

Minera Community Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17th January 2024

Commencing at 7.15 pm at the Tyn y Capel, Minera

Present: Cllrs H Field (Chair), T Grundy, J Wellens, A Roberts, G Dillon, D Gidlow, J Belton, W Ollerhead

Clerk: Mr D Hinchliffe

Apologies: Cllrs D Kelly, K Coventry

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair recorded the great shock and sadness of Minera Community Council at the sudden and very recent passing of Councillor Nigel Jones. Nigel had been a Councillor since May 2021, since which time he had been an active and valued advocate for his community and a respected colleague. He would be deeply missed, and the heartfelt condolences of the whole Council were extended to Nigel's family and friends at this very sad time.

All present stood in silence for a short time as a mark of respect.

117/23 Declarations of interest

117.1/23 There were no declarations of interest.

118/23 Ratification of the minutes of the previous meeting

118.1/23 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 were proposed as a correct record by Cllr T Grundy and seconded by Cllr J Wellens.

119/23 Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise dealt with in the agenda

119.1/23 Cllr J Belton had not yet returned the speed gun to the Clerk. This would be done in the near future.

119.2/23 The Clerk advised the meeting that North Wales Police had still not yet responded to the request to consider a Community Safety Order to compel security improvements at Minera Hall. This would continue to be pursued.

119.3/23 The Clerk advised the meeting that the damaged bench in Ffordd Bryn Madoc had still not been repaired. This had been principally due to the long spell of wet weather which had prevented work being undertaken. It was now expected to proceed to a conclusion in the near future.

119.4/23 Cllr J Wellens advised the meeting that he continued to liaise with residents affected by recent flooding with respect to the issues discussed at the previous meeting.

119.5/23 Noting that the next Town and Community Council Forum had not been brought forward from its initially advised date of February, Cllr J Wellens and the Clerk both recorded that the change of Chair for the forum had brought about a more open mood stamp for the meeting and a willingness to solicit topics for the agenda.

119.6/23 The Clerk advised the meeting that both the picnic bench for New Brighton and the defibrillator and cabinet for the Tyn y Capel had now been received and installed.

120/23 Casual vacancy – consideration of initiation of the process to fill the vacancy which has arisen

120.1/23 The Chair advised the meeting that this item of business would need to be expanded firstly due to the recent passing of Councillor N Jones, and secondly as she herself had separately decided to tender her resignation from Minera Community Council with immediate effect.

120.2/23 The Clerk advised the meeting that he would contact WCBC Electoral Services to establish the correct protocol in the current circumstances. While the vacancy caused by the resignation of Cllr W Brown was now cleared to be filled by co-option, the two subsequent vacancies would also need to be the subject of a notice of vacancy, and it was unclear whether the first co-option could be stayed until the two further vacancies could be attached to it as a single exercise.

120.3/23 Following a short discussion it was agreed by all present that no move to fill any vacancy should be made until after the funeral of Cllr N Jones, and the Clerk additionally asked the Chair to delay her own resignation until after any payments requiring immediate approval had been sanctioned since she and Cllr Jones were two of the three mandated signatories independent of the Clerk.

121/23 Police report – to receive an update from the local policing team

121.1/23 The Clerk had received short summaries of police activity in the previous month from PCSO Lydia Griffiths, and this had been shared with Councillors. The Chair noted that it was reassuring that reported crime remained at low levels within the community.

121.2/23 The Clerk advised the meeting that PCSO Griffiths was now available each week at Coedpoeth Police Station for a face to face meeting. Regular monthly reviews would therefore be restarted..

121.3/23 Cllr J Wellens advised the meeting that recent incidents concerning two large dogs had established that they were not of the XL Bully breed.

122/23 Footpath issues – report on activities

122.1/23 Cllr T Grundy advised the meeting that he was pleased to see that recent high winds had not created obstacles on local paths from windthrown trees.

122.2/23 Cllr Grundy also noted that a sign was missing and would pass the details to the Clerk for notification to WCBC

123/23 Minera Community Council Chair's report – summary of activities

123.1/23 The Chair advised the meeting that she had received representations from two neighbouring residents on Old Road Minera concerning a retrospective planning application. The application was included in the agenda for the current meeting and the residents were expected to attend to present their views.

123.2/23 A bus stop on Minera Hall Road was being intermittently disregarded by Arriva's drivers and the Clerk had been asked to expedite reinstatement of the signage so that this could be remedied.

123.3/23 A meeting with the Youth Service had been constructive, albeit a basic lack of participation still persisted, particularly among girls. Cllr W Ollerhead undertook to establish what costs would be incurred if the school was able to offer more attractive accommodation for the youth club during cold and dark periods of the year.

123.4/23 A meeting with WCBC to discuss the Community Agent service had been generally positive and confirmed a wish by WCBC to maintain the service. Further meetings would be arranged, and the Clerk would attend.

123.5/23 The Chair's final duty on behalf of Minera CC would be to take a sympathy card and flowers to Mrs Carol Jones, which would be done before the end of the week.

124/23 Planning matters – to consider items received from Chief Planning Officer

124.1/23 Planning application P/2023/0840 had been received for consideration, and at this point 5 residents joined the meeting. The Chair welcomed them and explained that the two viewpoints held by the attending residents could each be articulated for five minutes, following which Councillors would discuss and consider the issues at hand, and determine the particulars of a response to the WCBC Planning Officer.

124.2/23 The two opposing viewpoints of the attending residents were presented in turn, including review of papers and photographs previously circulated for review. Following dialogue with Councillors and the clarification of a number of points, the Chair summarised the position of Minera CC as follows:

- Minera CC had on numerous previous occasions advised WCBC of the need for active safety reinforcement on the Old Road and would therefore reiterate this concern with respect to this planning application. It was the opinion of Minera CC that the installation of a garden was prejudicial to road safety.
- Minera CC would encourage WCBC Planning Department to resolve as a matter of urgency a number of potentially conflicting and inconsistent elements of advice and published guidelines presented in support of the two opposing arguments.

