

ARTHOG COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE
ARTHOG VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 6th FEBRUARY 2019

808: The Chairman Opened the Meeting: The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm and welcomed all Councillors present and special guest Emyr Gareth, spokesperson for Sea Level Rise, Gwynedd Council.

809: Present: Cllr P Thomas, Cllr S Eves, Cllr P Roberts, Cllr B Woolley, Cllrs (Mrs) R Stott, Cllr (Mrs) J Woolley Cllr (Mrs) H Neville and Cllr (Mrs) L Hughes, Clerk Angela Thomas

810: Apologies Received: Cllr J Haycock and Lisa Goodier, GC

811: Councillors' Declaration of Interest: Nil

812: To Receive Any Special Announcements: Nil

813: Presentation by Emyr Gareth: Emyr started by giving apologies from Lisa Goodier who had been expected to attend the meeting but due to circumstances was unable to be there. Emyr had attended a meeting earlier in the day at the Fairbourne Village Hall with Fairbourne Moving Forward /Project Board attended by Cllr B Woolley. Emyr's presentation consisted of detailed explanations, graphs, pictures and example scenarios, all appertaining to Sea Level Rise and applicable to Fairbourne. There was some "actual date" missing with regard to monitoring in Barmouth, a period of measure 2003/2004/2005 and all data after 2015 to date. Emyr was unsure why the data was missing and thought maybe there had been a problem with the monitoring equipment, but the Clerk, having spoken recently to Barry Davies Maritime Officer, confirmed that the monitor on Barmouth Bridge was working correctly. This missing date was promised as being actual, and available, by Lisa Goodier at her last meeting with the Community Council. Emyr will attempt to acquire the missing data. Emyr answered a whole range of questions raised by the Councillors in a clear and concise way. The Chairman, Cllr P Thomas wished to have minuted that this session with Emyr Gareth was the first session since the implementation of the finding of Greg Guthrie and the adoption of the Shoreline Management Plan, the announcement by Gwynedd Council that Fairbourne will ultimately be decommissioned at some time in the future, Lisa Goodier being appointed as Project Manager, and the storm of 2013/2014, that the information available was presented in such a manner that it was fully understood by all in the meeting. There are still questions that need answering by Gwynedd Council such as a measure of time when this managed retreat might happen, relocation of residents, the new demarcation line, who pays for decontaminating Fairbourne, and more. The CC has always been led to believe that the demarcation line is the Railway Line, Emyr was asked would NRW be building a new Sea Wall to protect the Railway. Cllr Thomas said that that was a question that should be asked. Cllr Thomas asked Emyr if Gwynedd Council was lacking in its due diligence by not informing all the other communities in Gwynedd of the jeopardy, why just concentrate on Fairbourne. The Chairman Cllr P Thomas wanted it minuted that this Community Council is alarmed that Gwynedd Council appears to not be doing due diligence by making other communities aware of the situation faced by Fairbourne. It was

pointed out that Fairbourne was a special case as it was an enclosed village and was below sea level. It was also discussed with Emyr that the immediate cause for concern is the state of the ditches and the lack of clearing and cleaning. Barmouth is to be treated differently and further defences will be looked at for Barmouth. Emyr did confirm that at this moment in time there is no legislation in place that would legally allow Gwynedd Council to forcibly remove any resident of Fairbourne, he also confirmed that all utilities will remain in place until the "last man standing". Gwynedd Council has a duty of care for all its residents. The graphs, pictures, facts and figures etc were available to attendees at the earlier meeting, they are also available for viewing by any interested party. Please ring and make an appointment with the Clerk if you wish to have sight of any of the documents. Unfortunately, these documents are too large for the Notice Board but an attempt to make them available on the Website will be investigated. The Chairman once again thanked Emyr Gareth for his precise and understandable presentation and bade him a good evening. He left at 8.00pm.

814: To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9th January 2019: The minutes were confirmed by Cllr. Eves and seconded by Cllr (Mrs) Stott.

815: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9th January 2019. Nil

816: Clerks Report:

The Clerk reported that HMRC had acknowledged that the Community Council was now an employer and the Clerk was registered as the only employee. Vodafone had been informed that the Bank Account details for the Mobile phone account had changed to HSBC, this has been acknowledged. The Clerk read a response from NRW references three queries that the CC had relating to ditch clearance, the cost of making the breach in the inner sea wall and the transportation of shingle into Fairbourne. The information had been originally forwarded to the CC by the office of Liz Saville-Roberts. The CC were still appalled by the cost of £11,800 paid to Alun Griffiths for the breach work. A schedule of work carried out on the ditches was provided for 2018. The Clerk confirmed that an acknowledgement had been received from GC reference a letter sent to them outlining concerns for the Community with the proposed 5.5% raise in Council Tax. The reply basically said that the CC's concerns had been noted and would be taken into consideration. Cllr (Mrs) Hughes said that 588 people had replied to GC's Survey. The Clerk asked whether it was an idea to send the letter to the Cambrian News so that residents were made aware that the CC was trying to act on their part. The Councillors agreed that it was a good idea and to go ahead. The Clerk had been asked to write to Dwr Cymru with regard to concerns raised by some residents regarding the slow rate of expulsion of grey water, ie bath, toilet and basin. A reply had been received which the Clerk read, and a copy of the reply had been put into the Notice Boards in Fairbourne and Arthog. The conclusion was the Dwr Cymru were aware of concerns in the area and were working to resolve the issues. An information guide for customers struggling to pay for water rates had been received. Copies of this guide had been made available to residents via meetings in the Village Hall previously. A letter from the NRW, Keith Ivens was read by Cllr Thomas. This letter was with regard to the state of the ditches and the proposed works to be carried out by the NRW within the Fairbourne area. A CD had also been enclosed with the letter detailing all the engineering drawings for

