

5536 Agenda item 7:- Matters to report, the disbandment of the Community Council Finance committee. (Clerk)

The Clerk explained that this item was included on the agenda following the meeting he attended with the Chair with the Wales Audit (WA) office. He explained that WA made a comment that the Community Council have not agreed the setting of the Council budget. The Clerk's report is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

This generated some discussion with a number of views expressed. During this discussion Cllr Dorey formally explained that she resigned from the Finance Committee. There was some discussion relating to this and a number of concerns expressed. Following further debate it was:

Proposed by Cllr S Harrington seconded by Cllr R Moorby that the Finance Committee is disbanded.

The Clerk explained that four elected members should formally contact the Clerk in writing requesting that the resolution that has been approved is amended to conform with the Council Standing Orders.

It was agreed that elected members will formally write to the Clerk.

All those present agreed.

5537 Agenda item 8:- To receive and adopt the minutes from the Ordinary meeting, held on 22 May 2024

Proposed: by Cllr P Jones seconded by Cllr R Moorby that the minutes are accepted.

All those present agreed

5538 Agenda item 9:- Matters to report

No matters reported

5539 Agenda item 10:- To consider any Police reports from Gwent Police

No reports received other than the monthly correspondence.

5540 Agenda item 11:- Clerks reports verbal or written.

The Clerk had no further reports.

5541 Agenda item 12:- Clerks report following a meeting with officers from Audit Wales.

The Clerk presented his report that is attached to these minutes. The Clerk reminded members that his report should remain privileged until any further reports have been received from the Wales Audit office.

The Clerk also informed members that he has not been able to present the Annual Statement as the internal auditor hasn't returned it before this meeting as expected.

This generated some discussion with a number of views expressed. There was some discussion relating to this and a number of concerns expressed. Following further debate it was:

Agreed: to defer this to a further meeting.

5542 Agenda item 13:- Communication from Councillors when correspondence is forwarded by the Clerk (Clerk)

The Clerk gave a verbal report relating to communications when he presents information to elected members. He explained that not all members provide a response relating to planning and other correspondence.

He explained that not all correspondence requires a response but some correspondence does need a response and he only receive one or two replies or comments. Following some further discussion, it was:

Proposed: that any correspondence that needed a response should be marked important.

5543 Agenda item 14:- Consider the expression of interest, relating to the Old Raglan Church in Wales School. (ROCS)

The Clerk gave those present a verbal report following the draft document that was distributed to elected members prior to the meeting for consideration. The Clerk explained that his report / expression of interest should be considered as confidential as a commercial document. The draft document was considered and some discussion followed. Following this discussion, it was:

Proposed: that the draft expression of interest should be presented to the relevant dept of Monmouthshire County Council for consideration.

All those present agreed.

5544 Agenda item 15:- Consider any Planning Applications received before the meeting. All applications that were received were forwarded to members before the meeting for any observations.

One member asked about the works that are being carried out on a property "Shop House, Gwehelog". The Clerk explained that this proposed application was forwarded to members for

consideration, and he reminded those present that the application was submitted as a Fast Track Application.

Following some discussion where a number of views were expressed, it was concluded that no objection is made.

No further comments were made relating to Planning Applications that have been forwarded prior to the meeting.

5545 Agenda item 16:- Consider the receipt of invoices and payments made.

Date	Payment to	Amount	Cheque
26/6/24	Baptist Church (Hall Hire)	80.00	
26/6/24	Merlin Waste (Collection)	241.92	
26/6/24	The Chairs reimbursement for travelling to Cardiff	27.90	
26/6/24	HMRC		
26/6/24	Adrian Edwards (June salary) with overtime		
26/6/24	Traveling (Clerk) for council business	47.70	
26/6/24	Cllr S Harington (Cllr Allowance)	156.00	
26/6/24	Cllr R Moorby (Cllr Allowance)	156.00	
26/6/24	Cllr H Leacock (Cllr Allowance)	156.00	

The following need to be rectified so payment can be made.

26/6/24	Raglan festival grant.
26/6/24	Raglan in Bloom
26/6/24	Raglan Sports Association
26/6/24	Marie Curie Hospice
26/6/24	Kids Cancer

This was proposed by Cllr P Jones seconded by Cllr Moorby that the above are agreed.

