

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the remote Council meeting held on Monday 5th October 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillors: Mr P Butterworth (Chair), Mrs J Mckenna, Mrs L Brown, Mr I Martin, Mr K Dunn, Mrs E Chapman Mrs E Nigogosian and Mrs E Wixcey.

Also in attendance:

Mrs H Counsell (Clerk to the Council)

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and apologised for having to hold another remote meeting because of the Covid-19 pandemic, he thanked all present for their attendance, particularly Cllrs E Nigogosian and K Dunn to their first meeting.

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

There were none.

2. To receive applications for a co-opted vacancy in the Earlswood ward

Councillors met with Mr A Williamson on 2.10.20 and agreed at the current meeting to co-opt him into the Earlswood vacancy. This appointment means that the Council now has a full complement of members representing all wards. Clerk to inform Democratic Services and arrange to visit Cllr Williamson with relevant paperwork for signature.

3. Issues raised by members of the public

Traffic issues – it was reported that there were 100+ comments from residents discussing problems with traffic/ highways on Facebook. Following a lengthy discussion, including input from C Cllr Brown on the requirements for 20mph speed limits and the limited resources available to the County Council (for the reasons outlined in the County Councillor's report - Minute 4022), this Community Council agreed the following action points:

- Clerk to contact P Keeble, Mon CC to request that the seven inconsistent and confusing 30mph signs within the 20mph zone be removed or relocated.
- Investigate drawing up a petition to Mon CC for 20mph speed limits in Shirenewton and Mynyddbach, with the possibility of making a contribution towards costs.
- Clerk to include traffic issues in the next issue of the Parish Magazine.
- A group of Councillors (JM, KD, EW, EC) to look at costing options such as provision of signage, hivy jackets etc and report back to next meeting.
- EN to respond to the Facebook discussion with the Council's actions.
- Council to hold an informal update meeting on Wednesday 21st October at 7pm.

4. To receive the monthly police report.

20/09 – No insurance on a Crick Road vehicle

01/10 – Theft of lorry

04/10 – Theft of four push bikes in the Shirenewton area

Public Safety – Few calls for people being scammed over the phone across South Monmouthshire. We can't stress enough the importance of not giving personal information over the phone. If you have any concerns in relation to your bank account being hacked, or money supposedly being removed from your account. Hang up the call and ring your bank directly they can advise you. Never give information to someone who rings you out of the blue. For more advice please contact our cyber Team at

cybercrimeunit@gwent.pnn.police.uk or check the Action Fraud website at www.actionfraud.police.uk

or ring them on 0300 123 2040 if you think you have been scammed.

Notable arrests

Person arrested after a warrant conducted in the Bayfield area of Chepstow. They were arrested for Possession with intent to supply.

Operations

We continued to conduct a number Off Road Bike operations in Wentwood during this period, where the local Neighbourhood team from South Monmouthshire and The Rural Crime Team worked together with specials to try and catch people using off road bikes. A number of users warned and educated.

5. Minute 4017 - To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in listed business.

Item 7, Planning – C Cllr Brown took no part in this item as she is a member of Mon CC Planning Committee.

6. Minute 4018 - To confirm and sign minutes of the Annual and ordinary meetings held on 7th September 2020.

The minutes were confirmed as true records and will be signed by the Chair.

7. Minute 4019 - To consider planning matters.

1. DM/2020/01157 Red Barn Farm, Crick Road, Shirenewton

Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling.

Council was aware of the planning history of this site and that it currently holds a Certificate of Lawful Use meaning that residential use is established. In 2017 planning consent was granted for a traditional two bedroomed cottage.

