

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE FAIRBOURNE  
VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2021**

**1077: The Chairman Opened the Meeting:** The Chairman, Cllr Roberts opened the meeting at 7.05pm

**1078: Present:** Cllr Roberts, Cllr (Mrs) Salt, Cllr Haycock, Cllr Woolley, Cllr (Mrs) Woolley, Cllr (Mrs) Neville, Cllr (Mrs) Darvill, guests Mrs S Stephenson and Mr M Thrussell, and the Clerk Angela Thomas.

**1079: Apologies Received:** Cllr Eves, Cllr (Mrs) Stott, Cllr Louise Hughes (GC)

**1080: Councillors' Declaration of Interest:** No interests declared.

**1081: Guest speakers:** Cllr Roberts introduced both Ambassadors.

Sylvia Stephenson, Ambassador (FMFPB), addressed the Councillors regarding concerns that she has with representing the community on the Project Board. Sylvia said that it had been vitally important that both Ambassadors were affiliated to the ACC, (this has already been minuted.) She said that it was also important that residents knew the chain of command and that the ACC was the first tier of local government. Sylvia said that she had great concerns about the effectiveness of the FMFPB, a Board that has no teeth and that the structure of the Board was all geared to the convenience of Gwynedd Council. With GC having their own internal Fairbourne Project Board with no representation from Fairbourne sitting on that Board it was felt that Gwynedd were effectively showing the Welsh Government that they are engaging with the community but that nothing was being achieved by the FMFPB. It is in fact a duplication and a waste of money. The only achievement since 2013/2014 is the statement that Fairbourne will be defended until 2054 and that was made by Sian Williams NRW, not GC, in a press release January 2021. Sylvia also said that whilst Covid rules apply and face to face meeting are not allowed, it is impossible for the Fairbourne representatives to take part in Teams or Zoom meetings because the Village is hampered by bad connectivity and lacking up to date equipment unlike GC who have good connectivity and first-class equipment. Fairbourne lacks the ability to engage so the current set up of the FMFPB is not inclusive. The residents of Fairbourne are only interested in being defended and not interested in decommissioning studies.

Mike Thrussell, FMFPB Ambassador, said that he pretty much concurred with everything Sylvia had said. However, he had further concerns. A major concern being the lack of an evacuation plan specifically for Fairbourne. At the last "catch up" meeting that Huw Williams arranged, Huw had invited Katy Davies to talk about what plans are in place. Katy Davies's attitude left a lot to be desired, it was felt that she was being condescending towards the residents of Fairbourne implying that they were not capable of having or understanding a specific plan and that North Wales Police would see to the safety of residents. Mike said that he had read that the Welsh Government were bringing in a raft of new legislations relating to Climate Change, he feared that a part of the new legislation would be the ability of Councils/Welsh Government to have the right to move people out of their homes without compensation or consultation, by law. Currently there is no legislation to enable Council to move residents. Mike also said the work at the Dysynni river mouth at Tonfanau had been completed but that only time and possibly a 2014 type storm would prove whether reverting to the original exit of the river would make a difference to the tides and currents hitting Friog Corner and Fairbourne beach. He said that with already having lost a fifth of our "time left" there were still no actual plans in place and that we should not only be thinking about ourselves but our children's children. This "head in the sand attitude" and "it will never happen" is a recipe for disaster. He felt that some residents were relying on the railway embankment being the demarcation line, but Network Rail have made no such commitment and could not because basically the railway embankment is just a compacted soil/earth construction and would not hold back a severe overtopping.

Cllr Roberts said that this had already happened at Towyn North Wales and that Network Rail said at the time that the embankment was never intended to act as a sea defense. Cllr Haycock agreed with that statement. Cllr Roberts then pointed out that if the Village flooded from Friog Corner then Friog and Arthog would also be isolated and that the two Fegla's would become Islands. Properties that are elevated are safe from flooding but would be cut off because there would be no road access. Cllr Woolley said that he had realised in 2014 that GC wanted a scape goat, that being Fairbourne, but they had not considered that the community would fight back. GC had started the whole conversation without having a plan. Cllr Woolley commended both Sylvia and Mike for their commitment and work but felt that they were on a hiding to nothing.

Sylvia Stephenson again raised the subject of whether any risk assessments had been carried out by NRW/GC on the works carried out to the South of Fairbourne. Through the Freedom of Information Act those questions had been asked but without any tangible answers.