The residents now left the meeting, with the thanks of the Chair and Councillors for their contributions.

125/23 Borough Councillor's report – summary of activities

Cllr J Wellens briefly commented:

125.1/23 WCBC had now voted through the Local Development Plan. This would now be implemented.

125.2/23 WCBC continued to examine its budget deficit alongside service provision and the impact on local taxation. Work would continue in the coming weeks with numerous challenges still to be met.

126/23 School Governor's report – summary of activities

126.1/23 Cllr W Ollerhead advised the meeting that the Governors had chosen to re-write numerous policies under the purview of a review committee. This was felt necessary in order to raise the general level of governance in response to the Estyn outcomes. Training was also being increased, and Estyn was now noting visible improvements, with more required.

126.2/23 Two Governors, including the Head of Governors, had resigned and replacements were being sought.

126.3/23 Pupil numbers had fallen a little, influenced by a corresponding fall in the numbers of traveller children. Budgets were now extremely challenging, but staff and pupil morale was nevertheless good.

The Chair thanked the Governors on behalf of Minera CC for their continuing diligence in difficult times and for the positive changes they were helping to foster.

Susanne Allcroft now joined the meeting.

127/23 Community Agent's report – summary of activities

127.1/23 A useful meeting had been held with the new Brymbo Community Agent, also attended by Cllr J Wellens. This new liaison would be maintained as would close contact with Coedpoeth following the resignation of the Coedpoeth Agent after just 3 months in post.

127.2/23 Coffee Companions was thriving and had enjoyed a good variety of speakers recently. Additional grants would now be pursued to ensure activities would remain well funded into the future. A case study had been requested based on the success of Coffee Companions and £45 would be invested in a multi-use National Trust access card which could support future trips locally and further afield.

127.3/23 A complicated referral had been received at Christmas which involved intervention over the holiday period, but which had had a positive outcome.

127.4/23 A digital champions initiative involving children going into the community to assist with digital services issues and to provide advice on how to access things online was being researched as a possible inter-generational activity.

The Chair thanked Susanne for her continued good work, and Susanne then left the meeting.

128/23 Correspondence – summary of items received; the Clerk will highlight any issues requiring attention and provide any clarifications

The Clerk highlighted two issues:

128.1/23 Dialogue with North Wales Police and affected residents concerning abandoned vehicles and, latterly, household debris tipped in New Brighton continued. One derelict vehicle had now been removed.

128.2/23 The new play area Service Level Agreement for 2024/25 had been received and showed a modest £72 increase over the prior year. At the Clerk’s recommendation and with the assent of all present the Chair signed the agreement on behalf of Minera CC.

129/23 Grants and donations – to consider requests for financial support received.

130.1/23 Donation requests had been received from Eisteddfod yr Urdd and Cronfa (a charity aimed at making the Urdd accessible to underprivileged children). Following a brief discussion Cllr W Ollerhead proposed, and Cllr G Dillon seconded that each applicant be awarded £200. All present were in agreement.

131/23 Financial matters – to approve the month’s financial statement and schedule of proposed payments

131.1/23 The Clerk briefly explained the financial activities for the period, and the details of payments proposed to be made, following which the financial statement for the period was proposed for acceptance by Cllr J Belton and seconded by Cllr D Gidlow and the schedule of payments, shown below, was proposed for approval by Cllr W Ollerhead and seconded by Cllr G Dillon.

D Hinchliffe - Clerk salary, December	544.59
D Hinchliffe - Clerk HWA, December	20.00
HSBC, charges for November	5.00
SSE - electricity charges for November	294.38
S Allcroft, Agent salary for November	815.39
EE - mobile phone bill for October	13.00
S Allcroft, Agent expenses for November/December	27.70
LexisNexis, Arnold-Baker 13th edition copy	164.99
EE, mobile phone bill for November	13.82
Groundwork, room hire for Coffee Companions, November	100.00
Audit Wales, fee for 2022/23 audit	200.00

Groundwork, room hire for Coffee Companions, June invoice not sent until 13/12	100.00
Groundwork, room hire for Coffee Companions, December	50.00
Mellt the Storyteller, Coffee Companions speaker fee	50.00
Information Commissioner, data protection licence renewal	40.00
S Allcroft, Agent salary for December	997.94
McAfee antivirus	59.99
EE Mobile phone bill for December	14.65
WCBC, half-yearly play area inspection	703.80
Coedpoeth CC - room hire for Youth Service meeting	8.25
Total to approve	4,223.50

131.2/23 The Clerk had circulated a revised draft budget for 2024/25 ahead of the meeting. The budget was discussed, and it was proposed by Cllr G Dillon and seconded by Cllr T Grundy that the sum to be sought from precept to fund the Youth Service activities should be reduced to £3,250 and for the service's performance to be reviewed at the half year stage, with any subsequent funding that might be agreed at that point to be taken from reserves.

Allowing for this adjustment it was proposed by Cllr J Wellens and seconded by Cllr G Dillon that the Clerk advise WCBC of a precept requirement for 2024/25 of £45,474. All present were in agreement.

All business having been transacted the Chair thanked Councillors, present, absent and past, and the Clerk for their support during her time in office as a Minera Community Councillor.

Cllr J Belton responded in kind by thanking the Chair on behalf of all who had worked with her in long period of service to Minera CC for her commitment and diligence, noting that her contribution to the success of the Council would be greatly valued, sentiments to which all present gave their assent.

Meeting adjourned 2110 hrs.