Council noted the following information taken from the Planning Officers Report in 2017.

https://planningonline.monmouthshire.gov.uk/online-applications/files/8177D6E5703EA0E4D683564B1FB0687C/pdf/DC_2017_01219-OFFICERS_REPORT-647225.pdf

1. Planning policies state that replacing a bungalow with a two-storey dwelling or adding another storey to an existing bungalow is likely to result in an increased visual impact. An argument can sometimes be made, however, that bungalows are not a traditional building type in rural areas and that the replacement of a bungalow by a two-storey dwelling would result in an enhancement to the character and appearance of the countryside. Where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no harmful intrusive impact in the landscape through the increased height and mass of the dwelling, therefore, it is considered that an exception can be made to the strict interpretation of Policies H5 and H6 set out above. This would normally be subject to no increase in the footprint of the dwelling (i.e. keeping the same ground floor area).

The current application represents an increase in size from 53.95 sqm to 108.23, **an 86% increase**. No provision is made for garaging or other domestic outbuildings which ought to be included in calculating the total floor area when considering the application of the planning policies.

2. At present the wooden chalet is not visually prominent within the wider landscape however the upper floor of the two storey dwelling would be seen when travelling along the

Crick Road towards Shirenewton. The proposed traditional style dwelling would not have a harmful visual impact on the landscape character of the area. The fact that the structure will be seen from the road does not mean that it is harmful. The dwelling is designed to be a traditional small cottage which is appropriate for the rural setting. In addition the site is surrounded by existing mature vegetation and even the two storey structure will be partly screened by this.

The existing dwelling has a ridge height of 2.7m. The current application is almost twice the original floor area with a ridge height of 7.3m and a design which is not a traditional style rural dwelling in Monmouthshire, having a full height gable front and back at the left hand end.

3. Bat surveys are generally considered valid for up to 2 years. The last bat survey was in 2016. The habitat is suitable for reptiles and a condition was imposed requiring manual work rather than mechanical in suspected areas of the site.

Council felt that the above points from 2017 still apply and the recommendation was for refusal of the application on the grounds of size and the appearance not being of traditional farmhouse style. (Voting: Refusal 4/Approval 1/Abstentions 2)

2. DM/2020/01036 Bluebell Farm, Blackbird Farm Road, Earlswood

Reposition of access and gate, new planting and retention of access track.

Council was aware of the planning history of this proposal. The applicant had sought consent in 2017 for rear access with high timber gates and a hardcore (hoggin) drive across an open field, visible across the valley. This Council objected on the grounds that the gates were uncharacteristic of the road landscape, the hoggin drive would be a scar across the Castroggi Valley which although not a conservation area had previously been designated as a special landscape, and the increased use of the road was a highway safety hazard. If there is an existing track across the field this may be unauthorised and in contravention of the previous planning refusal.

The present application proposed a normal galvanised farm gate, replacement hedging to shield the access entrance but the route of the hoggin drive is still across the field. Whilst the application made clear that additional vehicle movements may only be 2-3 per day those vehicles would be large and could be expected to cause obstruction in Old Road.

Footpath 156 runs through the site but does not appear to be affected by the application.

Council felt that the 2017 comments still apply and recommended refusal of the application on the grounds that the route of the drive is inconsistent with and harmful to the rural landscape, it would be better placed alongside the hedgerow to reduce visual impact and notwithstanding the expert reports the highway movements would create a traffic safety hazard. (Voting: Refusal 7/Approval 0)

3. DM/2020/01219 Maron Cottage, 3 The Row, Shirenewton to Rhewl Farm

To build a log cabin 12ft x 8 ft in my garden to groom approximately 2 dogs per day. The dogs will be collected and delivered back to the customer. The cabin will have a dog bath and grooming table and various grooming equipment for my part time dog grooming business.

Council noted that the property is a mid-terrace cottage and that no planning notice had been posted at the property giving neighbours no opportunity to comment on the proposal. The applicant also stated that neighbours had not been consulted.

Council also understood from the Planning Office that this application did not require a Business Use Class and was deemed 'residential' use.

Council recommended refusal pending an Environmental Health report on waste product disposal (water, faeces, hair, parasites, chemicals etc) and noise disturbance to neighbours, plus a restriction on the hours of operation. (Voting: Refusal 6/Abstentions 1).

8. Minute 4020 - Finance –

- authorisation was given for payment of amended salary to the Clerk for 2020/21 under revised NJC payscales received at the last meeting.