Mike said that both Sylvia and he had serious doubts that residents were really behind the FMFPB or the ACC and their efforts to engage with GC and Welsh Government. They both felt that residents would rather that decommissioning was not discussed and kept quiet. Houses were beginning to sell again, and residents did not want the bad publicity starting all over again. Cllr Haycock said that human nature meant that people tended to "let somebody else" do the work. However, if residents do not

engage, they cannot then, later, say, “that they did not know” what was happening or what was intended. The difficulty is getting the community to wake up and engage. Previously the ACC was severely criticized for being secretive, and not telling the community what Gwynedd Council and NRW were intending, this was unjustified because no Councillor on the ACC was qualified to inform the community on the technicalities of climate change and sea level rise. Cllr Roberts pointed out that the first people to be blamed would be the ACC. Cllr Haycock agreed.

Cllr Woolley felt that it might be an idea to try and contact other communities both North and South of Fairbourne who will be facing the same future as Fairbourne and to ask if Gwynedd Council has engaged with their Council and started a dialogue.

Cllr (Mrs) Salt that there was an element of GC shaking the tree to see what falls out, i.e., some resident will go, some will stay, some homes will become second homes, some will become holiday lets (a quarter of homes on Fairbourne are already in this category and the number is growing). Cllr (Mrs) Salt that it might be an idea to try and arrange a meeting of other affected/interested communities without the involvement of GC. Cllr Haycock also suggested that it might be an idea to investigate the legality of what GC are proposing.

Mike Thrussell again reiterated that at this moment in time it was not legal for a Council to remove residents from their homes but again he felt that some of this new legislation might be to make a way around that. Mike reminded all the Councillors that at a meeting held in Aberystwyth in 2018 with Cllr Eves, Theresa Eves, Mike Thrussell and the Clerk Angela Thomas, Mike had put a question to James Morris Welsh Government, and that question was, “could he, James Morris, ensure that if it came to moving residents out in the event of a catastrophe happening, could he categorically say that residents would not end up in B & B, and the reply was no, that he, James Morris, could not give that assurance.” And that answer is still the same today. Both Sylvia and Mike felt that the most important thing that could be achieved is to get ACC representation on the GC Internal Project Board. After all, GC have been awarded £40,000 funding to come up with a business plan for Fairbourne, which will be the default plan for any other communities that will face the same as Fairbourne. Also, it was pointed out that the SMP2 refresh will not involve any community feedback. There is representation from GC on the SMP2 refresh, again speaking on our behalf but not engaging with us. Cllr (Mrs) Salt asked if the internal project board had met yet? Minutes should be available to all if it has met.

Mike Thrussell said that he had spoken to Gareth Evens, NRW about concerns with the shingle shift and other factors pertaining to Fairbourne.

It was also pointed out that several emails had been sent to our new MP Mabon ap Gwynfor, to date, no acknowledgement or replies. Cllr Woolley said that his view is that many residents are of the opinion that decommissioning will not be “our” problem, but our children’s problem etc., but he said that this newsletter and questionnaire that has been drawn up will highlight what residents do want.

Mike Thrussell made one last point, he said that this winter if there is a 2014 type event, he really wants to know now, how we will be evacuated, not have to wait for an event. Judging by events in Machynlleth annually there will be no plan.

Cllr (Mrs) Salt said that a paper trail needs to be in place to avoid the errors of previous years where the ACC were blamed for not engaging.

The last point that Sylvia Stephenson made was that although the appointment of an officer to work with the Village of Fairbourne was all well and good, however, the crucial and important questions remain unanswered. With the possible lifting of restrictions on the horizon face to face meetings may well resume although the official GC line is that face to face meetings should not take place. She made the point that the Chair of the FMFPB had for family reasons and illness not been available for a lot of the meetings and that perhaps the ACC should become the lead at the FMFPB meetings.

The Clerk then asked for approval to proceed with the printing of the Newsletter and Questionnaire. Several Councillors asked for small amendments which the Clerk said she would make. Proposed by Cllr (Mrs) Salt and Seconded by Cllr Haycock.

The Chair Cllr Roberts thanked both guests for their time and thanked them for their hard work on behalf of the Community.

**1082: To Receive Any Special Announcements:** No special announcements.

**1083: To Confirm Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.** Minutes proposed as correct by Cllr Haycock and seconded by Cllr (Mrs) Woolley. The minutes were signed by the Chair as correct.