the sluice gate, outfalls, culverts etc. Cllr Eves will take possession of this. It was confirmed that the Ditches on Mr John Evans land were still a concern however the NRW were dealing with this. Keith Ivens confirmed that visual inspections take place every 6 months to monitor the state of the ditches. Cllr Eves said that he and Mike Scott had walked the ditch from "The Shoe" up to the Railway line and that it was heavily clogged with weed and rubbish and felt that it had not been cleared for at least 2 years. It was also felt that the new sluice gate needed to be monitored on a very regular basis. Cllr Thomas said that the NRW needed to be challenged on their opinion of the outfall. Cllr Eves will make a report at the next meeting when he has studied the CD. Cllr Woolley made the point that the Sea Wall was a matter for the NRW not GC, NRW would be responsible for funding further defence work. He questioned why GC are making the decision as to when Fairbourne should be decommissioned when NRW make the decisions regarding the spending on defences. Cllr Woolley will raise that question at the next Project Board Meeting. The letter that the Clerk had written to GC on behalf of Mike Scott reference Penrhyn Point and works to be carried out had only been responded to by the Highways Department. It was confirmed that the zig zag and yellow/white lines would be repainted in during the Spring/Summer scheduled works. Matters regarding signage and pay and display were still outstanding, unless a reply had been sent directly to Mike Scott. A complaint had been received by the Community Council from the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding a communication from a member of the public which had been written in Welsh. The Clerk had politely asked for a translation into English and the sender had taken exception. A letter had been drafted by the Clerk to be sent to the Welsh Language Commissioner explaining that the CC was fully inclusive and embracing of the Welsh Language, providing copies in Welsh and English of all items on the Website and where practical and possible in the Notice Boards, space being an issue. It was hoped that this would alleviate all concerns. The Community Council has two fully Welsh Speaking councillor and some Councillors with an understanding of Welsh. If a request was ever received from a member of the public to attend a meeting and a Welsh translator needed, this CC would be able to fully comply to the request, subject to the Welsh speaking Councillor being in attendance or finances permitting, or a Welsh interpreter being engaged.

817: Special Items Brought to Attention: Cllr Thomas said that he had had a meeting with Stuart Marsh, Heron Barn, concerning the state of the ditches on Heron Barn land and the adjacent land, ie the Pig Farm. Stuart Marsh has had a report drawn up by a Civil Engineer Graham Hall, on the drainage problem. Stuart then wrote a letter to the NRW. The NRW response from Claire Pullman basically says that although they are responsible for the drainage of the ditches, the SNP also own ditches which need to be opened, but at the end of the day the RSPB have blocked all work. The RSPB philosophy is to take the woodland back to bog land; however, the livelihood of the farm and land owners and their well-being should take precedence over creating a bog land for birds. Stuart Marsh has two unusable fields and the Pig Farm is a sea of mud. It is the railway ditch that needs most attention, western end of the Mawddach Trail. The NRW would not allow the ditch to be cleared because of the SSSI. Cllr Thomas asked the Clerk to liaise with Stuart Marsh with a view to writing to the NRW stating an alternative scenario and case, stating that the NRW is not living up to its responsibility of allowing free drainage from these properties. Cllr Thomas said that historically the NRW, when they took over from the Environment Agency, said that they would become responsible for all drainage matters but it has always proved impossible

to get them to carry out their duty. SSSI is managed by the NRW but not owned by the NRW. Cllr (Mrs) Hughes questioned what the SNP ethos is, surely it is to ensure that the people who live in the Park should have a standard of life equal to others and that their mental well-being is paramount. Cllr Eves mentioned that he had spoken to the Jones Bros Contractors at Friog Corner with regard to keeping the tarmac road that they had built, as a permanent feature for Fairbourne. The Clerk had also received a telephone call from Gareth Evens NRW on the same matter. In conclusion, because the structure was classed as “temporary” and that it would interfere with the Sea Defence, it was not possible for it to be retained for use by the Community. A great pity and a waste of public money. The Contractors will be finished in two weeks’ time and off site. Cllr Eves also stated that a conclusion had been reached with regard to a beach ramp, it will be piled and concreted. Barry Davies Maritime Officer said that it would have to be pebble high. Costing is being calculated out at this time. By the next meeting a drawing will be available and at that time a crowd funding appeal will be launched. Approximate costing will be around £20,000. Cllr (Mrs) Neville confirmed that the visual check on the Playpark had been made and all was in order. The form was duly completed. The Clerk confirmed that the next formal inspection was due in June 2019 and will be carried out by ROSPA.