All those present agreed

The Clerk informed members a grant application from the Sports Association has been received. A discussion relating to the amount requested took place. The Clerk explained that he had emailed the person that made the submission for clarification but has not yet received a reply. He was requested to try to make contact again.

5546 Agenda item 17:- Replacement of the current council laptop. (Clerk).

The Clerk gave a verbal report relating to the current laptop. He explained that the current laptop was purchased in or around 2017/18 and the set up of the laptop was undertaken by a one of the former elected members, at a cost around £2k. The Clerk explained that a replacement would be between £450 and £760.00. Following some discussion, it was:

Proposed: by Cllr Dorey and seconded by Cllr Moorby that a new laptop is purchased

with a ceiling of £760.00.
All those present agreed.

5547 Agenda item 18:- Consider any correspondence received and forwarded prior to the meeting.

All those present acknowledged the correspondence forwarded by the Clerk and offered no further observations.

5548 Agenda item 19:- Reports from the County Councillor

Cllr P Jones, gave a verbal report on the following:

Gwent Police attended a County Council meeting and officers attended the weekly coffee morning in Raglan.

Cllr Jones raised the matter of the proposal of green ways initiative that is being considered by officers from Monmouthshire County Council. There was some discussion relating to this and it was explained that the current dog walk is used by local dog walkers and others. There was no further discussion and there was no resolution.

5549 Agenda item 20:- Public Notices and Enforcement Notices (Cllr Penny Jones)

Cllr Jones explained that she had been involved with a number of enforcement notices served on house holders relating to issues that affect residents. There was some discussion relating to parking of vehicles inappropriately, and the tipping / storage of materials on the Highway. The Clerk explained that he has received correspondence asking if the Community Council could intervene relating to some matters. The Clerk explained that this is outside the remit of a Community Council and it doesn't have those powers. No further action was taken and the comments were noted.

Cllr Moorby made observations relating to the over growth of hedgerows in the wider countryside. He explained that the hedges are overgrown and are not cut, and this is causing concern for safety when residents and visitors walk the lanes and byways and don't have any retreat to stand aside when traffic and machinery is travelling on the lanes. It was:

Proposed: that the Community Council should write to the relevant Highways dept.

5550 Agenda item 21:- Reports from members on outside bodies

No further comments were presented

5551 Agenda item 22:- To confirm the date of the next meeting 24 July 2024

The date was agreed

5552 No other business was discussed, and the Chairman explained that this meeting will be deferred until Friday 28 June. He then thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 21:12 hrs.

Signed by _____

Chairman

Date 24 July 2024

Update to: - Raglan Community Council, Without Prejudice

Subject: - Disband or discharge the Finance committee

Report: - by the Clerk

Date: - 26 June 2024

As Clerk to Raglan Community Council, I and the Chair attended a meeting with Audit Wales relating to the observations made that the Community Council hasn't approved or adopted the budget setting for previous years, (which I refute). Elected members are aware that a fully costed budget is set in a finance meeting in January of every year.

Those meetings are minuted and are presented at the next ordinary meeting, so all elected members accept and adopt the minutes as a true and accurate record of those meetings.

Audit Wales have inferred that this shouldn't be undertaken in this format, as budget setting should be agreed as a full council. The Audit Office has said, the Council has not provided evidence that a budget has been set in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act (1992) and that the precept has been set in line with the budget.

Therefore, whilst the Community Council only convenes two or three finance meetings a year, all relating to mainly budgets etc, and to set aside any confusion, the following is suggested:

Convene a Special EGM with one item on the agenda, to disband or discharge Raglan Community Council Finance Committee and incorporate all finance arrangements into the ordinary meeting/s; to disband or discharge the finance committee that was agreed in the AGM in a previous resolution to conform with Standing Orders. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least four councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

Advantage: to make all financial matters (including budget setting and expenditure) clear for the Auditors.

Disadvantage: meeting is going to take longer and be more cumbersome to manage.

Author: The Clerk to Raglan Community Council

Update to: - Raglan Community Council

Subject: - Update following meeting with Wales Audit office. #

Report: - by the Clerk

Date: - 26 June 2024

Without Prejudice and private until the Community Council receives a response from Audit Wales.

Currently this report is marked 'Without Prejudice', this update should remain closed to the public until the Community Council receives a response from Audit Wales. The following is to provide members with an update relating to the meeting with Audit Wales attended by Cllr Nick Ramsay Chair to Raglan Community Council and Adrian Edwards as Clerk to the Community Council.