**1084: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.** Cllr (Mrs) Salt asked if the lease agreement for the Golf Club had been signed and the answer was not yet, because Cllr Eves had been ill but was now looking much better a meeting with the Golf Club would be arranged very soon.

**1085: Clerks Report:** The clerk reported that she had written to NRW about the bungalow on the corner of Meirion/Beach Road as some residents were concerned that the owner was possibly blocking the NRW access to the ditch/river behind those properties. Ann Griffiths replied that NRW were aware and had had discussions with the owner. She confirmed that all was in order. The Clerk said that she had received a letter from Welsh Government and Auditor General Office Wales regarding a draft study to assess whether Community/Town Clerks should have a minimum of qualification. A list of preferred qualifications was included within the letter. Both Cllr (Mrs) Salt and the Clerk had filled in a survey report and the results were expected in September. The Clerk did points out that you can become an MP or an AM or even a Prime Minister without qualifications, but a Community Clerk had to be qualified. Cllr (Mrs) Salt said that she had investigated the background and concluded that the Welsh Government wanted to ensure that clerks knew how to write a response in a correct and concise way and to avoid the debacle of the English Clerk Jackie Weaver, Handforth Parish Council cutting across the Chairman etc., and that being made public. English Parish Council in fact differ a great deal from Community Councils in Wales.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that work would commence on the railway crossing that evening. There had been a problem with the barriers not lifting after the train had left the station, a helpful resident had directed traffic around the barriers, but the Chairman felt that they may well be subject to a fine for effectively jumping the light and the barrier. The camera, if working, would have picked that up. An email had been sent to all Councillors detailing the new flood maps that were obviously now available. The Clerk confirmed that the grass cutting within Arthog and Fairbourne had now been completed. Mike Scott had asked the Clerk to chase up completion. Cllr (Mrs) Neville said that there was an advantage to leaving the grass long and that was that people did not walk on it and therefore drop litter. The Clerk confirmed that she had written to Steffan Jones about the dipped pavement at Francis Avenue, (a wheelchair nightmare) leading to Penrhyn Bar and Grill, no reply received. The two red flags had been replaced with new ones, a thank you email had been sent to Barry Davies. The return of the Promenade Notice Boards had been promised. The Clerk confirmed that ROSPA had been chased for confirmation of the Playpark Safety check.

**1086: Special Items Brought to Attention:** Cllr (Mrs) Woolley confirmed that the NHS flag day had been a complete success and the late afternoon "Wakes Wakey" walk had raised over £300.00 for the NHS. She confirmed that a competition would be arranged for the children of the village to design a Fairbourne Flag, and that an event would take place for the selection of the winner. She confirmed that there would be no Fairbourne Festival this year because of Covid. Cllr Roberts confirmed that Arthog would also not be holding its festival. Cllr Roberts asked if a prize for the winner would be appropriate however Cllr (Mrs) Woolley said that the prize was having a flag made in the winner's name. Cllr Roberts asked Cllr (Mrs) Woolley to have a think about a possible small prize.

Cllr (Mrs) Salt said the issue of loose sheep in the Village had turned into a nightmare for many, many residents. Gardens have been raided and plants, flower, shrubs, and vegetables have been ruined. There had been reports of sheep on the railway line, the train unable to leave the station, including a lamb that had been killed. There had been dog attacks on the sheep in Friog. The Police had been informed and because the sheep were not fenced, the police took no action against the dog owner. The Clerk said that she had also phoned the Police and the local Police Officer said he would suggest that Bwlchgwyn keep the sheep fenced during the holiday period as they were proving to be a danger on the narrow road leading to the Penrhyn Point. Cllr (Mrs) Salt said that she had investigated the legalities of loose animals, and it is the owner's responsibility to keep them fenced in and safe. Some of the loose sheep had been seen in Alyn Road, gasping from the heat and unable to reach water. However, neither Gwynedd Council nor North Wales Police seem inclined to enforce such rules. This does not help the residents of Fairbourne. Bwlchgwyn appear to be fanning the flames by putting silly comments on Facebook. The Clerk had written to the Farm, but no reply had been received or receipt acknowledged. Cllr (Mrs) Salt asked if there is anything that can be done, Cllr Roberts said that it had always been a Police matter, however, nothing seems to be acted upon. Cllr (Mrs) Salt suggested that the Clerk write to Gwynedd Council again, however, the Clerk said that Steffan Jones does not respond to any emails sent to him. Cllr (Mrs) Darvill said that the sheep were also coming onto Glan Y Mor gardens as well.

