

Minutes of the meeting held on the 21 January 2020.

**PRESENT** Clrs Davies, Evans, Morgan-Evans, Keates, Bentley, R Morgan, Catley, Rippin and Cty Clr Jones. Also present were the representatives of LRM Planning, Monmouthshire Housing Association and P&P Builders as well as a good number of local residents.

**APOLOGIES** Clrs T Morgan, Phillips and Woodier.

The first item on the Agenda was a **DISCUSSION/QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION** with members of the public, councillors and the three representatives of MHA, P&P Builders and LRM Planning participating in a lively debate re the proposed housing development on Land to the South-West of Wern Gifford.

Further clarification was sought by those present on issues already raised by the Community Council and private members of the public in their initial Pre-Application Response to the three organisations above as well as to Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru who were not present on the night but who would be attending the next Community Council Meeting on the 18 February.

In no particular order of concern, the following points were raised:

1. Contrary to policy already outlined by MCC, relating to its preference for mixed housing developments, it was observed that this was a development relating completely to social/affordable housing. The answer given was that this was because partial grant funding had been obtained from the Welsh Government.
2. Access to the development (both when under construction and afterwards ) would have an enormous environmental impact owing to the increased traffic flow into Wern Gifford Estate especially around the Primary School entrance with children's safety issues already a great concern. The question was raised as to whether access could be created from the Grosmont/White House Pitch road through an area owned by the existing landowner who had released the present plots south-west of Wern Gifford for development. It was observed that the land accessed from the Grosmont/White House Pitch Road was as yet only a candidate site and part of the review process under the 2018-2033 LDP without planning status. It was forcefully stated by local people present at the meeting that all 'traffic surveys' had taken place in holiday time when traffic flow was at its minimum because of school holidays and that the results of the computer modelling which had

taken place under the auspices of LRM following the surveys were therefore misleading and could not be trusted. It was felt that theoretical data is not enough and that local residents' everyday experiences should be acknowledged, considered and taken into account in any assessment. There seems not to have been any mention\_of everyday school traffic or other Wern Gifford site traffic at all, in\_fact!

3. It was observed that not all residents of Wern Gifford had been informed about the proposals. The bare minimum of residents near the access point to the area alongside the Tram had been informed but it was strongly felt that all residents of Wern Gifford would be affected by the proposals as their only point of access into the Estate was off the A465. It was noted that more residents had now been informed but the general feeling was that this action was too little, too late. The LRM representative informed the meeting that she had followed the official, legal requirements in this matter.
4. Residents were extremely concerned that Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru apparently felt that the sewerage/drainage system serving Llanvihangel Crucorney and Pandy was capable of taking a sizeable development of this nature. The planning agent informed the meeting that they had received a pre-consultation letter from Welsh Water which had replied in a positive manner when referring to the present system's ability to cope with any extra input. **The latter statement was particularly infuriating to local residents and councillors who had suffered numerous sewage and flooding disasters over the years especially since Wern Gifford and other more recent housing developments had taken place.** In fact, ongoing at the moment, there are 2 housing development which when finished will add another 24 properties onto the already overloaded sewage system, in addition to the 20 units proposed in the current social housing application . Moreover, Welsh Water's latest response would seem to be in complete contradiction to its statement in a letter to Crucorney Community Council dated 13 September 2013 in which it stated that "The findings of the HMA indicate that our 150 mm diameter gravity foul sewer serving Pandy is hydraulically overloaded at present. The HMA confirmed that there is an amount of storm flows entering the bottom end of the catchment, which exceeds the(ir) design capacity of

