and T Phillips.

2242. Declarations of interest would be made as and when appropriate.

2243. The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 June 2010 were received and adopted as a correct record.

2244. Matters arising.

Re minute 2232, The Chairman asked members to consider what they feel should be done to the toilets in Raglan, whether the Council should take them over from the County Council or not, and the implications of this. Also, the Clerk will write to businesses in the village about alternative facilities on their premises which could be reimbursed by the government scheme. It might be possible to find someone to sweep streets, clean and look after toilets and act as School Crossing Patrol, and this could be looked into, but it would virtually double the Council's precept to do it.

It was noted that the Dog Walk needs cutting but up until now only one cut has been done each year. It was agreed to ask Mr Bradley to do it as an additional cut, or to suggest someone who might do it. Cllr Mrs Price will ring him.

The Chairman announced that following a recent meeting, the new school was not now going to happen as the bid for funding had been unsuccessful.

2245. Planning Matters.

a) Correspondence about Tree Preservation Orders was received and noted.

It was agreed that the Clerk would draft a response to the LDP consultation and pass it to the Chairman for agreement before sending it off.

b) The following planning application was considered:

(Cllr Crump declared an interest as a member of the County Planning Committee and took no part in the discussion.)

DC/2010/00367 Planning permission for change of use from stable and hayloft to holiday let at Stable and Hayloft, West of Cefn Coed Farm, Kingcoed, Raglan – Agreed.

2246. Finance Matters.

a) It was agreed to pay the following accounts:

Clerk's salary £271.67

Websites without worry (Hosting charge) £66.69

Ricoh Photocopying £93.28

b) It was agreed to send in the statement of accounts for Audit as agreed at the last meeting. The Chairman signed the letter.

2247. Highway Matters.

a) Correspondence.

A reply to our concerns raised at the last meeting was noted. Most of the issues were reported to the engineer and awaiting action.

b) Members concerns

The state of Somerset Drive was noted as very poor, and someone had fallen there recently. Residents at Wilcae Terrace were advised to approach Monmouthshire Housing Association concerning signs about residents parking.

The sign for Barton Bridge Rise could not be seen as it is approached, causing difficulties with deliveries etc. A request to move it would be made.

The walkway between The Willows and Ethley Drive was very overgrown. The Chairman would follow this up.

Cllr Parry noted that when grit bins are located they should be filled with salt not stone.

2248. General Correspondence.

A letter would be sent to the Boundary Commission to say no comment about Raglan but concern about introducing multi-member wards.

The Clerk would scrutinise the document on local authority byelaws and report back if it affects this council. He would also do the same regarding the new Local Government Measure from the Assembly.

A letter would be sent opposing the closure of Abergavenny Magistrates Court.

A document showing the transfer of land to the County at Moatenwell was received and noted.

Other correspondence was received and noted.

2249. Members Reports

a) Cllr Mrs Williams had attended the One Voice Wales meeting where Cllr Phillips had been re-elected as Chairman for another year. It was also understood that the Charter would be progressed by Jenny Lewis within the next six months. Meetings were being arranged to do so.

2250. Any Other Business.

a) Raglan Music Festival were proposing to erect a new notice board opposite the school. This was welcomed. The new one owned by the Council would also be put on the wall by the police house to replace the existing one.

b) Trees in Somerset Drive by the telephone exchange were blocking the light for adjoining properties and needed cutting back. The Clerk would write to BT about this.

c) It was agreed not to hold a meeting in August except to deal with Planning Applications if any are received. The Clerk would liaise with the Chairman on this.

The meeting ended at 9:20pm