**1087: To deal with Any Correspondence:** Dealt with above.

**1088: To Deal with Planning Matters:** There were no planning matters, however it was noted that work had begun again on Sea Shanty. A base had been laid down. There does not appear to be anything happening with the Springfield either. Holiday makers appeared to be using the electric car charging points at no cost to the user.

**1089: Financial Statement and Report:** The Clerk confirmed that the Annual Accounts had been sent off to the Office of the Auditor General for Wales. A summary of the accounts for the month to date had been circulated and all was in order. A letter was submitted for signature by three signatories authorizing the clerk to transfer a sum of money from the Current Account to the Reserve/Election Account, bringing it up to a balance of £4,000. It was duly signed. Two cheques were submitted for signature, one to pay for the NHS Flag and second cheque for postage costs incurred.

Current Account	£13,149.38	21 <sup>st</sup> May to 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
Reserve Account	£ 745.97	Closing balance
Youth Account	£ 6,066.16	
Cemetery Account	£ 3,280.00	

Current Account	£ 9,566.52	21 <sup>st</sup> June to 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
Reserve Account	£ 4,000.02	Closing balance
Youth Account	£ 7,076.21	
Cemetery Account	£ 3,280.00	

**1090: To Receive Councillors' Questions:** Cllr (Mrs) Neville had been asked by Roger Duke if there would be any objection to setting up a Terra Recycling point in the Village. Crisp packed, spray gun handles, toothbrush heads, etc. are all accepted and then recycled by an international recycling company. The organiser is a young man called Craig Dobbins, Dolgellau, and he is doing a fantastic job of organizing all this. A brown wheely bin will be made available, Roger Duke will supply the bin, he will collect it and then take it to Craig. Cllr Roberts did warn that it will be misused probably. It is possible that it could be located in the vicinity of the Toilets at the Shops, this being Trust land. Cllr Roberts said that Craig Dobbins is an incredible young man and deserves support. All monies received go to local charities chosen by Craig. A vote was taken, and it was agreed that this will be trialed. Cllr (Mrs) Neville will let Roger Duke know. Proposed by Cllr (Mrs) Neville, seconded by Cllr Roberts. Cllr Woolley again raised the question of the qualifications for the Clerk and was told that all would be revealed in September and a decision could be taken at that time. Cllr Woolley also raised the question of why there seemed to be an imbalance of Councillors attending the meetings Arthog to Fairbourne, was there a reason? It was unknown. Cllr Woolley also asked if a letter of thanks could be sent to Sylvia Stephenson and Mike Thrussell for their work so far. When Cllr Eves attends the next meeting the whole issue of FMFPB meetings and whether they are valuable or not should be discussed. Cllr Roberts reported that the role of NRW is being considered, because in many areas that NRW cover, Forestry, Rivers, Sea Defenses, etc, it has become apparent that the operations/departments do not seem to be working in tandem and sometimes against each other. There seems to be no joined up thinking within the NRW. Cllr (Mrs) Darville had been contacted by a resident about the de restriction signage at the start of the road leading up to Llywngwriil, where it runs parallel to the railway. It seems to be in the wrong place. Cllr Roberts said he would investigate. Cllr (Mrs) Woolley asked if next year to celebrate the Queens reign of 70 years on the throne if it would be possible to plant some flowering trees such as flowering cherry. Next year is the year for planting trees. Cllr Roberts said that he thought it was an exceptionally good idea.

**1091: Representatives Report:** Cllr (Mrs) Neville reported that the amazing children of Fairbourne had raised £10.00 by selling apples and asked if it could be deposited in the Youth account for the Playpark. They have another couple of things planned. Cllr Roberts reported that a competition had been held at the Golf Club, England versus Wales, England won, a stone baked pizza van was on site for food and refreshment. £425.00 was raised for the first responders. Cllr Roberts read a report from Mike Scott detailing the progress of work at the disabled toilet. The flower boxes at the Toilets on Penrhyn Drive South had helped to increase income, over £1000.00 has been raised which is amazing. Cllr Roberts confirmed that Lou Jones would be taking the grass cutting back from the next cutting.

**1092: Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021, Arthog Village Hall. The Chairman closed the meeting at just gone 9.00pm and reminded everyone that there would not be a meeting in August, next meeting in September in Arthog.