the sewers in this area in times of heavy rainfall." In this letter, it is further mentioned "that land adjacent to Wern Gifford has a separate sewer system with no discernible storm response" and that there were a number of sections that had root ingress which required scheduled maintenance and patch lining. It also mentioned that there was a lot of surface water entering the public sewerage system upstream of the Rising Sun Public House. As far as the Community Council is aware, no major improvements or surveys have taken place to ameliorate these findings in recent years. LRM's stance on this matter, was that as a separate sewage pipe would be installed in the new development and that an 'attenuation system' for surface water drainage would also be installed, the problem would be solved. Recent legal requirements that no development would be allowed which would increase the risk of flooding was disputed in this case by all local people present as the community had suffered serious flooding in the past and the area in the vicinity of this development was, in fact, on the flood plain. It is not clear either as to how extra surface water from the proposed tarmacked access road will be accommodated as the ditch which seems to run alongside it on the plans does not lead anywhere. There does not seem to be a bridge planned over the nearby stream, either, and there is no mention of design, levels or clearance between the stream and the underside of any bridge which may materialise. Re all discussions about drainage and sewage, it was pointed out by various people at the meeting that the overriding problem lay with the main sewage pipe into which all the lateral pipes ran insofar as it was insufficient for the needs of the community. **THIS WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT TO BE ADDRESSED** but none of the authorities were taking any notice! Welsh Water's favoured approach to problems seems to be purely *reactive* in dealing with each incident as it occurs on an *ad hoc* basis rather than be *proactive* when a recurring problem manifests itself and upgrade a failing system, despite the great anxiety and distress that flooding and sewage disasters cause local residents. Owing to the great concern of residents/councillors, the Community Council had already requested the presence of Welsh Water who unfortunately could not attend tonight but would be present at the Community Council's February meeting.

5. Linked to No.2 above, and of great concern to those present, was the intake capacity of the local Federated Primary School. Councillors have it on good authority that that the intake capacity will never change and no further accommodation will be built by the County Council. As the School is virtually always at full capacity, this will result in any extra children from this development (and others when completed) being transported into Abergavenny for their primary education. Once again, it seems that little thought has been put into this aspect of the development by the planners.
6. The full site plan suggests that the area is landlocked in very close vicinity to the flood plain.
7. It was strongly felt that until Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru had met with the Community Council and local residents, no final decision should be made with regard to this application by the planners at Monmouthshire County Council.
8. It was observed that other matters relating to these proposals include planning statements re transport links and other aspects of infrastructure which contain some inaccuracies, as follows: (a) The bus service (X3) is every two hours and not every hour and there is no direct service to the train station in Abergavenny and parking there is inadequate;(b) Information re hotel accommodation is not correct as there is now no hotel in Pandy.
9. The following policies/guidelines mentioned in the Monmouthshire County Council LDP (2011-2021) seem to have been breached and at the very least need further clarification/action before this latest planning application is progressed: Policy H7 (c) ; Policy EP1 (Water pollution and risk to public health or safety); Policy EP2 (Would not harm or pose an unacceptable risk to the capacity or flow of groundwater, surface waters .....);Policy EP5 (Foul Sewage Disposal ) and Policy SAH11(xvi).

Councillors thanked the representatives of the Monmouthshire Housing Association, LRM and P&P Builders for their attendance at the meeting.

### **DISCUSSION WITH THE LOCAL MCC HOUSING ENABLER**

Mr David James explained how those interested could see adverts for available affordable housing by adding 'non-existent children' to their status, as at the moment the system precluded those without children

seeing what was available even though 'under-occupancy' of such properties was allowed as part of the Rural Housing Policy. A guide was being produced which would act as a template to lead people through the existing intricacies of people wishing to apply, including information re 'under filling'.

The policy of local people first would continue but there were worries about the 'ripple effect' if there were not enough people to fill vacancies. It was emphasised that it would be better to direct all enquiries through the Monmouthshire County Council 'Homesearch' site.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Current A/C: £400 Reserve A/C: £21,035.86 (inc. last Precept payment of the Financial Year and the S106 monies.)

Cheques still not presented : £500 issued to Cwmyoy Hall Committee in August.

Cheques signed on the night: £60 to Merlin Waste, £125.00 to R L Evans for repairs to the Hall and £396.00 to Roger Brown for repairs to the heating boiler. A new burner would also have to be acquired soon and Mr Brown was investigating possible suppliers and costs.

Re the Budget Proposals for 2020-2021, councillors, agreed that a figure of £14,600 would be requested as the Precept. Part of the budget agreed an increase in the Clerk's salary to £2,500 as recent comparative research had shown that his salary had for a long time now, lagged behind other salaries paid to even smaller councils than Crucorney.

It was also agreed that £150 from the charitable donations allocation would be paid to support MCC's organisation of summer holidays play scheme for children in the Abergavenny and local area.

### **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes were confirmed and signed as a true and accurate record with one small amendment.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

1. Anthony Davies had confirmed that work on the play area would be starting soon.
2. Draft lease and Star Legal. No progress.