818: To Deal with Any Correspondence: The CC had received a letter from Ysgol Bro Idris asking for a Community Council Representative as school governor. Cllr (Mrs) Stott said that she would be happy to put herself forward. The Clerk will write a letter of application. A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed that Cllr (Mrs) Stott be put forward. A communication regarding Financial Management and Governance – Town and Community Councils 2017-2018 and Internal Audit Arrangements at Town and Community Council in Wales dated 23 January was shown and made available to all Councillors. A copy of the Revision to Police and Crime Plan Priorities January 2019 was made available to all Councillors. A Report on Public Transport issues in North Wales was made available to all Councillors for reference. The review will take a year and half to complete. GC are working in conjunction with Bangor University. A report from the Auditor General for Wales regarding Fee Scheme 2019-2020 was made available to all Councillors. The Clerk reported that Came & Co the current CC Insurers have been taken over by Stackhouse Poland Group. Same people same ethos. GC Financial Strategy Results will be published in March. As a matter of interest, the Ombudsman for Wales told GC that its publicity department was not very good at what it did, or more to the point what it didn’t do. One Voice Wales next meeting email was forwarded to Cllr Thomas, Wednesday 20th February, for his attention. The Councillors’ were informed that the SNP Eryri Local Development Plan had been adopted on 6th February 2019

819: To Deal with Planning Matters: The Old Church Room, now being referred to by GC as the Old Village Hall has applied for permission to call the building a Museum. The CC asked the Clerk to write pointing out that the Planning Application had been submitted under the wrong name. The Councillors’ were all in agreement that the site was in desperate need of tidying but emphasised that precedence must be given to the safety of the Black Poplar, a protected tree.

820: Financial Statement and Report: The monthly financial report was circulated to all Councillors’ for their approval. All cheques had been cashed and the balances were agreed.

All financial matters will now go through the HSBC Bank. A letter to HSBC was signed by 5 of the 6 signatories allowing the Clerk to move the various amount into the said accounts. As follows:

Current Account:	£9327.47	
Cemetery Account:	£4000.00	
Reserve Account:	£743.88	
Youth Account:	£7716.55	£21,787.90. TOTAL

A cheque was issued to the value of £448.99 and was signed for payment of the new Dell Laptop for the Community Council and a cheque to the value of £184.00 was also signed for maintenance of the CC Website. The Clerk was pleased to report that the Community Council Dell Computer was on its way. Office 365 has still to be purchased and will cost £59.99. A cheque will be requested in March. The Clerk confirmed that she was still awaiting a reply from the Welsh Audit office with regard to the appeal against the External Audit Bill.

821: To Receive Councillors' Questions: Cllr B Woolley asked whether the CC had received an update with regard to Footpath 13 and the re-located path. The answer was no, still awaiting a conclusion. The reply/conclusion will come from the NRW not GC. Cllr Woolley also asked if it might be a good idea to write a letter of thanks to the NRW and the Contractors Jones Bros for the completion of the Friog Corner Project. The Clerk said that she would send a letter. Cllr Eves confirmed that the last remaining pieces of the old ramp had also been removed. Cllr (Mrs) Woolley raised the matter of safety at Friog Corner and asked if it would be prudent to have some signage made saying Climbing the Rocks would be at your own risk. Of course, there is such a thing as "parental responsibility" but if there were some signs put up it would take any responsibility away from the Community Council, the NRW and Gwynedd Council if there was ever an accident due to the fact that at this moment in time there is no ramp to access the beach. Cllr Eves asked whether the CC had ever sent a letter to GC exploring the possibility of a reduction in Council Tax for the Residents of Fairbourne due to the 40% drop in value of properties. The answer was **no**. It is something to be explored further at a future meeting. Cllr Thomas reported that the National Trust had now replaced all the signs at Cregennan Lakes, including no litter and no overnight camper vans. The new signs saying please support local camping sights. Cllr Thomas also reported that on a recent trip to Aberystwyth he made a note of how many well illuminated 20mph signs there were. He would again like the Community Council to ask GC to reconsider their decision to leave Arthog Hill at 30mph. The Clerk reported that Liz Saville Roberts was still working on behalf of Arthog with regard to traffic calming in Arthog. Cllr Eves reported that it had been proven in areas that had adopted a 20mph speed limit that the accident rate increased. He said be aware that it isn't the motorist that loses attention but the pedestrians.

822: Representatives Report: Cllr (Mrs) Hughes asked that if Cllrs' were available it might be of interest to attend the Main Council Meeting in Dolgellau on the 5th March, main topic

of conversation being the 92 million pounds lent by GC to other Councils. Cllr Hughes will be fighting against a 5.5% rise in Council Tax

823: Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th March 2019 in Fairbourne Village Hall, commencing 7.00pm