Audit Wales requested that the Community Council provided copies of all original minutes for the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024, including minutes for all meetings held in camera.

During the May meeting I informed all those members who were present of the request, and it was proposed that I contact the Auditor General asking why it is a requirement to provide copies that are published on the Community Council website but agreed that minutes should be provided.

I wrote the Auditor General as requested and hand delivered the letter to the Audit Wales office in Cardiff 24 May; again, the Chair and I were informed by the Audit Manager that this correspondence cannot be found.

Again, the Audit Manager informed the Chair that he had not received and emails from myself that I have sent on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, @ 10:02 Thursday, 23 May 2024 @ 11:27 providing relevant information that has been requested.

During the meeting on the 12 June, (change of date from the 3 June following family matters for the Chair), I explained that I believe the document management of the Audit Wales offices need to be reviewed, as they haven't been able to find/locate the Annual Statement with supporting and relevant paperwork that was hand delivered, and on top of that to be told that emails have never been received.

Before the start of the meeting on the 12 June, I informed the Audit Manager and a Senior Auditor who was in attendance that I was going to record the meeting following the Audit Office mislaying documents and indicating that they hadn't received email/s correspondence from myself on behalf of the Community

Council. The Audit Manager was also asked if he would sign for the documents that were provided at this meeting.

During the meeting, the Audit Manager informed the Chair and I that the Audit Office had completed the Audit for Gwehelog Fawr end of year accounts 2022/23 and returned them to the former Clerk.

This was questioned as the Audit Office are saying that they hadn't received Raglan Community Council end of year accounts, but the Gwehelog Fawr accounts have been completed, but both sets of accounts were delivered on the same day!

The Audit Manager informed the Chair and I, that a copy of the Accounting Statement would be sent the Raglan Community Council following the meeting on the 12 June. At the time of drafting this update, the Community Council still hasn't received the documents.

On behalf of the Community Council, I asked about the observation made by the Audit Office relating to Assertion 3 below:

Assertion 3 – noncompliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice.

2019/20 & 2020/21 - The Council has not provided evidence **that a budget has been set** in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act (1992) and that the precept has been set in line with the budget.

The Audit Manager indicated that the minutes do not indicate that the Community Council had approved the budget in those financial years. As the Clerk I don't accept those observations, the Community Council has accepted the budget and precept set in a Finance Committee Meeting, as minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting were agreed in the following Ordinary Meeting where the acceptance of the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

For example:

- Minute 5416 Agenda item 5:- To receive and adopt the minutes from the Finance meeting, held on 17 January 2024
- Minute 5258 Agenda item 4:- To receive and adopt the minutes from the Finance meeting, held on 25 January 2023
- Minute 5056 Agenda item 3:- To receive and adopt the minutes from the Finance meeting, held on 26 January 2022
- Minute 4899 Agenda item 3:- To receive and adopt the minutes from the Finance meeting, held on 25 January 2021
- Minute 4843 Agenda item 6:- To receive and adopt the minutes from the finance meeting, held on Wednesday 15 January 2020

As explained in previous correspondence all elected members of Raglan Community Council past and present, were aware the Council has set a budget heading for many years to ensure the Council has the resources to enter into a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) for the MUGA and adjoining field with Monmouthshire County Council.

All elected members were / are aware the progress has been very limited and very frustrating due to Monmouthshire County Councils lack of engagement with the Community Council.

Cllr Penny Jones as the County Council Ward Member had correspondence from the Acting Head of Landlord Services on 24 January 24 relating the CAT for the MUGA and adjoining field where he said, *"I will liaise with Legal colleagues to accelerate any draft terms/contract that may have been produced in readiness for a decision on the MUGA CAT"*.

Elected members will recall on May 2 a further business case has been presented and again for the fourth time, it would appear this has gone into the dark depths of Monmouthshire County Council administration.

Audit Wales has made an assertion the balance carried forward exceeded the 21/22 precept. It would appear, Audit Wales consider that the Community Council does not have any arrangements in place to ensure effective and efficient use of its resources. The balance carried forward is as a result of the total lack of cooperation and administration failure on Monmouthshire County Council behalf.

Author: The Clerk to Raglan Community Council