3. The Pandy HMC Direct Debit re the Wi-Fi supplier was still being negotiated.
4. Unauthorised access into the field near the Pandy Inn. No progress.
5. Double yellow lines had been installed at last by MCC at the top of the Skirrid Pitch. The news was, however, that the line painters would have to return to finish the job as a van/car had been parked on part of the area marked out for painting.
6. A tree was still growing out of the bridge at Pont Rhys Powell.
7. Pontrilas Railway Station Action Group. No further communication.
8. Suggested uses for the bowling green to be vacated by the Pandy Bowls Club in April would be sought from local residents.
9. It was confirmed again that the field to the north of Wern Gifford had been put forward as a candidate site in the review process for MCC's 2018-2033 LDP.
10. It was confirmed that Clr Woodier would put up photocopies of bus timetables as soon as was convenient.
11. Some 'blocked' drains and a damaged dog bin had been rectified by Clr R Evans.

## **REPORTS**

1. Cwmyoy Hall. The Committee had apologised for not banking the £500 cheque issued by CCC in August. the matter was now in hand. The next film (22/1) would be *Yesterday.* The *Good Liar* would be in March and *Downton Abbey* in April. Films would continue for the foreseeable future. The History Club would hold a research day on the 21 March. Panto preparations were in full swing and work on the car park had been delayed by bad weather.
2. Pandy Hall. Grants were still being sought for updating the toilets. Clr Bentley would contact Melanie Mercer (Clerk at Llanarth) who would hopefully give some advice re grant applications. Repairs to the Hall had been carried out as noted above .Roger Brown had also agreed to fit a new burner and carry out an annual service from now on. Clr Evans had alerted an electrician to a few jobs in the Hall highlighted in the Fire Risk Assessment.
3. CEG. The Woodland Group had been filmed by ITV Wales and the programme would be broadcast sometime during the next few months as part of *Coast and Country*. The Walking Group had not met recently and the Litter-Picking group continued as per normal.

Climate Action group was meeting this evening (21/1). Craft courses would take place in the Spring. CEG would be working with The Green Valleys during the coming months to re-evaluate the feasibility of the Grwyne Fawr Hydro Scheme. The CEG Website had details of upcoming events.

4. Primary School. There would be a Full Governors' Meeting on the 22 January.

### **PLANNING**

1. MCC DM/2019/02051 Land at Wern Gifford. Discussion as above. A detailed letter outlining local residents' concerns would be sent in by the 31 January.

### **PLANNING DECISIONS**

1. BBNP 19/19027/CON Middle Gaer. Permission granted by BBNP
2. BBNP 19/17695/FUL Great Blaenawe Farm. Permission granted by BBNP
3. BBNP 19/17980/FUL Cap Glas Court. Permission granted by BBNP

### **PLANNING UPDATES**

1. BBNP 19/18140/FUL Dan y Bwlch Farm. Application now withdrawn.

**OBITUARIES** Mrs Carol White. Mr Ari Nash and Mr Vernon Jones.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Emails sent to councillors were as follows: SE Regional Engagement Team 17/12; Changes to planning consultation 17/12; BBNP LDP 18/12; Great Blaenawe farm 20/12; Patients Voice 20/12; Cap Glas Court 20/12; Middle Gaer 20/12; Weekly Register 23/12; Rates of pay- Comparison of clerks' salaries 6/1; Play scheme report 10/1; Planning application for land at Wern Gifford 10/1; Emergency road closure at Grosmont Road 17/1; OVW Area Committee 17/1; OVW Response to local government and elections 17/1; Skirrid Pitch Junction yellow lines 20/1; Weekly register 20/1; Aneurin Bevan H A 20/1; Monmouthshire Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales 21/1; Flood Map 21/1
2. Poster/leaflets taken by Clr Bentley re fostering to put on Llanvihangel Crucorney News (Facebook).

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. It was decided to ask Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru to email the Council with colour coded copies of the sewerage system in the area before the meeting in February.
2. A surface water problem was reported re the road between Mr Martin Whistance's residence and the A465.
3. It was reported that the road from the cross-roads near Treveddw and the Queen's was difficult to use around the farm because of mud on the road and the fact that the farmer was using gates across the roadway. Councillors were informed that this route/road has not been declassified.

The meeting closed at 21.45      Date of next meeting: 18 February 2020

***S G Cooper : Clerk***