

RAGLAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23 March 2011 at 7:30pm in Raglan School.

Present: Cllr S Thomas (Chairman)

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

In attendance: The Clerk, Mrs K Beirne (For the first item), Mr D Brown, Miss S Hughes and 4 other members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs K Beirne, Director of Regeneration and Culture for Monmouthshire County Council who explained her role to the Council. The post has responsibility for Operational matters, including refuse, highways, property management and also covers planning, enterprise, environment as well as culture, well-being, licensing, public protection and leisure services. Taken together the services cover all aspects of regeneration relating to environment, people and place, and her efforts are focused on linking all parts of the department to ensure that working is "joined up" and delivered effectively. Developing the green economy is one key area of this work. Other aspects of the job that were noted were digital inclusion, strategic development through the Local Development Plan, work-based training and possibly setting up a Community Interest Company to manage key projects and pursue new opportunities. A review of Tourism services is currently on-going.

As far as Raglan is concerned, a number of issues are outstanding connected to the school, traffic calming, the council depot, housing developments, and it is important that local views are considered and sought.

The County LDP is going for medium growth in the next 15 years which means about 5000 houses built in that time. A comment was made that the housing sites in Raglan are not the ones identified by the Community Council and the new school needs to reflect the need for places that extra development will create.

The new school fence was quoted as an example of a poorly carried out project. The planning application was in process as the fence was being erected, the line it took was not as per the plan, the gates are not lined up with steps within the perimeter and it had created a dangerous access to the MUGA onto Chepstow Rd due to lack of thought. The promotion of Safe Routes to School had been deferred and was still not in place.

Comments were made about the process of the LDP, the need for continuity of process which was impaired when new people kept coming into the projects, the problems with poor highways repair works, the collection of green waste in rural areas where it is not really needed, and the need to take the community into account.

Mrs Beirne acknowledged these concerns and made it clear that she intends to tackle them. She would be willing to come back to a future meeting to review progress and to show what improvements had been made.

The Chairman thanked her for attending and wished her every success with her efforts. Mrs Beirne then left the meeting.

3018. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Parry.

3019. Declarations of interest would be made as and when necessary during the meeting.

3020. The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 February 2011 were received and adopted as a correct record.

3021. Matters arising.

Re minute 3016, it was agreed to write to Mr G Edmunds to thank him for the work done in Station Road near Idlebrook.

Re minute 3013, a meeting about the dangerous entry to the MUGA was to take place tomorrow.

Cllr Watkins noted that the pothole in Warrage Rd was open again due to the poor quality of work in filling it.

3022. Planning Matters.

a) Enforcement Issues.

Cllr Mrs Vaughan noted that at Grange Lodge a stable block had been built which was not housing horses and a quantity of hard core had been dumped on adjoining land for what appeared to be further unauthorised development. This was on the list of new enforcement cases being investigated.

b) The following planning applications were considered:

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

DC/2011/00210 Change of use of land to extend approved private carp fishing lake from previously approved scheme at Field 3532, Rhiwlas, Raglan. Concerns were expressed about the quality of the earth dam and whether this was a step towards a private scheme becoming a commercial venture. It was agreed that the Environment Agency's views would be important in this decision.

DC/2011/00178 First floor extension and alterations at Pentre Farm Cottage, Llangovan. Recommended for approval.

3023. Finance Matters.

a) It was agreed to pay the following:

Clerk's salary and expenses £344.22

One Voice Wales Subscription £218.00

Zurich Insurance Premium £650.08

It was agreed to pay the insurance now as it was due for renewal but to review alternatives before next year's policy renewal becomes due.

b) It was noted that before these payments are made, the Council has £13,736.69 in the bank.

3024. Highway Matters.

a). There were no correspondence items for this heading.

b). Members concerns.

Cllr R Watkins asked if there was a case for switching off some of the highway lighting on the bypass in the night-time hours. It was agreed to write to SWTRA about this.

Cllr D Watkins noted that the footpath on the Monmouth Rd had still not been improved.

Cllr Phillips also noted that the items raised by him with Mark Watkins had not been addressed.

3025. General Correspondence.

It was agreed to nominate three members for a Training Session on Understanding the Law. Cllrs T Phillips, Mrs H Williams and Mrs A Vaughan. Cllr S Thomas would also like to attend the Planning course. The Clerk would follow this up urgently.

The Boundary Commission Report on Monmouthshire County Council wards was received. It was noted that none of the views expressed locally had been taken into account.

Other items of correspondence were noted.

3026. Raglan School Kitchen.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders while this was discussed to allow members of the public to participate.

It had come as a surprise to everyone that it was proposed to close the school kitchen at Easter and to transport meals from Deri View School at Abergavenny. There are two meetings tomorrow to discuss it – one with the School Governors and the relevant County Officers and another with parents representatives. It appears that the need for some works in the kitchen is being used as a smoke screen to cover the fact that it is seen to be cheaper to cook meals at Deri View and transport them in.

No breakdown of costs to put the kitchen right had been produced (the figure of £45k seems very high) and no evidence of the relative cost of producing meals at Deri View and transporting them either.

A parent had produced worrying evidence of the loss of nutritional value of meals when kept hot for too long.

This proposal would also leave the Community Centre based in the school without a kitchen, and that would affect a number of events held there during the year.

There are two issues to be considered, should they close the kitchen and what will happen afterwards on such matters as where the food will be served from, and how will the Community Centre cater for functions. At present the children get good food and every effort should be made to avoid down-grading that.

It was agreed that the Community Council supports the moves to avoid closure.

It was also agreed to await the outcome of the two meetings tomorrow.

(The meeting resumed under Standing Orders)

3027. Members Reports.

a). Cllr Mrs Vaughan raised an issue with a large Oak Tree overhanging several gardens in Ethley Drive which is dropping branches in the gardens. Work is needed on the tree but it is not clear who owns it. It was agreed that this is not owned by the Community Council and the property owner should be advised to go to the Land Registry to establish ownership before seeking compensation from the owner for the work that is needed to put it into a safe condition.

b). Cllr Mrs Price expressed on-going concern about the state of the Recycling area which frequently overflows its containers and is in an untidy state. Agreed to write to the Recycling Officer about this.

c). Cllr Phillips noted that there was ivy overhanging the footpath from Usk Rd to High Street which came from a tree in Trostrey House, The Clerk would write to get it cleared.

d). Cllr Phillips reported that he had attended a One Voice Wales meeting in Newtown when it was set out how previous years` problems with the Annual Conference would be overcome.

e). It was agreed to ask Mr Edmunds for a sweep to be carried out in the village as it was in a dirty state at present.

f) . Cllr Thomas asked members to agree that a new gatepost could be installed at the allotments by Mr Clarkson. This was agreed.

g). Cllr Mrs Williams reported on a forthcoming Twinning visit from Parce which would happen during the Raglan Festival on 11/12 June. An EC grant had been applied for. A lunch and various activities were being planned. Hosts were needed for the 50 or so guests and The Chairman of the Council would be asked to take part in the lunch and then to go to France later in the year to sign the twinning agreement. The Village Hall Committee had agreed to plant a tree in the play area.

3028. Any other business.

a). Raglan Local Ways would hold a walk on 2 April and anyone was invited to join in and to gather at the scout hut afterwards for refreshments. Leaflets of the various walks in the area were also being produced and would be widely distributed.

b). It was agreed to write a letter to congratulate Prince William and Catherine Middleton on their forthcoming marriage.

The meeting ended at 9:20pm