- the following payments were approved:

Expenditure (by Standing Order)

Clerk's salary/allowances -	September 2020	£659.02
Clerk's Pension (Council & Clerk's contribution) -	September 2020	£236.95

(Includes £58.33 towards £700 pa LGPS pension deficit)

Payments

Payee	Reason for expenditure	Amount £	Vat £	Total	Cheque No.
Mrs H Counsell	Expenses - September	54.15		54.15	101593
Mrs H Counsell	Pay award 2020/21 back pay 1.4. to 30.9.20	120.90		120.90	101594
Distinct IT Invoice: 19941	Amendment of e-mail address/dehack website	175.20	35.04	210.24	101595
J Hughes	Repair and treat benches and noticeboard	75.00		75.00	101596
Royal British Legion	3 x poppy wreaths plus donation	70.00		70.00	101597
Shirenewton Local History Society	Annual membership	15.00		15.00	101598
Shirenewton Recreation Assoc.	Hall bookings (1/3 rd of annual charge)	75.00		75.00	101599
Mon CC Invoice: 70168305	Replacement bowtop fencing at play area	323.00	64.60	387.60	101600

Council resolved to make all payments as listed.

9. Minute 4021 – To note the date of Remembrance Sunday as 8th November 2020.

- Clerk to collect British Legion poppy wreaths on 20th October.
- Chair to lay wreath at Shirenewton church.

10. Minute 4022 – Reports from the County Councillor and the Clerk

County Councillor Brown advised:

Highways Issues

A number of residents have raised the issue of the need for a 20mph limit. The Welsh Government has supported the '20 is Plenty' campaign and have produced the following task group report:

<https://gov.wales/20mph-task-force-group-report>

Further details of the debate can be found at the following link:

http://www.20splenty.org/welsh_20mph_report

The intention is to bring this legislation into force by April 2023, following the piloting of it. The idea is that the areas which have the required street lighting which applies to both urban and village areas will have a default speed limit of 20 mph rather than the current 30mph. The report indicates that the A roads may have to be considered separately but the report fails to consider villages such as Shirenewton which do not have street lights.

Unfortunately, although the Welsh Government support speed limit changes to 20mph the required resources, as far as I know, have not currently been provided to local authorities and so the local authority has a limited road traffic and safety budget.

However, I am continuing to press MCC highways for consideration of the highway issues in my ward.

The issue of community speed watch has also been raised. However, the only community speed watch in the ward area is in Pwllmeyric and it has not operated to date during Covid 19.

Adults Select Committee:

The Adults Select Committee on the 29th of September considered a number of Covid 19 related reports including the Track, Trace and Protect report. I mentioned public health concerns that the NDF now before Senedd contains the 50 dwellings per hectare rather than the standard 30. The current draft NDF says as follows:

Density

To support the economic and social success of our towns and cities, including sustaining public transport and facilities, urban growth and regeneration should increase the population density of our towns and cities. New developments in urban areas should aim to have a density of at least 50 dwellings per hectare (net), with higher densities in more central and accessible locations. It may be necessary to take social distancing requirements into consideration when designing public and communal spaces.

The latest National Development Framework was placed in Senedd on the 21 September for 60 days for approval.

The issue is that although social distancing is mentioned, the normal standard level of development is 30 dwellings per hectare but this says at least 50 with even higher densities in more central and accessible locations. It is the densely populated areas suffering the most from Covid 19 and if twice the level of density as the normal happens across the whole of Wales in the future developments in our towns and cities, it creates the ideal conditions for a breeding ground for any future pandemics. Hence the public health and wellbeing concerns.

The papers for the Adults Select committee meeting and the opportunity to watch the meeting on you tube, can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=4607&Ver=4>

Stronger Communities Select Committee;

The above select committee had a special meeting on the 28th of September to consider household waste issues and the garden waste consultation. It includes the scrutiny of proposals on the potential closing of Usk Household Waste recycling centre, the Five Lanes Household Waste Recycling Centre being open from 8am to 4pm and closed for a further day, green waste being collected by wheelie bins rather than bags on a fortnightly basis with changes in charges as a result. The Select Committees only scrutinise reports and the decision making is up to the Cabinet. The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=4614&Ver=4>

Monmouthshire County Council Revised Local Development Plan

The latest proposed timetable for the revised Local Development plan is as follows:

- RLDP Delivery Agreement report to Council: 22nd October 2020
- RLDP Growth and Spatial Options Non-statutory Consultation: December 2020-January 2021
- RLDP Preferred Strategy Consultation and Second Call for Candidate Sites: May-June 2021
- RLDP Deposit Consultation: July-September 2022
- RLDP Submission for Examination: early 2023
- RLDP Adoption: Autumn 2023

It means that there is expected to be a report to Council on the 22 October 2020, usually available about a week prior to the meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteId=143>

National Development Framework Plan- Future Wales Plan- National Plan 2040.

Timetable: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-09/future-wales-timeline-graphic.pdf.pdf>

The new draft NDF has been laid before Senedd for a period of 60 days from the 21 September 2020, with changes marked up following on from a consultation on it.

The general link for the reports can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040>

Consultation report

<https://gov.wales/draft-national-development-framework>

The schedule of changes can be found in the following link:

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-09/schedule-of-changes-to-the-draft-national-development-framework_1.pdf

As can be seen by ploughing through the schedule of changes which includes changes to policies 4 and 5 for rural areas and changes on the green belt policy for the South East region of Wales. The growth area for the South East region of Wales is still seen to be Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys.

Changes to Policies 4 (Supporting Rural Communities) and 5(Supporting the Rural Economy)- (please refer/ recheck the above link for more detail, as this is only from my

impression from the initial scan through a considerable number of pages in these documents):

Policy 4 Supporting Rural communities:

Draft before consultation of policy 4:

The Welsh Government supports sustainable rural communities and appropriate proportionate growth in rural towns and villages.

Schedule of changes to policy 4:

The Welsh Government supports sustainable and vibrant rural communities.

Original Version:

The future of rural areas are best planned at the regional and local level. Strategic and Local Development plans should plan positively to meet the needs of rural communities with regard to housing, transport, business services and diversification in the agricultural sector.

Schedule of changes to:

Strategic and Local Development plans must identify their rural communities assess their needs and set out policies which support them. Policies should consider how age balanced communities can be achieved, where depopulation should be reversed and consider the role of new affordable and market housing, employment opportunities, local services and greater mobility in tackling these challenges.

Policy 5 on the rural economy in relation to agriculture and forestry adds that the Welsh Government also strongly supports innovative and emerging technology businesses and sectors to help rural areas to unlock their potential, broadening the economic base and creating higher paid jobs.

The supporting text for policies 4 and 5 are headed Vibrant Rural Areas- which includes the Welsh Government wants vibrant rural areas with services to meet the needs of those living there in a sustainable way. Strategic and Local Development Plans must develop policies that support rural areas. Where these plans identify growth in rural areas it must be appropriate and proportionate to the needs of the settlement and the wider rural areas.

The changes go on to distinguish between rural locations close to a major urban area and more isolated ones.

However it now states that "Rural areas in the South East whilst living in close proximity to major towns and cities will be supported by policies 4 and 5 in order for these communities to be sustained."

Policy 34 -Green Belts in the South East: have been weakened considerably which is of great concern and at the LDP stage only prevent major developments but with the threat of reconsideration at a Strategic Development plan stage. Crossed out is the important protection for Chepstow and the surrounding areas in the sentences which no longer exist:

"The Welsh Government supports the use of green belts in the South East region in managing and planning urban growth...The Strategic Development Plan must identify a green belt that includes the area to the north of the Severn crossings to North Cardiff". (Deleted).

Yet it recognises the development pressures in our area due to the large green belt around Bristol but does nothing to mitigate it.

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-09/schedule-of-changes-to-the-draft-national-development-framework_1.pdf

Comment:

It can be seen that the important protection for rural areas of appropriate and proportionate development in our rural villages and towns in policy 4 has been removed in the actual policy itself, which is more important than the supporting text which itself is now headed Vibrant Rural Areas. The consultation document indicated that a reason for the change for this policy was that it was not ambitious enough, hardly an evidenced approach for such an important issue. In my opinion, the word “vibrant” is more appropriate for a city area than a rural area and there does not seem to be any policies to prevent urban sprawl.

The NDF being renamed Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 is important because it shapes the LDPs.

If you wish to make any comments/representations to the Senedd Members/ Minister on the draft NDF during this 60 day period from the 21 September, the following contact details can be found:

List of Members of Senedd; <https://business.senedd.wales/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

The Welsh Government Minister in charge of Housing and Local Government is Julie James MS: <https://gov.wales/julie-james-ms#section-15129>

Clerk's Report:

Hill View Cottage, Shirenewton – Enforcement case open – E19/130. Non Material Amendment application for velux roof lights and slated canopies received 18.10.19. Community Council approved canopies but recommended refusal of velux rooflights at November 2019 meeting. Application refused by Mon CC.

Damaged planter at Blethyn Close - Mon CC agreed to remove and replace the damaged concrete planter at their own cost as it is on their land – reminder sent 28.5.19 and 25.7.19 and 23.9.19 and 25.10.19 – J Wassal, Mon CC to put on works schedule w/c 27.1.2020. Residents to be asked if they would rather have a grit bin instead. Clerk to cost one.

Asset maintenance – work still ongoing on the repair of the squeeze belly gates at the war memorial, should be completed during September. Also further small set of railings to be installed at the Funeral Path to fill a gap in the railings.

Agreed at August meeting to replace planter at war memorial, replacement to be made locally.

Mobile Post Office – mobile service no longer running in current COVID-19 lockdown.

Footpath 30 – Earlswood Road to Newton Manor – poor condition of top part of path reported to Mon CC Footpaths Officer on 16.3.20. Report No: 09961. Footpaths Officer agreed and will arrange repair. Checked 23.6.20 - not taken place as yet, reminded 23.7.20.

Wall at Tredegar Arms Car Park – work to repair the wall has commenced with a local builder on behalf of the lease holder, Ms J Godwin.

Supply of recycling bags – Clerk is now an official bag supplier to Shirenewton! As well as dog waste bags, free purple, pink, yellow and food bags are now available in the telephone kiosk.

Reports to My Monmouthshire

6837487 – Ash die back in trees along Crick/Shirenewton road – 16.9.20 - under review.

6841876 – Request for road sweeper through Shirenewton and surrounding roads.

Under review.

Mon CC Countryside team – reported blocked and impassable junction of footpaths 53/54/55 at Old Cock a Roosting. Countryside has informed the Enforcement Officer.

11. Minute 4023 - Items of local concern –

- Ash dieback was reported on Weyloed Lane, Mynyddbach. Clerk to contact Mon CC regarding the procedure for reporting.

12. Minute 4024 - To receive correspondence as per attached schedule.

Council noted receipt of the following correspondence:

Covid 19 arrangements during lockdown - Various information and guidelines on holding remote/public meetings during the coronavirus outbreak from the Welsh Government and One Voice Wales.

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Consultation on Draft Annual Report for 2021/22 (closing date 23.11.20).

WG Consultations

- Education Workforce Council: interim suspension orders.
- Tackling fuel poverty 2020 – 2035.

13. Minute 4025 – date of next meeting

An informal discussion meeting to take place on Wednesday 21st October at 7.00pm.

Points for discussion:

- Update on findings regarding traffic/highways options.
- The LDP.
- The availability of 'No Cold Callers' cards.
- Accessibility preview of the redesigned website.

The next Council meeting will be held on **Monday 2nd November at 7.00pm** at the Recreation Hall, Shirenewton if the lockdown is lifted, if not, the meeting will be by Councillors remote attendance.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.